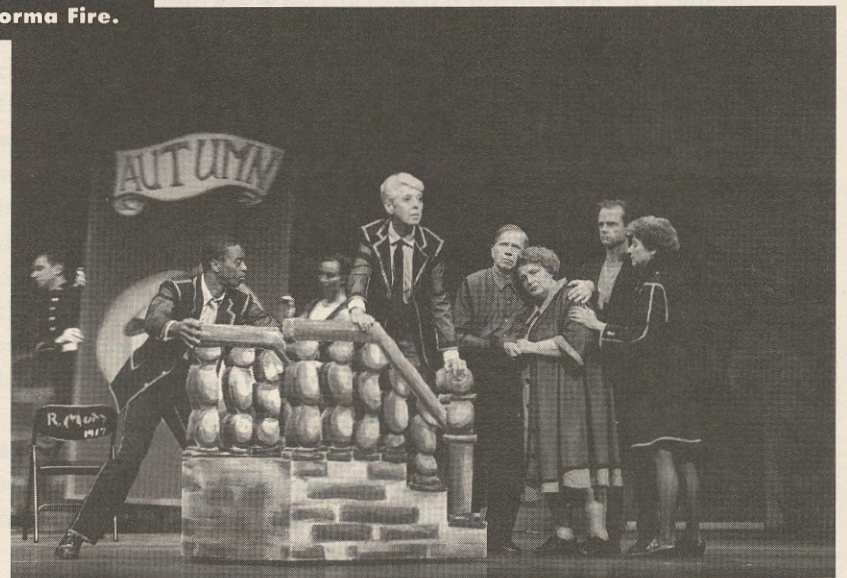


David Gordon

**MARCEL
DUCHAMP**
(Valda
Setterfield)
descends the
staircase as
his life whirls
about him.
Left to right,
Ben Bodé,
Dean Moss,
Karen
Graham,
Ralph
Williams,
Lola
Pashalinski,
Scott
Cunningham,
Norma Fire.

THE MYSTERIES AND WHAT'S SO FUNNY?



EDITOR'S NOTE

Interviewing David Gordon before *The Mysteries* opened in New York, I asked him, "Is it a dance or a play?" His answer, appropriately, was, "I'm not sure." Modern dance has employed spoken text intermittently since Martha Graham paved the way with *Letter to the World* (1941); many contemporary choreographers—especially those, like Gordon, who emerged from the Judson Dance Theater movement of the 1960s—have used words even more aggressively, as a means of questioning and dissecting the elements of dance and the whole process of making it. A whole new set of dramatic possibilities has come out of the tension between the act of moving on a stage and the words that comment on it, directly or by contrast.

But *The Mysteries and What's So Funny?* is the first work to come out of this movement that strikes me as having literary as well as theatrical substance. It exists to wed its pairs of modes, writing and performance, the verbal and the physical, acting and dance, just as it welds together its two dramas: the struggle of a married couple to sustain their relationship and the struggle of an artist to maintain integrity of spirit in the face of an innately exploitative world. Gordon always builds his works out of personal elements: The first drama is based on his vision of his parents and their family history, the second on the career and thinking of Marcel Duchamp, an artist whose questioning of the whole nature of art has been a central influence on Gordon's approach.

The juxtaposition of the two dramas, in alternating scenes, is like a surreal, nonlinear version of the double-plotted Elizabethan play structure. The fact that both stories are partly "documentary" in nature (many of Duchamp's lines are in fact quoted from him

verbatim) gives Gordon's surrealism some of its wry, matter-of-fact charm. Finally the two become one: We see that love, like creativity, is an act of tremendous risk, calling for huge efforts of concentration, and always prone to the destructive pressures of society.

The connection was underscored, in production, by Gordon's casting his wife and longtime partner, Valda Setterfield, in the role of Duchamp, in which she was obliged to assert, repeatedly, that marriage and family commitments were unhealthy for an artist, compromising his independence and possibly damaging his work; her existence was in effect a continuing denial of the lines she spoke, making the ironies dance in the air—as everything in Gordon's production danced, including the highly mobile elements of Red Grooms's design, to Philip Glass's subtle, airy music. The melancholy underpinnings of the intertwined stories didn't keep the event from having the playful appeal of an old-fashioned musical revue, as sophisticated as it was innocent, as rueful and somber as it was whimsical. In that sense, Gordon's greatest achievement was to have brought off the wedding every theater artist strives for: that of pure art, at its most free-flowing and complex, with pure popular entertainment.

Dedicated to:

Rose Gordon (September 15, 1912–October 19, 1992)

Samuel Gordon (July 1, 1913–October 31, 1991)

Marcel Duchamp (July 28, 1887–October 2, 1968)

I am grateful to:

Jedediah Wheeler

Nigel Redden

and Alyce Dissette

PRODUCTION NOTES

The Mysteries and What's So Funny? was developed over an eighteen-month period at workshop/residencies with the Guthrie Theater Lab, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Playwrights Horizons Theatre School, New York, New York, and the American Repertory Theatre's Institute for Advanced Theatre Training, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The first performances were presented in May 1991, at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. in Charleston, South Carolina, with additional performances following at the Bardavon Opera House, Poughkeepsie, New York; *Serious Fun!* at Lincoln Center, New York, New York, and the American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Music by Philip Glass

Visual Design by Red Grooms

Directed by David Gordon

Music Director: Alan Johnson

Lighting Designer: Dan Kotlowitz

Sound Designer: David Meschter

Casting: Vince Liebhart and Judy Dennis

Assistant Directors: Mary Ann Kellogg and Chuck Finlon

Producer: Jedediah Wheeler

ORIGINAL CAST

MARCEL DUCHAMP: Valda Setterfield
YOUNG ARTIST: Dean Moss
OLD ROSE: Lola Pashalinski
OLD SAM: Ralph Williams
YOUNG ROSE: Karen Graham
YOUNG SAM: Ben Bodé
DETECTIVE; ONLY, OLDEST CHILD: Norma Fire
FANNY: Jane Hoffman
MRS. HIM: Gayle Tufts
MR. HIM: Jonathan Walker
ANGER I: Scott Cunningham
ANGER II: Karen Evans-Kandel
ACTOR (GRANDFATHER, FATHER, ETC.): Alice Playten
PIANIST: Alan Johnson

Produced in association with David Gordon/Pick Up Company, Inc.

Commissioned by Spoleto Festival U.S.A. and Serious Fun! at Lincoln Center.

The principal sponsor of this project was the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The development of this project was made possible by a grant from the Ford Foundation. The commission fees for this composer/choreographer collaboration were made possible by a grant from Meet the Composers Composer/Choreographer Project, a national program funded by the Ford Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Additional project support was provided by the Jerome Foundation, John and Sage Cowles, AT&T Foundation, Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, Greenwall Foundation, and the Harkness Foundations for Dance.

