

Bad Gums

A play by Stanley Rutherford

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The characters

Multi-racial casting requested.

Randall	Adult male, late-thirties/early forties, a wild-haired artist, scruffy and druggy, Mickey's mate.
Mickey	Adult male, mid-to-late thirties, a wild-haired artist, scruffy but with pretensions, Randall's mate. Randall and Mickey live together and do their art together under the name of Randall-and-Mickey
Celia	Adult female, mid-to-late-thirties, artist, old friend of Randall and Mickey
Carmen Zapora	Adult female, late-forty-something, owns a gallery, represents Randall-and-Mickey
Dr. Sylvia Bloodhorn	Adult female, head of the Acquisitions Committee of the Whitney Museum of American Art

The setting

The present. San Francisco. All scenes take place in Mickey and Randall's loft.

Act One, Scene 1

The play is set in Randall and Mickey's loft—an industrial space, high ceilings, good light, part living space, part studio, a housekeeping disaster, but an artistic one. A kitchen area is stage right. Stairs rise to a sleeping loft on a second level.

Dominating the space is a very large canvas—say, 20 feet long, six to seven feet high—a barn-red field of color, sparsely mottled with sisterly shades of red-orange and red-purple. Cans of paint, brushes, and so forth are laid out on work tables. A suitcase sits by the entrance door, stage left; another suitcase lies open, partially packed with clothes; there are a couple of opened, unfilled packing boxes.

Regarding entrances: The playwright has done away with the knock-on-the-door-who's-there?-cross-to-open-the-door business. An entrance is announced when someone appears in the doorway, there's a shift in the lights, and the action proceeds accordingly.

At lights up, there's tension in the air as Randall is working on the painting, dabbing red blobs here and there to no particular effect. He pauses, then dabs on more red blobs, pauses, steps back, and looks at it, then steps back to the painting and slaps a whole bunch of red on it, ferociously.

Meanwhile, Mickey is looking through drawers, putting some things into a box...he opens a drawer, rustles around in it, closes it, opens another, and runs across some photographs. Getting sidetracked, he starts looking at them.

Mickey **[Looking at a photograph]** God, I'm ugly...**[He tears up the photo]**
This whole Mexico bunch... **[He looks through more photos then stops at one]** God, you're ugly. **[He tears up the photo]** What were we doing there anyway? *Why* did we go there...can you answer that? *Why did we go to Mexico?*

There's a pause as Mickey tosses the photos back in the drawer, closes it, opens another, and starts rummaging through it.

Mickey. *I can't take too much sun, you can't eat spicy food, neither of us likes mariachi bands, and so there we were sitting in the sun, eating spicy food, listening to Mariachi bands in Oaxaca.*

Randall: **[Turning from the painting]** I didn't say you were a fucking Republican.

Mickey: I don't mind ironing your clothes.

Randall: I said you *sounded* like you were a fucking Republican.

Mickey: There are many things I do for you that I honestly don't mind doing...

Randall: You *wanted* to go to Mexico...

Mickey: Steve and Denny said I can stay with them for as long as I want....

Randall: It was *your* idea to go to Mexico...I loved Mexico.

Pause as Randall turns back to the painting and Mickey takes a couple of things from the drawer and puts them in the box, closes the box, and places it with the suitcases by the door.

Randall: I *said* we could go to a movie, okay, I said that.

Mickey: **[As he continues to bustle around packing]** I've never been assertive...very shy...*very, very* shy...

Randall: Any movie you want, I'm serious...

Mickey: ...the only way I've been able to survive is to smile...smile, smile, smile, give, give, give...and I can't keep doing it, I can't, it's over, I'm serious, I'm drained...

Randall: Couldn't we just talk about it?

Mickey: **[Indicating the painting]** This is it, you know...this is the last one...

Randall: ...sit down, smoke a joint, have a regular kinda conversation...

Mickey: **[Referring to the painting]** ...we've been working on this for months and we've painted ourselves into a corner, a dead-end, no-getting-out corner, and that's the way I feel about you and me...we've run out of ideas. **[A few beats as he does some more packing]** We live together, we paint together, and then last night we have the same identical hideous nightmare and wake up holding on to each other screaming...**[Does imitation of old, old, skinny, woman, holding bony little hand out, begging]** Please, please, help me, please...**[then]** The buildings were beautiful, yes...Monte Alban was beautiful, yes...the people were lovely and sweet... **[imitation, again]** Please, please, help me...**[then]** Those old ladies are still following

me, they're going to be following me forever, in every dream, every night for the rest of my miserable life...

Randall: **[Shaking his head]** Fuckin' amazing...

Mickey: **[Referring to the old ladies]** ...gnarled old hands, old faces...

Randall: ...the same fuckin' dream...

Mickey: I don't want to hear about it....

Randall: **[Imitating old ladies]**...help me, please help me...

Mickey: **[Screams]** I don't want to hear about it! **[Beat as he does some more packing, then calmly]** My periodontist says that we've lost track of who we are as individual human beings, and that's why I grind my teeth at night, and that plus the stress has weakened my resistance to bacterial invasion which has aggravated the condition of my gums. She says she's never seen my gums so bad...

Randall: Maybe we need a little break from each other...

Mickey: ...acute periodontitis, extremely aggressive acute periodontitis...

Randall: ...we've been under a lot of pressure, a lot of intense kind of stuff goin' on and sometimes ya' need to get away from each other, have a little break...

Mickey: Steve and Denny have a very nurturing relationship...

Randall: **[Shouts]** Get the fuck out, man! Move! Leave! Do whatever you want, I don't care....

Mickey: Steve and Denny have the kind of loving, mutually supportive relationship that *I*, for one, would like to have, and when I woke up this morning screaming to save my life I realized that it was a warning, a final warning that I had to get away from you, I had to get away from you *now*, and if I don't leave now, I never will, and I'll never know who I am or who I want to be, and that's why I called Steve and Denny this morning, and that's why I'm packing my things and getting the hell out of here as soon as I can. **[Beat]** We're like two rats in a cage, and the cage is getting smaller, and *this* rat is getting out while he still can.

Randall: **[Beat, then calmly]** I think it's good that you're getting away, we *should* get away from each other a little bit...

Mickey: Steve and Denny have a more *balanced* kind of...

Randall: **[Shouts with finality]** Get the fuck out! Okay, just get the fuck out!

Mickey: **[He slams a drawer shut and mutters to himself]** Being in a relationship is the loneliest thing there is.

Randall goes back to the painting. Lights up on Celia, who appears in the doorway, rather frazzled, carrying a couple of shopping bags. She pauses as she enters sensing the tension, looks at both Randall and Mickey who are oblivious to her entrance, crosses to the kitchen area, sets down her bags, takes off her coat, pours herself a cup of coffee, looks again at Randall and Mickey, who are still oblivious, then...

Celia: Don't ask. **[Beat]** You don't want to know, you don't even want to hear about it. **[Beat]** Do you know what? Do you want to hear this? You are not going to believe this. I just ran into Rabbit Face. Can you believe that? Rabbit Face. At Walgreen's. I'd just paid, and I was walking out, and there she was, and it blew her away, I mean, her dinky little pink eyes just popped wide open, and she stammered out this little squeaky "hi"...**[she repeats it]** "Hi" **[Beat]** What is it with men? No, I mean, really...*what is their problem?*

Mickey. I'm not the one to ask.

Celia **[Mimics]** "Hi! **[To Randall]** "Hi! **[Then]** I leave town for a year, I don't look back, I forget that what's-his-name ever existed, and then I come back and the first person I run into is Rabbit Face.

Mickey: **[Still packing]** There's no justice.

Celia: I'd forgotten him, okay?

Mickey: Life just keeps kicking ya' in the face.

Celia: I've even forgotten his stupid name, but how can I forget the fact that he dumped me for a porn star named Rabbit Face! **[Beat]** Thank god I'm bisexual.

Mickey: **[Beat, then to Celia]** Darling, Randall and I have decided to separate, I'm moving out...I'm going to be staying at Steve and Denny's until I can find a place of my own...

Celia: **[To Mickey]** What did Randall do now?

Mickey. Our relationship is hindering my personal growth and development.

Celia: Since when were you interested in personal growth and development?

Mickey: I've never had a chance to be interested in *my* personal growth and development, because I've always had to worry about *Randall's* personal growth and development, and if I didn't have to worry about *Randall's* personal growth and development, I could worry about *my* personal growth and development instead.

Celia: Darling, personal growth and development is highly overrated, trust me.

Randall: **[To Celia]** That's what I tell him.

Celia: I thought everything was great with you guys, just back from Mexico, people interested in your stuff...

Mickey: It's been hell...

Randall: **[To Celia]** Two rats in a cage, and the cage is getting smaller.

Celia: **[Watching Mickey pack]** Didn't you just do this?

Mickey: *He* ran away last Christmas...this time it's going to be me.

Randall: **[To Celia]** We've started having the same dreams...

Celia: Oh, my god...

Mickey: **[To Celia]** You'd think that sleep would be a place you could call your own, be who you want to be, have your own dreams...

Randall: ...identical nightmares...

Celia: Look, I'm leaving, okay...

Mickey: ...desperate old ladies following us through the streets...

Celia: ...it's been lovely staying here, it's been really sweet of you guys, but I'm an irritant, I know...

Mickey: Stay here as long as you like, Randall needs you...

Celia: Maybe *I* could go stay at Steve and Denny's...

Randall: I don't know who I am any more...

Mickey: **[To Celia]** He's having one of his schizophrenia attacks.

Randall: I don't even know if there *is* a me any more...

Mickey. ...nine and a half wonderful years of schizophrenia attacks.

Randall: **[Suddenly angrily, to Mickey]** I can't be the same person forever, okay?

Mickey: **[To Celia]** It's a love-hate thing.

Randall: I'm not the same person I was ten years ago, I'm not the same person I was *two* years ago, two *months* ago...

Mickey: **[To Celia]** It's a serious multiple personality thing...

Randall. I need an island, I need an ocean, I need a desert, I need a mountain, I need a moon.

Mickey. **[Mimicking Randall]** I need an island, I need an ocean, I need a desert, I need a mountain, I need a moon... **[then...]** Nobody ever liked me in high school either.

Randall picks up a brush and starts to dab paint on top of the red—a slightly different color red, a little more orange—little blobs, dot, dot, dot... Mickey returns to packing his stuff. Celia is focused on the paper looking at For-Rent ads.

Mickey. **[Muttering]** My whole life I try to be nice...I try to be helpful and cheerful and maintain a clean, wholesome environment even if I'm not feeling well...

Celia: **[Looking up from the paper]** Why don't you guys take a vacation...

Mickey: We just took a vacation...

Celia: ...head up the coast, find a little bed-and-breakfast..

Mickey: ...we're not good at vacations...

Celia: ...walk on the beach...

Mickey. **[Screams at Randall]** I hated Isla Mujeres!

Celia: Take *separate* vacations...

Mickey. **[Still screaming]** No hot water, crummy food, constant cold wind blowing in from the sea...

Celia: ...send each other postcards saying what a great time you're having.

Mickey: **[As an old lady]** Please, please, please...

[Long pause, as Mickey returns to packing, Celia looks at the newspaper, then after a few moments, looks up...]

Celia: **[Coily]** Isn't anyone going to ask where I was last night?

Mickey: I almost called the police...**[to Randall]**...didn't I?

Celia: It was a chance encounter...

Mickey: I knew it was trouble.

Celia: There I was at the RightSpot having a drink with Judy Giampoli and who should see me and come rushing over...

Mickey: I don't want to know.

Celia: Carmen Zapora.

Mickey: **[To Randall]** Wouldn't you know it?

Celia: And she'd *heard* that I was back in town, and *Why* hadn't I called her? And *Oh*, how she's missed me...and she's simply *dying* to see my new work, *dying* to spend more time with me, *dying* to have me come back to her place...

Mickey: Don't go.

Celia: I went.

Mickey: You're a whore.

Celia: **[Checking the time]** She's coming by in a few minutes. She's taking me to lunch.

Randall: You're really a slut.

Mickey: You didn't actually have sex with her, did you?

Celia: We didn't go all the way.

Mickey: You didn't touch her private areas, I hope.

Celia: We necked.

Mickey: Please tell me you washed well afterwards...

Celia: I licked her thing.

Mickey: **[Cries out, appalled, covers his ears]**

Celia: I'm trying to *network*...

Mickey: Darling, Carmen Zapora has lied to us, robbed us, screwed us over in every way possible...

Celia: Carmen Zapora is going to make you famous.

Randall: We're going to make *her* famous.

Mickey: Absolutely ruthless.

Celia: No one was even looking at your stuff until she came along...

Randall: Claimed she'd sold our stuff for far less than she had...

Mickey: ...even *then* she wouldn't pay us...

Celia: She's supported you for years...

