



Sample Pages from
A Deep, Poetic Journey Into Something

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A DEEP, POETIC JOURNEY INTO SOMETHING

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Forrest Musselman



A Deep, Poetic Journey Into Something
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Cast of Characters

4F+3M+6 Either

JANE: SHE is a senior in high school and strives to break out of the box.

MOM: SHE is Jane's mother and is a free-spirited artist.

DAD: HE is Jane's father and would rather stay in the box.

MARY: SHE is Jane's friend and lives way outside the box.

DAN: HE is Jane's friend and is so outside the box it's not even funny.

JOHN: HE is Jane's friend, but wants to be a bit more.

MRS. HATE: SHE wants Jane to stay in the box.

SHADOW 1: Jane's Shadow

SHADOW 2: Mom's Shadow

SHADOW 3: Dad's Shadow

SHADOW 4: Dan's Shadow

SHADOW 5: John's Shadow

SHADOW 6: Mrs. Hate's Shadow

In the case of smaller cast issues, actors can double as shadows if needed.

Time

The Present.

Place

Anywhere.

Production Notes

The set is simple. Running along center stage are three large scrims made out of muslin or whatever fabric of your choosing. Each scrim is a large square around eight feet high by eight feet wide. The stands were originally made out of PVC pipe and supported by metal bases. Behind each scrim is a PAR can light which when turned on creates the shadow effects needed throughout the play.

Downstage of the scrims are four acting blocks, two located stage left and two located stage right. One of the blocks at stage right has an additional lid that can be lifted up to support a painting during the Mom and Jane scene. A triangular platform is located behind the two blocks on stage left to help with acting levels during the lunch room scene and the hospital scene.

The shadows wear tight black clothing. Jane, Dad, and Mrs. Hate wear black and white clothing, while the others wear clothes that have hints of purple. For example, John may wear a concert t-shirt with purple lettering or Dan could wear a purple stocking cap.

Props

Two pictures of a green cow under a purple sky (one is framed), three cell phones, a clip board, a painting, paint brush, painting palette, pillow, and two long pieces of purple fabric.

Music

Music is of your choosing as long as it sets the mood.

First Production

This play was first performed by the students of Rushford-Peterson High School on January 15th, 2011, at the Three-Rivers Conference One-Act Play Festival in Wabasha-Kellogg, MN. The original cast and crew are as follows: Annie Scaife, Jaci Adcock, Freddy Scaife, Dani Wood, Alex Courier, Amy Bessler, Alex Kopperud, Chelsea Becker, Kate Mackenzie, Luke Eide, Cara Lantz, Elizabeth Wick, Hannah Kopperud, Emma Malone, Shiming Xiong, Chad Kim, Siti Zahara, Amber Stone and Ruth Lee. The play went on to win several competitions, resulting in the honor of performing at the state level on February 10th as part of the Minnesota State High School League.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to Tiffany Wiech and Kate Thelen for their assistance, everyone at Rushford-Peterson Schools that supported us throughout the season and all of the community members that wore purple for us during the competitions. Most of all, many thanks to my family for enduring all the Saturdays I was gone and my parents for encouraging me to live outside the box at a very early age.

The stage is dark. Music begins to play. The shadow lights fade up. JANE enters stage right, walking slowly, looking around as if she is in a new world. SHADOW 1 follows her behind the scrim mimicking her moves. JANE moves center, stops, and looks around. JANE moves stage left and looks around. SHADOW 1 breaks movement and moves slowly back to the center scrim. SHADOW 1 motions for JANE to move toward it. JANE does. SHADOW 1 motions for JANE to come behind the scrim. JANE reaches her hand out and SHADOW 1 pulls her behind the scrim. SHADOW 1 releases her hand and moves to stage right scrim. JANE looks around and lifts her right hand. SHADOWS 2 and 3 rise from the floor and stand looking at her. JANE lifts her left hand and SHADOWS 3, 4, and 5 rise from the floor behind the left scrim. JANE sweeps her right hand out as if to touch the shadows, but they move slowly backward as the SHADOWS from the left side move toward her. She turns and sweeps her left hand as the SHADOWS move backward and the right side moves in. JANE faces forward as all the SHADOWS slowly converge upon her. JANE sinks to the floor and the SHADOWS appear to envelop her and become one large shape. The shadow lights fade out. Music fades. Lights come up in front of the scrim as JANE steps out from behind the scrim and into the light. She surveys the audience quietly before speaking.

