

ALL NIGHT LONG

by

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ACT ONE

Set: The inside of a house. It's like one of those doll houses with shuttered windows and big rooms. There is a stairway stage left that leads to three rooms above": Tammy's room, Eddy's room, and the master bedroom. There is a landing running across and over the spacious living room below.

Below is a kitchen, stage left, with refrigerator, cupboards, and a large dining table. Farther down the left wall is a sliding door which is Terry's place. There are also a few unexpected places in the walls for entrances and exits. Down center is a couch and a coffee table. Up center is the front door. There are windows all around in the walls pleasantly spaced and large. There is an upstage right window which is fairly large and, later in the second act, is blocked up with a stone cube with the curtains drawn hiding it, but in the first act, it isn't there.

When the play begins it is afternoon and light is coming through the windows. As the play progresses it gets darker outside.

Eddy enters through the front door. It's just after school. He has his books in a book strap. He tosses the books on the sofas and heads toward the refrigerator.

EDDY

Him Mom, I'm home! *(He pulls out the fixings for an enormous sandwich and begins to build one)* Had a hard day today. Georgie Gessel beat me up as soon as I got in the building. He told me to get off Buddha Row. I told him that I wasn't on Buddha Row. And that got him real mad. I'm pretty sure that he was thinking about hitting somebody before he got to school, especially me. I guess I got the face you like to punch. But I covered my cheeks with the sides of my hands like Dad told me to do and he only got me on the forehead and temples, sure protects the eyes though. Anyway, Georgie left in a huff after some of the

cheerleaders gave him the read out. He got real red in the face and his started to water and he snorted up his nose a lot and got me up against the lockers so that I made a big bang and I saw stars pouring out of my eyes and I felt all alone in the center of the universe like a big blob of nothing, shrinking all of the stuff of creation out of my head, and Karen Minataur bent real close to my face so that I could smell her perfume and I could see her big green eyes and her full red glisteny lips and her pearly white teeth and I could feel her warm, moist breath. And she said in the sweetest voice, "Are you okay, Eddie? Georgie didn't mean it personally. It's just that he's from the other side of the tracks and his dad beats him up a lot: I understood, Mom, I did. And I told her that. I said I had a lot of liberal guild to deal with myself so I could understand the value of a psychotherapeutic perspective. And then she left and I heard Georgie's big Chevy roar off. I worried about her all day. If she keeps missing school she won't be able to go to Springfield Junior C.O. this fall and she has a fine alto voice. (*Eddy has now finished making his huge sandwich and does a California roll over the back of the couch and on to the cushions.*) But one thing I didn't do, Mom, I didn't cry. I know that that might make me tighten up my facial muscles and lock my solar plexus so that I breathe wrong, but it did something for my leadership capacities. I know I won't go down in mixed chorus this year!

(Just then Jill, Eddy's mom, enters through the front door with a bag of groceries.)

JILL

Oh, hi, Eddy.

EDDY

Hi, Mom.

JILL

Oh, yes, a great day, Mom.

JILL

Oh, that's good to hear. (*She goes to the kitchen and begins putting stuff away.*) I do hope your dad had a good one. He was so stuffed this morning I almost kept him home from work. But he wouldn't hear of it. He said, "No, Mommie, I'm going there even if I have to put straws up my nose."

EDDY

Yeah, Dad's a real spirit farmer.

JILL

Are the other kids home yet?

EDDY

I don't think so. I'll check. *(He shouts from the couch.)*
Tammy? Terry?

(Jack, the dad, opens the master bedroom door upstairs and steps out on the landing. He has a huge thumb on his left hand. Half of his face is covered with dried day old shaving lather.)

JACK

Hi, kids. *(He twirls his big thumb.)* "Pluck your magic twanger Froggie!" Remember that, Eddy? And then he'd speak in that low gravelly voice of his. "Hi ya, kids, hi ya?" Oh god, I love that stuff! Have a nice day at school, Eddy?

EDDY

Sure did, Dad. How did it go for you?

JACK

(Imitating Daffy Duck)

T'ere did! Got my thumb th'uck in the th'ink. *(He holds up his big thumb and cackles.)* No way to earn a living.

JILL

Go wash up, Dad. Supper's gonna be ready soon.

JACK

All right, honey.

Jack disappears behind the door winking madly at Eddy.)

JILL

(As she continues setting the table)

You know your sister Tammy might be on Candid Camera next week. They've chosen her from a field of ten. They like her voice and her posture. It could get her good grades in Make-up class and that's a red belt at beautician's school, especially if she perseveres and doesn't act immodestly in the courtyard of King Wen.

EDDY

Mother, what the fuck are you talking about.

JILL

Headaches. It's this eternal housewifery. I feel like a spermed horse. *(She stops and looks at Eddy.)* Did you know yesterday, every time I looked at you I saw a corpse? Do you think that has any significance? Or is it just my lunar menses? The girls at Dream Club said that I shouldn't pay too much attention to such things, that I shouldn't look at it directly, but with the sides of my eyes and feel it as the lather of rather large movements. *(She goes back to her table setting.)* They talk about all that yang and yin but I think it's really western motivation in drag. You knew that Freud's mother was a faggot didn't you?

EDDY

It doesn't really make a difference, Mom, she's dead.

JILL

Oh, but it does, hun, it does in the long run.

EDDY

Who cares about the long run?

JILL

You should if you don't, Eddy. It's not just rationalization, this thinking in large movements. No, no, no. *(She throws back her head and laughs.)* It makes everything so funny! *(She stops laughing and continues to set the table.)* But it's more than that, It gets you into the here and now. It makes you realize that you're not putting up with anything.

EDDY

I know, I know. It gives on a panoramic view, but who cares if I was your father in another life, Mom?

JILL

(Suddenly glaring at Eddy savagely)

But you weren't! *(She goes back to her table dressing.)* Understanding things in a big way keeps you from being a dip shit. Go wash your hands your dad should be coming through the front door any second.

(The doorbell rings. Eddy hurriedly gets up and puts the sandwich on the coffee table and hurries into the downstairs bathroom Jill takes off her apron and brushes back her hair. She stops and looks at the hand she brushed her hair back with.)

JILL

(At first speaking to her hand)

Children all around me. I give them enough room to drown themselves. That's the larger space. I just imagine a huge body filling a river basin, steaming with bio-thermal effluvium, baby smells and moisture. I wander about this body, past the amber oils of its antennae, thinking of it in the large sense. How these viperous coils, these saffron fibers bejungle its dark pits and belched out genitalia and I realize that even God mumbles.

(She throws open the front door. Tammy, the old daughter, is standing in the doorway. She is pretty. She's wearing a red dress.)

TAMMY

I don't know what to say.

JILL

What do you mean?

(Tammy breaks into a shrill teenage giggle and then just stands there silent.)

JILL

(Standing there very still, then...)

You're really making the place silent as a tomb, dear. Why don't you come in?

TAMMY

In there?

JILL

Yes, dear. After all it's your house.

TAMMY

No, it isn't.

JILL

But of course it is.

TAMMY

No, it isn't. It's yours and Dad's. But it's really Dad's. That is until you separate and then you'll probably get the house and a moderate alimony check.

JILL

You're probably right.

TAMMY

But it won't make any difference.

JILL

Why do you say that?

TAMMY

Because they're probably going to turn off the oxygen.

JILL

Who's probably going to turn off the oxygen?

TAMMY

The Telephone Company.

JILL

No, my dearest. They'll try to turn off the meaning and then you'll think you can't breathe, but you'll be able to.

TAMMY

You're not going to let Terry out are you? She's been letting the most outrageous farts and I can't stand it.

JILL

Terry's your sister.

TAMMY

So what? That doesn't mean I have to like her farts.

JILL

She's been having stomach trouble. You should have some compassion.

TAMMY

But they get into my clothes and the kids can smell it at school

JILL

We all smell that way. We just don't keep our minds on it that much. Even Playboy Bunnies smell like that between their legs.

TAMMY

Well, I don't like it.

JILL

That's because you're still cherry. Well, don't just stand there letting the draft in, come in and wipe your feet.

There's plenty of house work to be done for you to complain about.

TAMMY

(Not moving)

Oh, Mom, you know I don't really mind all this house training.

JILL

I know you don't hun, but we've got to spat about something, what's a mom and dot supposed to do with each other?

TAMMY

Mother, tell me the truth. Is the blood really passed through the sperm?

JILL

(Smiling slyly)

What do you think? There are no blood brothers, honey.

TAMMY

The V.C.?

(She opens the closet door which is right next to the front door. A vacuum cleaner is inside of it.)

JILL

The vacuum cleaner.

(With that she simply turns the vacuum cleaner on and leaves it running there inside the closet and goes back to her table setting.)

(Tammy simply steps into the house, goes into the closet and pushes the vacuum cleaner out on the floor and begins working.)

(The work and the noise continue for a while when the front door swings slowly open revealing a wan figure in a business hat and top coat. The hat is tipped over so that the bill covers the man's face. He stands there so exhausted that he seems to be leaning on his bones which just happen to be in the right place to support him. He teeters. It is Jack, the same guy who was upstairs just a little while ago only now his business suit and hat have replaced his thumb and lather.)

(Tammy, who has been vacuuming, suddenly looks up and sees the figure. She screams. Jill doesn't seem to notice a thing and keeps setting the table. Tammy continues shrieking and back downstage leaving the vacuum cleaner abandoned and running. The figure reaches out to calm her but staggers instead loosing its tenuous self support and inadvertently heads downstage toward the vacuum cleaner, its hand still extended in front of it. Tammy, still screaming, pulls the vacuum cleaner away from the man by pulling on its cord, giving the impression that the vacuum cleaner is coming toward her of its own will. The figure stumbles toward the vacuum cleaner, hand out stretched, reaching toward the vacuum cleaner for support, subsequently following it and Tammy. Tammy screams and lets go of the cord, Jack, not by volition but by momentum stumbles into the vacuum cleaner, grabs its handle, and with one hand extended in front of him in a gesture intended to calm the girl, chases her about the room with the vacuum cleaner until it finally corners her and Jill pulls the plug. Jack, falls back against the wall.)

JILL

(Taking Jack's hat and coat)

Tammy, get your father a chair while I fix him an olive equals vermouth and vodka.

(Tammy helps Jack to his chair and sits him down)

JACK

(Pointing at the vacuum cleaner)

I don't like that thing. Put it back in its cage. This house is going to kill us someday. I suppose my son's in the bathroom performing his proverbial autogenesis. And my daughter? Have I Electra-fied you enough to help support an analyst? And my youngest, has it decided on a sex yet? And my ever present conjuga, have you licked my Swisher Sweets today?

JILL

(Elegantly bringing him a drink)

Yes, I have.

(She pulls a cigar from her bosom and gives it to him.)