CHARACTERS

MARCEL DUCHAMP
YOUNG ARTIST
OLD ROSE
OLD SAM
YOUNG ROSE
YOUNG SAM
DETECTIVE
FANNY
MRS. HIM
MR. HIM
ANGER I
ANGER II
ACTOR (GRANDFATHER, FATHER, CRITIC, BROTHER I, BROTHER II, MOTHER, VENDOR, MAILMAN, PAULINE, STRANGER, WAITER, *baby sound*, DOCTOR, SALESPERSON)

PROLOGUE

During the overture, which lasts approximately two minutes, the entire company enters or is revealed in ways that suggest their subsequent characters and the physical-cyclical nature of the event, its links to the cycle of the seasons, and of human life. The figures rotate through the space. The focal figures are DUCHAMP, OLD ROSE, and OLD SAM, framed (literally by a large Red Grooms–designed picture frame) in various ways by the action. A swinging door, in a doorframe mounted on wheels, moves through the action, revealing characters as they enter through it. OLD ROSE and OLD SAM end up in chairs where they will remain for most of the performance, facing upstage, watching a TV set. (They will return to this position at play's end.) Here, as throughout the piece, YOUNG ARTIST is instrumental in setting up and transforming scenes, facilitating the action.

Time passes. Music stops.

DUCHAMP: I am Henri Robert Marcel Duchamp.

(Music starts.)

GROUP: Duchamp.

DUCHAMP: Born in France.

GROUP: A Frenchman.

DUCHAMP: On July 28th

GROUP: 1887

ACTOR (GRANDFATHER): I am his grandfather. I was an artist.

ANGER I: His father

ANGERS: however

ANGER II: said no to an art career

ANGERS: for his three sons.

ACTOR (FATHER): Listen to your father. No Art!

DUCHAMP: So, my brothers and I all became artists.

ACTOR (FATHER): These kids never listen.

YOUNG ARTIST: Time passes.

DUCHAMP: I'm drawing, painting.

GROUP: Drawing, painting.

ACTOR (CRITIC): In 1911, his work begins relating to Cubism.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is Cubism?

ACTOR (CRITIC): A geometrical reduction of natural forms.

ANGER I: To what end?

ANGER II: To end what?

DUCHAMP: I became interested in successive images of a single body in motion.

DETECTIVE (to CRITIC): How did you know?

ACTOR (CRITIC): I'm a critic. Why do you ask?

DETECTIVE: I'm a detective.

ACTOR (CRITIC): He also makes drawings and paintings—

DUCHAMP: I told you so—drawing, painting.

GROUP: Drawing, painting.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Of pairs of chess players.

DUCHAMP: Those were my brothers.

ACTOR (BROTHER I): I am Gaston. I call myself Jacques Villon.

ACTOR (BROTHER II): I am Raymond. I call myself Duchamp—Villon.

DUCHAMP AND ACTOR (BROTHERS DUCHAMP): We all loved chess.

GROUP: 1912

ACTOR (CRITIC): is the year of his most important Oil on Canvas works.

DUCHAMP: If you'd only told me I could have stopped (*music stops*) right then.

ACTOR (CRITIC): He painted *Nude Descending a Staircase*.

(*Music plays as DUCHAMP descends staircase, then stops.*)

ANGERS: It caused a furor.

(*Music starts.*)

GROUP: Mon Dieu!

DUCHAMP: I became a little famous.

ANGERS: Notorious.

DUCHAMP: Hilarious.

GROUP: In 1913

ACTOR (CRITIC): he abandons all conventional forms of painting and drawing.

DUCHAMP: I got a job as a librarian.

YOUNG ARTIST: Excuse me, where are the art books?

DUCHAMP: I don't know, I just started working here.

ACTOR (CRITIC): He mounts a bicycle wheel upside down

ANGERS: on a kitchen stool.

ACTOR (MOTHER): Marcel—Marcel, where is my kitchen stool?

DUCHAMP: And—

GROUP: in 1914

DUCHAMP: I bought a bottle rack at a Paris bazaar. (*Music stops.*)
Combien Madame?

ACTOR (VENDOR): Twenty francs.

DUCHAMP: Ten francs.

ACTOR (VENDOR): Eighteen francs.

DUCHAMP: Twelve francs.

ACTOR (VENDOR): Fifteen francs.

DUCHAMP: I'll take it, and I signed it.

(*Music starts.*)

ACTOR (CRITIC): He calls these

GROUP: the *Readymades*.

DUCHAMP: Not yet. I wasn't ready.

GROUP: In 1915

DETECTIVE: he visits New York for the first time. Why did you go?

DUCHAMP: Why not?

ANGERS: He publishes a manifesto.

DUCHAMP: *A Complete Reversal of Art Opinions*

ACTOR (CRITIC): by Marcel Duchamp, *Iconoclast*.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is an iconoclast?

ACTOR (CRITIC): An attacker of popular ideas

ANGERS: and institutions.

DUCHAMP: I began work on the *Large Glass*.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is the *Large Glass*?

DUCHAMP: I'll tell you later.

GROUP: In 1916

ACTOR (CRITIC): he is a founding member of the Society of Independent Artists.

DUCHAMP: But in 1917 I resigned.

DETECTIVE: Why exactly does he resign?

ACTOR (CRITIC): They reject his *Readymade*

DUCHAMP: called *Fountain*

ACTOR (CRITIC): which he submits under the pseudonym

DUCHAMP: R. Mutt.

ANGERS: It's a toilet.

DUCHAMP: It was a urinal.

ANGERS: A urinal, a toilet, it's the same thing.

DUCHAMP: Not where I come from.

YOUNG ARTIST: Time passes.

DUCHAMP: I played chess more and more.

GROUP: More and more.

DUCHAMP: I designed a set of rubber stamps so I could play chess by mail.

ACTOR (MAILMAN): Madame Duchamp, here's a letter from Marcel.

GROUP: In 1919

ACTOR (CRITIC): he uses the *Mona Lisa* as a *Readymade*.

DUCHAMP: I gave her a mustache

ANGERS: and a beard.

DUCHAMP: A goatee.

ANGERS: A beard, a goatee, it's the same thing.

DUCHAMP: Not where I come from.

GROUP: In 1920

DETECTIVE: You invent a feminine alter ego. You call yourself *Rose Sélavy*. Why exactly do you do that?

(*Music stops.*)

DUCHAMP: C'est la vie. Don't you get it? C'est la vie.

YOUNG ARTIST: Time passes.

(*Music starts.*)

ACTOR (CRITIC): He moves back to Paris. His first puns are published.

DUCHAMP: I love punning better than painting.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is a pun?

DUCHAMP: A play on words. A kind of game.