Randall: ...said she'd sold stuff, when in fact she was keeping it for herself waiting for our "value" to climb.

Mickey: And then last week, she pulls out the contract she made us sign last year that says that everything we paint belongs to her and everything we *will* paint belongs to her...there's even a clause about "expected future productivity"..

Randall: **[To Celia]** Never sign anything, never, *ever* sign anything...

Mickey: **[Angrily to Randall]** *You* were the one who thought it was such a great idea...

Randall: She said it would give us "security"...

Mickey: *You* were the one who demanded that we get something down in writing...

Randall: **[Shouting angrily to Mickey]** You said you *loved* Isla Mujares...that's what you told me!

Mickey: I lied.

Randall: **[Mimicking Mickey]** ...the *colors*, the *light*, the *beautiful birds*....

Mickey: I lied.

Randall: ...the *sea*, the *sand*, the *heat*....

Mickey: I lied.

Randall: ...the fresh squeezed orange juice...

Mickey: I lied.

Randall: **[Beat]** What else did you lie about?

Mickey: Everything...nine and a half years of lies...

Randall: **[Turning away]** I need an island, I need an ocean, I need a desert, I need a mountain, I need a moon. **[Picks up brush and works on the painting]**

Mickey: **[After a beat, to Celia]** Romance wasn't my idea...

Celia: Let it out, honey, let it out...

Mickey: **[Crossing to Celia]** ...it was never supposed to be one of those *involvement* kind of relationships, it was just going to be one of those let's-just-do-our-stuff-together-and-take-it-a-day-at-a-time kind of relationships, and you'd *think* that a let's-just-do-our-stuff-together-and-take-it-a-day-at-a-time kind of relationship would be the easiest thing in the world to pull off...

Celia: No way...

Mickey: You can't just relate to somebody on a let's-just-do-our-stuff-together-and-take-it-a-day-at-a-time kind of basis, nobody seems to be able to handle that...

Celia: ...it's got to be more complicated...

Mickey: ...you've got to have *conflict*, you've got to have *neurosis*...

Celia: ...you've got to have *denial* and *guilt* and *misunderstanding*...

Mickey: Every day has been an act with me trying to be someone I'm not...

Celia: **[Understandingly]** ...you had to please him, you had to make him comfortable...

Mickey: I had to make him happy and not say anything that would upset him...

Celia: **[Nodding]** ...and you couldn't get angry, because who are you to have the right to get angry...

Mickey: That's right...

Celia: ...you don't count, you're not even a person...

Mickey: *I do not exist.*

Celia ...and he's not happy and you're not happy and nobody's happy and it's all your fault.

Mickey: I am the victim here.

Celia: That's right.

Mickey: **[Loudly, angrily to Randall]** I don't *care* whether you had a torrid little affair with the fucking waiter at the restaurant in the stinking over-priced hotel in Cancun.

Celia: **[To Randall, quite amused]** *You* had a torrid little affair with the waiter at the restaurant in the stinking over-priced hotel in Cancun?!

Mickey: Dirty little furtive afternoons, while I was taking my siesta...

Celia: **[To Randall]** You slut.

Randall: We just necked.

Mickey: ...said he was going for long walks on the beach.

Randall: I licked his thing.

Celia: **[To Mickey]** Darling, if I can be of any help, really...a shoulder to cry on...

Mickey: **[Angrily to Randall]** I am *concerned* about cholesterol, I *care* about cholesterol, and I care about you, and when I prepare nutritious and delicious meals that have absolutely *no* saturated fat, *none* whatsoever, and only a drop or two of monounsaturated extra virgin olive oil, it is because I love you.

Celia: **[To Mickey]** He doesn't deserve you.

Mickey: **[To Celia]** I don't know why I love him...

Celia: Maybe you *should* leave him...

Mickey: **[To Randall]** Monounsaturated fat is *good* fat, it helps to increase the high density lipids which are the *good* lipids, and *decrease* the low density lipids which are the *bad* lipids...

Celia: **[To Randall]** Can't you at least say you're sorry?

Mickey: **[To Randall]** Go ahead, get it over with. Jump. I don't care any more. **[To Celia]** He's threatened to commit suicide every other day for the last nine and a half years...

Celia: Darling, he's been doing suicide for years

Mickey: **[To Celia]** *You* introduced us.

Celia: **[To Mickey, referring to Randall]** We met on the bridge.

Mickey: ...told me you'd met someone you thought I could save...

Celia: *He* was staring down into the water looking forlorn, *I* was staring down into the water looking forlorn...

Mickey: ...I was going to help him discover the beautiful things that life had to offer.....**[Getting teary eyed]**

Lights up on Carmen Zapora, who appears in the doorway. She's an older woman, very monochrome and artsy-craftsy with silver jewelry and rings and frazzled-looking hair.

Carmen: **[Standing in the door way, arms opened]** Celia, darling...

Celia: **[Mirroring Carmen]** Carmen, darling...

Carmen: **[Entering, embracing Celia]** I hope I'm not too early...I couldn't wait to see you again....**[then noticing Mickey, holding out arms]** Mickey, darling...

Mickey: **[Holding out arms, mimicking her with great drama]** Carmen, darling. **[They embrace]**

Carmen: Why didn't you *tell* me that that darling Celia was back in town? **[Holding out arms to Randall]** Randall, darling...

Randall: **[Embracing Carmen]** Carmen, darling...

Carmen: ...all the things I do for you...

Mickey: **[In his most phony voice]** It's so *wonderful* to see you!

Randall: **[In his most phony voice]** We were just talking about you..

Carmen: **[To Randall and Mickey]** *You* never call me, *you* never answer your phone or return your messages...I've been calling you for days, *days*...the head of the Acquisitions Committee of the Whitney wants to meet you, darlings, and she's only going to be here a couple days...

Mickey: We're not interested.

Carmen: She *extremely* interested in your work...

Randall: We're not interested.

Carmen: **[Impatiently]** Darlings, Dr. Sylvia Bloodhorn, the head of the *Acquisitions* committee of the *Whitney Museum of American Art* wants to *meet* you and see your latest work. She's talking about putting together a "*package*" of a *number* of your paintings, I repeat, a *package* of *number* of your paintings...she might want this one too. **[She indicates the painting]**

Mickey: She can't have it.

Randall: It's not done.

Mickey: It's never going to be done...Randall and I are splitting up.

Carmen: Don't be ridiculous...

Randall: No more Randall and Mickey...

Carmen: But you're just on the brink of greatness...**[aside to Celia]** ...constant soap opera...**[back to Randall and Mickey]** ...just on the verge of getting the *payback* for all your years of hard work...**[then referring to the painting]** ..this is *marvelous*...absolutely *revelatory*...the *movement*, the *expression*...this *sweep* of color...

Mickey: It's the last one you're ever going to see.

Carmen: **[Still looking at the painting]** ...a glorious window that looks out onto another level of consciousness...

Randall: It's a piece of shit.

Mickey: It's a piece of shit.

Celia: **[Looking at the painting]** It's a piece of shit.

Carmen: Absolutely *no* one is doing this level of work....the *intensity*, the depth of *expression*, the layering of intentionality upon indifference...

Mickey: **[Screaming]** I want to paint landscapes!

Randall: **[Screams back]** This is a fucking landscape!

Mickey: **[Screams]** This is a fucking piece of shit!

Randall: **[Screams]** This is the fucking landscape of the fucking state of sterility of our fucking so-called relationship!

Carmen: **[Idea! To Randall and Mickey]** Why don't you join us for lunch!

Celia: What fun!

Carmen: Stop this nonsense...

Celia: Come on...

Carmen: I'm taking Celia to this marvelous new Italian place that Jamailia Hargrove told me about...

Celia: Come on, guys...

Carmen: ...fabulous risotto Milanese...it's on me, come on...

Randall: **[To Carmen]** Mickey hates your guts.

Mickey: So does Randall.

Carmen: **[Matter-of-factly]** So does everybody else.

Randall: You're a liar.

Carmen: Of course I'm a liar.

Mickey: ...a two-faced, self-serving thief.

Carmen: I own a gallery. **[Beat]** Darlings, I *made* your name, I *created* the contacts, I provided the *context* in which your work *became* art.

Mickey: You're a crook.

Carmen: You don't have art without context.../ created the context.

Randall: You're a bitch.

Carmen: I'm a complete bitch. I have to be a bitch. You can't create context *unless* you're a bitch. **[Indicating the painting]** This is an invitation. This is a space that invites discovery...an opportunity for the viewer to be a partner in an intoxicating act of deception and transformation. But there has to *be* a viewer, there has to *be* an audience, a *receptive* audience...and *who* finds that audience? Who *creates* that audience? Who helps that audience to understand that this **[indicating painting]**...*this*...is a work of art! **[Beat]** You need me, darlings. You're nothing without me, absolutely nothing...you're just two more drugged-out, not-so-young guys hanging around slapping paint on the wall. *I'm* the artist. *You're* the hired help. **[To Celia, taking her by the arm]** Let's go have lunch. **[She and Celia exit]**

BLACKOUT

Act One, Scene 2

Early afternoon, the same day. Mickey and Randall are alone. Randall is working on the painting, applying broad strokes of red and red-orange paint, very involved. Mickey is still getting his stuff together to leave...he's sorting bills and papers, putting some aside to take with him. There's a considerable pause, then...

Randall: **[Standing back, looking at the painting]** This is lookin' good, this is lookin' seriously fuckin' good. Not quite there yet, but you've got real quality here...this is real quality...

Pause as Mickey continues to pack, paying no attention to Randall.

Randall: **[Still studying the painting]** You don't see quality like this in most of that other shit. **[Beat]** This is lookin' to be the best fucking thing we've ever done...**[Beat]** ...poetry, fuckin' poetry. We're not givin' her another thing...this is ours, man, she's not gettin' it.

Mickey: **[Talking as much to himself as to Randall]** It's going to be a clean break for me...

Randall: **[Looking at the painting]** Everything's in this painting.

Mickey: I don't care if I have to go back to cleaning apartments....

Randall: **[Looking at the painting]** It tells the whole story...Pompeii, the Renaissance...

Mickey: ...start over, do my own stuff, find a new gallery to show it...

Randall: ...the Expressionists, the color-field guys...

Mickey: **[Derisively imitating Carmen, more or less talking to himself]** "Dr. Bloodhorn is interested in a *package*" of a number of your works..." **[then]** ...one piece isn't good enough for her, she wants a "*package*"...probably at some sort of "*volume discount*"...you can't just do art any more, you've got to do a "*package*"...everything's "*context*" and "*package*"...

Randall: **[Angrily]** She can't have it!

Mickey: **[Then to Randall]** It's not the money, I don't care about the money....

Randall: I refuse to be kicked around like a piece of merchandise...

Mickey: That's it...

Randall: We're the last to get paid and we're paid the very least...

Mickey: We're a commodity...

Randall: **[Referring to the painting]** This is some major shit here...

Mickey: ...just a *thing* to be bought and sold...

Randall: ...like, *transformative* fuckin' shit, you know what I mean, *real, real* shit, fuckin' cutting-edge shit...**[Beat, as he continues to study the painting, then turning to Mickey]** You're a great artist, man.

Mickey: Thank you.

Randall: It's been great working with ya', really.

Mickey: Thank you.

Randall: I wouldn't have gotten anywhere without you.

Mickey: **[Disagreeing]** I wouldn't have gotten anywhere without you...you had the ideas...

Randall: No, no...

Mickey: Really...

Randall: They were *our* ideas.

Mickey: I'm just the technician...

Randall: No, no...

Mickey: You're the concept guy...

Randall: No, no...it's the color stuff, and that's *you*....

Mickey: No, no...

Randall: That's what really distinguishes our stuff, the color stuff, and you're the guy that knows the color stuff.

Pause, as they stare at the painting.

Randall: Maybe we should keep on tryin' to paint together...live alone, but paint together...

Mickey: Please don't do this to me.

Randall: Maybe we could.

Mickey: I can't do it, it's tearing me apart...

Randall: ...maybe we could do stuff together, do stuff alone...

Mickey: **[Shaking his head sadly]** It was good for a while, but now it's time to move on...

Randall: Man, we're just startin' to get some place...

Mickey: ...you can't keep doing the same thing, we've been doing the same thing...we've got to get away from each other, do something new. **[Beat]** I tried.

Randall: I tried too...

Mickey: I wanted to make it work, I really did...

Randall: I'm sorry if I hurt you or something...

Mickey: You didn't hurt me.

Randall: I didn't mean to hurt you, okay?

Mickey: I hurt myself...

Randall: I didn't mean to mess it all up.

Mickey: We've gotta grow up. You're a man. I'm a man. It's time for us to behave like men. We can't keep holding on to each other...

Randall: You're right.

Mickey: Dependency is bullshit.

Randall: That's it.

Mickey: That's what happened.