JANE: There's a song out there somewhere about boxes, little boxes. Except the song isn't really about boxes, it's about us and the way we live our lives. It's about conformity and how we all move from one box to another. I mean, think about it. We grow up in boxes that look like other boxes in neighborhoods that look like other neighborhoods. We go to school in boxes where they teach us how to conform, and then we graduate and go to college, which is a larger box that teaches us how to work in a box so we can buy our own box and then start the whole process over again. (pauses) Not me. I want more out my life. I just wish I knew what it was.

Shadow lights fade up. The SHADOWS move fluidly within their squares.

I want to believe that inside those boxes there are organic shapes that move beyond structured lines and with a mighty push they find themselves outside the wall... free. And then they move...

a deep poetic journey. These are shapes I keep in my mind... shapes that want to make the push, but they can't. They're shadows that flit and flutter away into a big, dark nothing.

SHADOWS slowly fall to the floor. Shadow lights fade.

That's me... I'm on this deep, poetic journey into nothing. And it's been a big nothing for a long time. I'm pretty sure it started back in Kindergarten.

As she introduces the next segment, MRS. HATE enters stage right with MOM and DAD. MRS. HATE sits on a block, facing MOM who is sitting on the other block. DAD stands behind MOM.

Her name was Mrs. Haight. Her name was spelled H-A-I-G-H-T, like the famous Haight-Ashbury street in San Francisco, but she was far from the peace and love that word represented. Think the opposite. H-A-T-E. Mrs. Hate.

Lights fade up on stage right. JANE walks to the group and transforms into a cheery, little five-year old girl. The tone becomes upbeat and lively.

DAD: Mrs. Hate?

MRS. HATE: Yes. How are you? You must be Jane's parents.

DAD: Yes. *(trying to joke around)* I hope she hasn't been too much trouble.

MRS. HATE: No, not at all. She actually keeps to herself a lot.

MOM: So how's she doing in class?

MRS. HATE: Well, like I said she's usually not a problem with her behavior. But I do have some concerns with some of her work.

DAD: Really? Like what?

MRS. HATE: Here's a good example of what I'm talking about. *(hands them a colored picture)*

MOM: Oh, cute. I LOVE the colors. Did you color that Jane?

JANE: Yes.

MOM: Well, it looks fine to me. What's the problem?

MRS. HATE: Okay, obviously she's colored way outside the lines. And the cow is green. And the sky is purple.

JANE: I like purple.

MOM: I know you do, honey. (to MRS. HATE) Look, she's only five years old. If she wants to make the grass purple and color outside the lines, then she can.

DAD: Let's not get upset here.

The shadow lights fade up. SHADOWS 1, 2, 3, and 6 are at the center scrim, copying the movements of the scene.

MOM: I'm not getting upset. I just want to know what's the big deal?

MRS. HATE: The big deal is that we're learning about colors and their correct usage. When we think of grass, we think of green. When I handed out this picture, I specifically told the class to color everything correctly.

JANE: I colored the cow green.

MRS. HATE: Okay, but cows aren't green. They're brown or white or black, but they're never green.

MOM: Look, it's obvious that she knows her colors. She's known her colors since she was able to talk.

DAD: Hun, let's just hear her out.

MOM: Why are you siding with her?

DAD: I'm not siding...

MOM: If Jane wants to paint the cow green, she can! And she wants to color outside the lines, she can do that too.

JANE: Yeah!

MRS. HATE: Okay, but Jane is at the age where she needs to start showing control. Scribbling outside the lines shows that she hasn't managed this yet. How can she possibly move on to other more complicated projects if she can't show control?

MOM: This is absolutely insane. Do you know how many famous artists use whatever colors they want and work outside the lines?

DAD: Please...

MOM: All of them! That's why they're famous! They've ignored all the rules.

MRS. HATE: They may have broken the rules, but they all knew them first.