ACTOR (CRITIC): As *Rose Sélavy* he signs another artist's work.

ANGERS: Another game.

GROUP: 1923

DUCHAMP: I brought the *Large Glass* to a state of incompleteness—and I signed it.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is—

DUCHAMP: I'll tell you later. I perfected a roulette system in which one neither won nor lost. I trained seriously for chess competition. I shaved a star in the back of my hair. I gave French lessons to Americans to earn a little money. I lived my life. I had serious fun.

ANGERS: More games.

(*Music stops.*)

ACTOR (CRITIC): The *idea* reaches the public that Duchamp has ceased to produce art.

DUCHAMP: What a good idea.

YOUNG ARTIST: Time passes.

GROUP: 1925, 26, 28, 31, 35, 40.

(*Music starts.*)

ACTOR (CRITIC): He works.

GROUP: He thinks.

ACTOR (CRITIC): He plays chess

GROUP: more and more.

DUCHAMP: I played in chess tournaments.

GROUP: Real ones.

DUCHAMP: I wrote a chess column every Thursday

GROUP: for a while

DUCHAMP: for the Paris paper *Ce Soir*.

ACTOR (CRITIC): He arranges exhibits of the work of other artists and allows his own work to be shown.

DUCHAMP: Sometimes.

ANGER I: He gets married.

ANGER II: Gets divorced.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Continues an interest in optical phenomena.

DETECTIVE: What exactly is op—

DUCHAMP: Now you see it, now you don't.

ACTOR (CRITIC): And film, and puns, and *Readymades*.

GROUP: In 1942

DETECTIVE: you returned to the United States where you lived for the rest of your life. Why did you come back?

GROUP: Go back.

DUCHAMP: Exactly?

DETECTIVE: Oh yes. Why *exactly* did you go back?

GROUP: Come back.

DUCHAMP: A second wind.

YOUNG ARTIST: Time passes.

GROUP: In 1946

ACTOR (CRITIC): Duchamp begins to execute . . .

DUCHAMP (aside): Execute is an odd word.

ACTOR (CRITIC): his last major work.

DUCHAMP: "Marcel, do you want to go to the movies?" No, I think I'll just stay here and execute my last major work.

ACTOR (CRITIC): In complete secrecy. For twenty years he works on this composition.

GROUP: One.

ACTOR (CRITIC): For twenty years this assemblage.

GROUP: Two.

ACTOR (CRITIC): For twenty years this final chord.

GROUP: Three.

DETECTIVE: Did you do anything else?

DUCHAMP: Yes, I gave speeches, I gave interviews, I—organized exhibits.

GROUP: Four, five.

DUCHAMP: I remarried, I became an American citizen, I changed apartments.

DETECTIVE (aside): For the last time.

GROUP: Six, seven.

ACTOR (CRITIC): To see this last work you go through a low doorway into a small, empty, windowless room.

GROUP: Eight, nine.

DUCHAMP: And don't forget—I hand-colored nine hundred and ninety-nine foam-rubber falsies.

GROUP: Ten.

ACTOR (CRITIC): In the far wall, in an arched brick portal, there is an old wooden door.

GROUP: Eleven, twelve.

ACTOR (CRITIC): There are two small holes at eye level through which you can see a brick wall with a slit in it.

GROUP: Thirteen.

DETECTIVE: On October 2, 1968, during a customary visit to France . . .

GROUP: Fourteen.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Through the slit you see a naked girl on a bed of leaves and branches in a wide open space.

GROUP: Fifteen.

DETECTIVE: you died peacefully in your studio.

GROUP: Sixteen.

DUCHAMP: I was lucky right to the end.

GROUP: Seventeen.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Her face is almost covered by her blonde hair. Her legs are open and slightly bent. Her left arm is raised—the hand holding a small gas lamp.

GROUP: Eighteen.

(Music stops.)

DETECTIVE: Why—exactly—do you think you were so—

ANGERS: lucky.

ACTOR (CRITIC): A blue sky, two or three white clouds, wooded hills, mist, a small lake, some rocks, a waterfall.

GROUP: Nineteen.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Duchamp maintained an absolute silence on this subject until his death.

GROUP: Twenty.

DETECTIVE: Why, exactly?

DUCHAMP: It's a mystery to me.

Music starts.

YOUNG SAM: Something about the mystery of knowing what you want.

YOUNG ARTIST: Or the art of it . . . the art of knowing what you want.

YOUNG SAM: Or the mystery of it.

YOUNG ARTIST: Something about the mystery of how one person makes something . . . makes something to be interested in . . . makes something to *stay* interested in.

YOUNG SAM: And the mystery of how somebody else is also interested. The mystery of two people getting interested in each other . . . staying interested . . . making something of being together.

YOUNG ARTIST: The art of making something of being together.

YOUNG SAM: The mystery of staying together . . . Or the art of it.

YOUNG ARTIST: The art of staying together or the mystery of it.

ANGERS: Rose and Sam are well into their seventies

GROUP: No, that's not true.

ANGERS: Rose and Sam are *unwell* into their seventies.

ANGER I: Something about his insides, his operations,

ANGER II: her neck, her back, the sugar in her blood, his needing oxygen to breathe, his panic.

GROUP: His fury at not being able to breathe.

ANGER I: Her choking cough.

ANGER II: His toothlessness.

GROUP: His fury at not being able to chew.

ANGER II: Her headaches, her defensive sleeping.

GROUP: His fury at her sleeping.

ANGER I: His repeating.

GROUP: Repeating, repeating, repeating, repeating . . .

(Music stops.)

ANGER II: Her forgetting.

(Pause. Music begins.)

GROUP: His fury at her forgetting.

ANGER II: His deafness.

ANGER I: Her deafness.

GROUP: His fury at her deafness.

OLD ROSE *(speaking):*

I'm Rose.

I am Rose.

I am old, I was young.

I was thin, I am fat.

It's true I'm growing deaf, I once could hear.

I had no fear.

Oh Sammie, do you remember?

Remember me.

I'm Rose.

I am Rose

(Singing.)

My hair was brown, now it's gray.

Now I can't see, but my eyes were clear.

I showed my legs, I wore high heels.

(Speaking.)

Now I wear flat shoes, but I had no fear.

Do you remember? Oh Sammie,

Remember me.

I'm Rose.

I am Rose.

(Singing.)

I forget the time, I forget the day.

I forget the food burning on the stove.

I lose my watch, I lose my thought.

But I was strong,

(Speaking.)

I bore a child.

I was the one.

I had no fear, more than fifty years.

Nothing in this life prepared me for this life.

(Singing.)

I was a daughter, I was a mother, I was a wife—

(Speaking.)

I didn't realize I would end alone.

My mother gone, my children grown,

My husband sick and married to TV.

(Singing.)

He don't want me, he don't know me.

