

DOG SEES GOD:
Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead

A New Play
by
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"THE LISTENER"

Lights up on a very good looking, but rather large for his age guy. His name is CB.

CB

Dear penpal. I know it's been a few years since I last wrote you. I hope you're still there. I'm not sure you ever were. I never got any letters back from you when I was a kid. But in a way it was always very therapeutic. Everyone else judges everything I say. And here you are: some anonymous person who never says "boo." Maybe you just read my letters and laughed or maybe you didn't read my letters or maybe you don't even exist. It was pretty frustrating when I was young, but now I'm glad that you won't respond. Just listen. That's what I want. (Beat.) My dog died. I don't know if you remember, but I had a beagle. He was a good dog. My best friend. I'd had him as far back as I could remember, but one day last month, I went out to feed him and he didn't come bounding out of his red doghouse like usual. I called his name. But no response. I knelt down and called out his name. Still nothing. I looked in the doghouse and there was blood everywhere. Cowering in the corner was my dog. His eyes were wild and there was an excessive amount of saliva coming out of his mouth. He was unrecognizable. He looked both frightened and frightening at the same time. The blood belonged to a little yellow bird that had always been around. My dog and the bird used to play together. In a strange way, it was almost like they were best friends. I know that sounds stupid, but... Anyway, the bird had been mangled. Ripped apart. By my dog. When he saw that I could see what he'd done, his face changed to sadness and he let out a sound that felt like the word "help." I reached my hand into his doghouse. I know it was a dumb thing to do, but he looked like he needed me. His jaws snapped and I jerked my hand away before he could bite me. We called a center and they came and took him away. Later that day, they put him to sleep. They gave me his corpse in a cardboard box. When my dog died, that was when the raincloud came back and everything went to hell...

CB's SISTER enters wearing what can only be described as a black wedding dress. She's holding a wooden cross which she places on the ground in front of him.

"CANIS EXEQUIAE"

CB and his SISTER are standing beside each other and staring at the wooden cross.

A long silence passes.

She takes a box of cigarettes out of her purse (that is shaped like a coffin). She offers the box to him and he refuses it.

CB

Mom will kill you if she sees you smoking.

CB'S SISTER

(Lighting the cigarette) Well when she does, I hope you'll have the decency to bury me in an actual cemetery rather than the backyard.

Another long silence passes.

CB'S SISTER

Do you think we should say a prayer or something?

CB

I guess.

CB'S SISTER

Okay. You can say it.

CB

I don't want to.

CB'S SISTER

Well, neither do I!

CB

I don't know what to say.

CB'S SISTER

Oh, stop being so melodramatic, Charles. No one's asking for a eulogy. Just a simple prayer. Ask the Earth to watch over him. Or something.

CB

He's dead. There's not a whole lot of that necessary.

CB'S SISTER

You're so morbid. What about his next life? I think we should pray to Hecate and ask her to make him a human. Someone we meet and become friends with.

CB

What??

CB'S SISTER

Hecate is the goddess of death. She's also a goddess of reincarnation. It's wiccan.

CB

Oh, so you're wiccan this week? Glad that's cleared up. I can't keep your personalities straight! Last week, you go with a friend to a Baptist church, come home and proceed to tell mom, dad and I that we're going to hell because we watch TV. A mere NINE DAYS LATER, you're Elvira, Mistress of the dark. We can't keep up with you! FIND. AN. IDENTITY.

CB'S SISTER

You're one to talk!

CB

What could you possibly mean by that?!?!? I'm always the same!!

CB'S SISTER

(Venomously) That's nothing to brag about. (Beat.) Just drop it, okay? You don't tell me how to live my life and I won't tell you how to live yours.

Silence.

CB

I thought there'd be a bigger turnout.

She gives him a funny look.

CB

Well, he was popular. All our friends loved him. I just thought people would actually show up to pay their respect.

CB'S SISTER

You invited our friends?

CB

A few.

CB'S SISTER

You are so embarrassing!

CB

You're dressed like the bride of Frankenstein and *I'm* embarrassing?

CB'S SISTER

Shut up about my dress!!

CB

(Sotto voce; To self) This is not the way he would've wanted his funeral.

CB'S SISTER

He was a DOG, Charles. They shit on the ground and lick themselves. Ceremony is probably not key here. He was just a fucking dog.

CB

Oh yeah? Well, he was MY fucking dog. So, fuck you.

CB'S SISTER

He was my fucking dog, too!!

Beat.

CB

He never liked you.

CB'S SISTER

I suppose he told you this.

CB

He didn't have to. It was apparent. He barely tolerated you.

CB'S SISTER

I hate you.

CB

Big loss.

CB'S SISTER

You're a dickhead, CB.

CB

(Exploding) JUST SAY THE FUCKING PRAYER!!

Long pause.

CB'S SISTER

He was your fucking dog. You say it.

She storms off.

"Nirvana"

CB and "Van" sit on a park bench. Van is smoking a joint. He offers it to CB.

VAN

You wanna hit this?

CB

No. Thanks.

VAN

(Smiling) It's kind bud. You sure, man?

CB

Nah, I'm good.

VAN

I've been meaning to tell you -- I'm sorry about your dog.

CB

Thanks, man.

VAN

He was a good dog.

CB

Yeah. He was.

VAN

But he was old. It was long past his time. Still -- he was a good dog.

CB

What do you think happens when we die?

VAN

Do you mean, like, do I believe in heaven?

CB

Yeah.

VAN

Nah, man. I'm a Buddhist.

CB

Since when?

VAN

It's kind of a new development.

CB

Well, what do Buddhists believe happens when you die?

VAN

Buddha believed that one of two things happened. Either you were reborn or that you dissolved into nothingness. Oddly enough, the former is punishment and the latter, reward. We Buddhists believe that the corporeal body is the source of all suffering and a liberation from the body into nothingness, or *nirvana*, is the fuckin' way to go.

CB

Don't you find that depressing?

VAN

Liberation?

CB

Nothingness.

VAN

I think I'd kind of like to be nothingness. Because even nothing is something, right? (He shows his hand to CB) What am I holding in my hand?

CB

Nothing.

VAN

One would say that, yes. But in that nothingness is a thousand things, right? Particles and atoms and tens of thousands of things that we might not even know about yet. I could be holding in my hand the secrets of the universe and the answers to everything.

CB

You're stoned.

VAN

Damn straight.

CB laughs.

CB

So, you've given up Rastafarianism?

VAN

I've kept some of their more important philosophies.

He takes a large toke from the joint.

VAN

Why this interest in the afterlife? Is this about your dog?

CB

Just curious.

VAN

Dude, we all have to let go of things from our childhood. Do you remember when you and my sister burned my blanket to teach me that lesson?

CB

Yeah. It was only two months ago. If I'd known that it would lead to her being -- well -- I wouldn't have let her do it.

VAN

I was so pissed at you guys.

CB

The thing was fuckin' nasty, man.

VAN

(Pissed) Still. Ya'll suck.

CB

I think you were about to make a point.

VAN

I was? Fuck, yo, I'm stoned.

CB

Nevermind. I think I got it.

VAN

My point is, Chuck B., that life -- it does go on. Even without the things that have been there since the beginning. The things that we think define us, don't mean shit in the grand scheme of things. Us defines us. Not things or other people or *pets*. Like, me without my blanket -- it's still *me*. I miss my fuckin' blanket though. That was a dick thing ya'll did.

CB

Three words for you, bro -- (One finger) Pubic. (Two fingers) Lice. (Three fingers) Infestation.

VAN

Could've been fixed.

CB

Hey, we let you keep the ashes.

VAN

I smoked 'em.

CB

You what?

VAN

I rolled 'em with some good herb and smoked that shit up.

CB

That's sick.

VAN

Now, my blanket and I are like one forever.

CB

That's seriously disturbed, dawg.

VAN

We all handle grief in different ways.

CB

Can't be good for you.

VAN

Dude! Showed you two! Tryin' to mess with my shit. HA!

CB

Hey, how is your sister doing?

VAN

She's good. The doctors say that she's getting better.

CB

You miss her?

VAN

Yep. I miss the bitch.

CB

So do I.

VAN

This conversation is a major downer, amigo. Dead dogs, missing sisters, burning blankets. Let's talk about something happy.

CB

Like what?

They sit in silence. The lights fade slowly out.

"It's the Great Pussy, Charlie Brown"

A piercingly loud school bell rings.
Welcome to Thursday morning.

CB stands center stage wearing his
backpack. Matt enters. He is
extremely attractive and just as
obnoxious.

MATT

CB, my nigga! What is UP, dawg?

CB

N'much, man.

They punch each other's fists.

MATT

Are we going to this party on Saturday?

CB

Where?

MATT

Marcy's parents are out of town. *Plenty* of *virginity*. (He
thinks this rhymes.) Hey, I think Marcy's all into you.
Maybe it's time you're all 'into her.' Y'know't I'm sayin'?

He humps the air. And then gets
serious.

MATT

Oh, hey man. I'm sorry about your dog. That's rough.

CB

Yeah. Thanks.

MATT

You could prob'ly use that to get some pussy. Bitches are
suckers for that shit. Best sex I ever had was when I told
this girl that my mom kicked it. She 'consoled' me for four
hours straight! If you can whip up a few fake tears, it'll
definitely help the cause. (Feigning sadness) 'Life has no
meaning! Why couldn't it've been me? (slipping to sexual)
Oh yeah, baby. I'm almost there. That's good. That's real
good. Mom would've wanted it this way.' I'm tellin' you.
Works like a charm. Plus, girls are suckers for animals. A
dead dog, that's NICE.