JACK

Jill.

JILL

Jack.

TAMMY

Oh, this is simply ridiculous!

(She exits upstairs in a huff.)

JACK

Well, so what?

JILL

That's what I say.

(Jack picks her up.)

JILL

Leave me off at the kitchen.

JACK

Okay. *(He carries her to kitchen and puts her down)* I'm going to wash up.

JILL

You'll have to get that guy out of the bathroom first.

JACK

You mean...?

JILL

Yes, he got his thumb stuck in the sink and he's been there all day.

JACK

It's cool. *(Winks)* Return to sender.

(He bounds up the stairs with lightening speed and exits)

JILL

(Looking after him)

Chlorine bleach, seven-up, poker, Skelly gas and Studabaker, that's what me and my Jack grew up in. *(There's a knock on the wall. She ignores it and goes back to her table setting.)* That's my last child, Terry. Jack and me, we watched everything change right before our eyes and no one ever asked us anything about it. They just said, "And there you go" and things got longer, and fatter, and

pointy, and flat, and round and some lines got shorter and some got longer, just like the driveways. Up went the skirts and in went the pants and up went the kids and out went the bellies of some of Jackie's old army buddies and highways criss-crossed the country choking out most of the two-laners like old Highway 6. I don't feel any older for it, not in any physical way. But inside there's a longer staircase.

(A slot slides open in the wall and two little eye holes appear. It's Terry. She drawls out her voice like Patty Herst in her first tape from the S.L.A.)

TERRY

Mom? Dad?

JILL

(Still dressing the table)

Yes, honey? Have you come over to a certain side?

TERRY

I think so.

JILL

Well, you'd better make sure. Why don't you wait just a little bit longer.

TERRY

Okay.

(The eye holes slide shut.)

JILL

(Speaking as she sets the table)

Jack and me, we couldn't have another baby and we wanted one more, just one more so badly. Something to lead us across the border into middle life. But the doctor said that Jackie didn't have the juice. He suggested alternatives, but Jack wouldn't have it. He said, "that's what lesbians do." And we thought the subject was closed. Then one of Jack's friends, a lieutenant general in the reserves said that they had some interesting stuff left over from the space program and that it would all be very nuclear family and so we have Terry now, but she's not all the way through. I like to think of her as a girl. Eddy likes to think of her as a boy. And Tammy, well you know sibling rivalry, especially among teenagers. And Jack, well, sometimes I don't think he likes to think of her at

all, especially when she's "all the way" (*A little bell rings.*) I think she's through. (*Jill goes to the wall.*) I think that's it, honey. Are you ready?

TERRY

(Smiling sweetly and tilting her head slightly)
Yes, Mom.

JILL

Alright, here we go.

(She slides a section of the wall back and there behind it is the prettiest ten year old girl dressed in a sparkling silver dress. She is a radiant, smiling, perfectly healthy child. There are tinkling little music box chimes going on.)

TERRY

(Smiling sweetly and tilting her head slightly)
Hi, Mom.

JILL

Oh, you dressed for supper.

TERRY

Don't describe things so much Mama, you give me the chills.

JILL

Don't go too far out, sweetie, you'll cut your fingers on those diamond studded frets.

TERRY

(Shivering at the image)
Really, Mother, you ought to take up bass fishing.

(Eddie comes out of the downstairs bathroom)

EDDY

What's all this gobblie-goop? I'm never going to get any supper.

(Upstairs there is a most horrendous clanging of anvil and hammer.)

EDDY

What's he doing?

TERRY

He's ironing his shirts.

EDDY

Yuk-yuk.

TERRY

You don't believe me? Watch. *(She lets out a most incredible call)* Hey, Daddy!

(Jack bursts out of the mast bedroom and onto the balcony with a half finished steel shirt on.)

EDDY

What's he trying out for, a razor blade?

JACK

(Sneering while holding his nose with one hand and a sledge hammer with the other)

Oooo, that simply sinks.

JILL

(Who has returned to setting the table)

See what happens when you get hungry?

JACK

Look. *(He sticks his thumb out in front of him)* It went down. But the sink is still swollen. *(He gives a little laugh, then looks down at Terry.)*

I see you haven't started to melt yet.

TERRY

Oh, eat it Groucho.

JACK

The other one was a song called...*(He sings the "Cream of Wheat" song from the 50's kids radio play, "Let's Pretend".* "Cream of wheat is so good to eat that we have it every day. We..."But I can't remember how the rest of the words went.

JILL

Now we're all here but Tammy.

EDDY

I think that's a stupid name.

JILL
(Calling)

Tammy! TammyTammyTammyT-a-m-m-y!

JACK
(To Eddy, from above)

Well, I think your name is sort of stupid.

EDDY
Well, "Jack" isn't anything to crow about.

JACK
It certainly has a lot more substance than "Eddy".

EDDY
YOU're the one who gave it to me.

JACK
How do YOU know that?

EDDY
Well, certainly, MOTHER wouldn't have pinned such an atrocious license on me.

JACK
What? With a name like JILL? I wouldn't be so sure about that.

TERRY
Oh for crying out loud, will you stop it?

EDDY
Keep your bionic nose out of it?

(For some reason this breaks Jack up.)

TERRY
Stop it, all of you!

JACK
Don't dislodge your magnet! (He cackles.)

JILL
(Calling)

T-a-m-m-y!

EDDY
(Pointing at Jill)

Hey, Dad, did you hear that? I think her voice is changing.

TERRY

This is going very sour.

JILL

Jack, honey, change for supper.

JACK

Aye, aye, captain.

EDDY

(Staggering with laughter)

"Aye, aye, captain," that's great, Dad.

JACK

(Suddenly stops, his eyes bulging, his face red and intense)

Do you think so, son?

EDDY

(Effusive)

Oh, yes Dad!

JACK

(Making an especially big wink just for him)

Then I'll be right down.

TAMMY

(Appearing from upstairs)

If you keep acting like this nobody's going to pay any attention to you.

TERRY

She's right.

JILL

Oh, there you are, Tammy.

TAMMY

Mother has the right attitude.

EDDY

Yeah, check your stools for corn.

TERRY

(Exasperated)

Oh Jesus Christ!

EDDY
What's wrong with you?

TERRY
You're so gross.

EDDY
I'm so gross? Look who's talking.

(Silence while everybody but Jill looks at Eddy. Then...)

JILL
All kinds of creatures inhabit the earth.

EDDY
So?

TAMMY
Shut up, Eddy.

EDDY
What is this, Mr. Wizard time?

TERRY
You're a creep.

EDDY
Big deal. So "all kinds of creatures inhabit the earth."

JILL
And the all have REMS?

TERRY
REMS?

JILL
(Still setting the table)
Yes, Rapid eye Movements.

TAMMY
Yes, I know what you're talking about. Like in dreams your eyes follow the images going on in your head.

EDDY
My God it *is* Mr. Wizard time!

TERRY

Shut up.

EDDY

(Ignoring her)

Everybody knows about REMS, except you *(meaning Terry)* You probably don't have any.

JILL

On the contrary, I know for a fact that she has them.

EDDY

How do you know? Do you watch her after you put her back in the box?

JILL

No, I can see her eyes moving now. *(Jill, however, is not looking up)*.

EDDY

She's not asleep.

JILL

So what?

(Coming out of the downstairs bathroom)

EDDY

REMS only happen when you're dreaming.

JILL

Yes.

EDDY

Oh good grief, are we going to get into all the world's a dream routine?

JILL

(Jill looks up from her work and gazes at Eddy as if the idea had never struck her before.) Oh, that's very nice. *(She tastes the idea.)* "All the world is a dream." *(She goes back to work.)* Yes, that's one way of looking at it.

EDDY

Oh for Christ's sake mother, how can you be so fucking stupid?

JILL

(Without malice)

You ought to get laid, Eddy.

JACK

(Appearing from the master bedroom, dressed in casual evening clothes. He is brisk and clear) Late? Late? I'm never late for your dinners, my dear.

JILL

See, your Daddy has REMS.

JACK

I'm having them now.

JILL

You see not only people have REMS...

EDDY

Even dad does.

He titters.

JILL

...animals have them too, but not only animals, buildings have them.

TAMMY

REMS?

JILL

Precisely. And the tire is having REMS when it's squealing, and the rain is having them when it's falling.

EDDY

That's ridiculous.

JILL

(she pauses and looks up from her work)
No, ghostly.

JACK

Let's have some supper.

(They all sit down to supper.)

TAMMY

(Putting her arm around Jack's shoulder)
Do you think we ought to talk about things, Daddy?

JACK

Yes, or we can watch the television set.

TAMMY

And we could laugh together at the jokes on it.

JACK

You're not a kiddin'.

TERRY

Mom, what's the clone of crash?

JILL

(After an appropriate period of silence)

Why do you ask, honey?

TERRY

Because I dreamed about it last night.

JILL

About the clone of crash?

TERRY

Yes. I dreamed that I was inside of this absolutely yellow yellow room and there was a black curtain that went from the ceiling down to the floor. *(She turns to Jack and Tammy)* You two don't have to listen to this.

(Suddenly she starts scratching her head, but it is a peculiar action for it seems as if the hand itself is moving of its own accord. She begins whimpering as the hand scratches. The scratching becomes more intense until she is almost dancing, all the while she murmurs helplessly: "Mommy, Mommy"...)

JILL

Terry! Terry!, what's the matter? What's happening?

(Jack and Tammy are totally aghast.)

TERRY

(Her hands scratch the space a few inches from her head while the rest of her body bobbles up and down) And then the man's voice came again from behind the curtain and it said, "Come on you little phlegmer cough-it-up-cough-it-up" *(In anguish but unable to stop dancing and quaking.)* Oh, and Mommy! I popped out and swept it up as it came out of

my throat and fell on the floor and he kept on sweeping real fast and he always seemed to be right next to me even when he was across the room! Oh, Mommy! Mommy!

JILL

Jack, do something!

(Jack rushes toward her.)

TERRY

(Suddenly speaking with an entirely new voice, a voice filled with such authority that it stops Jack in his tracks.) "Oh God! Oh God!" I shrieked and then the ugly, pointy, yellow clown came up real close to me and I could smell him and he smelled like baby breath, but thick, thick, rich baby breath. And he said, he whispered, I mean, "What's the clone of crash? Don't jump to any conclusion." *(Then, all at once, without the slightest transition her fit stops and she is totally natural.)* And then everything felt good, and warm and clear. And then the clown said, but he had changed. He had this wonderful apricot colored cloud in front of his face. He said, and he said it real clearly, he said, "Jack's not your daddy, I am." And then this vertical blast of steam shot up out of the floor and I woke up. And Mom, *(she stammers)* I JUST WANTED TO ASK, *(She pauses and looks at Jill probingly)* Are you my mommy?