JANE becomes less spirited and begins to withdraw. During the following conversation, SHADOWS 2, 3, and 6 slowly blend and morph into some sort of monster, creating a large profiled mouth with jagged teeth. SHADOWS 4 and 5 and join in as well. SHADOW 1 moves to her knees and places her hands up in alarm with her mouth open. The monster's mouth slowly opens and closes.

DAD: Mrs. Hate. Obviously there's a difference of opinion here. My wife is an artist herself, so this is a sensitive issue for her. We'll talk with Jane and make sure that she does what you ask from now on.

MOM: No we won't. Since when did you become the rule police?

DAD: I just want Jane to do well in school.

MOM: By doing well, you mean she has to do what everyone else does so that she doesn't stand out. Is that what you mean by doing well?

DAD: I didn't mean that. I meant...

MOM: I don't care what you meant. I can't talk about this anymore. I can't even believe I'm having this conversation in the first place. I mean, is this what public school has become? Green grass and white cows?

SHADOW 1 slowly moves into the monster's mouth and disappears. The shadow lights fade out.

DAD: I really don't think...

MOM: No. No more. Don't talk to me. *(long pause)*

MRS. HATE: Okay, thanks for coming in. It was nice to meet you both.

Lights fade on stage right. JANE moves to center.

JANE: So that was the end of that conversation. And the end of a lot of other things too. It was shortly after that meeting that Mom and Dad got divorced. Oh, it wasn't because of the picture. Mom said it was because they were moving in different directions... that he wasn't the same guy she had fallen in love with. Dad pretty much said the same thing. So Dad left and me and Mom stayed

where we were. Mom told me I could color everything purple if I wanted, but I never did. I didn't want to cause any more trouble.

JOHN, MARY, and DAN enter stage left and sit on the two blocks.

So I just keep moving from one box into another. It all seemed to be working pretty well, until one day early in my senior year. It started from bad to worse. First, there was the moment at lunch. I was sitting with my usual crowd. (*moves to the group*) This is Mary. She's a lot like me, except she really doesn't care about anything. This is John. He likes to keep to himself too. Mostly because he wants to be a cool musician. And this is Dan. Dan is in a band with John and he's really weird. They all seem to have the box thing figured out. I kept hanging out with them, hoping that one day I could figure it out too.

JANE: (*she stands on platform behind the blocks*) Hey, guys.

DAN: Heeeeeeyyyyyyyyy!

MARY: What's up, squirrel face?

JANE: Wow, thanks Mary.

MARY: Lighten up, Miss Emo. You know I'm kidding.

JANE: (*smiles*) Sometimes I wonder. (*to JOHN*) And you need to stop texting me during Biology.

JOHN: I got things to say.

JANE: Then say it to my face. I'm sitting right next to you.

JOHN: And that's what makes it funny.

DAN: Yeeeeahhhhhh! Fuuuuunnnnnnyyy!

JANE: It won't be funny when we get caught. I can't afford to lose my cell phone. I've already been busted twice.

MARY: I think you're addicted. (*checks her own cell phone*)

JANE: You can't be addicted to a cell phone. And I wouldn't talk. You check your phone every ten seconds.

MARY: No, I don't.

JANE: Eight, nine, ten.

MARY checks her cell phone.

JANE: See.

MARY: I hate you. I'm not talking to you anymore.

DAN: Whooooooooaaaa! Teeeeeeension!!

JANE: *(laughs)* Whatever.

JOHN: Hey, I heard back from the U of M finally.

JANE: What'd they say?

JOHN: I'm accepted.

JANE: That's cool. And it's not that far away either.

JOHN: Yeah, but I don't think I'm going to go to college right away.

JANE: What?

JOHN: Yeah... I was thinking of moving out to Seattle for a year.

DAN: Seeeeeeee-atttttttt-lllleee. *(they do some sort of weird handshake)*

JANE: What's out there... besides rain and strong coffee?

JOHN: My uncle lives out there. He said me and Dan could stay with him for awhile if I wanted. There's a pretty cool music scene out there. We're gonna check it out.

DAN: Check it ouuuutt! *(they repeat the handshake)*

JANE: I thought you were going to stay? Can't your band make it big here?

JOHN: *(laughs, as does DAN)* We don't care about making it big. We just want to be where there's a music scene. There's nothing here.