Oh Sammie, remember me, we had a child.

We made love, we were in love, we have a child.

Oh my dear, remember me—

(Speaking.) I'm Rose. *(Sits down. Music stops.)*

DETECTIVE: Rose and Sam live together, alone with his anger and her growing anger *at* his anger

GROUP: their only pleasure

DETECTIVE: their only child.

GROUP: The mystery

DETECTIVE: Of the only

ANGER II: The oldest

YOUNG ROSE: Child—the only

YOUNG SAM: The oldest child.

(Music starts.)

DETECTIVE: The one who

ANGER II: No matter

YOUNG ROSE: No matter how

YOUNG SAM: Independent

DETECTIVE: Independent, no matter how

ANGER II: Independent

YOUNG ROSE: Or far away

YOUNG SAM: Or far

DETECTIVE: Away

ANGER II: Away, the oldest

YOUNG ROSE: Child, the only

YOUNG SAM: Child

DETECTIVE: Goes, oh no

ANGER II: No, no matter

YOUNG ROSE: No, no matter how far

YOUNG SAM: There is

DETECTIVE: Always

ANGER II: A tie

YOUNG ROSE: Always a tie

YOUNG SAM: The one they had first

DETECTIVE: The only one

ANGER II: They had

YOUNG ROSE: First

YOUNG SAM: The only one who got

DETECTIVE: Who gives

ANGER II: The most—who got

YOUNG ROSE: Who gives

YOUNG SAM: The most

DETECTIVE: The only one—the only

DETECTIVE AND ANGER II: Only

ANGER II: One—the oldest

YOUNG ROSE: One. The one they dreamed

YOUNG SAM: They dreamed

DETECTIVE: Imagined

ANGER II: Imagined, invented

YOUNG ROSE: Protected

YOUNG SAM: Protected

DETECTIVE: Protected—over

ANGER II: Overprotected

ALL: And over
And over
The mystery
Of it,

ANGER II: Of being

YOUNG ROSE: The only

YOUNG SAM: The oldest, of being

DETECTIVE: Everything to them

ANGER II: Everything

YOUNG ROSE: To them, everything

YOUNG SAM: Everything

DETECTIVE: Somehow

ANGER II: Somehow more

YOUNG ROSE: Than each other

YOUNG SAM: More than each other

DETECTIVE: *To* each other

ANGER II: Is this child,

YOUNG ROSE: This only

YOUNG SAM: This oldest, first

DETECTIVE: First

ANGER II: Child, this child this never

YOUNG ROSE: Never, never

YOUNG SAM: Grown up

DETECTIVE: Child.

ANGER II: Child.

DETECTIVE: Did you eat

YOUNG ROSE: Did you eat something

DETECTIVE: Mom, I'm twenty-one years old

ANGER II: Old, Mom I'm thirty-one years

DETECTIVE: Old Mom, I'm forty-one

YOUNG SAM: Years—No matter

YOUNG ROSE: No matter how old

ANGER II: You get

YOUNG ROSE: You are, you're still

YOUNG SAM: My baby

DETECTIVE: Baby

SAM: Only

ANGER II: First

YOUNG ROSE: Baby

YOUNG SAM: Child

DETECTIVE: Baby

YOUNG SAM: Baby, do you need

DETECTIVE: Money?

YOUNG SAM: Do you

ANGER II: Need money?

YOUNG SAM: Do you need money?

DETECTIVE: Dad, I'm twenty-one years old

ANGER II: Old, Dad, I'm thirty-one years

DETECTIVE: Old Dad, I'm forty-one

YOUNG SAM: Years—No matter

YOUNG ROSE: No matter how old

YOUNG SAM: You get, no matter how

DETECTIVE: Old, The mystery of being

ANGER II: The old mystery

YOUNG ROSE: Of being the only

YOUNG SAM: Child, the oldest

DETECTIVE: Child, the first

ANGER II: Born, first

YOUNG ROSE: Born, only

YOUNG SAM: Born

ANGER II: First

DETECTIVE: First

ANGER II: First.

(Music stops.)

The characters carry scripts and periodically refer to them. Detective's lines are echoed softly by YOUNG ARTIST, Mr. Him's and Actor's by the ANGERS.

DETECTIVE: *First* is my name. My second name. When I was a child—

MR. HIM: You were a child detective. I'm guessing.

DETECTIVE: I began to be a sort of detective.

ACTOR: I knew she was a detective. I knew you were a detective.

MR. HIM: Maybe that means *you're* a detective.

DETECTIVE: My mother always lost things.

ACTOR: *My* mother always lost things.

MR. HIM: You're an actor. You only pretended your mother always lost things.

ACTOR: I thought I meant that.

MR. HIM: You're a great pretender.

DETECTIVE: Her glasses. Her keys. Her voice. Her temper. Once she lost a funny amount of something really funny.

ACTOR: Hey me! My mother once lost me.

MR. HIM: That's really funny. My mother got lost when I was six, along with our neighbor's husband, my father's new Chevrolet, and two German shepherds.

DETECTIVE: She paid a quarter for a found lost object.

MR. HIM: You knew my mother?

DETECTIVE: No. My mother paid me twenty-five cents to find things.

ACTOR: My mother said a German shepherd was too big to keep in the house.

MR. HIM: My father told my mother to get lost once too often. "Bob, let's take the kids out." "Get lost Jean!"

DETECTIVE: Fifty cents if I found it in under ten minutes.

ACTOR: So we had pet snails.

MR. HIM: For a while I used to try and get lost. I thought I might see my mother. I thought lost was a place. Like Paradise. Like Paradise Lost.

DETECTIVE: So I began to lose her things for her. I began to make a living losing her things. I began to charge more. In fact my mail-order criminal detection lessons were paid for by a series of lost pieces of my mother's dinette set. My mother paid me two hundred and fifty dollars for finding the table which cost me twenty dollars to hide in a warehouse in downtown Brooklyn.

ACTOR: A snail is a really hard pet to have. I mean winning the affection of a snail is really hard.

MR. HIM: I began to try and get the attention of older women. All older women, all women, all girls more grown up than me became a kind of world, a kind of universal mother whose attention I wanted.

DETECTIVE: My mother became frantic. Things were disappearing right and left. Whole rooms of furniture. All her shoes. Everything in the refrigerator. I was making a fortune by the time I was fourteen.

ACTOR: That's how old I was. I was just that old

MR. HIM: I grabbed the elbows of elderly women and forced them to cross the street.

ACTOR: when my mother served the snails for dinner.

DETECTIVE: Then I privately persuaded my brother to take a two-day hike; convinced my mother that she had misplaced my brother and that I needed several thousand dollars to find him. Opened an office downtown under the trade name "Finders/Keepers" with the motto "Your mystery is our meat."