(Jill's eyes well up with tears. She looks deeply into Terry's eyes.)

JILL

Yes, darling, I'm your mommy.

TERRY

Thank you. I want to rest now.

(She goes back into the wall. It closes behind her.)

JILL

(Noting the silence)

Well, now there are just three of us.

JACK

Yes, there are aren't there?

TAMMY

(Looking at Jack warmly)

Yes.

JILL

Let's all sit down together.

JACK

You're not going to finish the table?

JILL

I'll do it later tonight when everybody's asleep.

(They all sit down together on a centrally located couch.)

TAMMY

Each day, in every way, I'm growing better and better.

JILL

Each day, in every way, I'm growing better and better.

JILL

Growing nearer to God.

JACK

Growing closer to the great white light.

TAMMY

Getting less tired by the minute.

JACK

Able to accept and reflect upon

JILL

...the minutes and the hours and the days,

TAMMY

...the incredible turnabouts

JACK

...which catastrophizes,

JILL

...and obliterates

TAMMY

...us in the end.

JACK

(To Tammy)

Speak for yourself.

TAMMY
I was, speaking for myself, that is.

JACK
Then why did you include me?

TAMMY
I didn't.

JACK
yes, you did! You said,, "us."

TAMMY
I meant me and Mom.

JACK
Why did you just use you two?

TAMMY
Because you're going to out live us.

JACK
(Shouting)
What are you trying to do, take the suspense out of things?

EDDY
(Suddenly throwing the downstairs bathroom door open and shouting from it) You're not going to do me in tonight when I'm sleeping are you?

JACK
That's inconsequential to the situation as it is now! *(Then to himself)* But it might not be. *(Then to Eddy)* Listen, son, I don't want you to feel like a bugger under someone's table...

TAMMY
(Wincing at the image)
Oh, god Dad!

JACK
(Wiggling his ears, puffing his cheeks and bobbing his eyebrows) what I mean to say is that deep down inside I want you to live a long time...
Eddy
But?

JACK

...But...I have very little control over that. You could be electrocuted in your pajamas.

EDDY

Oh, god, Dad, don't say that!

JILL

Eddy honey, you've got to be able to take care of yourself. Anyway it's beginning to get late. It looks as if Terry has gone to bed. Perhaps we should be thinking of our own.

JACK

(After a decisive pause)

Yuck.

JILL

(Suddenly looking especially old and gray with just a hint of injury) What, aren't you tired?

JACK

Hell no! I just got back from work, had some supper, a little pause to reflect and now I want to go outside with my family and have some ice cream and night life.

JILL

What about Terry?

JACK

We can leave her with the Counter. We won't be gone long.

JILL

That's true. Some fresh air to cool the blood at the end of your cheeks, to liquefy the eyes and clean the shining crystal. Oh god yes! I'd love to go out!

EDDY

Oh good fucking jizzum Dad!

JACK

Just like clock work. You kids are just like robots. I could have predicted your reactions. You are both in your element, the sluff. As long as you can look at the world in a sluff you feel secure even if it makes you feel crazy.

TAMMY

(Whining)

Oh god...

JACK
Well, we're going out. *(He looks at Jill.)*

JILL
(Smiles back at him)
Completely.

JACK
(To Jill)
Meet you upstairs.

JILL
Okay.

(They both dash upstairs and close the door. There is a long silence. The air gets decidedly thicker as Eddy and Tammy sense each other alone together.)

EDDY
(His eyes downcast)
You gonna go with them?

TAMMY
(Her mouth dry)
I don't know, are you?

EDDY
I was thinking that I might stay back and read. *(He pauses)*
upstairs in my room.

TABBY
(Softly)
That seems like a good idea.

Eddy
You mean, you like the idea?

TAMMY
Oh, yes, I think so. Yes, it's a good ideas.

EDDY
For you, that is? I mean you'd like staying back and reading yourself?

TAMMY

Yes, that would be nice.

EDDY

Would you do it down here?

TAMMY

No. *(Pause)* No, I would prefer my room.

EDDY

Yeah, I would prefer my room too. Do you think they're going to be up there a long time?

TAMMY

Probably...

EDDY

(Jumping on her cue)

Perhaps if your neck gets stiff I could give you a back rub.

TAMMY

...But they might not and then again, they might stay a little while and try to make babies.

EDDY

You know that they can't make babies anymore.

TAMMY

I know but they like to try.

EDDY

Do you listen to them?

TAMMY

I can't help but hear them.

EDDY

But you do *listen*?

TAMMY

Yes.

EDDY

Does it make you...*(He bobs his eyebrows once)*.

TAMMY

It used to.

,

But it doesn't now?

EDDY

Right.

TAMMY

How come?

EDDY

I know your father.

TAMMY

You know my what?

EDDY

Oh Eddy, women mature so much more quickly than you boys will ever understand.

TAMMY

Oh god, here we go again! I suppose he showed you his cock?

EDDY

He did more than that. He gave me an entire lecture on it.

TAMMY

"On it" I'll bet.

EDDY

He came into my room one night, right up to my bed, right next to my face and brushed my nose up and down with the front of his wool pants and I woke up and there he was towering above me.

TAMMY

Oh, Jesus Christ!

EDDY

And then he bent way over next to my face and said, "You want to see my aquarium?" And I said, "What aquarium?" And he said, "the one behind this screen." And he lifted the flap of his fly and showed me his zipper. And I said, "Dad, that's not an aquarium." And he said, "Oh, yes it is. It's a pressurized tank." And I laughed.

TAMMY

(Ignoring his retort)

You're full of it.

EDDY

TAMMY

And then he said, "You want to see my dolphin?"

EDDY

Oh, come on!

TAMMY

And you know what?

EDDY

What?

TAMMY

I wanted to see it. I mean I *really* wanted to. I never wanted to see anything so badly in my life!

EDDY

Oh good god!

TAMMY

And do you know what he said then?

EDDY

(Blending a sneer with searing interest)

What?

TAMMY

He said that the dolphin couldn't stay in the dry air very long, that it had to be kept wet. And do you know what I did Eddy? Do you? I fell in love with that dolphin and I kissed it right on its face.

EDDY

(Incredulous)

That's simply ridiculous.

TAMMY

But that was only the beginning.

EDDY

I don't want to hear anymore.

TAMMY

Why not?

EDDY

Because you always make up such stupid lies.

TAMMY

I do not.

EDDY

The last time you said he called it a "hover craft."

TAMMY

Well, it was.

EDDY

It never was! It never was anything because he doesn't have one any more.

TAMMY

But he does, Eddy! He does! And it IS like a hover craft, Eddy, it's like a flying saucer.

EDDY

Oh, come on.

JACK

(His voice coming suddenly through the flung open bedroom door) Come on, let's get our clothes on.

JILL

(Suddenly appearing in the bedroom doorway)
Yes, all of us. Let's go out into the night among all those flat little houses until we come to an ice cream parlor.

EDDY

I want to stay back and read.

JACK

(Appearing, grinning from ear to ear)
You need the air.

JILL

You need the exercise.

JACK

You can get a stinky finger later.

JILL

Yes, Tammy, let the impulse sink below your will into the dark lake of your belly dowry.

JACK

Besides *(He pauses and looks about the house from the landing, then softly)* this house needs a breather.

TAMMY

(Suddenly looking about the house apprehensively)
Oh...yes...you're right. Come on, Eddy.

EDDY

(Also apprehensive)
Oh...yes...sure, Sis.

(Without warning and from an unseen signal Tammy and Eddy suddenly dash upstairs into their separate rooms.)

Jill
Aren't they incredible?
Jack
You know it.
Jill

(As they come down the stairs)
You know, Jack, Eddy's been having trouble at school.

Jack
What, he's not getting what they're trying to teach him?

Jill
I don't know. He never talks about his education.

Jack
Teen-agers shouldn't be cooped up in school anyway. They should all be sent to athletic farms.

Jill
(Looking at the kitchen table)

You know, I love that table.

Jack
Do you? I'll get you another one.

Jill
No, I think it's the way he gets along with the other children.

Jack
Well, he has a very nice singing voice.

Jill
Yes, but I'm afraid it's not enough to get him laid.

Jack
That's unbelievable! Where are people's values? And why
hasn't he brought this up to me?

Jill
I don't know. I think perhaps he doesn't like you.

Jack
Doesn't like me? That's incredible.

Jill
Isn't it?

Jack
Well, what do you think I should do about it?

Jill
You could move out.

JACK
(Laughs)

That's a great idea.

Jill
You could also talk with him.

Jack
I do talk with him/

Jill
I mean alone, heart to heart. Let him know you care.

Jack
You know, I could do that. The only problem is that I can't
stand him.

Jill
You can't stand him?

Jack
No, I hate him.

Jill
You do?

Jack
Yes, every time I see him I want to tear him limb from limb

jell

Well, then I think a private meeting is long overdue.

Jack

My god, it's been fifteen years since I've been alone with him!

Jill

Is that right?

Jack

yes, I believe so. The last time I talked to him alone he was at least three feet shorter. Actually, if you want to know the truth, I'm afraid of him. He's so fresh and young and strong.

(Jill is suddenly without warning overcome with fatigue. She lies down on the couch.)

Eddy

(Comes out of his room talking)

It's true, Dad. I'm having trouble at school. The kids think I'm too skinny. At recess they punch me in the mouth and they won't play with me even when I open up and tell them I'm lonely and need to be considered just like anybody else. They just sneer and tell me to drop dead. Yesterday I stuck my finger down my throat and tried to strangle myself but all I did was throw up on my shirt.

(This breaks Jack up.)

JACK

Come on downstairs and tell me about it.

(But Eddy has returned to his room.)

JACK

(To Jill on the couch)

I'll talk to him.

TAMMY

And me too, Dad (she has appeared upstairs too), will you talk to me? (She exits also).

JACK

I'll talk to Tammy too.

Tammy too? JILL

Huh? JACK

Tammy too? JILL

Tammy too. JACK

(Tammy and Eddy come out from upstairs dressed for winter.)

EDDY AND TAMMY
We're ready.

JILL
(Gets up, exhausted and pale)
All right, all right if we must.

JACK
(Suddenly shouting angrily)
Yes, we must!

JILL
(Flinching)
All right, all right.

EDDY
Dad, I don't like the way you're talking to Mother.

JACK
Neither do I!

TAMMY
Well, stop it then, Daddy.

JACK
(Still shouting)

I will! I will! Just give me a second! *(He goes upstairs in a huff and into the master bedroom, slamming the door behind him.)*

(There is a long silence.)

JILL
I want to get out of here.

EDDY
I do too.

TAMMY
Don't reduplicate.

EDDY
I'm not reduplicating.

TAMMY
You are.

EDDY
Am not.

TAMMY
You said exactly what Mother said.