CB

(Sarcastically) You're gonna make a great father one day.

MATT

Fuck that shit, yo.

CB

Hey man, what do you think happens when you die?

MATT

Well, that's a good question, CB. I'm glad you asked. It's something I've thought about many times. And the way I see it is: Okay, when you start life you're coming out of this gigantic vagina that's bigger than you are. Right?

CB

Right.

MATT

(Smiling slyly) Well, I think when we die we're goin' back in. (Thinking about this) Except this time, it's not our mom's.

CB

I know where your head's at.

MATT

And you know where my head's BEEN.

He pulls out a bag of coke and does a bump.

MATT

You want?

CB

No. Thanks.

He shoves the bag back into his pocket.

MATT

(Singing operatically) I LOVE PUSSY!! I love pussy! Pussy! Pussy!

Beethoven enters walking across the stage, carrying schoolbooks.

He rolls his eyes at Matt as he passes.

MATT

What the fuck are you looking at, cocksucker? (To CB) Did you see the way that fuckin' faggot just looked at me? (Shouting to Beethoven as he exits) You fuckin' fairy, I'll kick your fuckin' ass. I fuckin' hate that kid!

CB's sister charges on stage and pushes Matt. This time, she's wearing 'gangsta bitch' attire.

CB'S SISTER

Leave him alone! Why are you so mean to him?

MATT

(Condescendingly) Aren't you missing the Barbie Tea Party?

CB'S SISTER

Why are you SUCH a DICK?!!

MATT

What was that? You said you wanted to suck my dick?

CB'S SISTER

You are so gross.

MATT

CB, is it okay if your sister sucks my dick?

CB'S SISTER

(To CB) I can't believe you let him talk to people like that.

CB

Fuck off, squirt.

Matt mimes jerking off.

MATT

'Squirt' being the operative word here.

CB'S SISTER

You guys are disgusting.

She starts to leave, but then turns around. A smile spreads across her face.

CB'S SISTER

Hey Matt. Question for you. Where do swine live?

She runs offstage. Matt clenches his fists. Rage is coursing all through his body. CB puts a hand on his shoulder and he relaxes.

MATT

(Through clenched teeth) You know how I feel about people calling me that.

CB

Ease up. She didn't say it. Deep breath. Let it go.

He takes a deep breath and is okay.

MATT

Because she's YOUR sister and YOU'RE my best friend, I won't beat the shit out of her.

CB

And then there's that whole thing about her being a girl, too.

MATT

(Realizing) Right.

CB

You *do* have a temper, dude.

MATT

And it all started with that little faggot. I fuckin' hate that kid. He's always looking at me like he's in love with me. I fucking hate that kid.

They exit.

"THE PIANIST & THE PLATYPUS"

Beethoven walks across the stage, as
before carrying his books. CB's sister
runs on after him.

CB'S SISTER

Hey, Beethoven! Wait up!

BEETHOVEN

(To himself) Oh God.

Despite his trying to get away, she
catches up to him.

CB'S SISTER

Hey, don't let those guys get to you.

BEETHOVEN

I don't.

CB'S SISTER

They're just assholes.

BEETHOVEN

Okay.

CB'S SISTER

Where are you going?

BEETHOVEN

It's lunch period.

CB'S SISTER

Wanna sit together?

BEETHOVEN

I'm not going to the cafeteria.

CB'S SISTER

Where are you going?

BEETHOVEN

I've got... stuff to do.

CB'S SISTER

Are you coming to the drama club meeting after school?

BEETHOVEN

I'm not in the drama club.

CB'S SISTER

You should be! It's really fun!

BEETHOVEN

Aren't you the only member?

CB'S SISTER

Well, yeah, but it's given me a lot of time to work on my one-woman show. I'm thinking about calling it "Cocooning into Platypus." Do you like that title?

BEETHOVEN

(Totally uninterested) Sure, why not?

CB'S SISTER

It's about a caterpillar who longs to evolve into a platypus instead of a butterfly. It's sort of a metaphor for --

BEETHOVEN

I've gotta go.

He starts to exit.

CB'S SISTER

Are you going to Marcy's party on Saturday?

BEETHOVEN

I'd rather gnaw off my left arm.

He leaves. She calls out after him.

CB'S SISTER

Maybe we could get together this weekend. I could do your tarot cards or maybe we could go to a poetry reading or something.

No response.

CB'S SISTER

Bye!

Lights out.

"SPORK"

Cafeteria. Lunchtime. Two girls, Tricia and Marcy enter with their lunchtrays and take a seat at an empty table.

TRICIA

So, he was all like (imitating Miss Othmar) 'Woh woh woh. Woh woh. Woh woh woh wowoh woh.' He is such a dick!! So, I'm like: 'Excuse me, Mr. Von Pfefferkorn, but just because I can't define metaphor doesn't mean I don't know what one is, you stupid buttwad!'

MARCY

You called Mr. Von Pfefferkorn a buttwad??!?

TRICIA

No, of course not. I added that to the story for dramatic purposes.

MARCY

Oh.

TRICIA

I begged and pleaded to God not to put me in his class. I wanted to be in Mr. Griffin's lit class. He gives A's to anyone with tits. But, no, I get the fag.

MARCY

Do you really think Mr. Von Pfefferkorn is a fag?

TRICIA

Well, if he were straight, then obviously I wouldn't be failing his class. The thing is: I really think that God is punishing me for sleeping with Fatty-fat Frieda's boyfriend.

MARCY

You slept with Craig Wyandowski??!?

TRICIA

I blew him. You knew that! I totally told you right after it happened!

MARCY

You did not!!

TRICIA

I so did!

MARCY

Ewwwww!

TRICIA

I was drunk, okay? Speaking of, is anybody looking??

MARCY

No sir.

TRICIA

(Condescendingly) Sweetie, you've gotta stop calling me that.

Over the following dialogue, Tricia reaches into her backpack and produces a large bottle of vodka. She pours a large amount into her milk carton, she passes it to Marcy, who does the same. Tricia quickly puts the bottle back into her backpack. Marcy produces a bottle of Kahlua from her backpack, and they repeat this action.

They take their cartons, close them and shake vigorously, in unison.

TRICIA

(Switching gears) I think I did it, subconsciously, just because I fucking hate Frieda Fatass.

MARCY

Isn't she our friend?

TRICIA

Oh please! She's a bulimic wannabe.

MARCY

(With glee) You are so cruel!

TRICIA

Well, it's true, isn't it? I mean, seriously, whenever one of us is upset over a real problem, she has to butt her fat ass in and start crying about how she can't stop puking up her food. It's so pathetic! I swear to God, if I have to hear her bitch one more time about how Craig won't sleep with her until she loses weight, I'm going to stick my foot up her ass. That is, if I can find the entrance. And if she's bulimic, will someone please tell me why she's such a heifer? I mean, come on, Frieda. She told me the other day she was on a diet and I was thinking, like: What? You can't eat anything larger than your head? Survey says YOU'RE FAT! Take your finger out of your throat and drag your ass to Lane Bryant.

And speaking of her fashion sense, why is she always wearing that shirt that says WWJD. What the hell is that supposed to mean? Who wants jelly doughnuts?

MARCY

Ummmm, I think it's: What would Jesus do.

TRICIA

Well, He wouldn't wear that ugly-ass shirt with those nasty-ass spandex shorts. SPANDEX! Who wears Spandex?!?! Somebody needs to explain 'camel toe' to her. Her body is so gross! (Imitating Frieda) 'I'm not just the president of the Itty Bitty Titty Commitee; I'm also a client!' Blecch! 'What would Jesus do?' He wouldn't let Darryl Farmer finger Him under the bleachers during a pep rally, that's for damn sure! Now, what should we drink to?

MARCY

How about 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'?

TRICIA

Marcy, I hate to tell you this. But sometimes you are really bland.

MARCY

Screw you! I am not.

TRICIA

Well, hello!!! There's a thousand things in this world to toast to and you pick the lamest one ever!

MARCY

Okay. Here's to... (looking down at her tray) Tater tots.

TRICIA

Well, that's slightly more interesting.

They "clink" cartons.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

The spork is a great invention. Simple, but effective. It's like, who came up with it??

Tricia makes them another round.

MARCY

The spork was invented in the 1940's. After the war, when the U.S. Army occupied Japan, General MacArthur decreed that the use of chopsticks was uncivilized, and the conquered should use forks and spoons like - quote - the civilized world. But fearing that the Japanese might rise up, revolt and retake their country with their forks, he and the U.S.

Army invented the much less dangerous spork, which was then introduced into the public schools. But really all a spork is, is a plastic descendant of the runcible spoon.

Tricia is shocked.

TRICIA

Ok. Umm. How did you know that??

MARCY

Can you keep a secret?

TRICIA

Can Frieda eat a moon pie in only two bites?

MARCY

I'm the smartest person in the world.

TRICIA

Yeah. And she's the skinniest.

MARCY

No, it's true. I was part of this government experiment in elementary school. It was a drug that made kids, like, super geniuses. Able to retain everything they learned. But the drug had a side effect...

TRICIA

(Without missing a beat) Backne??

MARCY

Shut up, bitch! You know I'm sensitive about that!!

TRICIA

Sorry. Why don't you just go to the dermatologist?