Randall: **[Nodding]** Yeah...yeah...

Mickey: It's not good...

Randall: **[Nodding]**messes ya' up...

Mickey: That's right.

Randall: ...don't know what ya' like any more, don't know what ya' want any more...

Mickey: ...the "couple" thing...

Randall: **[Nodding]** ..everything locked into some kind of pattern...

Mickey: ...husband-wife...

Randall: ...rats in a cage, havin' the same fuckin' dreams...

Mickey: It's sad.

Randall: It's sad...

Mickey: Pathological.

Randall: We've gotta find out who we are...

Mickey: Be men.

Randall: ...test ourselves...

Mickey: Have our own nightmares.

Pause

Mickey: I'm going to cry now...

Randall: I am too.

They both have a vaguely teary moment, but no real tears

Mickey: I can't cry.

Randall: I can't either.

Mickey: I can't cry about anything any more.

Randall: I never could...man, we're dealing with success, okay...we're dealing with a little stinking bit of success, for the first fucking time, Randall-and-Mickey-this and Randall-and-Mickey-that...

Mickey: I'm miserable.

Randall: I don't think I want success.

Mickey: You think that once success comes along, everything'll be okay...

Randall: We were happier when we were just gettin' by, no one was payin' any attention to us...

Mickey: ...we painted what we wanted and nobody cared...

Randall: ...and now all these people are comin' on to us, offerin' us big bucks, talkin' about us...

Mickey: You freeze.

Randall: You start painting for them, not for yourself..

Mickey: ...you want the money, you need the money, and once they start giving you the money...

Randall: ...you start doin' fame, you're doin' fame, you're not doin' art, ya' know what I mean...

Mickey: ...I can't paint any more, I can't do anything any more....

Randall: I'm not doin' any interviews, okay....absolutely no interviews, no product endorsements, none of that shit...

Mickey: **[Beat, as he studies Randall]** You know, people realize right off that you have complete contempt for humanity, do you know that?

Randall: **[Nodding]** People hate me.

Mickey: You're above it all, and all the rest of us are beneath you because we're stupider, we don't see the point, we don't know that we're all just moving around in some diabolically predetermined pattern, we don't even realize it, but you do...and you suffer...and you're really hot shit because of it. **[He returns to packing, Randall returns to the painting]**

Lights come up on the doorway, and Celia enters.

Celia: **[Entering]** What is it with women? No really, I'm serious...I spend the night with her, we have lunch the next day, and now she wants me to move in...live at her place, rent free...

Mickey: She's a predator...

Celia: ...she's talking about giving me a show in the fall...

Mickey: ...they offer you something you can't refuse, and once they've got ya' they suck you dry...

Celia: ...and all these years she'd had her eye on me, and when I left town she was absolutely *devastated*, and then last night when she saw at me the RightSpot, she knew I'd come back for a reason, and the reason was *her*.

Randall: Don't sign any thing, never sign anything...

Celia: She wants to see me again tonight...

Mickey: **[Pulling some magazines out of the bottom of a drawer]** What's this?

Celia: She's going to take me out to dinner at some place *romantic*, and then we're going back to her place for some *snuggles-and-hugs*...

Mickey: **[Turning a few pages of the magazine]** What in the hell is this? Where'd this come from? **[He holds up the magazine—it's pornography]**

Randall: **[Looking]** Oh.

Mickey: **[Showing them to Celia]** Pictures of naked women.

Celia: **[To Randall]** Personal growth and development?

Randall: You weren't supposed to find those.

Mickey: **[Looking at it some more, shaking his head]** Filthy, degrading, heterosexual garbage...

Celia: **[To Randall]** Masturbator.

Mickey: **[Looking again at the porn]** ...victims of male dominance and oppression.

Celia: **[To Randall]** Masturbating pig.

Mickey: **[Looking at the porn]** *This just makes me just want to puke.*

Randall and Celia both break out laughing, very amused

Mickey: There is *nothing* amusing about this.

Celia: **[Suddenly shrieking, pointing at the porn]** That's Rabbit Face! This is Rabbit Face! Look! That's her. Rabbit Face. **[She shows photo to Randall and Mickey]** ...the little pink pop-eyes, the tight little mouth...

Mickey: **[Covering his eyes]** I can't look.

Celia: ...tight little plump, perky butt....

Randall: **[Looking]** I think she's kind of hot.

Celia/
Mickey: **[Outraged]** Hot!?

Mickey: **[To Randall]** Pervert.

Celia: That's hot?!

Mickey: **[To Randall]** You make me sick.

Celia: That little wad of butterfat and potato chips is hot!?

Randall: She turns me on.

Mickey: **[Shaking his head]** How sad...

Celia: **[To Randall]** *This* turns you on?

Mickey: **[Referring to Randall]** Poor twisted, confused child...

Celia: **[To Randall, pointing at the porn]** This is dog food.

Mickey: Nine and a half years of "sweetie this" and "sweetie that" and all the while he's salivating over pictures of female flesh...

Randall: I did more than salivate.

Celia: **[Looking at Randall, shaking her head]** Over this?!

Mickey: I hate the government.

Celia: **[To Randall]** Honey, stick to men.

Mickey: If they would just allow clear, tasteful, hygienically-conscientious instruction to *young children* on the pleasures and rewards of good clean homosexual relationships you wouldn't have any of these problems...

Celia: That's right.

Mickey: ...this crime, these drugs, this out-of-control epidemic of totally irresponsible reproduction...

Randall: **[Looking at the porn]** I just wanted to see what girls look like.

Celia: You know damn well what girls look like.

Mickey: **[Hands over his ears]** I can't bear this...

Celia: You know what they look like, feel like, taste like, smell like...

Mickey: Why didn't I listen to my mother...

Celia: **[To Mickey]** Randall got all tanked up on mescaline one night and fucked me for hours doggy style back in our Art Institute days...

Mickey: Excuse me?

Celia: ...remember that one, Randy, honey.

Mickey: I beg your pardon?

Randall: She raped me.

Celia: **[To Randall]** Excuse me?

Randall: You pulled off my pants.

Celia: Who pulled off *whose* pants?!

Randall: **[To Mickey]** I barely knew what was going on.

Mickey: **[To Randall]** You told me you'd never touched a woman in your whole life.

Celia: He lied.

Mickey: **[Starts running around throwing things into a bag]** I'm leaving.

Randall: **[To Mickey]** She violated my body.

Celia: I beg your pardon!

Mickey: **[To Randall]** For nine and one half years no one has ever bothered to tell me about this sordid little episode?!

Celia: **[To Mickey]** It was far too humiliating for either one of us to admit.

Mickey: **[Viciously to Celia, as he throws things into his bag]** You keep your hands off of him.

Celia: I want nothing to do with him.

Mickey: **[To Celia]** I thought you were my friend.

Randall: **[To Mickey]** I was a virgin.

Celia: I beg your pardon?

Randall: **[Pointing]** *She* took advantage of my hormonal urges...

Celia: / was the virgin!

Mickey: **[To Celia]** You disgust me.

Randall: **[To Mickey]** I was terrified, absolutely terrified.

Mickey: **[To Celia]** Preying on innocent youth...

Celia: **[To Randall]** / was the victim here, thank you...

Mickey: **[Focusing on his packing]** Why am I so stupid?

Celia: **[To Randall]** ...telling me you loved me, needed me...

Mickey: **[To Randall]** Do I know you? I mean, really, do I have even the faintest idea who you are?

Celia: **[With disgust]** Men.

Mickey: **[Focusing on his packing]** ...the whole thing's been a mistake, right from the start, a great big miserable nine-and-half-year mistake...

Celia: **[Watching Randall, who's studying up the porno]** So hopelessly misguided...

Mickey: **[To Randall/Celia]** I'm just a small town kid with a small town mind, trying to be a big-city boy with big-city people, and I've never really

been good enough, have I, I've never been smart enough, never cool enough...everybody with their dirty little secrets...I'm too dumb to have dirty little secrets....**[He closes the bag]**.

Celia: **[To Mickey]** Honey, why don't you take a pill or something...

Mickey: **[Heading toward the door]** I'm taking a load over to Steve and Denny's right now...I'll be back for another before dinner...

Celia: Why don't you save yourself a whole lot of trouble...

Mickey: **[To Celia]** Have we met?

Celia: ...you'll just come back in a couple of days, you always do...

Mickey: **[To Celia, as he exits]** You can have him.

Celia: I don't want him.

Randall: **[Looking at the porn]** I really think she's kind of hot.

BLACKOUT

Act One, Scene 3

Late afternoon, the same day. The lighting is darker. The painting is more brightly lit. At lights up, Randall is working on the painting. Celia is sitting pensively, down stage, drinking wine. She's been drinking and talking at Randall for quite some time.

Celia: **[After a considerable pause]** ...and you think that if you move some place else you can start all over again...be somebody new...meet somebody new...change your life...**[beat]** And then after a few months you start to realize that everything's turning out to be the same...same boredom, same fuck-ups, and the people you're meeting are just like the people you were trying to get away from, and there you are trapped in some sort of city limits that every one's trying to get out of, and at least in San Francisco, everybody knows they've reached the end of the line. **[Beat]** This is it, I'm tellin' ya'. Forget the rest of it. Every place else people think they're going somewhere, gettin' somewhere, got a destination, a goal, something to dream about...and, ya' know, they can't even talk. Really. I mean *talk*...ya' know what I mean? Like at night...with each other...like *real talk*...like I'll show you mine if you'll show me yours...and you can do that out here...everybody's shown everybody everything, and after you've shown everybody everything *then* you've got something to talk about. **[Beat]** And you *know* you're going to die, and you can feel it, right here, you can really feel it, *right here*, that the ground is rocking and churning and at any time it can open right up and swallow you whole and grind you down to nothing, and that's right where I want to be, you know what I mean? Right here, right here where there's no chance. **[Beat]** I'm a necrophiliac...face it...I spend my days making painfully detailed rag dolls and then slash them and stab them and smother them in blood and call them "Heroes of America"...**[Beat]** Betsy Ross wrapped in a 13-star flag, mutilated by a jillion little dressmaker's pins, the Betsy Ross pin cushion...Dolly Madison, with a meticulously-made replica of a fork from her White House silver collection sticking straight out of her heart...**[Beat]** And so I get a few grants, and I have a few shows and get some serious-sounding brilliant-artist reviews, and here and there somebody buys some stuff, but then nothing ever really takes off, and I'm runnin' breathless into my forties, and I'm still living out of a backpack and worrying about the health insurance that I've never had, and half of the people I ever really cared about are dead. **[Beat]** I mean, look, I'll go back to waiting tables if I have to...I'm serious...I never minded it, I kinda liked it, and I didn't let it mess with my mind, and I can promise you

one thing, I'm not *ever, ever, ever* going to try to teach anybody anything ever again. You don't know. You have no idea. You get these kids and they're either overly-eager-and-hopeless or arrogant-and-completely-derivative, and every once in a while you get one who's sensitive and sweet and has some talent, and that's the most depressing because you know they're going to die of a broken heart... and all I wanted to do was tell these kids, "Don't grow up. Please, don't grow up. Don't get serious. Don't get dedicated. Don't, for Christ's sake, have a career doing anything, because it's all a lot of fucking rot." **[Beat]** You don't change. **[Beat]** Nobody changes. **[Beat]** People lose weight or dye their hair or get a new job or another degree, but they're still who they are, and they're always going to be who they are, and that last little dried up, worn out pile of bones and bad breath is the very heart of who you've been since the day you were born. **[Beat]** Are you okay?

Randall: I'm fasting for Jesus.

Celia: You're full of shit.

Randall: **[Still painting]** You don't appreciate Christianity.

Celia: Neither do you.

Randall: It's a fabulous religion.

Celia: You want to get a pizza?

Randall: The whole thing is about this *guy's body*.

Celia: **[Staring at him closely]** Look at me.

Randall: They *worship* this guy's body *and* his blood. *And* they eat it and drink it...It's fabulous.

Celia: **[Looking in his eyes]** Mushrooms?

Randall: They actually *believe* that they are *eating* his body and *drinking* his blood and this is going to *save* them.

Celia: **[Nodding]** Mushrooms.

Randall: It's cannibalism. It's fabulous. **[He goes back to painting]**

Celia: Where's Mickey?

Randall: **[Still painting]** He's gone.

Celia: He said he he'd be back before dinner.

Randall: **[Still painting]** Who cares.

Celia: **[Watching Randall painting]** Darling, you do not control reality. I know you'd like to *think* that you do, but you don't. You don't control anything about it. And you can stand there for the rest of your fucking life creating whole galaxies of colors and shapes and all you're doing is exercising your already excessively over-exercised ego, trying to paint out everyone and everything else until the only thing you've got left is *you*.

Randall: **[Idea!]** Let's go to Rome.