EDDY
What did Mother say that I reduplicated?

TAMMY
You said, "I do to."

EDDY
Yes, I know I said "I do too" but that was not what she was saying.

TAMMY
It was exactly what she was saying.

EDDY
"I do too" is the same as "I want to get out of here?"

TAMMY
Exactly, if you turn the sequence of the sentences around.

JILL
Children.

TAMMY

Yes Mother, I'm not arguing.

EDDY

She is, Mother. It's part of a syndrome. She argues and pinches white-heads in the mirror.

JILL

Children, put me on the table. I want to rest there and get my maximammery energy.

(Eddy and Tammy look at each other alarmed.)

EDDY

(Moving toward her, but troubled)

Are you sure you want to do that, Mom?

JILL

Yes, yes, I'm sure. I want to go where radiation is queen.

EDDY

But what it does to the bones, Mom.

TAMMY

What do YOU know about it?

EDDY

See what I mean? You're a compulsive bickerer.

JILL

Just lift me up and put me there.

(Tammy and Eddy carry her to the table and lay her down on it.)

JILL

(Sighing)

That's better.

(Just then Jack comes in through the front door. He has shorts on and lather is on one side of his face.)

JACK

Such interstellar heat! *(Seeing Mom and the kids)* What's this? Has mama mia gone bonkers again?

TAMMY

Dad, will you stop farting around?

JACK

Me fart? You know that daddy choo-choo doesn't fart, he "puffs."

TAMMY

Dad, you've driven Mom to the table.

JACK

That's nothing. You should take a look at this. *(He holds up a large model of the Saturn Five rocket)* Those guys can hot wire anything. *(He crosses to Jill and bends over her)* Hi, Mom, getting a little juice from the proverbial loins?

JILL

(Smiling up at him)

I felt a bit weak, Jackie.

JACK

If you don't watch out we're going to start calling you noodle bones.

TAMMY

Dad, that's nothing to joke about!

JACK

Why not? If you ever want a bit of your mommy you can pour her into a cup just like bowls of water and the moon, in every cup a smiling mother's face. *(Noticing Eddy)* God, Eddy, your getting hefty!

Eddy

Do you really think so, Dad?

Jack

Know so. Listen, kids, we're the reflection of actions done far, far across the reaches of time. We are the umbra of beings whose actions have preceded ours, whose actions we are in fact the result of. We are the feathers by which these awesome paradigms mount the just created heaves. When the alligators yawn, we yawn. That's why your mother's lying on the table. *(To Jill)* Are you ready to go yet, hun?

Jill

(Completely revived)

Yes.

Jack
Good, I'll go upstairs and change.

(Jack goes upstairs.)

Tammy
What a complete ass-hole.

Jill
(Pleasantly)
He is, isn't he. I've lost many a fingernail in him.

Tammy
About Daddy?

Eddy
Tammy, don't.

Tammy
Does Dad have an atomic penis?

Jill
Penis? Penis? What an ugly word. Is that something you go to the toilet with? It sounds like "poo-poo" only lispy: "penis"? I certainly hope your father doesn't have a penis.

Tammy
You still didn't answer me, Mother.

Eddy
Let it go, Tammy.

Tammy
Mother!

Jill
(Getting up from the table)
Why don't you shut up and sit down.

(Tammy flounces onto the couch, leaving Eddy standing there. Eddy starts to say something but Jill interrupts him.)

Jill
Oh, you sit down too.

(He sits down next to Tammy.)

Eddy
(To Tammy)

I told you not to ask.

Tammy

Oh, shut up.

Eddy
God, there sure is a lot of shutting up going on.

Tammy
The trouble is there isn't enough.

Eddy
What to pick my face?

(Tarry turns her back on Eddy.)

Eddy
See, Mom doesn't like that word either. I bet she doesn't like *(he silently mouths the word)* "vagina."

Jack
(Suddenly on the landing, breezy, ready for winter)
I don't mind the word myself, but I like the word *(mouths the word silently)* pussy". Out we go!

Jill
Out we go.

Eddy
(Whining)
Oh god!

Jack
Oh god!

Jill
Oh god!

Tammy
Stop it.

Eddy
I don't want to go out.

Jill
Out you go anyway.

Tammy

Come on.

Eddy

I'm not going. My food hasn't digested, besides we'll be gone to long and I have to rest my voice.

Jack

You just want to play with your whopper.

Tammy

Stop it!

Jill

She's right.

Jack

Who's that?

Jill

Your daughter.

Jack

(Rubs his hand between his legs and then extends it to Tammy) Hi, ya, kid.

(Tammy throws her hands up and heads stage left.)

Tammy

(To Jill)

I'm the only sane person here.

Jill

That's because we never bought you a pet.

Tammy

Mom, do you really mean that?

Jill

I mean everything I say.

Jack

I know, that's what makes you so endearing.

Tammy

That's what makes me so real. I am real, you are real, *(to Eddy)* he is real. *(She goes to Tammy, her arms open)* And my

beautiful daughter (*she embraces her*) is real. Come on, let's all go out together and stalk the night.

Jack

(Opens the door and a gust of snow blows in. He stands there with an arm extended to escort them out)
Butterbrickle, pistachio, rocky road, chocolate ripple, banana fudge, thin mint, strawberry, not to mention the sherbets.

Jill

Into the wind!

Eddy

Into the night!

Jack

Into the stars!

Eddy

It's cloudy, Dad.

Jack

But they're up there!

Eddy

That they are.

Tammy

This is ghastly.

Jill

No, ghostly. The whole place is haunted.

Tammy

Who will take care of Terry if we stay too long?

Jack

(Grinning like a Cheshire cat)

No one.

Tammy

Perhaps I should stay back.

Jill

It's all right, honey.

(Jill exits.)

Jack
(Ghostly)

There won't be anyone here.

(Jack exits.)

Eddy
(Who's already out the door)

Come on, I'm getting frost bite.

Tammy
(Who is suddenly in tears)

Good night, Terry.

(Tammy exits.)

(There is a long silence.)

(Then the door in the wall slides open and an electric wheelchair comes out. A being in a strange iridescent body is operating the controls. It tilts the wheelchair down center and stops. There follows another long silence.)

(Then slowly the iridescent skin cracks and a figure emerges from within it. It is Terry. She climbs out and walks out onto the stage, beautiful and radiant.)

Terry

Isn't the world magical?

(Terry goes to the refrigerator and pulls out a winged box. She puts it on the table and opens it. Inside is a large glass of milk. She puts the box back in the refrigerator and then picks up the glass of milk in both hands and walks down center.)

Terry

Aren't Dad and Mom rich? Tammy and Eddy really like each other. They're just teenagers. When they grow up and get a little more mature they'll depend on each other a lot more. I think Eddy's going to be an announcer on a space station. I don't know what Tammy's going to become. Oh wait! Maybe I do. Here it comes. Yes, she's going to become a personal psychologist like Dr. Amos. It's going to be very different, you see, the future, that is, I mean for people. I wonder where I'll be next year. Dr. Amos said I might last a long time. Elly said that I shouldn't worry about

it. She said that once something has crossed over it won't ever leave. So even if I drop over dead right now it won't make any difference because I'll just be somewhere else. Isn't that wonderful? I think that someday we'll all just be big sparks bouncing here and there all at once at the same time everywhere! Whew! What a life it's going to be for us all someday when we all become light pulses.

(Sings)

When I look into your eyes
all of the world opens.
Seas and clouds
and purple skies
break the wide world open.

Oh yes, oh yes,
even though your eyes
don't move anymore
and all the rest of you
drops away
there's the space
your eyes opened to

and you are there
and you are there
and everywhere I look
I see you.

ACT 2

Silence. The front door opens and Eddy and Tammy enter, subdued. It's dark. All of the curtains are drawn. They switch on the light.

Eddy

I hate father sometimes. He's such an oaf it's a wonder he can walk.

Tammy

I tried not to look.

Eddy

Oh, Tammy, what am I going to do? I've still got almost a whole year left of school.

Tammy

You? Look at me, I've got at least two years in this beanbag.

Eddy
Well, you could get married.

Tammy
Oh, great!

Eddy
Well, you could.

Tammy
Well, you could join the army.

Eddy
(*Aghast*)
Me? In the army?!

Tammy
Well, can you see me filling up some hospital ward with babies?

Eddy
Tammy, let's not argue. I think we're in for a long one tonight. Let's stick together, maybe we can put Dad to sleep.

Jack
(*Sticking his head around the door*)
Put me to sleep? Put me to sleep? Is that what children do to their elders in the Space Age? Why don't you just fluff us in a rocket and pack us off to the stars?

Eddy
(*Conciliatory*)
I want to go up into outer space.

Jill
(*Peeking her head over Jack's shoulder*)
We're already in outer space, honey.

Jack and Jill
Can we come in?

Eddy and Tammy
Why not?

Jack

Wait. Wait, let me do this.

Eddy

Oh, god, not again!

Jack

That's right again and again. Come my love, let me carry you across the threshold. *(Jack picks up Jill.)*

Jill

Oh, Osiris, what shall I do now that you're whole again?

Tammy

Oh, how "cryptic."

Jill

Not at all, Isis sought her beloved one's creative member for eons.

Jack

(Winks)

And still does. *(He carries her across the threshold, sets her on her feet, takes her hand and kisses it.)*

As the pomegranate sprang from the blood of Dionysus, the anemones from Adonis and the violet from Attis, so doth my bright green poplar tremble by the side of your moony stream.

Eddy

Whew! Did you hear that?

Tammy

(Disgusted)

Yes.

Eddy

Oh, Dad, say it again.

Jack

(Worried)

What time is it?

Eddy

Ten thirty.

Jack

(Relieved)

The bright hour just before the work force slumbers. What shall we do, watch the news with the vast incredible collective?

Tammy

I don't know. I think I want to go to bed before the rest of them.

Jack

(Sweetly)

Oh, no you don't! You shall not escape the love light of our circle.

Jill

(Gazing at her knowingly)

I think perhaps she doesn't want to escape the love light of her own circle.

Eddy

(Blushing)

Woowee, did you hear that?

Tammy

That's your mom, boy.

Tammy

Why are you always making me out to be the ninny?

Jill

I don't think anyone's trying to make you out a ninny.

Jack

I'm not.

Eddy

If you want to know the truth, I think that you ninny out whenever Dad's around.

Tammy

I don't like standing here being discussed.

Jill

Well, you did just bring yourself up for discussion.

Tammy

I did not. I just made a statement about how you treat me.

Jack

We treat you fine.

Eddy

We treat you fine.

Jill

We treat you fine.

Tammy
(Screaming)

You do not treat me fine!

Eddy

Wow, that's incredible, sis, you're having a crisis!

Tammy

I'm *not* having a crisis!