MR. HIM: When I was twenty my mother walked back in. No man. No car. No dogs. No money and no mystery. Just an ordinary woman looking for a place to stay. And she stayed—and I went.

DETECTIVE: Why? Why did you go when you finally got her back?

MR. HIM: She was a nuisance.

ACTOR: That's what she said.

MR. HIM: Who?

ACTOR: My mother about the snails.

MR. HIM: The snails?

ACTOR: She said snails could not be trained. She said I didn't deal with reality. She said I was a mystery to her. She said snails were good with garlic. She made me eat them and I acted like it didn't matter.

MR. HIM: And you've been acting ever since.

ACTOR: Ever since.

DETECTIVE: Ever since then I ask questions and find answers. It's my living. (*Turning to DUCHAMP:*) Marcel Duchamp, it is now 1966. In a few months you will be eighty years old. Looking back over your whole life, what satisfies you most?

DUCHAMP: My whole life, well, that's quite a question. My luck—I suppose my luck. I think I've been lucky. I've done the things I wanted to do. (*Music starts.*) Deep down I'm enormously lazy. I've never had a pressing need to express myself. I've never had that kind of need—to draw, for instance, morning, noon, and night. Usually a man's brain interests me more than what he makes, you know. Because, I've noticed that most artists only repeat themselves. My life has been my art; my art, my life,

YOUNG ARTIST: His life, his art. His art, his life.

DUCHAMP: Each second, each breath, a work neither visual nor cerebral, inscribed nowhere. A sort of constant euphoria. That sounds rather poetic, doesn't it, but I just like—just breathing. I like breathing better than working.

DETECTIVE: Well, that's quite an answer. Yet, you are responsible for art objects, for art concepts, that continue to affect the world.

DUCHAMP: No, no, not the world. Perhaps a small portion of the art world—which is a very small portion of the whole world. Anyway, I avoid that word—responsible. Responsibility clouds direction. It's a false purpose. (*To YOUNG ARTIST:*) Don't you think so?

YOUNG ARTIST: Excuse me, I want to study with you.

DUCHAMP: That's very kind, but I have nothing to teach.

YOUNG ARTIST: I want to be an artist.

DUCHAMP: Yes. Well, stop wanting.

YOUNG SAM: But what about money? What about earning a living?

DUCHAMP: Well, the truth is—I had a little. Family money. No great amount. But then my needs weren't great. I made sure my needs were not great.

YOUNG ROSE: What about a wife? What about children?

DUCHAMP: For me, my dear, you see all of that was a budgetary question as much as anything. I believed I had to choose to be a man of art or to marry and have children.

DETECTIVE: But you did marry.

DUCHAMP: Yes. I was still young and she was a very nice girl. We were properly introduced and we were married the way one is usually married, but it didn't work.

YOUNG ROSE: Weren't you happy together? Why didn't it work?

DUCHAMP: Because (*smiling at YOUNG ROSE*) no offense, because I saw that marriage is as boring as anything.

YOUNG SAM: Oh, I don't think that. I love knowing who I'm coming home to, who I'm waking up with. I love it when nothing changes.

DUCHAMP: Well, I guess I was really much more of a bachelor than I thought. I was just not interested in the woman-wife, the mother,

the children, etcetera. I carefully avoided all that until . . . I was . . . about . . . sixty-seven. Then I married a woman who, because of her age, couldn't have children.

DETECTIVE: But there were other women in your life?

DUCHAMP: Yes, of course. One is not, you know, obliged to marry every woman one is with.

YOUNG ARTIST: You protected yourself against "The Family."

DUCHAMP: Yes, I did. It's often the family, I think, that forces you to abandon your real ideas, to swap them for things *it* believes in. Society, you know, and all that paraphernalia.

YOUNG ARTIST: Excuse me—

DETECTIVE: Then you consider yourself—

DUCHAMP: I consider myself very happy.

YOUNG ARTIST: And probably tired of answering questions.

DUCHAMP (*smiling at YOUNG ARTIST*): Yes, a little. Anyway, I am happy. I've never had a serious illness, or melancholy. I've had even more luck at the end of my life than at the beginning. I've missed nothing. I can't tell you any more.

YOUNG ARTIST: Excuse me.

DUCHAMP: Yes?

YOUNG ARTIST: What about regrets?

(*Music stops.*)

DUCHAMP: I have no regrets.

(*Music starts.*)

YOUNG ARTIST: Meaning that everything you ever did was good.

DUCHAMP: No, meaning that everything you ever did or never did was okay with you.

DETECTIVE: Meaning that the memory of something, the memory of something

ANGERS: didn't make your stomach ache.

MR. HIM: Meaning that a stomach ache was okay with you.

ACTOR: Meaning that you had always said the thing you'd wished you'd said.

DUCHAMP: Meaning that what you did say,

YOUNG ARTIST: what you did say,

DUCHAMP: meaning that what you did manage to say was okay with you.

MRS. HIM: Meaning that who you met and married,

DUCHAMP: that who you met and didn't marry,

ANGER I: meaning that all the bodies in all the beds

ACTOR: that who you saw and never met,

ANGER II: that who you never met

FANNY: meaning that who you met and married and couldn't manage to stay with

MRS. HIM: meaning that who you met and married and couldn't manage to leave was all, was all okay with you.

ANGER I: Meaning that when you changed, and he changed,

ANGER II: when she changed and it changed

DUCHAMP: meaning that what it changed from and what it changed to was all,

YOUNG ARTIST: was all okay with you.

OLD ROSE: Meaning that having only one child,

DETECTIVE: that having had only one child

OLD ROSE: that having any child at all and then having had only one child was the right decision, was all right, was all all okay with you, meaning that the mystery of no regret

(Music stops.)

ANGER I: is not somehow

ANGERS: connected to

GROUP: the mystery of anger!

(Music starts.)

ANGERS: You know me. You've known me all your life.

ANGER I: We met the day you were born.

ANGER II: We met while you were half in

ANGERS: and half out.

ANGER II: I was there

ANGER I: when they pulled you from the

ANGERS: womb.

ANGER II: From the

ANGERS: womb.

ANGER I: I was there

ANGER II: when they hung you up

ANGER I: side

ANGER II: down.

ANGER I: Up

ANGER II: side

ANGER I: down.

ANGER II: I was there when they whacked you on the back

ANGER I: What a smack! I was there,
ANGERS: I'm anger,
ANGER I: your best
ANGERS: friend.
ANGER II: Your best
ANGERS: friend.
ANGER II: I was with you in that
ANGERS: crib! In that
ANGER II: high
ANGER I: chair!
ANGERS: In that
ANGER II: play
ANGER I: pen! Remember that damn playpen.
ANGER II: Remember the bars.
ANGER I: Remember that
ANGER II: damn
ANGER I: mesh
ANGER II: cage kept catching your toes
ANGER I: and your toys.
ANGERS: Remember screaming to be the hell out of there?
ANGER II: I was there.
ANGER I: I was there when she took away her
ANGERS: breast. (*Singing.*) That lovely breast.
ANGER II (*speaking*): I was there when your teeth tore through your gums.