Celia: You're bored.

Randall: I've never been to Rome, I want to see St. Peters...

Celia: I can always tell when you're bored...

Randall: I want to meet the Head Cannibal. **[Returns to painting]**

Celia: Why don't you realize that Mickey's the best fucking thing that ever happened to you...you weren't doin' shit until you met him.

Randall: **[Suddenly angry]** *I'm* always the one to blame, *I'm* always the asshole, *I'm* always the one who hurts somebody, and everybody hates me and everybody is always going to hate me no matter what I do, and as far as I can see everybody hates everybody else too...so why bother.

Celia: You've never cared about anybody anyway so why start now? Right?

Randall: That's right. **[Than nastily]** You wanna fuck? **[He immediately turns back to slapping red paint on the painting]**

Celia: Darling, I truly hate to tell you this, but you're just like everybody else...do you realize that?

Randall: You don't know anything about me.

Celia: The same little mediocre feelings...

Randall: **[Turning back to her]** I'm not blaming Mickey, okay?

Celia: ...same little mediocre fears...

Randall: We took it as far as we could and we did what we set out to do, to collaborate... it was art, it wasn't going to be love. And we took it until there was no place else to go. End of relationship. **[Beat]** There were days when he'd paint on one end and I'd paint on the other and we wouldn't look—that was the deal—and a few hours later we'd stop and look at the whole thing and he'd have done practically the same exact fucking thing I had done...

Celia: End of relationship.

Randall: Exactly.

Celia: Time to wash the brushes, time to wash your hands.

Randall: You know, I didn't invite you back into my life...you just moved in.

Celia: Lucky you.

Randall: **[Mimicking]** Hi guys, I'm thinking about moving back to the city...

Celia: I heard your cries for help.

Randall: **[Mimicking]** Do you guys think maybe you could let me stay there for awhile?

Celia: Funny how life moves you around in circles...

Randall: I can't help you...

Celia: ...comin' back to the only place I knew where there were people who are more messed up than I am...

Randall: I'm serious about Christ.

Celia: Darling, drugs are fine, I like drugs, I recommend drugs to all of my colleagues, but, *not as a way of life.*

Randall: "Eat me, drink me..."

Celia: Do you want a pizza?

Randall: I want people to eat me too...

Celia: How about a burrito?

Randall: **[Earnestly]** When I'm dead, take me, wash me, rub me with olive oil, a little sage, thyme, rosemary, a lot of garlic, salt, pepper, roast in a moderate oven, baste every half hour until the meat just begins to

separate from the bone, serve and enjoy. **[Beat]** I am *meat*. End of relationship...

Celia: Maybe I'll get a pizza...

Randall: Ya' know, what I like about girls? ...the juice...I love the juice...I love sticking my fingers up in there and rubbing 'em around and in and out...and the smell, that fabulous fuck-me smell...

Celia: You're queer.

Randall: So was Christ.

Celia: You've carried narcissism to it's ultimate end.

Randall: So did Christ.

Celia: You couldn't love anybody except yourself, and the irony is that you can't even do that.

Randall: *I am meat. He was meat. Everybody is meat.*

Celia: I'm a vegetarian.

Lights up on Mickey, who appears in the door way.

Mickey: **[As he enters]** I won't be long, I just need to get a couple more things...**[beat]** Having a little heart-to-heart?

Celia: Exchanging recipes. Randall's going to throw a "Last Supper," with himself as the main course.

Randall: **[To Mickey]** I am meat.

Mickey: **[Looking first suspiciously at Randall, then turning to Celia]** He'll come down in a few hours and feel like shit and then he'll crawl under the table and cry for a while and then you can help him get into bed. **[Then to Randall]** I am in agony, absolute agony, **[indicating]** right here, all along here, bacteria eating away my gums, and it's spreading into the jaw bone, and it's all your fault.

Randall: **[Concerned, trying to be helpful]** D'you want the electric toothbrush.

Mickey: **[Pushing him aside, crossing to the kitchen area]** Get out of my way.

Randall: Really, you can have it, I don't want it...

Mickey: Stress causes every known degenerative disease there is and that's all I have to look forward to now, stress and degenerative diseases...
[Looking around the kitchen] Where is the stock pot?

Randall: **[Earnestly]** Man, I don't *want* the electric toothbrush...

Celia: Does anyone want a pizza?

Mickey: **[Looking for the stock pot]** Where is the 8-quart Calphalon stock pot?

Randall: Take the fucking toothbrush, man...I'm never going to brush my fucking teeth again.

Mickey: I never thought you did.

Celia: I'm going down to Goat Hill and get a pizza if any one's interested?

Mickey: **[Shouting]** Where in the fuck is the goddamned stock pot?

Randall: **[Shouting]** Where in the fuck did you goddamned put it?

Celia: **[Backing out]** It's been lovely seeing you both...

Randall: **[Angrily to Mickey]** *You* are meat. *I* am meat. *She* is meat. *Jesus Christ is meat!*

Celia exits, there's a pause, as Mickey studies Randall, then...

Mickey: You were spoiled. You were pampered. Nobody ever told you "no." Nobody ever helped you to learn that there are things in life that you have to take *responsibility* for, and first and foremost is *yourself*.
[Randall starts crying] You have gone through life, and *I* am partially at fault here, thinking that you could do anything you wanted to do *any way* you wanted to do it and you should be the object of unconditional, unquestioning, selfless love, and I'll admit that *that's* what I did...unconditional, unquestioning, selfless love...*I* never said no, *I* never said maybe, I always said, "Yes Randall, darling, yes, Randall, darling, yes, Randall, darling..." **[Shaking his head sadly]** You are a *crippled, crippled* human being...and it is my fault and it is your mother's fault. **[He starts crying too]**

Randall: **[Wiping away his tears]** I'm sorry.

Mickey: I'm sorry.

Randall: I didn't mean...**[cries again]**

Mickey: **[Wiping his tears]** I'm sorry.

Randall: ...I didn't mean...**[cries again]**

Mickey: **[Nodding his head]** I didn't know...

Randall: **[Through the tears]** I didn't want to hurt...**[cries]**

Mickey: I didn't realize...

Randall: **[Through the tears]** You were so nice...

Mickey: ...the blame's not all yours...

Randall: **[Through the tears]** I fucked everything up...

Mickey: I should have said "no"...

Randall: **[Through the tears]** I always fuck everything up...

Mickey: ...but I couldn't say "no"...

Randall: I didn't want to fuck everything up.

Mickey: ...I never learned how to say "no"...

Randall: I'm scared.

Mickey: I'm trying to learn to say "no" right now...

Randall: People scare me.

Mickey: You scare me.

Randall: Everybody scares me.

Mickey: **[Turning Randall's head]** Randall, try to look at me.

Randall: Women scare me...

Mickey: Try to focus for a minute.

Randall: Everybody sees right through me...

Mickey: **[All business]** I've had the PG&E and phone accounts transferred to your name. The bills will come here, *to you*, and *you* will have to pay them, not me...

Randall: Do you ever think about women?

Mickey: Randall...

Randall: I mean...seriously...

Mickey: **[Impatiently]** I don't like women. I have never liked women. I have never met a woman I liked. I don't trust them. I don't understand them. I'm not attracted to them. I'm not even the slightest bit interested in them on any level, in any way, for any purpose.

Randall: I can't get away from them.

Mickey: And I don't like men either. I have never liked men. I have never met one single man I have really truly liked. I don't trust them. I don't understand them, and for some completely unfathomable reason I am hopelessly attracted to them and God only knows why.

Randall: **[Nodding]** Yeah.

Mickey: It's all such a fucking waste of time.

Randall: **[Nodding]** Yeah.

Mickey: All that thrashing around...

Randall: **[Nodding]** Yeah...yeah...yeah... **[excited]** I get all wound up, all wound up...and it's this gotta, gotta, gotta have it, gotta have it...and, man, ya' know there are times when I stop in the middle of the whole thing, and think "What in the fuck is *this* all about?"

There's a moment as they look at each other and realize that they're turned on to each other, come close to embracing passionately, but then..

Mickey: **[Turning away]** There's really nothing more for us to talk about. There's nothing more for us to say. Everything now is concrete details. *Your* signature. *My* signature. *Your* electric toothbrush. *My* eight quart Calphalon stock pot.

Mickey, annoyed, turns and walks upstage, looking for stuff...there is a pause as Randall drifts off into his own thoughts. Mickey disappears off stage.

Randall: **[Talking to himself]** All our old friends are dead. **[Beat]** Everybody's dead, everybody we used to hang out with...Tiger and Blake, Ed, Jon, Jamie Snell...all dead. Everyone dead.**[Beat]** And I'm alone.

Absolutely alone. Me. Period. No one. Nothing. Me. Alone. **[Long beat]** Hi, my name is Adam. I live in a garden. It's a real nice garden...a lot of really nice animals, all kinds, and fruit trees, berries, grapes and real nice weather, sunny, warm, a cooling afternoon breeze. **[Beat]** Hi, my name is Adam. I live in a garden. And everybody's dead. And I'm alone. And everybody's dead and it doesn't make any difference...They were alive and now they're dead and I'm alive and I'm the only one alive and it doesn't make any difference, and I'm going to die and it doesn't make any difference, and so I'm just going to sit here and breathe. **[Beat]** I am going to sit...here...right now...and I am going to breathe. **[He does so]** In and out. **[He breathes in and out a few times]** It's fabulous. Just breathing. In and out. It's everything. Try it. You add a little food, a little wine...you got paradise. This is paradise. This is paradise right now. Here. Paradise. This second. No bus trips. No waiting in line, man. Paradise. Fuckin' paradise.

Mickey reappears carrying the stock pot, covered...he's holding it away from himself, looking rather strange.

Mickey: **[Calmly, slowly]** Randall, darling...why did you take a shit in the stock pot? **[He lifts the lid on the stock pot and shows it to Randall, then quickly covers the pot]**

Randall: **[Beat]** It's compost art.

Mickey: I realize you're going through a great deal of stress...

Randall: I am exploring compost in a variety of environments..

Mickey: *Shit in a stock pot?!*

Randall: It's art. **[Beat]** It's religious art. **[Beat]** It's my homage to the Pope.

Mickey: **[Setting down the stock pot, and indicating]** Steve and Denny's phone number is on the board...but don't call me unless it's business, I don't want to hear from you unless it's business...I don't want to see you. I don't want to hear from you. I'm going to walk out the door now and out of your life, and Mickey-and-Randall will cease to exist, and our relationship will cease to exist, and I will be free to lead my life the way I want to lead it, and you will be free to lead your life the way you want to lead it and be whoever you want to be and shit any where you want to shit and call it any god damned thing you want. Good bye.

Mickey turns abruptly, picks up his stuff, and exits.

Randall. **[After a beat, he turns and looks at the doorway, then cries out scared] Mickey! Mickey! [Then, like Stanley calling Stella] Mickey!!!**

BLACKOUT

End of Act One

Act Two, Scene 1

Two weeks later. The place looks different. Things have been rearranged. A futon is now down stage right. Randall sits on a chair, with a thermometer in his mouth. He's got a killer cold. He's in a bathrobe and slippers. Celia is in the kitchen area. She pours tea into a cup, squeezes lemon, adds honey, pours in a slug of brandy, carries it over to Randall, hands it to him, takes the thermometer out of his mouth.

Randall: **[Very nasal, stuffed up, melancholy]** He was the greatest dog. **[He pauses, shakes his head]** He was the greatest, most wonderful, sweetest little dog there ever was. **[He sneezes and blows his nose]**

Celia: **[Reading the thermometer]** Your temperature's normal. No fever. You're fine. **[She shakes the thermometer]**

Randall: That little guy would go runnin' down that beach like he was flying, runnin' around and around in big circles of absolute happiness... you've never seen anything that happy...

Celia: Darling, get up, you've got to get dressed.

Randall: God, I love dogs.

Celia: It'll be painless, come on...

Randall: ...I love dogs so much I don't understand why I wasn't a dog...I should have been a dog...that's it right there...that's what I should have been...a dog...**[He blows his nose]**

Celia: Please, get dressed...

Randall: Pisses me off...

Celia: Pisses me off too.

Randall: ...pisses me fuckin' off that I wasn't a dog. I would have been a damned good dog. Really. Damned good dog.

Celia: Damned good.

Randall: I would have been a good cat too...damned good cat...

Celia: Darling, Carmen just called, she's going to be here in a few minutes....

Randall: God, I love cats...**[Sneezes and blows his nose]**

Celia: She's bringing the lady from the Whitney...

Randall: Never had a cat...I had a dog...

Celia: The lady from the Whitney wants to look at this thing, she might want to buy it **[indicates the painting]**.