Eddy

Wow, that's incredible, sis, you're having a crisis!

Tammy

I'm not having a crisis!

Jill

Tammy, move to the other side of the room.

Tammy

What? *(Alarmed)* Why?

Jill

(Seems to be speaking against her will and in Jack's voice)
Just do what your mom says. *(Tammy, aghast, puts her hand over her mouth.)*

Eddy
(Looking strange)

How do I look strange?

Jill

Tammy, you come over by me.

(Tammy starts and moves quickly next to Jill.)

Eddy

What about me? Can I come over by you too?

Jack

Yes, what about us, can we come over there too?

Jill

(Steely-eyed and firm)

No, you two stay over there.

Eddy

I'm lonely. *(To Jack)* Can I stand next to you?

Jack

Me? Yes, you can stand right next to me. You can stand on top of me if you like.

Eddy

Thank you.

(They stand next to each other should to shoulder with glowing eyes. As they stand there they sway slightly)

(Tammy starts to say something but Jill puts her hand over her mouth.)

Eddy and Jack

(Wagging their fingers at the same time at Tammy and chanting) No, no, no, no-no-no.

Eddy

(Pointing at himself)

He can't stand you.

Jill and Jack

(Jill mouths while Jack pleads)

But I can.

Jill

Spoke too soon

Eddy

Mom,

Jack

I think we caught ya.

(Tammy starts to say something but Jill and Jack stop her.)

Jill

You'd better not stand too close to me, either.

(Tammy shrieks.)

Jack

Don't get freaked honey, we've just lost each other for a moment.

(Tammy is now separated from Jack, Jill, and Eddy. Eddy jumps into the space between them and begins doing a soft-shoe while Jill speaks and Jack mouths her words. It's all kind of wobbly.)

Jack and Jill

(Jack mouths while Jill speaks)

You're on the other side, honey. Just say something. Just speak and the bad, bad movie will stop.

(Tammy tries to speak. Her mouth moves, she gesticulates, but now sound comes out.)

(Suddenly they move towards Tammy.)

(Tammy screams.)

(They scream.)

Jack

(Mouthing while Jill speaks)

Didn't quite make it honey, let's try it again.

Eddy

She won't talk because she doesn't like me.

Jack

She don't like me either.

Jill

Oh, stop it both of you. She's just a little alienated.

Jack

(Shouting childishly)

She doesn't like me!

Eddy

(Buries his head in his hands and begins sobbing) She don't like me neither

Jill

She does too.

Eddy

(Speaking in Tammy's voice)

Shut up and give her a chance!

(Jill continues to talk but Tammy begins mouthing the words.)

Jill and Tammy

Oh Mommy, Mommy, please help me. Help me, help me.

(Then Jack and Eddy join Jill and finally Tammy joins.)

Tammy, Jack, Jill and Eddy

(They begin very low and then gradually build to terror and catharsis.) Hello hello hello hello hello Hello HELLO HELLO HELLO!! HELLO!! HELLO!!

(The lash "HELLO" is screamed and then breaks into laughter and they fall into each other's arms.)

Jack and Jill

(Laughing)

Aren't they great?

Tammy

Oh god, Dad, I'm so sorry! I get so crabby.

Eddy

I do too.

Tammy

We argue, and argue over and over again.

Eddy

Just like brother and sister.

Tammy

No, no I was just on a trip.

Jack

And you got lost.

Tammy

Yes, lost in hell.

(There is a silence.)

Eddy

(Breaking in clumsily)

Recapitulation, recaptulation, recapitulation. So much of it is recapitulation that I wonder how much we really do.

Tammy

Yes, it's like a ritual.

Eddy

Yes, with the grown folks moving away from us in the fog.

(Tammy and Eddy head for the stairs.)

Jill

(Stopping them)

Where are you going?

Eddy

To bed.

Tammy

We have somewhere to go tomorrow.

EDDY

And besides, you two should have some time to yourselves.

JILL

Why should we *(Meaning herself and Jack)* have time together? Perhaps Tammy and dad should have time together and you and me should have time together.

TAMMY

(Her eyes flashing)

All right, Mom. *(She looks down at Jack)* Come on up stairs.

JACK

Me? Good god. *(Jack grabs his hat, coat and scarf and goes upstairs. Then, from the landing)* I feel like a sailor that just got into port. *(With that he goes with Tammy into her room.)*

EDDY

(Flushed and almost out of his mind with excitement, strides a match and lights a cigarette he pulls from his picket. He tosses the blown out match.) You can call me Ed. No shit, you can.

(Jill doesn't say anything. Instead, she takes out a bunch of bananas and begins chopping them.)

EDDY

(Descending the stairs)

Don't let people dump on you, no matter what they says, no matter how they try to justify themselves, there's no excuse for them to dump on you.

JILL

What as bore you are.

EDDY

You wouldn't say that if you knew what was going on in my mind right now.

JILL

I know what's going on in your mind.

EDDY

Do you?

JILL

Yes, I do.

EDDY

What do you think is going on in my mind?

JILL

You're wondering what your Dad is doing with your sister.

(She begins fixing a drink.)

EDDY

(Swallows)

Is that for me?

JILL

No, this is.

(With that she turns on the blender and it blasts over the speakers. The sound is so loud that Eddy has to put his hands over his ears. Jill is stuffing bananas down it. The door to Tammy's room opens and Jack comes out with Tammy's dress on. He is shouting for them to quiet down but can't be heard. Tammy comes out of her room dressed in Jack's clothes with shaving lather on half of her face. Eddy has fallen to his knees, his hands over his ears.)

(Jack finally pulls the plug on the blender and the sound stops. All four of them look at each other strangely. Then Eddy goes and gets the TV, turning off the living room lights. They all sit on the couch and stare at the television. The light flickers on their faces.)

JACK

(After a bit, speaking about the TV)

This news is dead. *(Really wondering)* Where are we, in Alaska? *(He gets up and walks to the front door, opens it. There is a huge polar bear roaring in the doorway. Jack hurriedly closes the door.)* Terry's sleep walking. *(Jack cautiously opens the door again. A little robot--tin cans and a coffee urn with little pig tails sticking out of a pointed dome--stands in the doorway on a little red wagon. Jack picks the little robot up and carries it into the living room.)*

JILL

Oh, I'll take Terry to bed.

JACK

No, let me. *(He brings the robot down with him to his chair and sits. He settles down with the little Terry.)* I remember when you were just a baby in a jar. Let me tell you a story. A long time ago before your mummy and daddy were born there was a huge carcass that sprawled over the aged topography of our world like a draping, endless, multi-colored cheese. Now, this carcass was in a rather advanced state of putrefaction. It was so huge that it was the sole source of our early atmosphere. The hiss of its decomposition could be heard even far out in space. Ah, but you know all about that stuff already, don't you? How there really was a god and the big bang was the sound get it together. How there really was a god and the big bang was the sound of god's gun blowing his brains throughout the universe and that god really isn't dead *(pause)* yet and we are his lights going out one *(pause)* by *(pause)* one.

JILL

That's a terrible story, Jack. There isn't an ounce of truth in it. Put Terry to bed before her iron rate goes down.

JACK

It has already. Oh, your beady little eyes! *(He rises and crosses to the wall, carrying the little tin Terry to bed.)*

Did you say "hover craft?" Yes, your daddy was part hover craft. *(The panel opens. He places the robot into the wall and continues talking)* That's where you were born...in space like flies breeding with maggots falling from larval cocoons. Ask your mother. Your mother knows. *(Calling as if falling into a deep hole)* Your mother was in pure balloon. *(The door closes.)*

(The doorbell rings. Jack approaches the door. Then he stops.)

JACK

What time is it?

EDDY

(Without looking at his watch)

Eleven thirty.

JACK

It was eleven thirty an hour ago.

TAMMY

I want to go to bed.

(Silence. The doorbell rings.)

JACK

What time is it now?

EDDY

Eleven thirty-one.

JACK

A minute hasn't passed yet.

JILL

Well, go to bed.

(Silence. The doorbell rings.)

JACK

What time is it now?

EDDY

I looked it up. It was ten thirty an hour ago.

JACK

(Disconcerted)

That's ugly. That's really ugly.

EDDY

What's ugly?

JACK

Don't just ask me what's ugly, recognize it as such.

(The doorbell rings)

JACK

(Whining)

What's wrong with me? *(He takes his dress off.)*

JILL

(To Tammy)

I'll bet that's for you.

TAMMY

I know it's for me.

JACK

It's a date, isn't it?

TAMMY

Yes, a gentleman caller. *(She crosses upstairs.)*

JACK

Tell him to use the window.

(Tammy slams the door.)

JILL

Now it's time for us to go to sleep.

(Jack starts towards Jill. He takes her into his arms. They kiss passionately. Then...)

JACK

It's time for us to go to the master bedroom, Eddy.

JILL

Goodnight, son.

(Soft, sexual moans come from Tammy's room.)

EDDY

(Wide-eyed and left out)

It must be pretty late, huh?

(Jack and Jill cross upstairs, leaving Eddy alone.)

EDDY

I don't want to go to sleep. It's not that I couldn't go to sleep. It's not that I'm not tired. I am tired. It's not that I want to stay up. There's nothing I want to do out here. It's just that I don't want to go to sleep. When I think about lying down it frightens me. I'm supposed to go upstairs and like down in a dark room and wait to go "unconscious." And then maybe suddenly I'll find myself in some very strange place. *(Suddenly enacting a dream)* "Here, drop down this hole." "Who are you?" "I'm your dad." "You don't look like my dad." "That's only because you see but a fragment of your dad." "What are you going to do with that rope?" "I'm going to kill you with it, my son!" *(Eddy throws his hands over his mouth and screams)*, I like the way it was this afternoon with the smell of Mom on the sofa and light streaming through the windows and doors, and salami, and baloney and pastrami and mustard...*(As he speaks the windows fly open and a bright, pleasant light comes through them, the light of midday.)* and the sounds of birds *(The sound of birds come up)* and Benny, the postman coming up the walk *(The sound of Benny's footsteps come up)* and kids playing outside *(The sound of kids comes up)* and cars *(The sound of cars join the other sounds)* and buildings with people sending information to each other *(there is the sound of typewriters and office machinery, drawers opening and closing, massive yard droves booting up etc.)* and jets flying overhead, taking people to foreign places *(Suddenly the sound of a huge jet starts at one end of the auditorium and moves across to the other end.)* and new things being built. *(The sound of Jackhammers and bulldozers and construction work joins what has now become almost a roar, he has to shout over the noise)* I don't like night. I don't what to sleep! *(He falls face first into his sandwich, fast asleep.)*

(Suddenly the front door flies open and all of the daylight and noise flashes into blackness and a huge crash of thunder comes down. It is night again and there is Eddy, asleep.)