DAN: *(suddenly angry)* Nothing!

JANE: Right.

JOHN: Why do you want me to stay?

JANE: I didn't say that.

JOHN: I think you did.

JANE: I think I didn't. Why would I want you to stay?

MARY: 'Cause you think he's hot.

JANE: Shut up. I thought you weren't talking to me anymore.

MARY looks at JANE then begins to text on her phone.

JANE: Don't listen to her. All the radioactive waves from her phone finally fried her brain.

JOHN: You think I'm hot?

JANE: In only a temperature type of way. You seem flushed a lot. Maybe you shouldn't wear so many layers.

JOHN looks confused. JANE's cell phone beeps. She looks at it.

JOHN: Who's that?

JANE: Who do you think?

They both look at MARY. MARY smiles.

JOHN: What's it say? *(he grabs the phone)*

JANE: No! Give that back!

JOHN: *(reading phone)* It says, "John thinks you're hot too."

DAN: *(laughs)* Nice! *(does the "secret" handshake by himself)*

School bell rings. They exit as JANE leaves the scene and walks center stage.

JANE: I'll admit it. He's hot in a smart-guy-rebel-plays-the-guitar kind of way. And he's got plans and he's confident and he doesn't care what other people think and I was so embarrassed at that moment I just wanted to climb into a dark hole. I didn't think things could get much worse until I had to meet with the guidance counselor. What made it worse was that the counselor was Mrs. Hate, who had given up her teaching position several years ago in order to help the children on a more personal level. Personally, I think she should have stayed in Kindergarten.

MRS. HATE has entered from stage right and is sitting at her same block. JANE sits facing her.

MRS. HATE: Thanks for seeing me, Jane. How are things going?

JANE: Fine.

MRS. HATE: Okay. Well, the reason I wanted to call you in today was because I was wondering how your college search was coming along.

JANE: Fine.

MRS. HATE: Are you sure? Because this is the time of the year when I get a lot transcript requests, and I haven't seen any for you. Have you applied anywhere?

JANE: No. I guess I haven't really thought about it yet.

MRS. HATE: Okay. Don't you think you should? You're graduating this year. (*JANE doesn't say anything*) What sorts of careers are you interested in? Maybe that can help.

JANE: I don't know what I want to be.

MRS. HATE: You don't know what you want to be? Surely you've thought about doing something...

JANE: I thought I was going to paint the world purple once, but then it changed.

MRS. HATE: Okay, well, I have your scores from the ASVAB (*The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery*) test here. According to this, you'd be very good in a field where you can help people. Nursing seems to be a good fit for you.

JANE: That's impossible. I generally don't like people.

MRS. HATE: Oh come on, you don't mean that. Look, these tests are very good at picking a person's strengths and weaknesses and predicting a future career.

JANE: No offense, but I really don't want a test tell me what box I have to be in.

MRS. HATE: Box?

Shadow lights fade up. SHADOWS 1 and 6 are copying the conversation at center scrim.

JANE: I may not know what I want to do, but I certainly know what I don't want to do. And I don't want to spend my life cleaning up puke.

MRS. HATE: Okay. There's no need to get upset, Jane.

JANE: I'm not getting upset!

SHADOW 1 begins to choke SHADOW 6. Shadow lights fade.

MRS. HATE: Okay, let's just stop for now. I'll give you a few weeks to think things over and then we'll meet again. I think it's important

that we get the ball rolling and start applying for some colleges, okay?

JANE: Sure.

Bell rings. JANE stands and faces the audience.

JANE: I was never more thankful when the last bell rang so I could get go home, lock myself in my room, listen to sad, sappy music, and curse my own existence. Of course, what happened after school didn't make things any better.

She moves to stage left where DAD has moved the blocks together to represent the front seats of a car.

JANE: Hey, Dad. Why are you at school? Is something wrong?

DAD: Uhhh... no, things are fine. Your mom asked me to pick you up today. C'mon, get in.

JANE mimes getting into the car and sits beside him.

JANE: Oooooo-kay. Is she busy or something?

DAD: Not really. I just needed to talk to you about something. *(coughs)*

JANE: What's up? Can't it wait until this weekend?