Randall:if ya' have a dog you can't have a cat...and ya' can't have another dog either, ya' can't have *two* dogs...you can only have *one* dog, that's the way it's supposed to be—the *guy* **[indicates himself]** and the dog—it's a special relationship...the *guy* **[indicates himself]** and the dog...there's a real monogamy there, and that's the only place where there's a real monogamy...the *guy* and the animal companion.

Celia starts looking around for some clothes, finds some in a pile, and picks through them.

Randall: It's different with women. They don't need an animal companion, like a guy needs an animal companion. Women have each other. Guys don't have each other... And I don't think men should be able to vote. Really. I mean that. I don't think men understand anything about that kind of stuff ...they *think* they know all about that kind of stuff, but they don't...they don't know *shit* about that kind of stuff, but *women* know that stuff by heart, women *invented* that stuff...and they should be runnin' the whole fucking thing. Really. I'm serious—women should be runnin' *the whole fucking thing*, and guys should stay at home with their animal companions.

Celia: **[Handing him jeans and a shirt]** Put these on...

Randall: Men don't want to know anybody, do you know that? A lot of people don't realize that...

Celia: I knew that...

Randall: **[Taking the clothes]**...*guys themselves* don't realize it, that they don't want to know anybody and *they don't want anybody to know them*....really...they want to be unlabelled, unnamed, unnumbered, unknown...

Celia: ...undressed...

Randall: ...and they want a dog and they want a whore...and they want one dog...and they want one whore...at a time...or maybe two at a time...and most of the time they just want to jack off...either by themselves or with each other...or with their animal companion. **[He starts to take off his bathrobe]** But most of the time a guy's gotta be alone...

Celia: **[Trying to help him]** That's right.

Randall: ...he's gotta be who he's gotta be...that's our culture...

Celia: That's right.

Randall: ...that's the way it's always been...man and the mountain...man and the sea...man and outer space...

Celia: Man and the animal companion and the whore.

Randall: Exactly.

She takes the bathrobe from him. He's standing there in his boxer shorts.

Celia: **[Handing him the shirt]** Put this on.

Randall: I'm sick. **[He throws down the shirt]**

Celia: You're not sick.

Randall: I'm fuckin' sick....this is sick.

Celia: This isn't sick.

..

Randall: This is sick...what are you getting out of this, huh?

Celia: Out of what?

Randall: Tellin' me I'm not sick...

Celia: You're not sick. **[She hands him the shirt]**

Randall: I'm sick...

Celia: **[Trying to get him into the shirt]** You haven't got anything..

Randall: ...Little Miss Bedside Manner...**[pulling away from her, angrily stomping around]** I am fucking burning up...I have *been* fucking burning up for days...*days*...and I have this pain, right here in my gut and it's not going away, no m'am, pain, *pain* in the gut, *pain* in the head...I've never been this sick...nobody's ever been this sick....

Celia: It's psychosomatic.

Randall: Kiss my ass.

Celia: It's mental.

Randall: Where's the fucking noodle soup?

Celia: **[She tries to get him into his shirt]** Darling, it's not every day you get to meet *Ms. Acquisitions Committee* from the Whitney Museum.

Randall: I'm not in the mood.

Celia: They might want to hang your piece-of-shit art of their very, *very* important walls.

Randall: I don't like the Whitney...they bore me.

Celia: Carmen wants you to be nice to her...are you listening to me? She going to show her some of my slides, too, okay? She's working every angle. Get dressed.

Randall: **[Studies her for a moment]** You've got a great mouth...you know that? Really great lips...fabulous, mean, cruel lips...lips like Satan...Kiss me. **[He leans toward her]**

Celia: Darling, last night you told me you never wanted to see me again, hear from me again, talk to me again...do you remember that?

Randall: I want to make love to your big mean beautiful cruel mouth.

Celia: You had found nirvana right here in your cell all by yourself...remember nirvana right here in your cell all by yourself?

Randall: Nirvana isn't what it used to be.

Celia: I tried to tell you.

Randall: Pisses me off.

Celia: You never listen.

Randall: I'll pay you.

Celia: For what?

Randall: Service for money...strictly cash basis. You let me kiss your big mean beautiful cruel mouth, I'll pay.

Celia: Forget it.

Randall: I'm not asking for charity.

Celia: I'm not in the mood.

Randall: Five bucks.

Celia: For a kiss?

Randall: Five bucks.

Celia: Forget it.

Randall: You excite me.

Celia: Really.

Randall: I have always found you very exciting, very arousing, very stimulating, right from the day we met...you were literate...really, fuckin' literate...fuckin' words use to come from your beautiful, articulate, big mean cruel mouth...it turned me on...really...excited me...*you* turned me on...mouth, neck, breasts, butt, feet....you've got beautiful beautiful amazingly fucking beautiful ugly feet.

Celia: Thank you.

Randall: I will pay you if you would let me lick your foot. I will pay you if you would let me suck each toe...I want to make love to every part of your body with my tongue.

Celia: **[Beat]** How much?

Randall: Five bucks.

Celia: Forget it.

Randall: I love it when you're cruel.

Celia: You were meant to suffer.

Randall: It turns me on.

Celia: You were meant to beg.

Randall: Be my whore.

Celia: Forget it.

Randall: I want you to be my whore.

Celia: I am your whore. I'm everybody's whore. This is what it's like to be a woman, except most of the time ya' don't get paid.

Randall: I want you to suck my cock.

Celia: What did I tell ya'.

Randall: I'll pay.

Celia: How much?

Randall: Five bucks.

Celia: Get dressed.

Randall: No.

Celia: Why did I ever have to meet you?

Randall: I'm never going to get dressed again.

Celia: Get dressed.

Randall: I'm scared.

Celia: Get dressed.

Randall: I'm really scared.

Celia: **[Shouts]** Get the fuck dressed!

Randall: You don't care, do you.

Celia: No.

Randall: You don't care if I'm dying, do you.

Celia: No.

Randall: I crave your contempt.

Lights up on the door way, Carmen and Sylvia Bloodhorn appear.

Carmen: **[Open armed]** Celia, darling.

Celia: **[Open armed]** Carmen, darling.

Carmen: **[Entering]** You look marvelous.

Celia: You look wonderful. **[They kiss]**

Carmen: Darling, I'd like you to meet Dr. Sylvia Bloodhorn.

Celia: How do you do.

Sylvia: How do you do.

Celia: It's so nice to meet you.

Sylvia: Carmen's told me so much...

Carmen: I've been telling her about your marvelous voodoo dolls...

Sylvia: I'd love to see them.

Carmen: ...brilliantly crafted...

Celia: **[To Sylvia]** I'd love to show them to you...

Carmen: **[With her arms around Celia]** I'm doing a show of Celia's work in the fall....so much potential in so many dimensions...

Celia: **[To Sylvia]** Carmen's been so kind...

Carmen: **[Opening her arms to Randall]** Randall, darling.

Randall: **[Backing away, holding his hands in front of his face]** Don't touch me...

Celia: **[To Carmen and Sylvia]** He's been feeling a little under the weather.

Randall: **[Backing away]** I'm contagious...very contagious.

Celia: **[To Carmen and Sylvia]** A little case of the sniffles.

Carmen: **[To Randall]** Darling, I'd like you to meet Dr. Sylvia Bloodhorn.

Sylvia: I'm so thrilled to meet you.

Randall: I'm dying...

Carmen: Dr. Bloodhorn is a great admirer of your work.

Sylvia: Brilliant, absolutely brilliant...

Randall: ...it's not going to be a pretty death. **[He sits and wraps his arms around himself and rocks back and forth in a serious funk.]**

Carmen: **[To Sylvia, indicating the painting]** Darling, this is the latest.

Sylvia: **[Looking at the painting, gasps]**

Carmen: What did I tell you?

Sylvia: **[Entranced by the painting]** The energy, the explosive range of expression...

Carmen: **[Looking at the painting]** ...marvelous...

Sylvia: ...a depth of feeling that cuts right to the heart...

Carmen: This is the culmination of the series in red, the magnificent finale of the entire suite of blood drenched paintings...

Sylvia: ...absolutely brilliant...

Celia: **[Quite dryly]** Electrifying.

Carmen: **[To Randall, excited]** Dr. Bloodhorn has come up with the most marvelous idea.

Sylvia: I'm so excited.

Carmen: **[To Sylvia]** Tell him.

Sylvia: **[To Randall, who's not listening]** We want to do a special exhibition of your and Mickey's works, to celebrate our new acquisitions...

Carmen: Dr. Bloodhorn wants to buy six of your paintings, including this one **[indicating]**

Sylvia: ...we want to "introduce" our new artists and welcome you to the Whitney "family."

Carmen: **[Excited]** Tell him about the sheets.

Sylvia: We don't quite know yet...

Carmen: **[To Randall]** You'll love this.

Sylvia: ...but we're thinking about creating a Whitney Museum line of fine home products...sheets, towels, fabrics...

Carmen: Isn't that marvelous...

Sylvia: ...and a Randall-and-Mickey collection might be a wonderful place to start...

Carmen: ...brilliant...

Sylvia: We want to open the public's eyes to the excitement of new art by major emerging American artists. We want to bring them into the museum to experience the excitement of seeing art in its formal context, and then provide them ways to take the art home, to *live* with art in provocative new ways.

Carmen: **[To Celia]** Don't you love it?

Celia: Marvelous.

Carmen: **[Excited, to Randall]** Dr. Bloodhorn is proposing an extremely generous offer whereby *they*, the Whitney, would purchase this painting **[indicating]** and five others pieces at a somewhat discounted price due to the size of the acquisition...

Sylvia: We haven't quite worked out all the details...

Carmen: ...and *they*, the Whitney, would acquire all rights for reproduction, replication, and adaptation of the works for the Whitney line of fine home products and any other uses that the Whitney may so devise. And you and Mickey would receive a certain percentage of any net profits as yet to be determined, and I, as your agent, would also receive a certain percentage of any net profits as yet to be determined, and the Whitney would retain the balance of the net profits as yet to be determined, which would go to help sustain the collection.

Sylvia: **[Excited, to Randall]** People should be *surrounded* by art, *immersed* in art, wake up to art, sleep on art, cover their chairs with art, dry their

bodies with art, experience art at every possible moment in every possible way to open their eyes to beauty and truth...**[Then, to Carmen]** This is what I love about my work...helping people to experience a unique vision...they don't know what that is...

Carmen: **[Agreeing]** You have to show them...

Sylvia: They don't know *how* to look...

Carmen: They don't know what to look *for*...

Sylvia: **[Excited, to Carmen]** One of things we want to highlight in the exhibit is the wholesome home life of the artists, the wonderful model of commitment that Randall and Mickey represent. **[Then to Randall]** We want to display your works and also feature a large screen video "portrait" of the artists—you and Mickey at home, you and Mickey at work, the domestic life, the artistic life, the beautiful dialogue of love, two voices that have become one, yet two, yet one, arias and duets...**[then to Carmen]** So many people think that artists are desperate, alcoholic, drug-addicted misfits...we want to dispel that stereotype...

Carmen: **[Shaking her head]** I don't know *where* people get those ideas...

Celia: **[Shaking her head]** It's sad.

Sylvia: **[To Randall]** We want to make you and Mickey sort of...poster boys...for good wholesome homosexual monogamy and creative brilliance.

Carmen: People need to see that.

Celia: Desperately.

Sylvia: People need to see examples of *good* homosexuals...all they hear about are *bad* homosexuals...and we at the Whitney Museum of American Art *believe* in homosexuals, and we want all of America to believe in homosexuals too.

Carmen: I *love* homosexuals.

Sylvia: I do too.

Carmen: I am homosexual.

Sylvia: I am too.

Carmen: I think everyone should be homosexual.

Sylvia: Most people *want* to be.

Carmen: There are so many women I know....

Sylvia: ...men too...

Carmen: ...starving for affection and passion...

Sylvia: ...you can't find that with some one of the opposite sex.

Carmen: No you can't...

Celia: Not a chance.

Randall: **[Suddenly agitated]** I'm never going to paint again.

Carmen: ...Randall, darling...

Randall: Fuckin' public doesn't deserve my art...let 'em make their own fucking art...

Carmen: ...darling, the people of the world need your work...

Sylvia: ...they need it desperately...

Carmen: ...they hunger for it...

Sylvia: ...I love art...I live for art...I would die without art...

Randall: Let 'em paint by fuckin' numbers...that's what I did...

Carmen: ...now, darling...

Randall: ...god, I loved paint-by-numbers...used to buy every fuckin' bullshit paint-by-numbers they made...

Carmen: Darling, you've got to open your hearts to the little people who are looking for beauty and enlightenment...

Sylvia: Help us, please, help us.

Carmen: Artists have a moral responsibility...

Sylvia: **[Holding out her hand like a little old lady]** Please, please, please...