(Then there is again the sound of gentle rain.)

(There, standing in the open doorway are Tammy [in her original dress], They move forward, swaying synchronously

from side to side as they enter the room floating on Eddy's streams of sleep.)

(As they move towards the center, Eddy's body stands itself up out of his sandwich and taken itself, zombie-like, to the swaying stationary group which waits for him.)

(The panel in the wall slides open and a slash of light falls across the floor from the unearthly illumination of Terry's abode and Terry comes out. She has transformed into a gray-faced zombie. She wears a little pope's hat. She sways her way to the front of the group. In her right hand, which is crossed over her left hand in front of her chest, is an Egyptian mace. Terry, now in front of the group, leads them downstage and then up the stairs and into Eddy's room. The door to Eddy's room closes behind them.)

(Immediately, a light snaps on in the master bedroom and we hear Jill's voice.)

JILL

Jack! Jack! Wake up!

JACK

What is it, honey?

JILL

Jack, I've had the awfulest dream.

JACK

Go back to sleep.

JILL

Jack, I think Terry's going to die.

JACK

How do you get that?

JILL

I saw her leading us in a procession. She was carrying an Egyptian mace.

JACK

None of us can live happily ever after, go to sleep.

(The light in their bedroom goes off.)

(Jill emerges from her room with a candle and comes downstairs. Cautiously, she pulls the curtain a bit away from the window and peers out. Just at that moment there is the sound of a roving band of punk rockers chanting "Kick ass, kick ass, kick ass" etc. After a bit the sound dissolves and Jill lets go of the curtain and approaches Terry's panel.)

(Suddenly the panel opens and a green beam of light shoots out followed by a whirring. A sarcophagus rolls silently out of the wall. Terry's voice comes out. It is sent through a flanger. It seems to be coming from the beam of light.)

TERRY'S VOICE

Come one in, Ma, the pressure's fine.

JILL

(Backing from the wall)

Terry, are you all right?

TERRY'S VOICE

I'm finefine.

JILL

You sound so strange.

TERRY'S VOICE

I am strange, Mom.

JILL

Where are you? It's so dark inside of there.

TERRY'S VOICE

It's all right, Mother, I'm not far away. Look.

JILL

(She looks down cautiously into the sarcophagus)

Is this my daughter?

(Suddenly Jack pops up out of the sarcophagus dressed like a mummy and grabs Jill by the back of the hand and tries to pull her in with him. She rips herself away.)

JACK

You don't like us. You'd rather be with him up stairs sleeping wand snoring and growing hair. You don't like the way we change our clothes.

JILL

I do! I do! It's just that it's so strange and you do it so often and so late at night. *(Speaking into the dark room behind the panel)* Terry, you're breaking my heart! Where are you now? Am I ever going to be able to recognize you again?

TERRY'S VOICE

You can see me, Mom. I'm this beam of light.

(Jill looks at the beam of green light. She approaches it and extends her hand to touch it, then stops.)

TERRY'S VOICE

That's all right, Mom, you can touch me.

(Jill hesitantly extends her fingers into the light. Upon touching it her body shivers. She withdraws her hand then reaches up again and touches it again, more surely this time.)

JILL

My god, Terry, it's...you're so old!

TERRY'S VOICE

Yes, it was a surprise to me also. How do you like it?

JILL

I can't say that I like it or dislike it. It's just, just...*(Her voice trails off as she bathes her hand in the light. She pulls the sleeve of her nightgown down and bathes her arm in the light, then her face and neck)* Oh, Terry, can you feel me back? I can feel you, every cell of you, a trillion billion cells of you!

TERRY'S VOICE

(Also moved)

Yes, Mother, I can feel you, I can feel you like I've never felt you before. *(Speaking as Jill bathes her face and neck in the light.)* Think of me as you would as plant cutting. Because one form dies doesn't mean that the plant dies. It simply moves from one environment to another.

JILL

I know what you mean. Only last night I lay in the darkness and I could feel that the whole thing was unknown, everything, every last part of it, unknown but real, so

real and yet moment by moment unknown, even though it is all that I have, and that it is so strange, that it is so slippery and that it is for keeps.

JACK

(Again popping out of the sarcophagus)

Don't give me that greasy gobber! What would this reeking bitch know about class? I throw up on you, you sow!

JILL

I think Tammy's waking up.

TERRY'S VOICE

Yes, she is, Mother. And so is Jack.

JILL

I'd better go up, I wouldn't want him to think I was out grave robbing.

TERRY'S VOICE

Good night, Mother.

(The sarcophagus glides back into the wall and the panel closes.)

JACK'S VOICE

(From upstairs)

Jill? Jill? Where are you? Your side of the bed is cooling off.

JILL

(Wiping her eyes)

I'll be right up, honey. I was watching the punk rockers rove the streets.

(She goes to the refrigerator and opens the door. Eddy steps out of it.)

EDDY

I'm sorry, Mom, I was hungry.

JILL

You'd better get up to bed. If your father knows you're awake, he'll give you a middle of the night lecture.

EDDY

I'm not going to die at thirty-nine, am I, Mom?

JILL

No, Eddy, you're not going to die at thirty-nine. You're going to have a long, long life. Go to bed and sleep in the one you have for sure right now.

EDDY

(Much relieved)

That's great, Mom.

JILL

Don't explain it, you might run out of ways of looking at it.

EDDY

(Said like "right on")

All right!

JILL

(Clapping Eddy's ass like a jock)

Now go up there and hit the deck.

EDDY

All Alright!

(Eddy dashes up the stairs and just before the door, spins and sails into his room and out of sight.)

JACK

(In his bed clothes)

Was that Eddy? I've got something to tell him about fighting. What time is it?

JILL

(Without looking at a clock)

Three thirty.

JACK

(Tasting what he's saying)

I was dreaming about this curfew, this particular curfew...

JILL

(Matter of factly)

I don't want to hear about it right now.

JACK

(Simply)

Oh. *(He turns around, goes back into the bedroom and closes the door.)* Terry, Terry, what's happening with you? Dr.

Amos said that there would be changes, but Jesus Christ, if I had known what he meant I would have forgotten the whole goddamned thing! Give me an idiot, a cannibal even, but a neutron, a goddamned oversized neutron for a daughter, Jesus Christ! *(Suddenly she looks absolutely paranoid. She drops to her knees and folds her hands in prayer, and murmurs.)* Oh god, oh god! Let me know that all *(Pause)* this *(Pause)* isn't just procreation cooling on someone's face, my face, the Earth Mother's face. FUCK THE EARTH MOTHER!!!

(Tammy's light goes on. She opens her door.)

TAMMY

(Rubbing her eyes)

Mom, what's the matter?

JILL

You worthless piece of shit! *(She picks up a pot and throws it up at Tammy. It misses her and hits the wall)* You've made my like a walking nightmare!

EDDY

(Coming out of his room on the run)

Mom, what's the matter?

JILL

(Thrown into an absolute rage at the sight of Eddy)
You! You twerp! You don't even have the stuffing to be a homosexual! You pre-ejaculatory squirt! You're the one that really fucked up my life! When I was young I had balls, real balls, I had ten times the class squared than that muffin-faced mama's boy you call a father! You and that idiot winking at each other and letting chicken farts!

EDDY

(Squealing)

Mama! Mama! Don't talk like that, you make me feel bad!

TAMMY

(Screwing up her face at him in an incredible knot of hatred, mocking him.) Mama! Mama, you make me feel bad! *(She smashes Eddy in the face.)*

JILL

Let go of him! He's my business, you slut!

(She rushes upstairs and pulls Tammy from Eddy by the hair and throws her up against the wall) You stinking shit-faced little bastard, always stuffing your mouth. (She pulls him down the stairs and into the kitchen) Here, you forgot this! (She pulls the belt of her nightgown, stuffs his face into the sandwich and ties it to his face) I wouldn't want to send you out into the world unprepared.

TAMMY

(Jumping up and down, clapping her hands)
Yes, mother, yes, throw him outside and let the punk rockers get him!

EDDY

(Though the sandwich tied to his face)
No, Mama, please, don't, please.

(Jill opens the door. It is pitch black outside. In the distance the chant of "Kick ass, kick ass" can be heard. Then she throws him out and slams the door behind him.)

(Outside the chant of "Kick ass, kick ass" approaches. There is a pathetic knocking and clawing at the door. The chant come right up to the door. The clawing stops and all is silent.)

JILL

Let's take care of this place!

(Tammy rushes down the stairs.)

TAMMY

Mother, I can't believe it. Oh, how beautiful! I've been waiting for this for so long. *(She picks up a pitcher and is about to throw it.)*

JILL

(Stopping her)

No, let's keep that one for ourselves, it makes the best coffee in the world.

TAMMY

Mother, we can get another one.

(Tammy puts it down and grabs a handful of cups, dangling them from her fingers. Jill grabs her around the arms and pushes her against the wall.)

JILL

No, not those! Those are mine!

TAMMY

(Exasperated)

Would you please tell me what isn't yours?

JILL

Well, hardly any...*(She stops and looks the kitchen over, her hand poised on her chin)* I guess it's all mine. Let me see. *(She walks about the kitchen looking at various things)* Yes, that's mine. I bought it when you were just a little thing. And this, this was given to me by your father in the forties. They don't make them any more. And this, well, this is just something stupid. And look at this is a picture of Eddy on his way to summer camp. Look at those sandals. Doesn't he have darling feet?

TAMMY

Mother, how can you stand it? Look at what you're doing. Look at this crap you're tied to.

JILL

(Still looking at the picture)

You're not tied to anything, my dear.

TAMMY

I'm not? Then what do you call all of this?

JILL

Mine.

TAMMY

But what about me?

JILL

What about you?

TAMMY

Mother, are you crazy? Look at all this junk! Do you want me to get caged in like you by all this clakkery?

JILL

Don't worry about my time machine, it's mine, not yours. You'll have yours when it comes. You'll have your own tools, your own shop. Leave what's mine alone. Leave me alone. This is my shop, my world, my place and you're simply growing out of it. But while you're here and eating

my food, wash the dishes and sweep the floor and be nice to your little sister and your brother and Jack. If you don't like it, just go away and find a place that's better.

(Tammy looks at Jill, her lower jaw forgotten and dangling.)

JILL

There, there, that's the way it goes, in and out and everywhere at once, like a vine chasing a spiral dream. First you want it and then you can't get rid of it like the sun just before eclipse. It's time to help someone.

(Jill goes over to the refrigerator and opens the freezer compartment, exposing a huge breast with a livid swollen bitten up red nipple. She holds a large glass under it. A stream of milk from the nipple flows into it.)