DAD: That's what I wanted to talk to you about. There isn't going to be a weekend.

JANE: Why?

DAD: I've got some things I need to take care of.

JANE: What?

DAD: *(coughs)* I can't really talk about it right now.

JANE: This is bull, Dad. You skipped out on last weekend too. Don't you want to see me?

DAD: Look, I wish I could explain, but I can't...

JANE: Mom was right. It's always about what you want. You're always putting yourself first.

DAD: Is that what she said? That's not true. I do everything I can to support you.

JANE: Everything... You mean a check every month?

DAD: Wait a second! I'm working two jobs, two jobs, to support you and your "artistic" mother...

JANE: What's that supposed to mean?

DAD: She could get a job too.

JANE: She has a job. She's an artist! She's painting all the time!

DAD: It's not paying the bills, is it? If she wanted to take some responsibility, she could find a part-time job. Instead, I have to work my butt off. If it weren't for you, I could have walked away from her and not have paid one single cent...

DAD stops, realizing his mistake. Slow, somber music plays softly. The shadow lights fade up on the center scrim. SHADOWS 1 and 3 are sitting, copying the car scene. SHADOWS 2 and 4 sit behind them, unseen for the moment. SHADOWS 5 and 6 form a car frame around the sitting shadows.

JANE: Me?

DAD: That came out wrong... I'm sorry.

JANE: You're sorry I'm your daughter?

DAD: I didn't mean it that way. I just get frustrated with your mom sometimes. You know I love you.

JANE: I'm not so sure, Dad. It sounds like I'm a financial burden to you. You know, I don't want your stinkin' money. I never wanted it.

DAD: It doesn't work that way.

JANE: What I want is you, Dad. You. And now you're bailing out on another weekend.

DAD: I'm not bailing...

JANE: Forget it, Dad. I'll walk home. Stop the car!

DAD: C'mon, we can talk about this.

JANE: Stop the car or I'll jump. I mean it.

DAD: Fine. (coughs) Maybe it's better this way.

JANE mimes getting out of the car.

JANE: Maybe it is.

DAD mimes getting out of the car as well, acting as if he wants to say something more. SHADOWS 5 and 6 slowly unhook their hands and roll away. SHADOWS 2 and 4 rise up and walk away. SHADOWS 1 and 3 walk a few paces away from each other. JANE has walked past the center scrim and pauses to look back at DAD, but then turns away again. DAD exits. SHADOWS 1 and 3 move toward each other and hug. The music and the shadow lights fade slowly. Pause.

JANE: I wished I had waited until he got me home, so I could have made a dramatic exit into the house. Now I had to walk dramatically for seven more blocks. And that, of course, led up to the next crappy moment.

JOHN enters from stage right.

JOHN: Hey, what are you doing out here?

JANE: It's called walking.

She tries to walk around JOHN, but he stops her.

JOHN: Funny. Doesn't your mom usually pick you up?

JANE: Well, she didn't, okay? What's it to you?

JOHN: Sorry... jeez, I guess I won't ask any more questions.

JANE: Good.

She tries to move but JOHN stops her again.

JOHN: What are you so ticked for? You mad about what happened at lunch?

JANE: Gee, you think?

JOHN: Hey, that was all Mary's fault. I'm sorry I grabbed your phone.

JANE: Just forget it. It was all stupid anyway.

JOHN: Fine. Good idea. So you wanna hang out later tonight?

JANE: Huh?

JOHN: It's Friday! Let's go do something fun!

JANE: Don't you have to practice with the band of something?

Shadow lights up. SHADOW 4 mimics DAN eating rubber cement. The other five SHADOWS stand around with horrified positions.

JOHN: No, Dan ate a half a bottle of rubber cement during art class and had to go to the hospital. He should be out tomorrow.

SHADOW 4 falls to ground. Shadow lights fade.

JANE: What? I didn't hear about that.

JOHN: It was during last hour.

JANE: Oh... I was with the counselor.

JOHN: So, how about it? You wanna do something?

JANE: Is this like a date? *(awkward pause)*

JOHN: I... I don't know. Maybe? *(long pause as they survey each other)*

JANE: *(suddenly turns away)* Look, I'm not interested.

JOHN: Why not? I thought you were.