ANGERS: Through your gums. I was there, I am anger,
ANGER I: your best friend.
ANGER II: Your best friend. Remember doo doo?
ANGER I: Ka ka?
ANGER II: Wee
ANGER I: wee?
ANGER II: poo
ANGER I: poo?
ANGERS: poo.
ANGER I: For shit's sake, I couldn't get any time off.
ANGER II: How could I leave when they talked to you like that?
ANGER I: Remember when you had to sit on the toilet?
ANGER II: Remember how long you had to sit on the toilet.
ANGERS: Anger! I was there.
ANGER I: Remember that day one
ANGERS: September,
ANGER II: when they dressed you up,
ANGER I: took you for a walk,
ANGER II: and left you in a room
ANGERS: with thirty other screaming kids?
ANGER II: I was there when they left you in that room
ANGER I: In that damned room
ANGER II: They left you!
ANGER I: Not me! I stayed!

ANGER II: I stayed there,
ANGERS: I am anger,
ANGER I: your
ANGER II: best
ANGER I: friend.
ANGER II: Your
ANGER I: best
ANGER II: friend. I was there all through
ANGERS: school.
ANGER I: I was there when your
ANGER II: best girl
ANGERS: went to the prom. Oh, oh, oh—the prom
ANGER II: with somebody else.
ANGER I: It was my idea that you ask that
ANGER II: girl
ANGERS: from another school.
ANGER II: I made that up. We got
ANGERS: even didn't we!
ANGER II: I was there that
ANGERS: summer
ANGER II: at the
ANGERS: beach
ANGER II: when you almost
ANGERS: drowned. You almost drowned

ANGER II: It was my energy that saved you.
ANGER I: It was me who got you through the war.
ANGER II: It was me who
ANGERS: killed that guy with your bayonet.
ANGER I: You would have
ANGERS: died.
ANGER II: I saved your
ANGERS: life. Now it's true sometimes I take a rest—a vacation. I go
away for your health. You expect me and I don't show.
ANGER I: It's not that I don't care—
ANGERS: I'm busy!
ANGER II: I do have other friends
ANGERS: you know.
ANGER I: But sometimes I just drop in—
ANGER II: Unexpected
ANGER I: uninvited.
ANGER II: I might appear at breakfast—
ANGERS: in fact—maybe tomorrow morning—
ANGER I: you might
ANGERS: roll over in bed
ANGER I: and find me lying there between
ANGERS: you and your lover
ANGER I: first thing—
ANGER II: first thing—
ANGERS (singing): first thing in the morning.

(Music stops. MR. and MRS. HIM are in bed, covered by a sheet. MR. HIM stirs.)

MR. HIM: Morning, hon.

(An ANGER hits Mrs. Him's head. She wakes up. Note: Throughout the scene, MR. and MRS. HIM are physically besieged by the ANGERS in ways that escalate their argument, turning the scene into a quartet.)

MRS. HIM *(in a muffled voice, turning away)*: Morning.

MR. HIM: What's for breakfast, hon?

MRS. HIM *(pausing)*: You know, you say that every morning.

MR. HIM: What?

MRS. HIM: Every damn morning. You say that every damn morning—as if I stayed awake all the damn night dreaming up your breakfast.

MR. HIM: Hon? What's wrong, hon? Wake up on the wrong side of the bed?

MRS. HIM: What does that mean? Wrong side of the bed? Did your mother used to say that to you? Wrong side of the—I went to sleep on this side, didn't I? I always sleep on this side, don't I?

MR. HIM: All I did was ask about breakfast, hon.

MRS. HIM: And my name's not hon. That's another thing—my name's not hon. Maybe your secretary is hon or your receptionist or that damn lady barber you go to—maybe she's hon. But I'm not hon.

MR. HIM: Look, now I'm getting angry. All I asked was a simple question. What's for breakf—all I asked was what's for—damn, now I'm angry.

MRS. HIM: What's for breakfast? Okay. Let's guess. Let's say orange juice to start.

MR. HIM: Damn, I hate orange juice.

MRS. HIM: What a surprise! Well how about tomato juice?

MR. HIM: Yeah, I like tomato juice.

(ANGER climbs into bed between them.)

MRS. HIM: Is that so? That must be why you have tomato juice every morning. That must be why the only juice in this house is tomato damn juice because it's the only damn juice you like. Because you drink it for breakfast every damn morning before you have your damn coffee—not just any damn coffee. Maxwell House, Maxwell damn House coffee because your mother made Maxwell House coffee which you have every morning before your *(MRS. HIM gets out of bed. ANGER II, behind her back, slaps her.)* Cheerios which is the only damn cereal you ever eat—not Rice Krispies, or Wheaties or Rice Chex or Cream of Wheat or Farina or Granola or . . .

ANGER II: Raisin Bran.

(The bed is moved off as MR. HIM exits in the opposite direction, leaving MRS. HIM and ANGER II alone onstage.)

MRS. HIM: Raisin Bran or Corn Flakes or Frosted Flakes or Oatmeal or Total . . .

My mother and father

both

call me

“Baby.”

They always called me “Baby”

And they call me

“Baby”

now.

My sister is one year younger than me

and they call her

“Baby Baby.”

My sister

“Baby Baby”

calls me

“Sissy”
 And she calls her only son
 “Only.”
 She calls him
 “Only.”
 And she makes
 “Only”
 call me “Auntie.”
 “Auntie Baby.”
 My boyfriend in high school called me “Mama.”
 His “Mama.”
 Try to hold on to these facts.
 My mama called me “Baby.”
 And my boyfriend called me “Mama.”
 At the same time.
 My own son calls me “Mom.”
 Or on bad days
 “Muh-thurr.”
 His teachers call me
 “Ma’am”
 And they always say
 “Well”
 Like a little song
 “We———ll.”
 So you’re
 his
 mother.
 My husband
 calls me “Hon.”
 “Hon.”
 Like Attila the —.
 On MasterCard and Visa I’m
 “Mrs. Him.”
 The butcher
 and even my damned gynecologist

call me
 “Mrs.
 Him.”
 The kid who delivers from the supermarket
 and the super
 both just call me
 “Mrs.”
 Just
 “Mrs.”
 Just
 plain
 “Mrs.”
 Kids in the street who used to call me “Miss”
 now call me “Lady.”
 I know
 what that means.
 Soon I’ll be
 “Granny”
 “Granny Baby.”
 On my tombstone.
 Here lies
 Mrs.
 Baby
 Honey
 Mommy
 Granny

 HIM!