JILL

(As the glass fills up with milk)

You know the goddess Mut did this for Amen-re. He was the sun god who spat out the suckling Horus who later flew up and scratched the primal electricity out of the wind which polarized the amino acids into life. *(She puts her mouth to the nipple, sucks out as mouthful of milk and spits it into the glass)* This top part of the milk is warm from the blood heat. That's what keeps Terry here--milk heated by her mother's mouth.

(Terry's hand sticks out of the wall and takes the glass and disappears.)

JILL

Sometimes it's hard not give up on a child, but Terry will out pace us all. *(To Tammy)* Now, you must go back to bed. You have your junior year to complete. As for me, I've got to go back to my body and enter Theta sleep. Too much dreaming inflames the ethereal tissues and makes me morose and gives the ethereal body baggy eyes. Hold out a candle.

(Tammy holds out a candle. Jill lights it and the lights go out while beautiful beams of light come out of the cracks everywhere, out of the windows and up from the floor. Jill's face is lighted by candle light. Silently she climbs the stairs. There is the sound of rain. She disappears into the master bedroom, closing the door behind her.)

Immediately a light in her room snaps on and we hear Jack's voice.)

JACK

What time is it, honey?

JILL

A quarter after four.

(The light in the master bedroom fades slowly out. Tammy stands in the shimmering beams of light.)

TAMMY

I wish I could sleep at night. They're all out of their bodies away from the blood and the pain. I'm the only real insomniac in the house, my double seldom leaves the premises. Watch. *(She calls softly)* Eddy?

(Eddy suddenly comes through the wall. He is dressed in brightly colored ribbons and wears a silver bi-winger's cap.)

EDDY

(Absolutely natural)

Yes, Sis.

TAMMY

I can't sleep.

EDDY

Neither can I.

TAMMY

Mother's been wobbling around down here like a cracked egg. She woke me up.

EDDY

Me too.

TAMMY

That's not true, Eddy. You're upstairs in bed right now.

EDDY

Don't mess with yourself, Tammy. You're liable to spike your Jackal.

TAMMY

What do you mean by that?

EDDY

Short...circuit.

TAMMY

What do you mean, short circuit?

EDDY

Never wake up a sleep walker, even if they've been walking the streets for years.

(He picks her up in his arms. She is fast asleep. He takes her upstairs. All of the lights fade out and there is the sound of rain and thunder. Tammy still holds the lighted candle.)

EDDY

(As he carries Tammy's sleeping body towards the master bedroom)

I cannot fly, spirit, where you do not guide me.
If you would have me soar beyond the storm,
Then must you beckon me over
Raising my wings on a course beyond love,
Beyond all knowledge, beyond joy,
Beyond all human senses.

(Eddy stands there before the master bedroom door with Tammy in his arms. He stomps his foot three times. His back is to us and we see Tammy's face lighted by the candle she is holding.)

EDDY

(Speaks while Tammy mouths the words)

Mother? Mother? I want to talk to you.

JILL

(From within her room)

Can't it wait till morning? It's four thirty.

Eddy

(Speaks while Tammy mouths the words)

No, it can't wait, Mother.

(Eddy puts Tammy down on her feet before the door and backs toward the wall and then steps through it.)

JILL

Oh, alright. *(She opens the door)* What is it?

TAMMY

Mother, I don't like the way you talked to me just now.

JILL

What do you mean, "just now"?

TAMMY

The way you talked to me downstairs a little while ago. About staying out of your life and that if I don't like it I should go away and find a better place.

JILL

Oh, for Christ's sake, Tammy, I'm sound asleep. Go to bed and let it wear off.

TAMMY

Oh that's fine for you to say. It's easy enough to cut somebody up and then tell them to stop bleeding. Mother, you're the only friend I have in this place.

JILL

Well, you'd better start getting around.

TAMMY

(Aghast)

Mother, how can you say that?

JILL

Tammy, you might as well start getting used to the reality that I'm just another person. One night I moo-mooed your father and got pregnant. The rest is goo-goo ga ga.

TAMMY

The rest is what?

JILL

Goo-goo ga ga.

TAMMY

(Desperately)

Goo-goo ga ga? Is that what you call my child hood? Goo-goo ga ga?

JILL

(Unable to contain her laughter)

I'm sorry, honey. But you have to admit it was a bit goo-goo ga ga, even now...

TAMMY

Mother, how can you say that?

JILL

Tammy, my dear *(pause)* grow up. *(She shuts the door in her face.)*

TAMMY

(Hysterically)

You slammed the door in my face! You slammed the door in my face! Goo-goo ga ga? You have no right to slam the door in my face. I'm your daughter.

(The door opens. It is Jack.)

JACK

(Cooly)

What do you want?

TAMMY

(Backing away)

I want to talk to my mother.

JACK

(Low)

She's in bed.

TAMMY

I don't care. I want to talk with her.

JACK

(Turns his head back into the room--there is a mumbling. Then he turns back to Tammy) She doesn't want to talk to you right now. She wants to sleep *(He grins)* with me.

TAMMY

Mama! Mama!

JACK

Let's go downstairs.

TAMMY

I don't want to go downstairs.

JACK

Okay, then I will. *(He sticks his head back into the master bedroom and mews like a pussy cat at Jill)* Meow, meow, my

little pussy, be right back-backy, honey buns. *(He closes the door and kisses it)* Isn't it awful the way we act? *(He pulls a flashlight from his bathrobe pocket and lights his way down the dark stairs. Tammy remains above on the landing. At the bottom of the stairs he puts the light under his chin and makes a terrible face with an accompanying sound. Tammy shrieks and sobs a bit more.)* Life has its ins and outs, its ups and downs, its weird caresses, its changing roles. *(He walks the rest of the way downstairs, and sits down on the couch and snaps on a lamp)* There are possibilities within you right now that you have had glimpses of but have had no real idea of as they pertain to the fusion of catastrophe. I liken it to a pony inside of one. Do you follow? A pony that trots and walks and gallops and sometimes races. A pony you want to call home to grain and bed down. It's your reaction to things. Do you get it? I know a friend of a friend who sat on a chair just like this one. He challenged his friend to talk him out of death. But there wasn't a chance either way, because his pony was on the way to the gun in his side pocket. You see, the lad was afraid to go home with his cold gun and see himself in the dark room talking to himself about how he didn't want to die alone. He wanted to give his friend a shot of his vision, and he said, "You give me a good reason not to shoot myself and I won't," meaning, of course, that he would do it anyway. And he pulled out this big gray pistoley and he put it inside his mouth and he watched his friend go white with conviction and hot air and right there in the middle of it all it seemed so funny, him with a gun up his mouth and his friend blithering like a spigot and he wondered what his friend's face would look like after he pulled the trigger and so he did, he blew his own head off. The bomb's inside, enough to blow the world away. And you can't ever tell when some little what-not might entrigger itself and turn the pony's teeth against its own dancing flanks. Tammy, my love, my daughter, my dear little darling. Ride your pony good. Turn it into a horse you can depend on. *(Terry pops up from behind the armchair and puts her hands over Jack's eyes.)*

TERRY

Guess who?

JACK

Let me look at you. You're like a little ghost.

TERRY

I am for you, Papa.

JACK

You mean, you're not that way for everybody?

TERRY

Not for Dr. Amos. For Dr. Amos I'm a wish.

JACK

What kind of a wish?

TERRY

A wish for his daughter that passed over many, many years ago. There are lots of scientists' kids on the Otherside. I know because I cross back and forth. *(Sweetly she lets her fingers creep up his chest as speaks.)* There are some very strange things all over the place and some people just can't get the feel for the inside of things. They have a ringing in their ears.

(Just at that moment there is the sound of a distant, approaching siren. Eddy bursts in. His p.j's are tattered.)

EDDY

(Out of breath)

Tammy's finally menstruating again

(Tammy gets up off of her knees and knocks lightly on the door to the master bedroom.)

TAMMY

Mama? Mom? Mother? Dad told me the wonderful story about a pony I have inside of me. And Mom, I feel it. I do! I do!

(Jill hands out a box of Kotex.)

JILL

here you are, honey.

TAMMY'

Oh, thank you, Mom. *(To Eddy, Jack and Terry below)* It's a Merry Christmas! *(She exits into her bedroom.)*

JACK

What time is it?

EDDY

(Just simply knowing)

Five a.m.

JACK

It's almost time to get up.

TERRY

It's almost time for your sun to rise.

(Jack crosses to the front window. He pulls the curtains back in a single stroke, revealing a solid wall. Everybody shrieks at the sight of it.)

JACK

Don't get excited. I think we can handle this. Here, let me push against it. *(They push against the wall and it starts to move)* Yes, yes, it's moving!

(The little group pushes against the wall with all their might and slowly the wall begins to recede. As the wall is pushed back a dim, just perceptible light begins forming through the windows and with it the soft, muted sound of birds.)

JACK

Keep pushing!

(They push harder and as they push the stone recedes and the light becomes brighter and the sound of birds becomes louder. In the middle of the effort Terry's body begins to shudder. It is clear she is weeping.)

EDDY

Can we rest a second, Dad? *(He gets Jack's attention and points at the weeping Terry.)*

JACK

What's wrong, Terry, you're pale as a ghost.

TERRY

Daddy, Eddy, I can't go with you.

JACK

We're not going anywhere, hun.

TERRY

Yes, you are and I can't go with you there...ever.

JACK

Where do you mean?

TERRY

You'll find out. *(She struggles to hold back her tears.)*

EDDY

What is it, Terry?

TERRY

I've got to go back now, I hear Elly calling. *(She backs away)* There are some places that will never meet. I guess that's because all of us are part Thing. And someday, some of us will never meet again. *(She continues backing towards her wall)* In a strange way it makes us all one like blind creatures filling an endless well getting wetter and wetter and blacker and blacker, with my tongue in your mouth and your feet in my stomach. Someday I may never ever see you again but just right now and now and now. *(She has backed up to her wall. The panel slides open and a strange red glow fills the room. There is the sound of pulsating steam and the humming of machinery. She stands pausing at the threshold. Then suddenly she runs to Eddy and Jack and throws her arms around them. Then suddenly she dashes away from them into the opening in her wall, calling as she runs)* Good-bye, I remember...

(Eddy runs to Terry's wall but it is closed tight.)

EDDY

Terry! Terry! Dad, what happened? What was she talking about?

JACK

I don't know. We won't need her for this thing.

EDDY

Dad, don't be so cold.

JACK

Don't get melodramatic. Come on, let's push this thing out.

(Eddy joins Jack and again they begin pushing against the stone.)

EDDY

(Grunting)

It won't budge.

JACK

Come on, put some belly into it.

(Again they dig into the work, pushing with all their strength. Again the huge block begins to recede and as it does the light continues to grow and the sounds of the birds becomes louder.)

EDDY

Dad, it's really moving

JACK

Yes, I know, keep pushing!