JANE: I don't want to go down a road that leads to more heartache and pain. *(she grimaces at her own revealing comment and tries walking away)*

JOHN: What are you talking about? I just want to go to a movie...

JANE: It's just not going to work. Let's just keep things the way they are.

JOHN: *(tries to grab her arm)* Did I miss something? What did I do?

JANE: Nothing. Just... just leave me alone, okay!

JOHN: Fine. Never mind then. Later. *(exits, looking hurt)*

JANE: *(to audience)* What was I supposed to tell him? That I'm afraid of commitment? That I just want to be left alone?

MOM enters stage right during JANE's lines. She stacks the block with the lid on top of the other block. She lifts the lid and leans a painting against it. The painting has a purple background with black, shadowy figures painted over it. SHADOW 1 portrays a flying bird located above one of the figures. MOM picks up a palette and brush and paints.

JANE: So, you would think the day was as rotten as it could get, right?
Wrong. The kicker was just around the corner. (*moves toward MOM*) Hey, Mom.

MOM: Hey, honey. How was school?

JANE: If today was anymore of a disaster, it'll become a national holiday.
I'm going to my room.

MOM: Hang on. So what do you think? (*points to her painting*)

JANE: It's awesome like always.

MOM: Hmmmm, I'm not so sure. It's missing something. More purple,
maybe?

JANE: How would I know? I'm not an artist.

MOM: Don't say that. You're more talented than what you give yourself
credit for. Why don't you see that?

JANE: I don't see anything but misery and failure.

MOM: See, you're already on your way to becoming an artist.

The shadow lights fade up. SHADOWS 2 through 6 are at the center scrim, being perfectly still and copying the figures in the painting. SHADOW 1 creates the flying bird using her hands to represent the bird.

MOM: Or were you talking about the painting?

JANE: Ha, ha. Can I go to my room now?

MOM: Not yet. Did your dad give you a ride home?

JANE: Yes... or at least he tried to. We got in a fight and I made him
stop the car.

MOM: What did you get into a fight about?

JANE: He said we can't hang out this weekend.

MOM: Why?

JANE: I don't know. He said he had things to do.

MOM: You mean he didn't tell you? (*she shakes her head in frustration
and turns back to the painting*)

JANE: Of course not. He never tells me anything. Why does he always have to do that?

MOM: That's what he does. He's gotta keep everything to himself.

JANE: Keep what to himself?

MOM: I shouldn't say.

JANE: What?

MOM: I wanted him to tell you. That's why I told him to give you a ride home today.

JANE: Tell me what? What's going on?

MOM: Your dad is sick.

JANE doesn't say anything for a moment, searching her mother's face for a sign that she's joking around, and then tries to make a joke herself.

JANE: Oh, like in the head?

MOM: It's not a joke. He's got cancer.

JANE turns and moves away from MOM. Slow, somber music begins to play. The SHADOWS slowly melt to the floor. SHADOW 1 playing the bird flies slowly away from center scrim into scrim stage left. The shadow lights fade out.

MOM: That's why he hasn't been able to be with you on the weekends. He's been doing these chemo treatments at the hospital. (pause) I really wish he would have told you himself.

JANE: How bad is it?

MOM: Pretty bad. He said he'd been feeling really tired for a few months. By the time he went to get checked out, it was already in his lymph nodes.

JANE: But the chemo is helping, right? Things should get better?

MOM: I don't know. That's why I wish he would have told you. He's not giving me the whole story either.

JANE: I don't get it. Why didn't he tell me?

MOM: He's going to have to explain that one himself.

JANE: Yeah, right. He won't say anything.

MOM: Then maybe it's good that I told you. You can tell him that you know and then maybe he'll explain...

JANE: Explain what? That he can't talk to his own daughter? That he'd rather avoid me? That it's better he hides in his little box than tell me what's going on? Why bother? This is all so stupid! Why is everything so STUPID!?

MOM: It's okay to get upset. Go on- yell some more. It'll feel good. C'mon, I'll yell with you.

JANE: Stop! Just leave me alone. That's all I want is for PEOPLE TO LEAVE ME ALONE!

MOM stops. She slowly collects her painting, brush and palette. She lowers the lid of the block and exits.