Randall: **[Beat, then resisting]** I'm sensitive...very, very sensitive...and Mickey's sensitive, and we suffer, we suffer when we're together, we suffer when we're alone, and we were just getting to the heart of it, the real ugly hard-core heart of suffering right here... **[he indicates the painting]**

Sylvia: **[Carried away by the painting]** It's marvelous.

Randall: **[Starting to cry]** ...the heart of the heart of human misery and pain.

Sylvia: **[Carried away by the painting]** The wound...the deep, penetrating, pulsating wound...

Carmen: **[Studying the painting]** ...brilliant.

Sylvia: Absolutely breathtaking...

Randall: **[Suddenly turning on Carmen]** Fucking parasite bitch.

Carmen: Now, darling...

Randall: **[To Carmen]** This cash cow is going out to pasture, no more milk, not one drop...

Carmen: Calm down, darling...

Randall: I am dry. I am dead. I am meat.

Celia: **[To Sylvia, reassuringly]** He's been working awfully hard...

Carmen: **[Confirming]** ...a dreadful pace...

Randall: **[Sudden mood shift]** I'd didn't want Mickey to leave me. I didn't want him to go. I told him, *I told him*, Mickey, baby, Mick, man, we can work it out, we can make it okay...

Carmen: **[Moving to comfort him]** Now, now...

Randall: ...I thought we'd go on paintin' together, makin' art together...

Sylvia: **[Confused, to Carmen]** Is something wrong?

Carmen: **[To Sylvia referring to Randall]** He hasn't been getting enough sleep...

Celia: **[To Sylvia]** Work-aholic.

Randall: I can't do it without him...

Sylvia: **[Confused]** Has something happened to Mickey?

Celia: **[To Sylvia]** Advanced periodontitis..

Randall: He's never coming back.

Celia: **[To Sylvia, indicating gums]** ...extremely acute advanced periodontitis..

Carmen: **[To Sylvia]** Everything's going to be fine...

Randall: I'm never going to see him again.

Carmen: **[Trying to usher Randall away]** Now, now, darling, why don't you go take a little nap...

Celia: **[To Sylvia]** It's stress...

Randall: **[Pulling away from Carmen]** I can't paint any more....

Carmen: **[To Randall]** Now, darling...

Randall: I can't paint without him, I can't do anything without him....

Carmen: **[Reaching into her purse]** Darling, I want you to take a couple of Valium....

Randall: I'm no good.

Carmen: **[Handing him pills]** ...just take a couple of these...**[to Celia]** Could you get me some water, dear...**[then to Randall]** You're going to feel better in no time.

Sylvia: **[To Carmen]** Maybe we should leave.

Randall: I want to die...

Sylvia: **[To Carmen, concerned]** Should we call a doctor?

Celia: **[With a glass of water, taking Randall by the arm]** Come on, Randall, darling, let's go take a little nap.

Randall: **[To Celia]** Please, let me die....

Celia: **[Trying to get him to take the Valium]** Take the nice pill and you'll feel all better.

[Celia leads him away. They exit]

Sylvia: **[Beat, then to Carmen]** I don't understand...

Carmen: **[To Sylvia]** Darling, let's go back to my office...

Sylvia: This isn't quite what I expected...

Carmen: You don't understand...

Sylvia: This is not the image...

Carmen: ...he has hallucinations, he thinks Mickey's left him, he's so desperately, dearly in love with Mickey he loses all perspective, has these fantasies of abandonment...

Sylvia: **[Trying to understand]** He gets *confused*...

Carmen: Darling, artists are terribly vulnerable beings, terribly vulnerable, susceptible to every rock and shoal...flying, then drowning, soaring, then falling...they need so much help, so much care, so much dedication, it's a full time a job, I don't know how I do it...I have to attend to everything, the business aspects, the emotional aspects, worry about whether they're working too hard, worry about how they're getting along, strive to provide them with financial security, a nurturing space, emotional support so they can continue to create their marvelous works...And they're such lovely men, *lovely, lovely* men, sweet, kind, generous, committed, a marvelous couple...it's like music, one could weep, such beautiful love, such beautiful devotion, a union of heart and mind and soul... **[During the course of this speech, Sylvia has become quite transfixed by Carmen, she moves closer to her, and by the end she's gazing romantically into Carmen's eyes...when suddenly Randall comes rushing back out, excited like a little kid, carrying the stock pot.]**

Randall: **[To Carmen]** Would Dr. Bloodburger like to see my latest work?

BLACKOUT

Act Two, Scene 2

A day later. As the lights slowly come up, Randall and Celia are on the futon experiencing the final gasps and moans of orgasm—Randall is on his back, Celia is straddling him on top, clearly in control. Both of them are wearing bathrobes that have fallen open during the course of their love-making. After the climax, there's a long pause, some catching of breath, as Randall lies inert on the futon. In time, Celia stands, adjusts her robe, and crosses to the kitchen. She pours herself a scotch and lights a cigarette, and smokes. After a time Randall sits up.

Randall: What's wrong?

Celia: Nothing.

Randall: Wasn't I good enough?

Celia: What do you care?

Randall: What was all that hollering about?

Celia: Dramatic effect.

Randall: I thought you didn't like me.

Celia: Nobody likes you.

Randall: Everybody likes me...

Celia: Name one.

There's a pause as Randall stands crosses to Celia, pulls her toward him and they engage in some pretty serious kissing for a few moments, then...

Celia: **[Pulling away from him]** Look, I'm getting out of here.

Randall: **[Pulling her back]** Come on...

Celia: **[Pulling away]** It's too complicated.

Randall: What's complicated?

Celia: Everything's complicated.

Randall: **[Pulling her toward him]** Come on..

Celia: **[Pulling away from him]** Leave me alone. **[She stands and walks away]**

Randall: **[Long beat]** I wasn't good enough.

Celia: You were fine.

Randall: **[Nodding]** I wasn't good enough.

Celia: Darling, fucking isn't what it used to be, okay? Don't take it personally.

Randall: I've never been good enough.

Celia: You can only do primal once. We did primal...years ago...you can never do primal again.

Randall: I like primal.

Celia: Let's not get psychological.

Randall: You scare me.

Celia: I should.

Randall: You don't really need anyone, do you?

Celia: I'm broke, I'm unemployed, and I couldn't take another morning of standing in front of a class, going on about the aesthetic of loneliness in twentieth century art...do you have any idea how fucking lucky you are?!

Randall: **[Still studying her intently]** You're the smartest person I've ever met, really...

Celia: **[Referring to why Randall is lucky]** You're crazy.

Randall: ...I mean, *really, really* smart...

Celia: ...it's a luxury, craziness is a fucking luxury...

Randall: ...cool, calm, brilliant, I-don't-need-anybody-fuck-you smart...

Celia: I'd like to be crazy, too, but I don't have enough money...

Randall: You're the one with the talent, you know that?

Celia: I know.

Randall: Your stuff makes our stuff look like beginner's stuff...

Celia: I know.

Randall: ...blows me away...

Celia: Me too.

Randall: **[Looking up at the painting]** This is shit, absolute shit...

Celia: **[Not without sarcasm]** You're too sensitive. **[She turns and crosses to the refrigerator, starts looking for something to eat]**

Randall moves down stage and sits in front of a rather spectacular, peculiarly unique arrangement of flowers that he had been working on earlier. He picks up a flower and carefully, meticulously places it in the arrangement just so, studies the arrangement for a moment then takes the flower out and places it elsewhere. He studies the arrangement, places another flower, then, dissatisfied, takes it out and throws it on the ground.

Randall: **[Exasperated]** Everything's a knot, my stomach's a knot, my brain's a knot...all I do is worry, worry all the time, and I try to tell myself, I say, *Randall, Randall, Randall*, you are not responsible for every war, every famine, every disease, every hurt that humanity has ever suffered...and I want to cry, I just want to cry, it is *so, so, so, so sad...everything is so fucking sad...sad, sad, sad, sad, sad... I bleed. I bleed.* I bleed for every single stupid fucking asshole, every single one of them...they are so fucking dumb...So, *so, so, so, so dumb*, and I think about them, and I worry about them, and I hate them, and I want to kill them, each of them, individually, and watch them die a miserable fucking death, and then mourn them, and cry for them, and pray for them, and lay one perfectly formed, brilliantly colored flower on every single grave...**[He focuses back on the flowers for a moment]**

Celia: **[Eating something, talking more-or-less to herself]** I really don't mind watching people destroy themselves...it can be quite fascinating...

Randall: **[Engrossed in the flower arrangement]** God I love flowers. From now on floral is the only medium I'm working in, just floral...fuckin' fabulous...

Celia: **[Studying Randall]** ...constant, delusional self-stimulation...

Randall: ...I don't need people, I don't want people, from now on it's just me and the flowers.

Suddenly the lights come up on the doorway and Mickey appears with his suitcases. He pauses at the door, waiting for someone to acknowledge him. Randall, oblivious, continues to focus on the flowers. Celia continues to focus on what she's eating. Mickey enters and crosses to the kitchen area and sets down his bags, turns, looks up, waits again for someone to acknowledge him, then notices that both Randall and Celia are wearing bathrobes and that the futon has clearly been slept on.

Mickey: Having a little slumber party?

Celia: Reliving old times.

Mickey: **[Dryly]** How nice.

Celia: Not really.

Mickey: **[Sternly commanding Randall]** I want you to pick up your things, right now. I want the futon back up in the loft, and *everything*, and I mean *everything*, back exactly where it's supposed to be...

Celia: **[Dryly]** Welcome home...

Mickey: **[Sarcastically to Celia]** Little lost soul, seeks asylum, moves in with old friends, tries to break up loving relationship...

Celia: You can have him.

Mickey: I don't want him...

Randall: **[Looking up]** What are you doing here?

Mickey: I live here.

Randall: I thought you moved out.

Mickey: **[Beat]** Steve and Denny seem to be going through a bit of a *rough* spot in their relationship, something about "contradictory goals and hidden agendas"...And their friend Sheila wants to have a baby and she wants Denny to be the father, and Steve doesn't think it's really a very good idea, and yesterday was going to be the first official "insemination day," the details of which I'll spare you, except it didn't happen because Steve started talking about how maybe *he* should be the father while Sheila sat around trying to figure out a name for the kid, and Denny is worried about schools and whether they should

send the kid to something private, or whether it would be better to let the kid be exposed to what he calls "the reality of real life"...and there's *grease* covering every surface in the kitchen, not to mention every surface of every other room, grease and dust and bacterial slim, and just about the point when Denny suggested that maybe I should take Lamaze classes with them, Sheila expressed her concern that maybe my presence in the household was interfering with the beneficial flow of the *chi*...and not only do my gums ache, but my head aches, lacerating pains right through the temples, and while they're nattering on about how their little replicant is going to be the brilliant leader of the 21st century, *I am dying of terminal gum disease, thank you, and all I want is a quiet, sane place to die!* **[He opens a bag and starts pulling things out, then...]** This is the last place in the world I want to be right now to be, but I don't have any other place else to go...and I thought maybe you could find some compassion for the homeless...**[Long beat, as he pulls some more things out of his bag, then looks up]** I don't care about either of you. Whatever you want to do just go right ahead and do it, I just want to be left alone...pretend that I do not exist, because I don't. **[He continues to unpack]**

Celia: **[Beat, as she studies him]** Why is that when people have something really good going, they get this overwhelming need to fuck it up? Why is that?

Mickey: Why is that?

Celia: Because they're stupid.

Mickey: Why don't you go pack your little bags, sweetheart, and find somebody else to torment, okay?

Celia: Why don't you two figure out that you're both so fucking stupid you need each other desperately to survive.

Mickey: And where does that put you, may I ask?

Randall: You leave her alone.

Mickey: *You* leave her alone....**[then viciously to Celia]** I knew about you, I knew all about you all along, I'm not so dumb, every time you come here, it's just another excuse to get your hands on him, and so maybe I tricked you, okay? Maybe I staged a little break-up, okay? Maybe I just ran away to see what you two would do when left to your own sad little pathetic devious filthy-minded alcohol-and-drug-driven sex-crazed perversely heterosexual devices...and it's just what I suspected, caught red-handed, pants down, skirts up, fucking your brains out, not that you have any brains to begin with, *bitch*.

Celia: **[Beat]** / introduced you two to each other, remember that?

Randall: **[Angrily, to Mickey]** Just walk in, take right over, start telling everybody else what to do...

Celia: / was the one who gave you two the idea of working together, remember that?

Mickey: **[To Randall]** The futon goes upstairs, the plants go back by the window...

Randall: **[Yelling at Mickey]** Get out of my loft. This is *my* loft. You can't just come walkin' back in here saying "I changed my mind, move over."

Mickey: Who says?

Randall: Faggot.