(Music starts. As OLD ROSE and OLD SAM tell their stories, the group, including one ANGER, does a top-speed, literal reenactment of it, supervised by YOUNG ARTIST.)

OLD ROSE: Sam’s mother and father emigrated to America. They didn’t know each other. They met here. How did they meet? I don’t know. She was much younger than him. Sam says she was a kid. Did

they fall in love? Did “falling” or “love” mean the same thing then? I don’t know. Anyway—she married him and before she was eighteen she had three kids.

OLD SAM: Rose’s mother’s brother Sam came from Russia and when he had the money he sent for his mother Rachel and his sisters Fannie and Ida. Rose was Fannie’s daughter. Nobody talks about Rachel’s husband, Fannie’s father. Don’t ask me,

GROUP: I don’t know.

OLD ROSE: First comes

ACTOR: Adelaide called Mickey

GROUP: I don’t know why,

OLD ROSE: then

ACTOR: Morris, then Molly or Eva

GROUP: who died

YOUNG SAM (*entering*): Then Sam.

ACTOR: Then Eva or Molly

GROUP: Who died.

OLD ROSE: Then what happened? Did she fall out of love? Did she suddenly realize she was a kid with three kids. I don’t know. But she walked out. Sam says she couldn’t take the kids.

YOUNG SAM AND OLD SAM: She couldn’t take the kids.

OLD ROSE: All I know is she didn’t—take the kids. Now Sam’s father had three kids. No wife. And no second wife—yet. So he kept the girl to take care of the house and put the two boys in an orphanage. Sam says this was ordinary—in those days.

OLD SAM: This was ordinary in those days.

OLD ROSE: I don’t know. My mother had six children, no husband, and kept us all home. Also, if you’re counting, the girl who’s keeping house is about five years old. Don’t ask me.

GROUP: I don’t know.

OLD SAM: Fannie grew up and met and married Morris—

OLD ROSE: Not Sam’s brother Morris.

GROUP: Another Morris.

OLD SAM: Fannie grew up and met and married Morris—who was handsome and a bolter. Rose was born.

GROUP: Rose

OLD SAM: and Morris bolted. He came back. Fannie loved him. Pauline was born.

GROUP: Pauline

OLD SAM: and Morris bolted. He came back. Fannie loved him. Don’t ask me. I don’t know. Yetta was born.

GROUP: Yetta

OLD SAM: and Morris bolted. Irene was born.

GROUP: Irene

OLD SAM: and Morris bolted, Ruth was born.

GROUP: Ruth

OLD SAM: and Morris—you know, don’t ask me, I don’t know. At last Alfred the son was born,

GROUP: Alfred the son.

OLD SAM: Morris bolted and Fannie finally bolted the barn door.

OLD ROSE: Now Sam and his brother get bounced in and out of foster homes. Sam’s mother marries another guy and can’t tell his family that she already has three kids—

GROUP: I don’t know why

OLD ROSE: —and has two kids with him. Sam’s father marries a woman with three or four grown children of her own. Sam comes home from the orphanage.

OLD SAM: Fannie took in a boarder named Hymie, began making wigs for women in the kitchen, and raised her five daughters and her son alone. She sent her oldest girl Rose to college. Don't ask me how.

GROUP: I don't know.

OLD SAM: Rose was invited to a party in Brooklyn. Fannie didn't want her to go.

ALL WOMEN: Don't go.

OLD SAM: Rose who usually obeyed borrowed a black dress with beads on the sleeves from Pauline

YOUNG ROSE: Pauline, could I borrow your black dress

ACTOR (PAULINE): With beads on the sleeves?

OLD SAM: and went to the party . . .

ACTOR (PAULINE): Rosie,

ALL WOMEN: Rosie, take off your glasses.

(Music stops. ROSE removes glasses.)

OLD SAM: where she met me.

GROUP: Sam.

OLD ROSE: Not my mother's brother Sam.

GROUP: Another Sam.

(Music starts.)

OLD ROSE: He starts smoking at the age of nine (*all cough*), quits school at thirteen to get a job.

YOUNG SAM: I have to get a job.

OLD ROSE: joins the Marines at seventeen by asking a stranger in the street to pretend to be his father and sign for him.

YOUNG SAM: Will you pretend to be my father and sign for me?

ACTOR (STRANGER): Yes, I will.

OLD ROSE: Has teeth pulled, gets malaria, learns to speak Spanish

YOUNG SAM: Sí.

OLD ROSE: and is in an earthquake in Managua, Nicaragua, by the time he's twenty-one.

OLD SAM: I was in Marine uniform. I didn't own a suit.

GROUP: No suit.

OLD SAM: Later she bought that dress from Pauline—

OLD ROSE: I did buy that dress from Pauline.

OLD SAM: —and kept it for forty years.

GROUP: Forty years

(Music stops.)

OLD ROSE: Then on leave, at a party in Brooklyn, Sam meets me. Is this the exact truth?

(Music starts.)

OLD SAM: Don't ask me.

ALL: I don't know.

(Music stops.)

DUCHAMP: Let's talk about the mysterious act of making art. Can there be a mysterious act—a mysterious action? What do I mean by action? Do I mean doing? Isn't action doing? But by the time I'm doing, by the time I'm doing, by that time there is no question.

DETECTIVE: I thought mystery implied question. (*To audience:*) I thought mystery implied question.

ANGER I: Who says you know what you're doing?

DETECTIVE: And when.

YOUNG ARTIST (*accompanied by DUCHAMP*): Exactly. One mystery in making art is when will you know what you're doing.

DETECTIVE: Do we know what we're doing now?

ANGER I: I sure as hell don't.

DETECTIVE: Then are you making art?

ACTOR (CRITIC): Okay, not knowing what you're doing is not necessarily making art.

DUCHAMP: Unless, perhaps, if you're an artist.

ACTOR (CRITIC): You mean anytime an artist doesn't know what he's doing he's making art?

ANGER II: You mean anytime an artist knows what he's doing he's not making art?

ANGER I: Is knowing that something is or isn't art itself

ANGERS: a mystery?

DETECTIVE: To the viewer?

ANGERS: To the artist?

DUCHAMP: I made this thing the other day. (*Points to chair.*) I think it's art.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Looks like a chair to me.

YOUNG ARTIST: How about now? (*Frames chair.*)

ACTOR (CRITIC): Looks more like art. Wait a minute. Wait one damn minute.

(*YOUNG ARTIST knocks on door.*)

MR. HIM (*offstage*): Hon, can you get that? I'm on the toilet.

YOUNG ARTIST (*as ANGER opens door*): Right. The old "art has no function" routine.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Or is it doing

GROUP: something to something?

ACTOR (CRITIC): He did do something.

DETECTIVE: To the chair. Doing something to the chair.