JANE: And so that was my big, crappy day. Fun, huh?

She grabs the stacked block and carries it stage left placing it next to the other two blocks. She moves center stage for the rest of her soliloquy. During her speech, DAD enters in a hospital gown carrying a pillow. He lies on the three blocks and waits.

JANE: For the next six months, I just kept my head low. I made small talk with my friends, did what I needed to pass my classes, and wondered how Dad was doing. It didn't take very long before I found out. There was a call for me during a weekend in March. It was the hospital. They said Dad wasn't doing very well and that he wanted to see me. I didn't want to go at first, but Mom made me. When I entered the white box, I saw my Dad in a different light. He was alone. Like me.

She moves toward DAD and kneels on the platform behind the blocks.

JANE: Dad?

DAD: Hey... come on in.

JANE: Why didn't you tell me you were sick?

DAD: I didn't want to worry you.

JANE: Worry me? Dad, I'm your daughter. You need to tell me everything. Isn't that what you always taught me?

DAD: I know... I screwed up. I'm sorry.

JANE: Sorry doesn't cut it. You have no idea how... (DAD winces)
What's wrong?

DAD: Nothing.

JANE: Are you in a lot of pain?

DAD: No... yes... it hurts a lot.

JANE: Where?

DAD: Everywhere. Hit that morphine button, will you?

JANE: Morphine. How come sick people get all the good drugs?

DAD: Hold my hand, will you?

JANE: Okay.

DAD: I want you to know that I'm sorry for a lot of things I did.

JANE: Like what?

DAD: Like leaving you like I did. Like not supporting you with who you wanted to be.

JANE: What are you talking about? I have no idea who I want to be.

DAD: You're already who you are. You just have to get past all the crap that you think everyone else wants you to be. You have to fight for it.

JANE: I don't like to fight. I'm a pacifist. Maybe even a vegetarian.

DAD: See there you go. You hide behind your jokes. People tell you things you don't like to hear, so instead of speaking your mind you hide inside of it instead. (JANE doesn't speak) Got you on that one, didn't I?

JANE: It's just easier that way.

DAD: Of course it is. It's always easier to give up than to fight for what you believe in. That's why I left your mom... and you. Don't let my mistakes be yours too.

JANE: Dad, you're starting to scare me. You've never been this honest with me before.

DAD: (overlapping her lines) It's time to let it all out. I love you.

JANE: It's time...? What's that supposed to mean? Dad?

DAD: Break out of the box, Jane.

JANE: The box... how did you know about that? Dad? (no response)
How did you know about the box. Dad, stop it. You're really
freaking me out. Dad? Dad? Dad? (starts to break down) Dad, don't
do this. Not now. Don't...

Music begins to play. JANE puts her head down on her father's chest. All the SHADOWS emerge from behind the screen. SHADOW I gently leads JANE to downstage center where JANE collapses on the floor. SHADOW I returns to DAD. All the SHADOWS lift him up, three on each side, like pallbearers of a funeral. They carry him behind the curtain. The shadow lights for center scrim fade up. The SHADOWS gently lay him down, move to their knees and stagger themselves diagonally so we can clearly see each of them on either side of DAD. As the music swells, they bow their heads in prayer and freeze. The shadow lights slowly fade to black with the music. Center light fades up on JANE. She pushes herself to her knees. She's crying.

JANE: And just like that he left me... again. I didn't know what to do. I stayed there for a long time until Mom came and brought me home. I didn't say anything. I was numb. All of his words spinning in my head like a dark wind. (starts to regain control) I stayed in my room and Mom pretty much left me alone. I thought a long time about how I'd lived my life since kindergarten. I didn't go to school for three weeks. That's when Mom decided it was long enough. I think I had decided too.

A bit of sad music plays. MOM enters from stage right and pushes remaining block toward JANE. She stops near the end of the center scrim and sits on the block.

MOM: Jane? Jane.

JANE: Hmmmmm.

MOM: You need to get up. You need to start doing things. If you keep lying there, it's just going to get worse.

JANE: I don't think it can.

MOM: There's someone here to see you.

JANE: Mom! I really don't want to see anyone right now!

MOM: You can visit for a few minutes, and then you can tell him to leave.



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