MARCY

(Annoyed) Can I please finish my story? So, this miracle super genius drug fucks with all the kids' hormones and turns everybody into, like, horny children. Like, all these third graders are running around humping, like, everything.

TRICIA

So, it's like Flintstones shaped Viagra?

MARCY

No. But they were orange.

TRICIA

That is so weird! You WERE really smart when we were kids!!

Marcy bursts out laughing.

MARCY

Got you!! You should have to drink purely based on your gullibility!!

TRICIA

You're a snatch!

MARCY

You'll believe anything.

TRICIA

How did you know all that stuff about the spork?

MARCY

Duh! I looked it up on the internet. Every time we do this, you pick up a spork and say 'The spork is such a great invention. I wonder where it came from.' So, I decided that I was going to be ready one day with the answer.

TRICIA

(Sarcastically) How brilliant of you.

There is a moment of silence. They both finish off their drinks. Tricia turns hers over and nothing comes out. She pulls the bottle of vodka out of her bag and pours a shitload of it into the empty milk carton. Marcy slides her carton over and Tricia refills hers, as well.

They both begin to down the vodka.

TRICIA

I'm depressed.

They look at each other and break out into inebriated laughter.

CB and Matt enter with trays and sit with them. Tricia and Marcy try to act normal.

CB

Hey.

MATT

What's up, sluts?

TRICIA

You wish.

MARCY

What's up?

CB

Nothing.

TRICIA

(To CB) Sorry we couldn't make it to your dog's funeral.

CB

That's okay.

TRICIA

But, don't you think it's kind of weird? Having a funeral for a dog?

CB

I guess. Whatever.

TRICIA

Well, he's in a better place. Want a drink?

CB

No thanks.

MATT

(Realizing) Oh shit! You guys are wasted!

CB

What do you mean by 'a better place'?

TRICIA

I don't know. Like doggy heaven or something?

Marcy and Tricia laugh.

MATT

Do you really believe that?

TRICIA

Hell no.

MARCY

Not a chance.

TRICIA

I was just saying it to be polite.

CB

You don't believe in heaven?

TRICIA

Well, yeah. For people. But dogs? I don't think so.

CB

So, what happens to them?

TRICIA

Maggot food. Sorry, but that's what I think. So does Marcy. Dogs are gross. If there are dogs in heaven, I want to go to hell.

MARCY

You're probably going there anyway.

TRICIA

Probably. Hey, we can carpool!!

They laugh again. CB realizes that this is an impossible conversation.

CB

(Exiting) See you guys.

TRICIA

(Flirtatiously) So, Matt, are you coming to Marcy's party?

Matt takes out a bottle of hand sanitizer from his pocket and uses it.

MATT

I dunno. Gotta check my calendar.

TRICIA

You don't even know how to read.

MATT

(Feigning retarded) Very funny, Tricia.

TRICIA

That's okay. I like 'em dumb.

MARCY

You should bring CB with you.

MATT

CB said he'd only go if you give him head and let him cum on your tits.

The girls shriek.

TRICIA

You're a pig!

Matt goes stiff, as before. He's pissed.

TRICIA
(Defensively) What? I didn't say it!

He lets go of his anger and smiles.
Marcy takes a handful of tater tots
from his plate.

MATT
You can't touch my food like that!!

MARCY
(With her mouth full) Why not?

MATT
Aw man! Don't chew with your mouth open! That's disgusting!
(Regaining composure) Look. There are germs all over your
hand, so when you put your hand in someone else's food, you
contaminate that person's food. And when you talk with your
mouth open, little pieces of gnashed food, mixed with your
saliva in turn fly out of your mouth and onto other people's
plates. It's gross. And now I can't eat this.

He stands and exits. Marcy and Tricia
are just staring at him.

TRICIA
I don't get it. This is the same kid who used to wallow in
filth. A virtual cloud of dirt followed him everywhere he
went and now he's like some germophobe. And the nickname
thing! It's like who cares?

MARCY
He does.

TRICIA
I'm so gonna have sex with him at your party.

MARCY
Do you think CB will come?

TRICIA
On your tits, apparently.

MARCY
Be serious!

TRICIA
Five bucks says I can get Matt in bed before you can get CB.

MARCY
You're on.

The girls shake hands. Lights out.

"THE VIPER'S NEST"

Lights up on BEETHOVEN playing Chopin's 'Prelude #4 in E Minor, Op. 28/4' on the piano. He has a black eye.

CB enters unseen by Beethoven. He stands and listens to the music, as if hypnotized by it. He begins to cry silently, but then accidentally lets out a sob.

Beethoven abruptly stops, spins around and sees him. CB pulls himself together.

BEETHOVEN

You're not supposed to be in here. I have permission to practice during lunch. But nobody else is supposed to be in here.

CB

Just give me a second.

He continues to try and pull himself together. Beethoven continues to play.

CB

You've gotten really good. I mean, you always were, but -- Who wrote that? Beethoven?

BEETHOVEN

Chopin.

CB

God. This is really embarrassing. (Pause.) My dog died. He got rabies. They, um, had to put him under. I looked up rabies on the internet. It's an acute viral infection. It's transmitted through infected saliva. I guess he must have been bitten by something that had it. Maybe a fox or a raccoon. Bats can have it too. It travels from the bite to the spinal cord and the brain. Then the victim gets a really high fever and uncontrollable excitement, then spasms of the throat muscles. That's what causes them to salivate. They can't swallow water. Another word for the infection is 'hydrophobia,' which of course means 'fear of water.' Can you imagine not being able to swallow? That must suck. (Beginning to ramble) It's weird. We had him vaccinated when he was a puppy. I guess it doesn't always work. (Beat.) We had a funeral for him. Well, my sister and me did.

I think I was supposed to say something, but I couldn't think of anything to say. I just stood there, frozen, like an idiot. I couldn't think of a fucking thing. My brain went numb and that's never happened to me before. I mean, there's always something going on up there, right? Even in the subconscious. My head was completely blank and it was so uncomfortable. People meditate to clear their minds. I don't get that. I don't ever want to have a clear mind again. It made me feel faint. I guess I was thinking, by burying him, that I'd have some closure or feel his presence there or something and I didn't and that just freaked me out, so I don't know. I mean, have you ever had someone close to you die and you can't stop thinking about them and what's happened to them? It's like you're stuck in this morbid place and death is the only thing you can think about and sometimes you feel like your head is going to explode and it makes you think that you're not even there. That maybe you're dead, too.

Beethoven slams his fist down on the piano, making a cacophonous chord.

CB

What?

BEETHOVEN

Well, it's just that you haven't spoken to me in years. Except to call me a 'faggot' or to dislocate my shoulder and all of a sudden I get a stream of consciousness monologue about your dead dog while I'm trying to spend the only moments of my day that don't truly SUCK. And, you see, there's some missing component to this conversation, other than an attentive listener. A segue, I suppose? Forgive my bluntness. Please don't hit me. But I could give two shits about you or your vacant mind or your morbid curiosities or your dead fucking dog, so why don't you just leave?

CB

I never dislocated your shoulder!

BEETHOVEN

According to my doctor, you did. In shop class last spring, you twisted my arm behind my back and told me that you wouldn't let go until I said that -- and I quote -- 'I like to get it up the ass.'

CB

I was just playing around with you.

BEETHOVEN

That makes me feel a lot better! At least I know it was all in good fun. Now I remember. Through my screaming and the searing pain, I definitely recall hearing laughter. Anyway I can contribute to the fun of the group...

CB

We were just messing with you.

BEETHOVEN

Fuck you, CB! I'd rather you say 'we beat the shit out of you because we can't stand you' than to say you're just 'messing' with me! That implies light teasing or slightly opprobrious behavior. I haven't had lunch in the cafeteria in two and a half years for fear of going home with some part of it smeared across my shirt! I haven't been in a bathroom on campus since the time my head got slammed into the wall. I believe you were there.

CB

I didn't do that!

BEETHOVEN

Yeah?! Well, you didn't stop it either!! And the faculty doesn't care. You know what I'm so sick of hearing?: 'They only pick on you because of their own insecurities.' The classic guidance counselor line! 'Oh geez, Mrs. Blank, since you put it that way, my head doesn't hurt so much anymore!' And what really kills me is that everybody wonders why kids bring guns to school and shoot you fuckers down. Maybe you're not the bully, but you stand idly by and watch. In my eyes that makes you even worse. So -- Please. Just. Go.

CB

Maybe if you didn't act so --

BEETHOVEN

What? What, CB? How do I act?

CB

Well. Gay.

BEETHOVEN

And how does one act gay?

Silence.

BEETHOVEN

By playing the piano? Oh it must be all those times I ogle the football team. Maybe I'll stop carrying around a pink purse. Or openly sucking dick in plain view of the entire student body! What?!! What is it?!?!?

CB

You're being hostile and I'm just trying to talk to you like a civilized --

BEETHOVEN

I don't want to talk to you!!! I just want to be left alone!! I don't need social pointers. All I need from you is an apology for the five minutes that you've stolen from my day!!

CB

See, this is why you don't have any friends.

BEETHOVEN

I think we both know why I don't have any friends.

CB

Oh, don't be so melodramatic!

BEETHOVEN

Melodramatic??!! You're in here crying about a dead dog and I'M being melodramatic??!!

CB

Just shut the fuck up about my dog, okay?

Beethoven gets up in his face.

BEETHOVEN

Or what? You'll hit me? Go ahead. I'll show you how people get hurt and don't run away to cry like a big fucking baby.