Celia: **[Beat]** The thing that I liked the most was that both of you were miserable, and then after you got together you were still miserable, but something started to happen, something good, like something you could call "love" **[Beat]** ...but sometimes it doesn't look like love, it looks like boredom, or anger, or confusion, or despair, and it's pathetic when two people who have it don't appreciate it, because it's what everybody else is looking for... **[Beat]** Excuse me, I've got to go floss my teeth. **[She exits up the stairs]**

Long pause

Mickey: **[Calmly, to Randall]** I went to a lawyer and had him look over the papers we signed...and it turns out that *we*, it appears, are no longer you and me...*we* are now a *corporation*, doing business in the State of California under the name of Randall-and-Mickey, and everything you think you own is owned by Randall-and-Mickey, everything you've ever painted or *will* paint is owned by Randall-and-Mickey, the lease on this loft is in the name of Randall-and-Mickey, and you and I only own 50% of the shares of Randall-and-Mickey, Carmen owns all the rest. We don't even own our own names.

Randall: Fuck this...

Mickey: *She* has the "privilege and obligation" to *sell* our work, and *we* have the "privilege and obligation" to *produce* the work...

Randall: **[Suddenly crossing, determined]** I'm gettin' outta here...

Mickey: The lawyer says we can try to renegotiate or sue...he'll be happy to represent us.

Randall: **[Pulling a bag out]** ..movin' up to Mendocino, growin' some dope...

Mickey: ...he might want to buy some of our stuff...

Randall: **[Starting to throw things into the bag]** ...live naked, grow dope, watch the stars move across the sky at night...

Mickey: Randall, darling, *I* am not happy, *you* are not happy, *no one* is happy, this is the human condition...

Randall: **[Muttering, as he continues throwing clothes into the bag]** ...spending your life staring at a fuckin' piece of canvas, tryin' to make somethin' out of nothin'...

Mickey: I was thinking about making that nice porcini pasta that you like so much, a little green salad with avocados as a special treat...

Randall: **[Muttering]** I hate people...

Mickey: **[Calling up to Celia]** Celia, darling...would you like to join us for dinner?...

Randall: ...drive me fuckin' nuts...

Mickey: **[To Randall]** I thought we could sit down and have a nice meal and celebrate the wonderful friendship we've enjoyed all these years.

Randall: **[Looking up from his packing]** You really think I'm stupid, don't ya'...

Mickey: I can't slept, I can't eat, I think about you practically every minute, I worry about you, I dream about you...

Randall: ...I *am* stupid...**[starts changing into jeans and a T-shirt]**

Mickey: ...and I realized how I was blaming everybody for my unhappiness but myself....

Randall: **[As he changes]** ...it's a mid-life thing, okay, it's a fuckin' mid-life thing...

Mickey: Maybe we could start over.

Randall:fuckin' stuck in the middle of your fuckin' stupid life and you don't know what to do about it so all you can do is run away, and that's exactly what I'm going to do...

Mickey: Remember the nights we spent working together, never talking, just working, and we were happy...do you remember that, happy, do you remember what that was like...happy?

Randall: You don't get it, do you...

Mickey: Do you remember happy?

Randall: I don't like you. I never liked you. I've never liked you for a minute.

Mickey: **[Beat]** I didn't say things were going to be perfect.

Randall: You were comin' on to me, like nobody'd ever come on to me before, and it was powerful, ya' know, it was pretty fuckin' powerful, and we started painting together and we were painting pretty great stuff together... and it's all been cool, okay, pretty fuckin' cool...but, *man*, I never liked you...**[beat]** I mean, you turn me on, okay...you turn me on a lot, but, man, everybody turns me on...I've never met anybody that didn't turn me on, don't take it personally...**[he throws a few more things in his bag]**

Mickey: **[After a pause, as Randall closes his bag and heads toward the door]** It's been nice knowing you.

Randall: At least I know I'm fucked up...

Mickey: I'm fucked up too...

Randall: You're completely fucked up, I'm just sort of fucked up...**[pushing Mickey aside as]** Get out of my way...

Mickey: **[Reaching out to him]** Randall....

Randall: **[Grabbing the flowers as he passes them, throwing them on the floor]** Fuckin' flowers, I fuckin' *hate* flowers, I fuckin' hate everything...**[He exits]**

Mickey: **[After a beat, calling to him, weakly]** Randall?

BLACKOUT

Act Two, Scene 3

Two days later. Mickey is working on the painting. Celia is smoking. She's been talking to him for quite some time.

Celia: ...so she called and I said "no," and she said "please," and I said I was "too tired," and she was having dinner with Dr. Bloodhorn but thought she could get away early, and couldn't we just?...and I said, "no," and she said "please," and I said I was "too tired," and she started telling me about how brilliant and talented I am and how she's going to "shape" my career, and maybe we could go away together this weekend, and I said I couldn't, and she said "please," and this is what happens, every time, you put out a little and they want more, and I put out a couple of times, okay, three times maybe, maybe four, nothing I couldn't handle, and now she thinks she has proprietary rights on my body, and finally I told her I had a "headache" and if a woman doesn't understand "headache" then you're in trouble for sure. **[Beat]** So then I went out to the RightSpot. **[Beat]** And somewhere around the third vodka-tonic, this guy named Alejandro comes over and starts telling me about how he does some sort of bullshit multimedia video and sound "environments-for-events" kind of thing.... And he buys me another vodka-tonic, and we start talking, and the next thing I know he's goin' on about maybe us doin' our work together 'cause my stuff sounds like such great fuckin' stuff and I'm so cool, and he's so cool, and doin' art is like being a god making beauty in the middle of the desert of the ugly fucking world, and if the two of us'd just do our art together, like, wow...**[Beat]** And I looked at him...and I told him...that, frankly, I can't stand art, I hate art, I hate everything to do with art, I hate the smell of art and the mess of art, and the whole fucking business of art, but it's the only thing I've ever been any good at, and I don't do words, and I've never figured out numbers, and I wouldn't be good at retail because I can't stand people, and I especially can't stand people who are into multimedia video and sound. **[Beat]** You want to know what he said? He wanted to know if I'd ever taken the train from San Francisco to Vancouver. And I said I didn't even know there *was* a train that went from San Francisco to Vancouver, and he said it was the greatest fuckin' romantic train-ride in the world, great scenery, great food, great sleeping cars for two, and he really wanted to take me on it, and then he asked me if he could see my tongue... And I explained very nicely that I didn't like to show it to strangers...and so he showed me *his* tongue...and explained how you can tell everything about a person's character by their tongue and how *his* tongue showed what a great fuckin' guy he was, and how smart and sweet-smelling he was, and then in the middle of the tongue lecture he suddenly

remembered that he'd met me before at some party back in the 80's at Lonny Schneiderman's place, and I told him that I've never known anyone named Lonny Schneiderman in my entire life, and so he invited me to go home with him to meet his cat and listen to his collection of Betty Carter albums, and I'll be damned if I didn't go. **[Beat]** He said I had a great tongue.

- Mickey: **[Turning from the painting]** I want you to go wash every square inch of your body, right now...
- Celia: ...he was beggin' for it, crawlin' around on all fours...
- Mickey: ...I'm serious...
- Celia: ...and I was tellin' him what he *could* do and what he *couldn't* do, and what I let him do wasn't a whole hell of a lot, and that turned him on even more, and it turns out what he really wanted was someone to tell him "no" all the time, and saying "no" all the time happens to be just exactly what I like to do. **[Beat]** He wants me to move in with him, wants to support me, wants to create a video-and-sound environment that I can call home.
- Mickey: Say no.
- Celia: What's home?
- Mickey: Stay here.
- Celia: I've never had one, I probably never will....
- Mickey: You've been coming back here for years, this is where you belong...
- Celia: He wants to see me again tonight.
- Mickey: We're your family, we're here to protect you.
- Celia: I told him no.
- Mickey: I'm going to cook a nice meal tonight, I was hoping you could be here...
- Pause as he turns back to the painting and starts to paint, but then turns...**
- Mickey: I think I'm coping quite well...
- Celia: I think you're coping beautifully...

Mickey: Usually I'd be hysterical by now...

Celia: He always comes back, he will this time too...

Mickey: ...I'm staying calm, staying engaged...

Celia: ...you run away to get attention, he runs away to get attention...

Mickey: **[Trying to convince himself]** Everything's going to be fine...

Celia: ...two little boys acting out your lives in little boy ways...**[beat, then referring to the painting]** Honey, this thing stinks, absolutely stinks, I'm sorry to say this, but this thing is the single most boring fucking tedious stupid fucking thing you guys have ever painted...

Mickey: Thank you.

Celia: ...so...*red*

Mickey: Randall's favorite color...

Celia: Everything you've painted for years has been this ugly *red*...

Mickey: *My* favorite color...

Celia: ...the same thing, the same size...

Mickey: It's a series...

Celia; ...the same *red*.

Mickey: **[Beat]** It's about blood.

Celia: I see.

Mickey: It's about mortality.

Celia: I see.

Mickey: It's about facing the blank wall in the middle of your life and trying to make something out of it...

Celia: Do you now what people do when they're scared?

Mickey: They run away from each other...

Celia: They do the same thing over and over...

Mickey: I suppose you're some kind of expert...

Celia: They're afraid to do anything that isn't what they've already done...

Mickey: You still love him don't you.

Celia: What difference does it make?

Mickey: It's okay if you love him.

Celia: I've always loved him.

Mickey: We can both love him...

Celia: Honey, you saved me.

Mickey: *You* saved me.

Celia: I'd have quit painting if it weren't for you...

Mickey: I'd have gone back to Idaho if it weren't for you...

Celia: I'd have gone hungry and died if it weren't for you, and so here I am again, nowhere to go, no idea what to do...

Mickey: Stay as long as you'd like...

Celia: **[Beat, then grabbing the paint brush from Mickey]** Give me this...

She takes the brush, dips it in the red paint, and starts working on the painting, slapping the paint around. There's a pause as Mickey watches her, then...

Mickey: You're the most talented person I know, really...you're the one with the talent, you know that?...your stuff makes our stuff look like beginner's stuff, **[referring to the painting]** ...this is beginner's stuff..

Celia: You just need a little help...

Mickey: **[Referring to the painting]** This is shit, absolute shit...

Celia: You're just stuck...

Mickey: It's shit...this is about shit...

Celia: You just have to work through it...

Mickey: There's nowhere to go...

Celia: You're stuck. **[She's still painting]**

Mickey: We're stuck

Celia: Everybody's stuck...

Mickey: **[Agreeing]**...this is what life's all about now...

Celia: ...no way out, no where to go, nothing's right, all you can do is scream....

Mickey: **[Referring to the painting]** This is a scream...

Celia: **[Agreeing]** This is a cry for help. **[She slaps more paint on the painting]**

Mickey: **[Pause, as he watches her paint, then...]** You really have a very special mind, you know that?

Celia: Thank you.

Mickey: You don't think like a human being...

Celia: Thank you.

Mickey: You're broader in scope.

Celia: Thank you.

Mickey: You're not limited, other people are limited...I'm limited...Randall's limited...

Celia: Try not to worry about it....**[She continues to paint]**

Mickey: **[Long beat as he watches, then concerned]** What if he's gone to the bridge...

Celia: He hasn't...

Mickey: He didn't say he was going to the bridge, usually he says he's going to the bridge...that's what worries me...

Celia: Everything's so dramatic now...

Mickey: ...he's been gone for 36 hours...

Celia: ...drama, 36 hours a day...

Mickey: ...what if he's leaning over the rail right now staring down into the cold black bay...

Celia: ...and any minute he'll wander in through the door and fall on his knees and break into tears and say he's sorry, and you'll start painting together again because that's what keeps you going and you'll be miserable together for the rest of your lives, and then you'll die. **[Beat]** It's really kind of beautiful...

Suddenly the lights shift as Randall appears in the doorway, disheveled, badly hung over but still drunk, completely forlorn. Dejectedly he enters, eyes down. Mickey and Celia silently watch him, he staggers in further, then slowly, drunkenly crosses to Mickey...

Randall: **[Falling to his knees, remorsefully, tearfully before Mickey]** I didn't mean to be bad, I wasn't going to be bad, I wanted to be good and be nice and treat you right, and then things got all fucked up, and I got all fucked up, and I hurt you and I didn't want to hurt you, all I ever do is hurt you, I'm a bad person and I know I'm a bad person and I don't want to be a bad person...and you **[Mickey]** hate me, and you **[Celia]** hate me, and everybody else hates me, and so I went to the bridge...thought I'd do everybody a favor...

Celia: **[Beat]** But stopped off first for one last tequila?

Randall: I needed to think.

Celia: **[To Mickey]** Randall was last seen at 1:25 a.m. this morning at the RightSpot, staggering drunk and salivating, arms and legs wrapped around Rabbit Face.

Randall: **[Defensively]** I didn't know she was going to be there.

Celia: **[Imitating Rabbit Face]** "Hi!"

Randall: What was I supposed to do?

Celia: So big and handsome and helpless.