(As they push the sound of the stone's grating becomes audible and the dawn breaks more and more until it fills the whole house with light.)

JACK

(Grunting as he exerts himself)

Come on just a bit more!

(They heave and shove and as they do the stone moves and the dawn breaks more and more. Jack and Eddy stop.)

JACK

Are you ready?

EDDY

(Out of breath and excited)

Yes!

JACK

Okay then...

(They shove and suddenly the huge stone falls away and light blazes through the hole. Out on the backdrop there is the color of a primeval dawn and mountains. There are birds singing joyously everywhere and soft breezes. Eddy and Jack stick their heads out the hole in the wall.)

EDDY

God, look Dad!

JACK

Yes, I can see!

(Jill suddenly appears on the other side of the hole. She is beautiful with her hair piled up on her head and wearing a Grecian robe. She is carrying an empty bird cage with the cage door open.)

JILL

Well, what are you two waiting for? Come on out. Tammy's here too.

TAMMY

(She too is on the other side, radiantly attired)
Come on out, you guys, I'm playing with Hippolytus.

JILL

But you've got to leave everything behind.

(Jack and Eddy strip.)

JACK

(Now naked, steps through)
Like the skin of the snake.

JILL

Here, clean up after yourselves.

(They pick up the stone and replug the hole. The stone is now very light. They, of course, disappear behind the wall. Upstairs there is a ringing of an alarm clock. Then another one joins it. And then another one. And then from another room the sound of an alarm going off. Then one after another, each alarm clock is turned off. Jill comes out of the master bedroom in a bathrobe singing to herself. She stops on the landing.)

JILL

Now don't turn those alarms off prematurely, that is before you're out of bed. *(She comes down the steps.)* I love it. Children all around me. My husband. A growing nation full of schools. *(She goes to the table and begins setting it)* And now, at last, it's breakfast.

(Eddy begins singing scales in his room. Then from Tammy's room comes the sound of an electric razor.)

JILL

(Shouting up at the rooms as she continues to set the table)

Jack, remember not to use the electric razor with shaving lather.

EDDY

(Snickering)

She's not using it on her pits, she's shaving her wig.

JILL

Tammy, don't use the electric on your wig, the plastic gets caught in the gears. And Eddy, don't be such a snitch.

(Eddy sticks his head back in his room and closes his door.)

JILL

(Calling as she sets the table)

Jack, are you up yet?

JACK

(His voice muffled behind the door) Yes, honey.

Jill

Jack, is anything wrong? You be careful now, we don't want any mishaps.

(Jack opens his door. His hand is stuffed up into a white porcelain pitcher.)

JILL

(Seeing Jack's state)

Eddy?

EDDY

(The top of his head also covered with lather as well as his entire face) yes, Mom?

JILL

Help your father.

EDDY

Jesus Christ, Dad! What happened to your face?

Jack

I WAS TRYING TO RINSE OUT MY EYES.

EDDY

Yuk-yuk. Here, let's go to the bathroom.

(They go into the master bedroom.)

JILL

Tammy? Tammy?

TAMMY

(From within her room)

Yes, Mother, I'm awake.

JILL

This family is awake! Come on, it's breakfast!

(Everyone comes out from upstairs and stands on the landing looking down at Jill. Eddy is in a nice black suit, Tammy wears a green dress and Jack is in an overcoat and bowler. They softly applaud Jill.)

EDDY

(After they have finished clapping)

Mom. *(He smiles warmly and tenderly at Jill)* Thank you.

TAMMY

(Stepping forward)

Thank you, Mother.

JACK

Honey, the Visigoths kept it warm between the loins of horses.

JILL

And?

JACK

And what's for breakfast?

JILL

Me.

(She takes her shoes off, steps up onto the table and lies down on it. There is a knocking on the front door.)

EDDY

Don't get up, Mom, I'll get it.

(He dashes down the stairs and opens the door. Terry is standing there. The wind is blowing and she has an open umbrella and a cute little dress. She looks exactly like

the 1941 Morton's Salt girl. In fact, she's carrying a box of salt.)

TERRY

When it rains, it pours. (She steps in, the salt pouring out in a trail behind her.)

(They all come and stand around the table where Jill is lying.)

EDDY

Here Mom (He goes over and gets a blanket and throws it over Jill.)

TAMMY

(Seating herself)

Oh, aren't you gallant.

JACK

(Seating himself)

Mamacopia.

(They pull various fruits from under the blanket.)

JACK

Eddy, I heard what happened at school yesterday. And I want to tell you that you handled yourself well under the circumstances. But you shouldn't let a guy beat you up. No matter what. Even if it hurts you, you should keep swinging. Listen, if he knocks you down just get up and keep swinging. And then if he knocks you down just get up and keep swinging just like Jason and the Argonauts. Remember those skeletons that kept coming up out of the earth even though the hero sliced them to pieces? They just kept coming up and coming up, the little pieces would turn into skeletons and would just keep popping up from the ground as if his own violence had bred them. That's what you've got to do too. Down you go. Up you pop. Down you go. Up you pop. And up you pop and up you pop until he exhausts himself on you and icy fear will creep into his veins. It will! And he'll see that no matter how hard he hits you, you won't cry. Look at me, Eddy. Just make little sniffs like this when you want to cry. See. Little sniffs and bury your eyes into your head like a dead man and get up off of the ground, bleeding and all and come at him with your arms rounded in the cosmic mudra and head at him like a missile towards his heart. Remember that he has a beating heart. It must beat and it must beat and it must beat. And it will

pull you to it like a heat guided lover. So keep yourself towards that heat delivered up by his beating hear and sniff your tears back and if he round-houses you like this, and your head snaps to the side like this, let a flag of your blood whip out at him like a sun spurt and splash his face with it so that his heart quickens at the thought of it. When his face is hit by your blood it will worry his heart and it will beat faster and he will begin to strain from the ages of absolute non-existence from which his heart issued itself up like a dream. And Eddy, he will become afraid and his blood will chill and he will stop pushing you around, the dirty, ugly mother-fucker will stop pushing you around and when he sees you on the street he will smile at you kindly. He will be more understanding. You will have him in your HASPS! And there will be girls in your life like you've never known before. The age of heroes is eternal and anyone who tells you differently is merely trying to hold you down. Don't let them hold you down! When you are a hero then the age of heroes is! And they will say "Heroes live!" But where there are no heroes the age of heroes lies dormant like spring ground under snow. There are no signs to watch for. You are the sign. Will you do that for me? Don't go down!

EDDY

Yes, Dad. I won't go down.

(Eddy gets up from the table.)

EDDY

(Bending over and kissing Jill)

Thanks, Mom.

(Jack gets up and accompanies Eddy to the door. He stops and looks at Eddy.)

JACK

Goddamn it, Eddy, I hope I did right by you in your childhood.

EDDY

You did, Dad *(He puts a hand on Jack's shoulder)* Thanks.

JACK

(Puts a hand on Eddy's shoulder)

Ditto.

EDDY

(Calling to Tammy)

Sis?

TAMMY

(Looking up from her fruit)

Yes.

Eddy

(Earnestly)

Have a nice day.

TAMMY

You too, Eddy.

EDDY

Terry?

TERRY

Yes, Eddy, me too, I too will have a nice one.

JACK

Be cool, honey.

EDDY

(Earnestly)

I will.

JACK

(Pointing at the door)

Into it.

EDDY

Bang bang. *(He takes a deep breath, opens the door and dives out of sight)*

JACK

(Chuckling to himself, excited)

Goddamn, goddamn! I can feel this day coming up through my shoes. I'm going to make it this time. I'm going to beat him to work. I even think I know where he leaves it. *(He turns around and goes to the closet, opens the door and pulls out a brief case and holds it over his head)* See? *(Then he pauses)* Only one thing. I have to go to the bathroom.

JILL

Don't do it, Jack. Go and do it in the sink if you have to but stay out of the upstairs bathroom.

JACK
(*Uneasy*)

You're right. I'm obsessing. No, no, into the sink or my pants. But honey, I've got to...*(He goes over and whispers into Jill's ear.)*

JILL
That's okay, we have a garbage disposal. Tammy, throw a sheet over your father.

TAMMY
With pleasure.

(Jack sits on the sink and Tammy throws a sheet over him. Jack's pants down from beneath the sheet.)

JILL
Haven't you two buttoned up your little squabble?

TAMMY
I don't think we ever will, Mom.

JILL
(Knowingly)
Oh yes, you will, someday.

TAMMY
You know this is hopeless. He'll never go outside.

(Suddenly Jack gives a holler and disappears into the sink leaving an empty sheet.)

JILL
I don't know honey, somehow I keep hoping. But perhaps you're right. Perhaps the world is only Talkter.

TAMMY
Talkter?

JILL
Talkter.

TAMMY
What do you mean, "Talkter."

JILL

It's like "laughter" only it's talking. Well, pull this blanket off me. *(She gets up off the table)* Terry, you haven't said a thing.

TERRY

That's because God didn't give me anything to say until just now.

TAMMY

I'm going, Mom.

JILL

See you tonight.

TAMMY

(Stops by the door)

Oh, Mom?

JILL

Yes?

TAMMY

I had the most wonderful night last night.

JILL

YOU did?

TAMMY

Yes, it was sort of a breakthrough. I had a of of dreams...*(Her voice trails off and she looks at Jill)* You were in them. *(She looks at Terry)* So were you.

JILL

And so was I.

TERRY

Me too.

(They all laugh)

TAMMY

You know what I'm going to be when I grow up?

JILL AND TERRY

What?

TAMMY

I'm going to be a personal psychologist.

JILL

(Going to the closet and pulling out a huge hat with an enormous green feather.) Here, try this on for size.

TAMMY

(Putting on the hat)

Oh, I feel just like Dorothy and the Tornado!

JILL

Watch out for the winds of time.

(Tammy steps out the door and is whisked away by a powerful wind.)

JILL

(Turning to Terry)

Now, my little gear cutter, it's time for you to vacillate. *(She stops and turns towards Jill)* Mom, this afternoon is going to be very sunny and warm. Preschoolers are going to be riding their trikes and the sidewalks are going to be all white with long strips of sunshine and the grass will be amazingly green. Open all of the windows and go upstairs and make love. "Today." *(Said like "good-bye")*

JILL

Today

(The panel in the wall slides open. There is an alien sound of throbbing, humming engines. It is as if there was an enormous place down there. Terry waves sweetly and the door slides shut in front of her.)

(Jill opens all of the windows. The light streams in. The sound of a clear spring day is heard. Preschoolers are playing outside and there is the sound of birds and distant laughter. Jill is humming. She looks up toward the master bedroom she holds her bathroom from her. She let's her bathrobe fall from her. She is naked.)

JILL

(Calling sweet and low)

Jack?

(She climbs the stairs as the light fade into darkness.)

END