Beethoven shoves CB. He's had it. CB doesn't fight back. Beethoven is hitting him as hard as he can but CB isn't budging.

Beethoven relents and CB begins to laugh and his laugh is getting bigger and bigger.

BEETHOVEN

What's so funny, asshole?

CB

I'm sorry. Nothing.

BEETHOVEN

I don't see anything to laugh at.

CB

It's just that I was scared of you for, like, a second.

Beethoven joins in the laughter. They sit down on the ground.

BEETHOVEN

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that.

CB

No, it's okay. I deserved it.

BEETHOVEN

It was insensitive of me.

CB

See, now THAT's gay.

This makes them laugh even harder. But
it subsides.

CB

Promise me you won't bring a gun to school.

BEETHOVEN

I don't know where to get one.

CB

You know, I think my sister has a crush on you. I read her
diary. There's a lot of mention of you. 'He's so artistic.
He's so.. Isolated.'

A silence.

BEETHOVEN

You were one of my best friends. You all were. And then one
day, it all changed. I just don't get it.

CB

It's no consolation, but -- well can I be honest?

BEETHOVEN

Yeah.

CB

No one knew what to say to you after your dad got arrested.
It was awkward.

BEETHOVEN

It was more awkward for me.

CB

I'm sorry that we weren't there for you.

BEETHOVEN

That means a lot.

CB

See, now you're being sarcastic again.

BEETHOVEN

No I wasn't. That was me in most sincere form.

CB

(Laughing) It's hard to tell with you.

Beethoven laughs as well. CB extends his hand.

CB

Truce?

BEETHOVEN

I wasn't fighting a war, but okay. Truce.

He shakes his hand. Their hands are together for longer than expected. CB pulls his away.

CB

Are you -- ?

BEETHOVEN

Gay? I don't know. I've never had sex, so it would be hard to say at this point.

CB

But what about -- ?

BEETHOVEN

My dad? When your father fucks you up the ass, I don't think that's considered sex.

A longer than average silence.

CB

Do you remember how my dog used to howl whenever you played the piano?

BEETHOVEN

Yeah. I always found it pretty insulting.

CB

He was singing along. What do you think happens to pets when they die?

BEETHOVEN

They go to heaven.

CB

You believe in heaven?

BEETHOVEN

Sure. There has to be some reward for having to live through this.

CB

And you think there are animals there? In heaven?

BEETHOVEN

'The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, and the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest.'

CB

But my dog killed a living thing. Wouldn't God -- I don't know -- wouldn't He be mad?

BEETHOVEN

He was sick, CB. He couldn't help it.

(Was he talking about his father?)

He looks at CB, who looks depressed.

BEETHOVEN

You know they say a dog sees God in his master. A cat looks in the mirror.

CB

(Chuckling) I hate cats.

BEETHOVEN

Me too.

CB stares at him for a long moment, then smiles. He stands up and walks over to the piano. He sits down and begins to play the bass part of 'Heart & Soul.' Beethoven stands and joins him at the piano to play the treble part -- of course, stylistically. CB stops, prompting Beethoven to, as well. He looks at him again for a long moment.

He grabs Beethoven and kisses him, long and passionately. He pulls away.

BEETHOVEN

That was rather unexpected.

CB stares at him, almost blankly, then he stands and exits, leaving Beethoven a little out of sorts.

Lights out.

"DRAMA"

Lights up on CB's sister. She performs to the audience. The following can only be described as BAD.

CB'S SISTER

Metamorphosis. Transformation. Evolution. Change. I am a teenage caterpillar. I know of these things. For soon, I'll spin a cocoon. And from the silklike craft that I will create, a magnificent creature will emerge. No. Not a butterfly. For butterflies are a dime a dozen. Destined to flit about for a day or so, then drop dead. Or have it's wings ripped off by a demented child. Or have it's body pinned to a piece of cheap foam core and matted underneath a cheap frame and hung in the bathroom of an elderly woman who wreaks of Preparation H and Vick's Vapo-Rub. (Beat.) This will not be my fate. This CANNOT be my fate. I will become a platypus. It's not impossible. It's just never been done before. It's only a matter of time, you see. If I stay in my cocoon longer, I'll change from a butterfly to a swallow and then from a swallow to a duck and then from a duck to a platypus. It's all just a matter of time. And time I have. I will wait to become a platypus. I will be an extraordinary creature.

The lights fade as she pulls a silk scarf from her pocket and begins to wrap it around herself.

"YOU'RE INVITED!!"

Lights up on Marcy. Cajmere's 'U Got Me Up' begins, a beat thumps out. As Marcy delivers the following, the cast (with the exception of Beethoven) enters and positions themselves around the stage. As they get to their marks they stand like statues, scattered around the space.

MARCY

You're cordially invited to the party of the year.
 My folks went to Bali and left my ass here.
 So what better way to get my revenge,
 than throwing a shindig that would make them both cringe?
 We'll have some kegs, so chip in some cash,
 Or else just bring from your parents' stash!
 I'm sure that someone will bring some grass,
 Remember the rule: puff, puff, pass!
 Anyone who plans on dropping E,
 will have to bring a pill for me.
 And anyone up for a little 'phys ed,'
 well, you can use my parents bed!
 So, mommy and daddy I'm sure will regret,
 I'm throwing a party you'll never forget.

A strange melody plays over the beat,
 prompting the gang to begin dancing
 bizarrely (as they did when they were
 younger).

The song explodes and so do they. They
 launch into a rousing dance, first by
 themselves. But then they begin to
 partner up. This is the most sexual
 dance you've ever seen by teenagers.

Eventually they're all grinding against
 each other in a line. Boy-girl-boy-
 girl, of course. CB's sister
 disappears to refill her cup.

Beethoven enters, carefully. He's
 holding a cup and sipping slowly. Matt
 spots him.

MATT

What the fuck is HE doing here?!?!

ALL

(to Beethoven; except CB)

What the fuck are YOU doing here?!?!

The music stops. Matt walks over to Beethoven and gets up in his face.

MATT

I think you must've missed the fine print at the bottom of the invitation that said: No queers. Sorry you came all this way, buddy, but you're going to have to turn around and follow the breadcrumbs back to that little house of yours.

CB pulls Matt away by the arm.

CB

Matt, dude, chill. There's nothing wrong with him being here. We're having a good time.

MATT

We WERE until he walked in.

CB

Leave him alone, man. Let him stay.

MARCY

CB!! My parents would kill me if they knew there was a homosexual in our house!!

CB

Marcy, there are seven people upstairs on ecstasy fucking in your parents' bed! Relax!!

Tricia, who is BEYOND trashed, walks over to Beethoven and falls against him.

TRICIA

Heeeyyy! Don't I know yooooou, faggot?

She falls down, spilling her beer all over Beethoven. The girls run over to her and begin fanning her, freaked out.

MATT

See! Look! Now that *he's* here, people are starting to die.

BEETHOVEN

I'm leaving. Prick.

Beethoven throws his cup down and Matt lunges at him. CB is able to grab him and keep him away.

CB

(To Beethoven) No! Don't go. (To Matt) Matt, calm down. Go inside and get a beer or something.

MATT

I'm not going anywhere until this little faggot has walked his faggoty ass out of here!

CB

He's not going anywhere.

BEETHOVEN

(Angry) CB, shut up, I'm leaving.

CB

No!

MATT

Yeah, isn't your dad waiting for you?

CB grabs Matt's arm and twists it behind his back. Matt screams in pain. The gang gasps.

MATT

What the fuck are you doing, man?

CB

Apologize to him. Right now.

MATT

Fuck no!

CB twists his arm further. Another scream.

MARCY

Let him go, CB!!

VAN

Dude, turn him loose. He's your friend.

CB

(Pointing to Beethoven) So is he.

He pushes Matt to the ground. They all run over from (the still passed out) Tricia to Matt.

MATT

(To CB) I'm gonna kill you.

CB stands beside Beethoven.

CB
You guys make me sick. (To Beethoven) Are you okay?

BEETHOVEN
(In shock) Yeah.

CB
Good.

He grabs him and kisses him AGAIN in front of everyone. They all gasp, REALLY loud this time. Everything is still. CB's sister drops her drink.

CB'S SISTER
Oh my God.

VAN
Oh my God.

MARCY
Oh my God!

MATT
Oh my God.

Tricia comes to and says:

TRICIA
Oh my God, I think I'm gonna puke.

ALL
(except CB)
Me too.

BEETHOVEN
(Scared, to CB) What did you just do?

CB
I think we need to get out of here now.

Lights out.

"AFTERMATH"

Lights up on Beethoven and CB.

BEETHOVEN

That was a very stupid thing you did.

CB

Was it?

BEETHOVEN

You realize we can't go back to school now, don't you? Well, you can, but I can't.

CB

Where do you want to go? I have a car. We can leave tonight. I'm game. Let's go.

BEETHOVEN

Are you on crack? I'm not running away with you! I never want to see you again as long as I live! In fact, I think that I HATE YOU! (Beat) What did you think that that would accomplish?! Did you not stop to think about what it would mean for me?

CB

Are you sorry that I did it?

BEETHOVEN

YES!

CB

That I kissed you or that I kissed you in front of them?

BEETHOVEN

BOTH!

CB

Then I'm sorry. I thought that you wanted me to.

BEETHOVEN

Well, that's mighty presumptuous of you. This is all so weird.

CB

Look, I'll tell them all that it was me just trying to prove a point.

BEETHOVEN

What point would that be?!

CB

I don't know. That it's okay to be different.