Mickey: **[To Randall]** I want you to go wash every square inch of your body right this minute...

Randall: I didn't touch her.

Mickey: ...burn those clothes....

Randall: I didn't touch her! We talked.

Celia: You talked...

Randall: We talked.

Mickey: You talked.

Celia: The aesthetics of loneliness in 20th century art?

Randall: Investments.

Celia: Investments.

Randall: And then I passed out.

Mickey: Investments?

Randall: I couldn't get it up.

Mickey: I beg your pardon.

Randall: I couldn't get it up, okay?

Mickey: **[To Celia]** This is a first.

Randall: It was too scary.

Mickey: I'd be scared too.

Celia: So would I.

Randall: She's one scary woman...

Celia: Scarier than most.

Randall: **[Then shaking his head, sadly]** I'm a bad homo, I'm a bad hetero, I'm a bad person...

Mickey: Why don't you go take a shower and get cleaned up.

Randall: **[To Mickey]** Man, you should go out there and find yourself some nice guy who'll treat you right...always goin' out of your way doin' something nice for me...

Mickey: Have you had any breakfast?

Randall: ...and then I go out and do something really lousy, and then I hate myself for it, and then I blame you.

Mickey: Do you *want* some breakfast?

Randall: Hate me! Hate me! Hate me! Don't you get it...hate me!

Mickey: **[To Celia]** Why do I find him so fascinating?

Celia: He's so needy.

Randall: Kick me out, man, tell me to get out of your fuckin' life, okay?

Mickey: I keep trying to, but you keep coming back, and when I try to leave, I come back too.

Randall: I'm a mess.

Mickey: We're both a mess.

Celia: The perfect basis for a wonderful relationship.

Randall: **[After a hesitation, he opens his arms to Mickey]** Mick-ey...

Mickey: **[Opening his arms to Randall]** Randall...

Randall: Mick-ey, baby...

Mickey: Randall, honey...

Randall: **[Nuzzling his head against Mickey]** Mickey...Mickey...Mick-ee-ee-ee...

Long beat as Randall and Mickey embrace.

Celia: **[As she watches them]** Co-dependency is such a beautiful thing.

Carmen suddenly appears in the doorway and enters in a rush, crossing directly to Celia.

Carmen: **[Excited, to Celia]** I've got the most marvelous news... I showed Dr. Bloodhorn the slides of the voodoo dolls and she loved them, absolutely *loved* them, she's thinking about a package...the Betsy Ross, the Dolly Madison, the Ethel Merman...

Celia: **[Trying to head Carmen back to the door]** Darling, we're having a little moment of reconciliation....**[indicating Randall and Mickey]**

Carmen: **[Acidly to Randall and Mickey]** Unfortunately Dr. Bloodhorn is having second thoughts about *your* work, she's not quite sure the artists are of sufficient *maturity* to receive such national attention...**[then to Celia]** Let me take you out to dinner to celebrate...

Celia: I'm sorry...

Carmen: Please...

Celia: I can't...

Carmen: I'd so hoped...

Celia: **[Trying to head Carmen to the door]** I've already made other plans...

Carmen: Darling, I just spent three days playing snuggle-and-kiss with a woman I really can't stand...breakfast with her, lunch with her, drinks with her, long hand-holding "art-and-beauty" dinners with her, all the while trying to promote your work, *please*....

Celia: **[Apologetically]** I'm sorry I have a date...

Carmen: Darling...

Celia:with a guy who's into multi-media video and sound...

Mickey: **[A little too sweetly/brightly, to Carmen]** Maybe you'd like to have dinner with us?

Randall: Oh, *do*.

Carmen: **[Ignoring them, to Celia]** I don't understand...

Celia: What's to understand?

Carmen: What about us?

Celia: What about us?

Carmen: You and me...

Celia: **[Trying to head Carmen to the door]** How about lunch tomorrow?

Carmen: I thought we were...

Celia: Why don't I call you in the morning...

Carmen: Darling, I'm just trying to help...you need me, I need you...it's simple...

Celia: **[Heading Carmen to the door]** Let's talk about it tomorrow....

Mickey: **[A little too sweetly, to Carmen]** I'm making my mother's special chicken cacciatore...

Carmen: **[To Celia]** You said you never felt such passion.

Celia: I lied.

Carmen: Such intensity.

Celia: I lied.

Carmen: Such excitement.

Celia: I lied...

Carmen: **[Beat]** I see.

Mickey: **[A little too sweetly, to Carmen]** Garlic mashed potatoes, low-fat lemon soufflé for dessert...

Carmen: **[Starts to leave, then turns to Celia, all business]** I'll call you when I hear from Dr. Bloodhorn, and she makes a definite offer... **[then to Randall and Mickey]** and as for *you* two, if the Whitney doesn't want this thing, I've got a dealer in Japan who'll pay three times as much so... **[then pointing at the painting]** Paint! Paint, for god's sake! Finish the goddamned thing, and then get on with another one...**[she turn to leave, gets to the door, then turns back]** And *please* try to remember that art's not just a *thing* any more, it's a *conversation*, a dialogue between artist and public working together to realize a vision...and it's not just *your* vision, darlings, it's *their* vision too, and *their* money, and *their* judgment that determines the value of the *thing*, and without them, and without me, darlings, you're nothing, you're nowhere, you're invisible, and *things* like this **[the painting]** don't even exist. **[She turns and exits]**

Mickey: **[After a long beat]** She's a very unhappy person...

Celia: There's so much they don't tell you about in art school...

Mickey: ...pushy people are not happy people...

Randall: **[Referring to the painting]** This is *our* conversation, not her conversation...

Mickey: ...she doesn't have a creative life of her own, doesn't have a meaningful relationship of her own...

Randall: What would she and the fuckin' public have their little conversations about if they didn't have us, ya' know what I mean, think about it, what in the fuck are they gonna talk about?

Celia: The weather.

Randall: Fuckin' public...**[He turns and studies the painting]**

Mickey: It's sad...

Celia: If no one minds, I'm going to go upstairs and fill the tub and lie in it and put my ears under the water and close my eyes and try to forget who I am...**[she starts toward the stairs]**

Mickey: **[To Celia]** I wish you could have dinner with us tonight...

Celia: I'd be happy too...

Mickey: I thought you had a date...

Celia: I lied.

Randall: **[Studying the painting, nodding approvingly]** This is lookin' seriously fuckin' good...

Celia: **[As she starts climbing the stairs]** It's always so much fun living with you guys...

Mickey: I was thinking of inviting Steve and Denny over for dessert...

Celia: ...always a happy ending...

Randall: **[Still looking at the painting]** ...seriously, seriously, seriously fuckin' good...

Mickey: **[To Randall]** I thought we could show them the photos of Mexico...

Randall: **[To Mickey, referring to the painting]** Man, you've been doin' some great stuff here...

Mickey: ...tell them about what a great time we had.

Celia: **[As she climbs the steps to the second level]** I need an ocean, I need a mountain, I need a desert, I need an island, I need a moon...

She exits. There's a long pause as Mickey starts fussing around, then...

- Randall: Things are gonna be different this time...
- Mickey: Things are going to be the same...
- Randall: I'm learnin', I'm gonna change...
- Mickey: ...you're going to be who you're going to be, I'm going to be who I'm going to be, we just have to deal with it...
- Randall: I'm not messin' around with any more women, okay?...I'm serious, that was just a phase, nothin' serious...
- Mickey: Just let me know if you're not coming home.
- Randall: I'm just gonna mess around with you.
- Mickey: Thank you.
- Randall: And with myself.
- Mickey: Whatever.
- Randall: And I was lyin' there with what's-her-face in the middle of the night, wide awake, couldn't sleep, and I was thinkin' about you and all the stuff we've been through...
- Mickey: ...let's not get sentimental...
- Randall: ...always puttin' up with, helpin' me, bein' understanding and.....
- Mickey: **[Suddenly shouting]** I am not your goddamned wife, okay...I'm sick-and-fucking-tired of being your goddamned wife!
- Randall: I want to help out more around here, I'm serious.
- Mickey: ...and I'm not your goddamned mother either...
- Randall: You shouldn't have to do all the cookin' and cleanin'.
- Mickey: I'm a person.
- Randall: I make a great fuckin' stir fry...
- Mickey: I have needs.

Randall: Man, I don't want a wife, I never wanted a wife, and I don't want a mother either, okay, I had a mother, it didn't work out real well, okay, that's not what I want... I want you...

Mickey: **[After a long beat]** My periodontist says I need an absolutely stress free environment...

Randall: Why don't I help you fix dinner and then I'll clean up and then we can go to a movie, any movie you want, I'm serious....even one with subtitles.

Mickey: She says that everybody has bad gums, most people just don't realize it...

Randall: **[Agreeing]** It's the fuckin' fluoride...

Mickey: ...I shouldn't feel stigmatized...

Randall: ...pisses me off, they put that shit in the water and it's rottin' away everybody's fuckin' gums... I've got somethin' bad goin' on right here, see... **[indicating]** ...some sort of red thing goin' on there, ya' see that? It hurts, ya' know what I mean, kind of a pain thing goin' on right there...**[he shows Mickey the spot]**

Mickey: **[Beat, as he looks closely at Randall's gums, then start nodding]** Periodontitis...acute periodontitis...

Randall: ...it hurts pretty bad...

Mickey: **[Still looking]** ...advanced acute periodontitis...

Randall: ...and I've got sort of an indigestion thing goin' on, a constipation kind of thing goin' on, I can't eat, I can't sleep...

Mickey: **[Nodding understandingly]** ...afraid to close your eyes....

Randall: ...afraid to dream...

Mickey: **[Nodding]** ..old ladies..

Randall: **[Nodding]** ...every night old ladies...

Mickey: ...every where you look old ladies...

Randall: ...following us in the streets...

Mickey: **[Imitating]** Help me, please, help me...

Randall: ...gnarled old hands, old faces...

Mickey: ...horrible, shrunken, blood-drained, hideous-looking gums.

Randall: **[Beat, then...]** And they keep coming closer...

Mickey: ...and we start running...

Randall: ...and they keep coming closer...

Mickey: ...and we keep running...

Randall: ...and they keep coming closer and closer and closer ...

Mickey: ...and we keep running and running and running...

Randall: ...and they're comin' at us...

Mickey: ...fingernails and teeth...

Randall: ...clawing us...

Mickey: ...tearing us apart...

Randall: ...and we're screaming...

Mickey: **[Crying out]** ...help, help...

Randall: **[Crying out]** ...please...

Mickey: ...help us, please help us...

Randall: ...please, please, please... **[They clutch each other and scream, just as they were doing when they woke up from the dream.]**

Pause

Mickey: **[Interpreting the dream]** You can't run away...

Randall: **[Interpreting the dream]** We're all old ladies.....

Mickey: ...you can never run away....

Randall: ...we're all becoming old ladies...

Mickey: ..can't run away from life, can't run away from death, can't run away from each other...

Randall: We've gotta stick together...

Mickey: It's a mid-life thing...

Randall: You and me, ya' know what I mean?

Mickey: ...we're having a mid-life thing...

Randall: We've gotta keep painting...

Mickey: ...things are closing in on us and we're afraid...

Randall: We gotta keep painting, we gotta keep makin' somethin', creating somethin'...

Mickey:afraid to paint, afraid to sleep...

Randall: We think too much...

Mickey: Is that it...

Randall: ...you can't think and do art, you just have to *do*...

Mickey: **[Nodding]** ...just paint...

Randall:don't dream, don't think...

Mickey; ...just fuckin' paint.

Randall: We're animals.

Mickey: Go take a shower.

Randall: ...fuckin' animals.

Mickey: ...go take a shower, I'll make breakfast.

Randall: ...animals with a fuckin' brush...

Mickey: **[Nodding]** ...artist animals....

Randall: ...sad, isn't it?

Mickey: Tragic. Go take a shower.

Pause, as Randall starts to exit to go to the shower, then stops and studies the painting.

Randall: This is lookin' real good, seriously fuckin' good.

Mickey: **[Studying the painting, doubtful]** I don't know...

Randall: ...seriously fuckin' good....

Mickey: ...it's sooo...

Randall: ...we've gotta keep working on it...

Mickey: ... *red*...

Randall: ...we gotta keep workin' to find out what it's going to become.

Pause, as they study the painting.

Mickey: What if it's just red paint and despair?

Randall: We gotta keep paintin', gotta keep paintin' just to know we're fuckin' alive...

Mickey: **[Long beat, as he studies the painting]** What if we're the world's two biggest fools?

There's a long pause, as they study the painting, and then Mickey and Randall each turn and pick up a can of paint[Mickey picks a can of green, Randall a can of blue] and a brush and move to the painting and without consulting each other, spontaneously attack the painting with huge splashes of blue and green. They look at each other and laugh.

BLACKOUT