BEETHOVEN

And you needed *me* as a visual aid?!

CB

I can fix things.

BEETHOVEN

I don't think you can.

CB

I was sticking up for you! That's what you said you wanted!

BEETHOVEN

Sticking up for me is one thing! Sticking your tongue in my mouth in front of everybody is quite another!! I can't believe you've done this to me! What am I going to do?

CB

You could kiss *me*.

Without missing a beat...

BEETHOVEN

Okay.

Beethoven throws himself onto CB and they kiss. CB begins taking his shirt off, but Beethoven won't let him. While they're still making out the lights fade.

"THE HANGOVER"

The sound of a rooster crowing.

Lights up on Tricia, Marcy and Matt, sitting on the ground. Matt is shirtless. Tricia's wearing sunglasses and is probably still very intoxicated. Marcy is staring dreamily at Matt.

The following is delivered slowly, except for Marcy who has an overabundant amount of energy.

MATT

Did that really happen last night or did I dream it?

MARCY

No. We definitely had a threesome. Well, Tricia passed out pretty early on.

MATT

No, I meant the part about CB kissing that... thing last night.

MARCY

That happened too.

TRICIA

Do you guys have to scream? Shit. Talk at a normal volume.

They weren't screaming.

MARCY

Sorry, sweetie.

MATT

That's fucked up. We shower together after practice. What if he rapes me or something.

MARCY

That is fucked up, but I had a really good time with you though.

MATT

I mean, CB! Come on! Who knew?

MARCY

(To Matt) I was thinking maybe we could go see a movie tonight or something?

MATT

Do you think they have sex and shit?

MARCY

Do you remember how you told me you loved me last night? Did you mean it?

TRICIA

Does anyone have a cigarette?

MATT

I can't wrap my mind around this.

TRICIA

I want yogurt.

MARCY

Hey Matt! Why don't you and I go get in the hot tub while Tricia goes to the store and gets yogurt?!

MATT

What if he thinks about me when he jerks off?

TRICIA

I don't want to go anywhere.

MARCY

Sure you do!!

She stands up and starts to drag Tricia up.

TRICIA

Let go of me, freak!

MATT

This is all that little faggot's fault. I don't know what he did to CB, but I'm gonna fucking kill him.

TRICIA

I don't feel good.

Lights out.

"OUR SISTER OF MERCY"

Lights up on CB's sister who is crying.
Van walks in and sees her. He sits
down beside her.

VAN

What's wrong?

CB'S SISTER

I hate him.

VAN

Who?

CB'S SISTER

My brother, you moron!

VAN

Because he's gay?

CB'S SISTER

I can't believe this! Everybody's treating me like a leper
because I'm forced to share the same house as him. We share
the same bathroom! What if I get some.. some... gay disease?

VAN

That would suck. But come on. You're smarter than that.
What is this really about?

CB'S SISTER

He knew how I felt about Beethoven!

VAN

Have you voiced your concerns to him?

CB'S SISTER

I don't want to talk to *him*!

VAN

You wanna smoke?

He pulls out a pipe.

CB'S SISTER

I guess. I've never done it before. How do I do it?

He shows her the pipe.

VAN

Here. I'll teach you. This is the carb. Put your finger over it. Just hold, suck, let go of the carb and continue sucking.

She does this as he lights it for her. She breathes in and keeps it in like a pro.

CB'S SISTER

I've never smoked pot before.

She exhales with ease.

VAN

I smoked my blanket.

CB'S SISTER

(Ignoring that comment) It's not fair! Why does he have to be my brother?

VAN

Maybe it's because you have the same parents. Or something.

CB'S SISTER

Do you think I should tell my parents? Maybe if I did, they'd send him away.

VAN

They should send him to Amsterdam. I think a lot of homos go to Amsterdam. I wanna go to Amsterdam. Not because I'm a homo. You can smoke everywhere in Amsterdam. I definitely wanna go to Amsterdam.

CB'S SISTER

You're retarded.

VAN

(Smiling and nodding) Perhaps I am. (Beat) Hey, you know what would be the perfect revenge? If you had sex with your brother's best friend. (Putting his arm around her.) Guys really hate that.

CB'S SISTER

Ewww. I'm not losing my virginity to you.

VAN

Well, I think he'd be equally upset by you giving his best friend a blow job.

CB'S SISTER

I guess. I've never done it before. How do I do it?

Here. I'll teach you. VAN

Lights out.

"THE PSYCHIATRIST IS IN"

Lights up on what looks like a booth.
There is a chair facing it. Behind it
sits VAN'S SISTER. There's a sign at
the corner of the booth that says: THE
DOCTOR IS IN.

CB enters and Van's sister smiles.

VAN'S SISTER
Where have you been all my life?

CB
Hey!!

VAN'S SISTER
(Warmly) Sit down! Sit down!

CB
(Reading the sign) 'The Doctor is In.'

VAN'S SISTER
Boy, is she ever.

CB
Very funny.

VAN'S SISTER
I thought you might like it. How have you been?! How is
everybody?! Oh, I miss you guys!

CB
Everybody's pretty much the same. How are you?

VAN'S SISTER
I'm great. I'm doing really well. I've taken up knitting.
I know that sounds cheesy, but it's been really good for me
and I made you something!

She holds up a scarf, but it's not
nearly as interesting as the handcuffs
that are restraining her hands.

CB
It's beautiful! Wow! Thanks.

VAN'S SISTER
The guards'll give it to you on your way out.

CB
I'll wear it often. Don't the handcuffs seems a little
unnecessary?

VAN'S SISTER

Are you kidding? I love them! They're kinky and you know me...

CB

I do.

VAN'S SISTER

(Mockingly authoritative) Besides, it's for your protection.

CB

I'm not scared.

VAN'S SISTER

(Grinning) Maybe you should be.

CB

When are you getting out of here already?

VAN'S SISTER

As soon as I can say three simple words: 'Fire is bad.' But I'm not in any hurry to rush out of here. They've got me on great drugs! Can I just say: I LOVE LITHIUM!! You've gotta try it!

CB

Don't say shit like that. There are people who miss you out there.

VAN'S SISTER

Those people out there are just as crazy as the ones in here. (She thinks on this) Did that sound cliché?

CB

Maybe not as much as 'I love lithium.'

VAN'S SISTER

I miss you!!! I think you should burn something down and you can join me here! We would have so much fun!!

CB

Oh God. They're not letting you make Kool-Aid, are they?

VAN'S SISTER

Ha ha. Very funny. So, what's going on in your life?

CB

(Blase) Not much. I'm failing like three classes. I kissed Beethoven. And my sister's decided she's wiccan this week. But that's just this week, I mean, she's gone completely --

VAN'S SISTER

WHAT?

CB

Wiccan. It's some sort of spooky goth thing. I don't really get it.

VAN'S SISTER

You kissed WHO?

CB

It wasn't a big deal. I kissed him last night at a party. In front of everybody. Although, it wasn't the first time. I kissed him on Wednesday too. (Thinking) Or was it Thursday? (Deciding) No, it was Thursday.

VAN'S SISTER

Waitwaitwait. Slow down. Beethoven?!? Skinny, dorky Beethoven that we all make fun of?

CB

Yeah, the same one you were in love with.

VAN'S SISTER

When I was *eight*!! This is a joke, right? My brother put you up to this, didn't he?

CB

Nope. True story.

VAN'S SISTER

Was it, like, a dare or something?

CB

No.

VAN'S SISTER

You just kissed him? Out of nowhere?

CB

Yeah. Sort of.

VAN'S SISTER

And you're okay with this?

CB

I think so.

VAN'S SISTER

So?

CB

So?

VAN'S SISTER

So, what does this mean?

I don't know. CB

Did you like it? VAN'S SISTER

I wanted to do it. CB

Why? VAN'S SISTER

Because I felt like it. CB

Major parts of this story are missing, CB. What HAPPENED? VAN'S SISTER

Well, the first time we were in the auditorium. CB

At school??!?! VAN'S SISTER

Yeah and we were talking. Actually we were fighting and then we were talking and I just kissed him. CB

And the second time? VAN'S SISTER

Party at Marcy's house. CB

And people saw? VAN'S SISTER

Oh, they saw alright. I wanted them to. CB

Oh my God. I don't believe this. VAN'S SISTER

Is it so hard to believe? CB

I'm so proud of you!! VAN'S SISTER

Why? CB

VAN'S SISTER

Because you did something different! You've always been so... Predictable.

CB

Oh great. Here we go.

VAN'S SISTER

It's true! You know it's true. Kissing Beethoven is something that's so completely out of character for you.

CB

What do you mean?

VAN'S SISTER

Well, for a straight guy to kiss a gay guy -- that's, like, *something*. That's... HOT!!

CB

What if I'm not straight?

VAN'S SISTER

Are you coming out of the closet?

CB

I didn't say that.

VAN'S SISTER

But you didn't not say it either.

CB

Not not saying something isn't the same as saying something.

VAN'S SISTER

No offense, CB, but I don't think you're cool enough to be gay. Don't get me wrong, I love you to death, but if I had to imagine you giving a shit about home decoration or musical theatre, I just don't see it.

CB

Now you're using stereotypes.

VAN'S SISTER

Sorry, Miss Manners, but I'm in a bit of a shock right now.

CB

We had sex, too.

VAN'S SISTER

Ex-fucking-scuse me!?!?

CB

Yeah. After the party. We left and we had sex.

VAN'S SISTER
HOLY FUCKING SHIT!!! YOU'RE A HOMO, CB!!!

CB
Just because I did something that I wanted to do doesn't make me a homo. I've smoked pot. Doesn't mean I'm a pothead. I've drank plenty of beer. Doesn't make me a drunk. You set that little redheaded girl's hair on fire. Doesn't make you a pyromaniac.

VAN'S SISTER
(Correcting him) Well, actually, technically it does.

CB
Okay. Bad example.

VAN'S SISTER
Are you going to do it again?

CB
I don't know. Maybe.

VAN'S SISTER
Do you have feelings for him?

CB
I don't know. I've grown up questioning everything I do. When we were kids, everybody -- mostly YOU -- told me what I was doing was wrong. It made me conscientious about everything. Christ! It takes me an hour to get dressed every morning! I'm always thinking about what people are going to say or what they're going to think. And when I kissed him, I didn't care or wonder what anyone was going to think, I just did it.

VAN'S SISTER
That wasn't an answer.

A silence passes.

CB
I can't stop thinking about him.

VAN'S SISTER
It sounds like love to me.

CB
What do I do?

VAN'S SISTER
You have to tell him.

CB

I can't.

VAN'S SISTER

Then resign yourself to being alone for eternity.

CB

I love it when you get melodramatic.

She laughs.

VAN'S SISTER

God, I miss you.

CB

I miss you, too.

VAN'S SISTER

(Smiling) So, I guess this means we're not getting back together when I get out.

CB

Oh, so now you wanna get out of here, huh?

VAN'S SISTER

Fuck yeah! I didn't realize what I was missing! (Beat) Oh by the way. My brother told me about your dog. I'm really sorry.

He had forgotten all about that.

CB

Oh. Yeah. Thanks.

VAN'S SISTER

It's a shame I'm locked up in here. We could've cremated him.

He stares at her unimpressed.

VAN'S SISTER

Sorry. Bad joke.

A silence.

CB

Hey, why'd you do it?

VAN'S SISTER

What? Burn the bitch's hair off? Torch her tresses? Light her locks?

CB

Tell me.

VAN'S SISTER

Her hair is a symbol of innocence and my lighter is a symbol of corruption. God told me to do it. The devil made me do it. Charles Manson is just so damn persuasive. She is Joan of Arc and I am the townspeople of Salem. I did it for Jodie Foster! Boredom - plain and simple. It was a political statement! Allegorical! Metaphorical! A cry for help. A plea of insanity. (Flexing her forefinger) Redrum! Redrum!

CB

Will you please be serious?

VAN'S SISTER

Can't we just blame the government or the educational system? Puberty? P.M.S.? My parents?

CB

No.

VAN'S SISTER

Fine then. I did it because I felt like it.

CB

That's no excuse.

VAN'S SISTER

Really? You used it no more than five minutes ago.

CB

Public displays of affection and random acts of violence are two different things.

VAN'S SISTER

Are they? (Beat.) They say that love and hate are the closest two emotions.

CB

I'll bite. Why do you hate the little red headed girl?

VAN'S SISTER

Because you loved her.

CB

Yeah, when I was like EIGHT.

VAN'S SISTER

Touche.

CB

You did it because of me?

VAN'S SISTER

Yes. I just love you so intensely that it borderlines psychotic. You're all I ever think of.

CB

Seriously?

VAN'S SISTER

Nah, I'm just fucking with you. It's the lithium talking.

CB

(Starting to stand) I'm gonna go now.

VAN'S SISTER

Wait! Don't!! I was pregnant.

CB

Why can't you be honest with me like I've been with you?

VAN'S SISTER

I am. I was pregnant. (Beat.) Don't worry. It wasn't yours. I had just gotten an abortion the day before and the next day in Biology, we were ironically learning about reproduction. I'm listening to Miss Rainey talking about fallopian tubes, the uterus, eggs and I'm feeling sick to my stomach already. Trying to zone out on anything I can. So I start reading a note over *the bitch's* shoulder and 'Miss Puritanical Princess' is writing a note telling her friend (aping perfection) 'how happy she is that she's a virgin and that she's going to stay that way until she gets married and how repulsed she is by all of the whores at our school.' Without thinking, I reached into my pocket for my cute, little red Bic lighter and lit her cute, little red hair on fire. And every day in therapy, they ask me if I'm sorry yet and I just can't be. No matter how hard I try. These kids that we're surrounded by, these zombies walking the corridors trying so hard to look, act and feel like everybody else -- they make me sick. They've *made* me sick. I am officially sick, psychotic, unrepentant and unremorseful. They've branded me a sociopath and I have no choice but to believe them.

CB smiles at her.

CB

Pregnant?

VAN'S SISTER

Pregnant.

CB

You're fucking with me again?

She smiles.

CB

I guess I should get going. I think visiting time is just about up.

VAN'S SISTER

I'm glad you came.

CB

Yeah, me too.

VAN'S SISTER

Before you go -- I guess I don't have to ask how everyone reacted.

CB

To your incarceration?

VAN'S SISTER

I meant the kiss.

CB

Are you kidding? We hightailed it out of there so fast, I didn't even have time to look.

VAN'S SISTER

Smart kid.

CB

Although, I think my sister mouthed 'I hope you die' at me across the breakfast table this morning. But the clock is ticking and I guess I'll find out how everybody else votes tomorrow at school.

VAN'S SISTER

Good luck.

CB

Thanks.

VAN'S SISTER

CB, I'm so proud of you for breaking through. For setting one foot outside the norm and giving no apologies. Promise me that you won't apologize.

CB

I won't.

VAN'S SISTER

I have faith in you.

CB

Thanks.

VAN'S SISTER

And next time when you come, if you could just maybe stick a book of matches up your ass, I'd be your best friend forever.

CB gets up and leaves, but not before saying --

CB

(Smiling) You already are.

Lights out.

In darkness --

VAN'S SISTER

Hey Blockhead! You forgot your scarf!!

The sound of a cell door closing.

Then the sound of a school bell ringing.

"SALISBURY STEAK"

Lights up on Marcy, Tricia, Van and Matt eating lunch in the cafeteria.

They are eating in silence.

MARCY

I hate salisbury steak.

No response.

MARCY

Hey, don't you guys hate the obligatory scene in teen movies where someone describes all of the inhabitants of each table? You know, like, how they say 'The stoners sit there. The cool kids sit there. The geeks sit there. Blah blah blah.' It's in every movie! Don't you guys hate that?

Again, no response.

TRICIA

I think we're all dodging a certain topic here. One that perhaps needs to be addressed. I mean, we can talk about this like adults, right? I know I'm not the only one with an opinion. And he *is* our friend. So, all I'm saying is that -- (New tactic) Oh Jesus Christ! WILL SOMEONE JUST FUCKING SAY SOMETHING ALREADY??????

VAN

About what?

MARCY

CB, dumbass.

VAN

Oh. I saw him in the halls. I like the shirt he's wearing.

Matt sits and seethes. The girls look at Van like he's insane.

MARCY

Well, the Bible says that homosexuality is a sin. I think.

TRICIA

Good. That's good. The lines of communication are open. Would anyone else like to share?

They all look at her like she's nuts. She's embarrassed.

TRICIA

I mean, yeah, I hate salisbury steak, too.

VAN

Dude, you know what's even worse than salisbury steak?? Mexican pizza! I fuckin' hate Mexican pizza! It's like, they didn't invent it so, why do they swoop into high school cafeterias and try to take credit for it? If I want Mexican food, I'll go get a taco! Not a pizza! It just doesn't make sense, right? It's like -- I dunno like -- Australian spaghetti -- or some shit like that. It just doesn't make sense. Fuck, man. Why don't we ever have tacos? Or like Burrito Day? If I was Class President, I'd insist on Burrito Day. Not this Mexican pizza shit. But you know what else is good? Hamburgers. Even in a high school cafeteria, a hamburger's always nice. You sort of can't go wrong with it. Sure the meat's always a little tough and the bun's always a little hard, but I can eat a hamburger, yo. But only if it's --

Matt, so pissed he can no longer contain it, slams his fist against the table.

They all look at him, shocked.

MATT

(Through clenched teeth) It's not right.

VAN

See! He understands! There's no such thing as Mexican pizza!!

TRICIA

(Condescendingly) Sweetie, I think he's talking about CB.

VAN

Oh.

MARCY

Well, the Bible says --

MATT

I don't give a shit about what the Bible says!! It's just fucking wrong! It's disgusting and it's just -- it's just WRONG! And I fucking hate that kid for fucking with my best friend's head!

He looks like he might cry out of anger and frustration.

TRICIA

What are you going to do?

MATT

I'm not going to stand by as my best friend becomes a -- (he can't say it) you know!

TRICIA

Maybe you should have a talk with Beethoven.

MATT

Maybe I should beat his fucking face in.

TRICIA

Violence never solves anything. (Thinking about this) Okay, I'm wrong. Actually it does. But for the sake of your friendship with CB, perhaps you should have a civilized conversation with Beethoven. Something along the lines of 'It really hurts me that you're pursuing a sexual relationship with my friend.'

VAN

Tricia's right. Just tell him that --

MARCY

(Excited) Oooh! Oooh! Tell him that the Bible says it's wrong!

VAN

No, tell him that CB is, like, dead or something!! We could all pretend like he's dead, but he's not really, but Beethoven will think that he is and then he'll stop liking him! And then we'll tell CB that Beethoven is dead! And then they'll both think that the other is dead! It's genius!! I'm a fucking genius.

MATT

Beethoven IS dead.

Matt stands up and leaves, his fists clenching.

A silence.

MARCY

He seems really pissed. Do you think one of us should go after him?

TRICIA

Nah. I find it's best not to interfere with feuding lovers.

VAN

Are Beethoven and CB feuding?

TRICIA

I meant Matt and CB, ding dong.

MARCY

You've completely lost me.

TRICIA

Oh my God. You guys are so blind! Matt's in love with CB. That's what this is all about. It doesn't take Nancy Drew to solve that case. I figured it out and I'm the stupid one.

VAN

I don't buy it.

CB's sister enters and heads towards their table.

TRICIA

The only thing you buy comes in a baggie from a guy who calls himself "The Doober."

VAN

Blow me.

Thinking he's talking to her, CB's sister runs away in disgust.

Repressed homosexual anger isn't all that uncommon. Why do you think he hates Beethoven so much? Let me give you an example: Take Fatty-fat-fatass Frieda. I think we can all agree that she's a giant blimp of a human being, correct?

VAN

Frieda weighs like a hundred pounds!

TRICIA

Shut up, Van. Now, don't you think she's jealous of us because we're pretty and popular? So much so that she probably dwells on how much she hates us all day long?

VAN

No. But you do. (Figuring it out) You're the one who hates her, so it must be YOU that's jealous of HER!! That's it! You're Matt and she's Beethoven!!

TRICIA

Oh no no no, my little stoned friend. You've missed the turn and are heading towards a dead end.

VAN

Move over Nancy Drew! Scooby Doo's drivin' this truck! (Another genius idea) Holy shit! And you're in love with Frieda!!!

TRICIA & MARCY

WE'RE **NOT** LESBIANS!!

Tricia and Van look at Marcy,
strangely, who looks away sheepishly
holding a spoonful of Jello.

MARCY

At least *I'm* not.

TRICIA

What's that supposed to mean, you TWAT?

MARCY

Oh nothing. I just think it's really strange how you never
used to invite me to your sleepovers with her in eighth
grade.

TRICIA

That's because you make weird sex sounds when you sleep!

MARCY

I DO NOT!! (To Van) I do not.

TRICIA

You're both assholes! I'm not jealous of Frieda and I'm not
in love with her either!! She and Craig Wyandowski can have
each other!! I hope he gets lost in her FAT ROLLS!!

She runs out of the cafeteria in tears.
They eat their lunch in silence.

MARCY

(A troubling thought...) This *is* the 'cool' table, right?

The lights fade out, as they continue
to eat their lunch.

"THE WILDERNESS"

Lights up on Beethoven at the piano.
He is playing 'Revolutionary Etude' by
Chopin.

CB enters with a brown paper sack. He
starts unpacking lunch on the piano.

CB

I brought you lunch.

Beethoven stops. He gives CB a look of
despair and frustration.

CB

Hey, we made it halfway through the day and I only got called
a queer three times.

BEETHOVEN

That's because people are scared you'll beat them up.

CB

Don't worry. I've already started spreading the word that if
they mess with my *boyfriend*, I'll be kicking some ass.

He kisses the top of Beethoven's head.

BEETHOVEN

Your boyfriend?

CB

Well, I thought the other night sort of sealed the deal.

BEETHOVEN

Slow down, CB.

CB

Why?

BEETHOVEN

Because I don't want a boyfriend.

CB

Nonsense!

BEETHOVEN

We shared a moment.

CB

(Laughing) We shared more than that.

BEETHOVEN

This can't happen.

CB

What can't?

BEETHOVEN

We can't just start a relationship. I mean, you've gotta be a little more realistic.

CB

Give people time. They'll get used to the idea.

BEETHOVEN

How can I expect 'people' to get used to the idea when *I'm* not used to the idea!

CB

(With a goofy grin) I'm falling in love with you.

Beethoven can't help but blush. He snaps back to reality.

BEETHOVEN

This is retarded.

CB picks up a carton of yogurt from the piano.

CB

Do you like yogurt?

BEETHOVEN

No.

CB

Shit. Neither do I. I was hoping you'd want it. (Holding up 2 sandwiches.) Ham or bologna?

BEETHOVEN

CB, I really need to practice.

CB

You really need to eat.

BEETHOVEN

(To himself) I'm in the fucking 'Twilight Zone.'

CB

Ham it is.

BEETHOVEN

(Losing it) CB!! Just stop! Okay? This isn't what I want.

CB

What's the problem?

BEETHOVEN

THIS is the problem! I'm a little stressed out right now and I'm trying to calm my nerves by playing the piano and you're turning into Donna Reed before my very eyes.

CB

Who?

BEETHOVEN

Nevermind. Look. The other night was great, but let's just call it one of those things. You go back to being yourself and I'll even let you hit me now and then for old time's sake. This exchange is just too weird.

CB

How so?

BEETHOVEN

YOU'RE NOT GAY!!!

CB

You're probably right.

BEETHOVEN

Good. Now we're getting somewhere.

CB

That's right. I'm not attracted to guys. But I'm attracted to you.

Beethoven slams his head on the piano keys.

BEETHOVEN

But I am a guy! And so are you! That makes this homosexual.

CB

Remember the other day when I asked you if you were gay and you said you didn't know? You'd never been with a man before? Well, now you have, so what's the verdict?

BEETHOVEN

(Beaten) I don't know. I'm trying not to think about the other night.

CB sits down next to him and begins kissing his neck.

CB

I can't think of anything else.

Beethoven squirms away. CB gets up.
Now he's getting perturbed.

CB
Fine. I'll leave you alone.

BEETHOVEN
Thank you.

CB
But eat something. You're too skinny.

BEETHOVEN
Fine.

He grabs his backpack and starts to
exit.

BEETHOVEN
CB.

CB turns around and looks at him.

BEETHOVEN
Just give me time.

CB
Yeah.

He leaves.

Once the coast is clear, Beethoven
smiles.

BEETHOVEN
(To himself) Oh my God.

He resumes his playing and he can't get
the grin off of his face.

Several moments pass.

Matt enters, unseen by Beethoven.

MATT
Hey there, Liberace.

Beethoven stops playing and turns
around. He is trying so hard to
conceal the fact that he's terrified,
but it's hard for him.

BEETHOVEN

You're not supposed to be in here.

MATT

Where's your boyfriend?

BEETHOVEN

He's not my boyfriend. I didn't have anything to do with what happened the other night.

MATT

You sort of did.

BEETHOVEN

Just leave me alone, okay? Please. I didn't do anything.

MATT

So, are you two, like, a couple now? Are you going to parade around the halls holding hands? Go to prom together?

BEETHOVEN

(Mustering a great amount of courage) Why, Matt? Are you jealous? Pissed that I stole your boyfriend?

Matt is behind Beethoven who's still seated at the piano. He grabs Beethoven's hair and yanks his head back. He gets up close to Beethoven's ear.

MATT

(Softly and psychotically) If I see you talking to him ever again, I'll kill you. Got that, you goddamn faggot?

He releases him and starts to back away slowly. Beethoven doesn't turn around. He thinks that Matt has left.

Beethoven resumes his song.

BEETHOVEN

(Sotto voce) Yeah. Fuck you, too, Pigpen.

Matt's face fills with fury. The last thing we see before a sudden blackout is Matt lunging at Beethoven.

Three sounds are heard simultaneously in the darkness:

The sound of several keys being pressed.

The sound of the piano lid being
slammed down.

And the sound of Beethoven letting out
a scream like never before heard.

"SALUTATION"

CB stands center stage. He delivers
the following fighting back emotion.

CB

The ambulance pulled up to the school while I was in Chemistry. I didn't hear about what Matt had done to him until after they'd taken him away. Every bone in both of his hands was broken. I raced to the hospital to see him, but the doctors wouldn't let me. They said that he didn't want to see anyone. The next morning, I didn't go to school. I went back to the hospital and they told me that he'd been released and his mother had taken him home during the night. But that he'd been rushed back to the hospital earlier that morning. Not breathing. He died of a deliberate overdose of his pain medication. He died of a suicide. The doctors were unable to resuscitate him. (Beat.) The sad thing is that his hands will never heal. That the broken parts of a dead body cannot heal. But what about the broken parts of a live one? (Long pause.) I hope things are better for you. Sorry for unloading all of this. (Forcing a smile) I bet this is the longest letter you've ever gotten. Thanks for listening. Sincerely. No. Yours Truly. Or. Your penpal. CB.

School bell.

Lights out.

"PEER COUNSELLING"

The cast enters and sits on the edge of the stage. CB is miserable. He does not want to be there. Marcy is blubbering into a Kleenex. CB's Sister is wearing, for the first time, what would be considered normal attire, despite the fact that it's black.

A garbled voice (their teacher) comes from above.

In response --

TRICIA

I'll go first. Beethoven was very talented. I definitely connected with him on that level. His suicide was an enormous shock to me, anyway. I mean, like, I never thought he would do something like that in a million years. (She thinks.) That's all.

The garbled voice sounds again.

VAN

What do *I* think about it? Well, I mean, if I had to go, I would definitely want it to be of an overdose. What kind of pills were they anyway?

MARCY

Does it matter? Our good friend is dead! You're being really insensitive. I just wish that he had called me. I would've totally, like, told him everything would be okay and stuff. I don't think he had my number, though.

The garbled voice.

CB'S SISTER

I think Matt should be put in jail for the rest of his life. Or executed.

MARCY

Why? He didn't *kill* him.

CB'S SISTER

What Matt did led Beethoven to do what he did!

TRICIA & MARCY

That's hearsay.

CB'S SISTER

And he gets suspended for a week. A slap on the wrist. It's pathetic bullshit.

The garbled voice screams at her.

CB'S SISTER

(Sheepishly) Sorry. I just don't think it's fair.

The garbled voice talks, prompting CB to come out of the daze he was in.

CB

Huh?

She asks him the question.

CB

How does his death make *me* feel? Stupid.

They all look at him strangely.

CB

Oh, come off it! No one even *liked* him. Who cares? He's dead!

TRICIA

(Sneering) God, that's rude.

CB

That's life, *Patty*. The world is full of people who have tough lives. But do you see them killing themselves? No. There are people out there who can't walk. Can't see. Do they give up? No. They keep going. 'Pathetic bullshit,' sis? *Suicide* is pathetic bullshit. It's weak.

VAN

One might argue that suicide requires a great deal of courage.

CB

One might argue that *you've* smoked away all of your brain cells and should shut the fuck up.

Van is shocked and hurt.

CB'S SISTER

(Fighting back tears) And you're Captain Courageous, CB? You didn't even go to his funeral! You couldn't even muster up the strength to go and say goodbye to him!

CB

(Losing his shit) DID HE SAY GOODBYE TO ME?!

He regains his composure.

CB'S SISTER

Don't you even feel the slightest bit of regret?

CB

Oh I regret alright! I regret everything. I wish that he was still here so that I could twist his arm behind his back and shove his face into a toilet and tell him that he sucks dick. And all of you can mourn your "loss" but I'm over it. I learned a valuable lesson in all of this. And thank God things are back to normal.

MARCY

(Sotto voce) Yay! He's back to normal!

TRICIA

You call this normal??

CB

(Turning to Marcy and Tricia) And you two! Do the school a favor, put the bottle down and go to a meeting!

TRICIA

You can't talk to us like that.

CB

Well, then let's stop talking! (Pleading with them) Why can't we all just forget about this? Forget about HIM. This is exactly what he so selfishly wanted! For us to sit around and pretend like he was still our best friend and sob about how much we'll miss him! Why are we honoring that? Let's just ignore him like we did before. Pretend he's not there. Because he's not!!

CB'S SISTER

CB. You don't mean any of this. I know that you don't mean it.

CB

Why don't you go pray to your witchcraft goddess and ask her to bring him back as an actual human being. One with balls. And Matt can dive back into the dirt and dig the 'faggot' up and break a few more bones. (Turning to Van) Then your sister can light him on fire and YOU can roll his ashes into a big, fat joint and ya'll can all get high. (Turning to Marcy and Tricia) Marcy, Tricia -- here's to "maggot food"! (To the teacher) And then we'll all come back here and we'll talk about how we *feel*!

CB'S SISTER

When did you turn so hateful?

CB

(Fighting back tears, himself) When I stuck my dick into the viper's nest and I got bitten.

He hits the wall and storms off.

There is a long silence. They all stare at the ground.

-- Do they understand? Do they get it?

The schoolbell.

They all snap back to normal and begin to exit.

VAN

Does this mean CB isn't gay anymore?

TRICIA

I've never seen him like that before, he was so -- hot!

MARCY

Okay, so, now that he's over his gay thing, do you think he'll go out with me?

TRICIA

Get in line!

MARCY

Don't you dare, bitch!

-- No. Apparently not.

Lights out.

"DRAMA PART 2"

Lights up on CB's sister. She continues her "one-woman show." This next part is delivered with sincerity and strength and isn't bad at all.

CB'S SISTER

And when I poked my head out of my cocoon, I realized I had stayed inside for too long. I had, unwittingly, gone from platypus to beaver to walrus to chimpanzee to a human. I had evolved much more than I ever wanted to. Now I would learn to speak and learn to think and ask questions and make friends and lose friends and cry and laugh and maybe fall in love one day and maybe see that love go away and maybe climb a mountain, but I never wanted to do any of these things! I never wanted to feel this much! Platypuses don't feel things, do they? Now, I'm trapped in this body that will always know regret. A girl who should've been a butterfly, but would still always want to be a platypus.

Lights out.

"BROTHERS AND SISTERS"

Lights up on CB, who is alone on stage, sitting and thinking. His sister enters.

CB'S SISTER

Hey.

CB

Hey.

CB'S SISTER

(Carefully) Are you okay?

CB

Why does everyone keep asking me that?! I'm fine!

CB'S SISTER

I know you didn't mean what you said today.

CB

You're wrong. I did.

CB'S SISTER

I know that you loved him.

CB

Look, I went through... something. Some sort of phase. I don't know what it was, but I'm done with it now. Everything's okay. I'm back to normal. This is a good thing.

CB'S SISTER

I don't believe that.

CB

Just stop already, okay? Please. I want to move forward.

CB'S SISTER

Is forgetting the past moving forward?

CB

It is for me.

CB'S SISTER

I know I was a real bitch about.. you two. It stung. That's okay though. In time, I would've been okay with it. I would've been *great* with it! We're different - you and me. We're special. We're not like *them*.

CB

I *am* like them. (Correction) I want to be like *them*.

CB'S SISTER

That's sad. (Beat.) You know, when we were kids, I used to look up to you.

CB'S

When I was a kid, I was a loser.

CB'S SISTER

No you weren't. You were great. A little different, but great. Recently, I've seen that quality in you again. That's the boy I love. The one that I'm proud to be related to.

CB'S

Do you ever feel like you're not a real person? That you're the product of someone's imagination and you can't think for yourself because you're really like just some 'creation' and that somewhere there's people laughing at every time you fail? Guffawing at your miserable existence?

CB'S SISTER

Laugh and the world laughs with you --

CB

When have you ever seen me laugh?

CB'S SISTER

You should try it.

CB'S

Where did God go? It's like he just abandoned us. Without so much as a 'good luck.' It's every man for himself now and it just -- sucks.

She kisses him on the cheek.

CB'S SISTER

Oh, I almost forgot. This came for you.

She hands him an envelope then leaves. He looks at it and the wind is knocked out of him.

"THE VOICE OF THE SILENT FRIEND"

The lights dim. CB stands alone in the center of the stage. He is holding in his hand the letter. And just staring at it. He opens it, tentatively.

Tom Kitt's 'Lament' plays.

The cast enters and stands in a semi-circle around him.

ALL

Dear CB.

CB'S SISTER

How unexpected to get a letter from you after all these years.

VAN'S SISTER

I thought you had forgotten about me.

VAN

It sounds like you're going through a pretty rough time and having to deal with situations that you feel like you can't handle --

TRICIA

But if anyone is equipped to deal with these things, it's you.

VAN

I promise that things get better.

TRICIA

Hang in there.

TRICIA & VAN

Be strong.

MATT

I'm so sorry for your loss.

MARCY

I was talking to a girl the other day who told me of an incident that happened at her high school.

ALL

There was a boy.

MATT

Bullied.

TRICIA & MARCY

Tormented.

MATT

To the point of opening fire on their cafeteria. He was quiet and awkward. No one ever spoke to him unless it was to insult him. He took the lives of many innocent people. But was anyone innocent? The girl told me that no one extended a hand in friendship to this kid.

Matt walks to the other side of the stage and stands on his own.

ALL

She hadn't.

TRICIA

She said how she wished that she hadn't turned a blind eye to what he was going through.

MARCY

She thinks to herself, how differently things could have been through just one connection. No matter how great or small.

VAN'S SISTER

She lives where I live now. A place where there is no violence. Everyone treats others with kindness, love and respect. If you can imagine such a place, I challenge you to do so. Think on it.

VAN

As for the questions that you are asking yourself and others: don't concern yourself with death. Concern yourself with life. Enjoy every moment of it that you are allowed to. Life is a process that can be both cruel and rewarding. But this story lies between the two bookends.

Van crosses to the brick wall and sits on it.

MARCY

Also, bare no malice for the ones who leave you.

TRICIA

The only regret they feel now is the regret of not being able to tell you how they really feel.

VAN'S SISTER

They wish that they could say goodbye to the ones they left behind.

MARCY

But sometimes that's not possible.

TRICIA

Even in perfect happiness --

MARCY

Even in nirvana --

TRICIA, MARCY & VAN'S SISTER

They will always have this regret.

Marcy and Tricia sit on the edge of the stage. Van's sister crosses to the piano and leans on it.

CB'S SISTER

A boy recently came to live down the street from me. He's had a tough life, but things are better for him now. He plays the piano like your friend. I often hear his music wafting from an open window, where a small yellow bird sits. Sometimes I cry when I hear it. But mostly I smile.

CB's sister sits next to Van and puts her head on his shoulder.

Beethoven enters. He crosses to CB.

BEETHOVEN

He found a dog who likes to sing along. He takes good care of the dog. When we talk, he tells me of a person he knew from where he used to live. Someone very special who means more than anything to him. A person that reminds me of you.

Beethoven takes his seat at the piano.

CB

I apologize for not being there for you before. And I'm not sure that I'll be able to write you again. Just know that there's someone out there thinking about you. Someone who has a vested interest in your success. How I wish I had had the opportunity to meet you. (Pause.) Maintain in your heart all that keeps you who you are. You are a good man. (Pause.) Your penpal. CS.

As the music reaches the end, he drops the letter to the ground and falls to his knees, finally able to cry. For his dog. For his friend. For himself.

END OF PLAY