ACTOR (CRITIC): What about *not* doing?

ANGERS: What *about* not doing?

ACTOR (CRITIC): What about him? What about the toilet bowl? What about not doing something to an ordinary toilet bowl?

YOUNG ARTIST: Duchamp did do something to that damn bowl. He took it out of the toilet.

DETECTIVE: But that's a different mystery.

ANGERS: You mean about plumbing?

DETECTIVE: No, the mystery of how he thought to do it.

ANGERS: To me it's plumbing.

ACTOR (CRITIC): Can the artist—

DETECTIVE: an artist—

ACTOR (CRITIC): because he's—

DETECTIVE: an artist

ANGERS: Or maybe it's water pressure.

ACTOR (CRITIC): point a finger

DETECTIVE: at some damn thing

ACTOR (CRITIC): While you and your upstairs neighbor

DETECTIVE: can't simultaneously flush

ACTOR (CRITIC): and call it art?

ANGERS: You can take a simultaneous shit

ACTOR (CRITIC) AND DETECTIVE: but you can't simultaneously flush.

ANGERS: I call that a mystery.

DETECTIVE: Well, he can call any damn thing any damn thing he wants. (*To DUCHAMP:*) What strikes me is your need for freedom, your taste for distance, for distance not only from movements, styles, and ideas, but also from artists themselves. Nevertheless, you were always acquainted with these movements, and didn't hesitate to borrow. What exactly prompted you?

DUCHAMP: An extraordinary curiosity. (*Exits.*)

(*Music starts. YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM move through the scene in silence, framing their old selves as they speak.*)

OLD SAM: My name's Sam. I don't know too many people here.

OLD ROSE: I only know that girl, near the window, I came with her.

OLD SAM: You work together?

OLD ROSE: No, we go to school. We're in the same English class. She's my best friend.

OLD SAM: In high school?

OLD ROSE: No, in college. We go to college.

OLD SAM: Oh—no kidding. You don't look like—

OLD ROSE: I took off—I'm not wearing my glasses.

OLD SAM: You wear glasses.

OLD ROSE: Men don't make passes—my sister told me

OLD SAM: at girls who wear

OLD ROSE: glasses—that's what my sister said.

OLD SAM: Is your sister older? She gives advice—

OLD ROSE: No, I'm the oldest—sister. She's the one after me.

OLD SAM: Are there more? Sisters?

OLD ROSE: Yeah. I have four sisters. You? Do you have—

OLD SAM: I have one sister—and a brother.

OLD ROSE: I have a brother too. He's the youngest.

OLD SAM: I'm on leave. I only have about a week.

OLD ROSE: From the army?

OLD SAM: The army? Uh uh! This is Marine blues. I'm a Marine.

OLD ROSE: Oh, I'm sorry. I don't know about—uniforms.

OLD SAM: Say—you didn't tell me your name.

OLD ROSE: Oh, I'm sorry. Rose, I'm—Rose.

OLD SAM: I bet you forgot—

OLD ROSE: No I didn't. You're Sam.

(*YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM go to Fanny's house.*)

YOUNG ROSE (*coming through the door*): Mama, Mama.

(*Music stops.*)

I met somebody. I met a man, Mama.

FANNY: You see, what did I tell you? I told her. I told her not to go. I told her not to go to that party. I said "Rosie, don't go." But does she listen? No.

YOUNG ROSE: Mama—

FANNY: Does she listen? Ohhhh no. Not her. Not her. And now what? Now she meets a man.

YOUNG ROSE: Mama, he's coming over. He wants to meet you.

FANNY: Pooh pooh pooh. He's coming over. Do you hear this? He wants to meet me. He's coming over to meet me. Who says I want

to meet him? Who wants to meet a man from a party? What kind of a prize can you meet at a party? What decent girl meets a man at a—

YOUNG ROSE: Mama, be nice. Please. His name is Sam. I—

FANNY: Sam.

YOUNG ROSE: I like him Mama.

FANNY: She likes him. Pooh pooh pooh. How does she know what she likes? What does a young girl know? One minute she likes some bum—the next minute she's raising six children all alone.

YOUNG ROSE: Mama, he's here. Please be nice, Mama, please. Come on in Sam. Mama this is Sam.

YOUNG SAM: How do you d—

FANNY: Oh my God. Oh my God. A uniform. It's a uniform. What is that uniform? He's a sailor. She brings me home a sailor.

YOUNG SAM: No Mama, I'm a Marine. These are Marine blu—

FANNY: He's a Marine. Pooh pooh pooh. Do you hear this? A big shot. A Marine. A Marine, a sailor—it's the same. It's the same thing. It's a uniform. He looks like Western Union.

YOUNG ROSE: Mama. Isn't it funny? Sam's father only lives two blocks from here and we had to meet in Brooklyn. Isn't that funny Mama?

FANNY: A riot.

YOUNG SAM: I'd like permission to call on your daughter . . . on Rose . . . with your . . . if you don't mind . . . Mama.

FANNY: He wants my permission. If I don't mind. He's here already and now he wants my permission. When?

YOUNG SAM: Well, I have ten days leave left—

FANNY: So, when?

YOUNG SAM: I'd like to come by . . . every day, Mama, if you don't . . . with your . . .

YOUNG ROSE: Please Mama, I want him to come.

FANNY (*pausing*): Okay, Western Union. Okay. But he better not leave me any surprise packages.

YOUNG ROSE: Oh Mama. He's good, Mama. Sammie, come and meet my sisters and my baby brother.

(Music starts. YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM take a stroll. OLD ROSE and OLD SAM pass them, sometimes framing them. Fanny's house disappears and comes back. Music stops.)

YOUNG SAM: Rose, I know we've only known each other a week—but I wish you'd write to me—when I go back to Nicaragua.

YOUNG ROSE: Oh I will. I'd really like to.

YOUNG SAM: I don't have much longer to serve—and now—and now that I've—met you

YOUNG ROSE: How much longer—before—you come back?

YOUNG SAM: About a year.

YOUNG ROSE: Oh. That's long. That seems very—long—to me.

YOUNG SAM: But now that I met you and—your family.

YOUNG ROSE: I'd like to meet your family.

YOUNG SAM: You will, really, when I get back.

YOUNG ROSE: I'll—miss you.

YOUNG SAM: When I get back I'll get a job—I'll miss you too. I'll send you money—to save—for a ring. I'll really miss you Rose.

(Music starts. YOUNG ROSE meets YOUNG SAM at the altar. ACTOR marries them. OLD ROSE and OLD SAM watch. DETECTIVE puts veil on YOUNG ROSE and holds her train. YOUNG ARTIST helps set up altar. Music stops.)

YOUNG ROSE: I love you Sam. I hope you won't disappear like my father.

YOUNG SAM: I love you Rose. I hope you won't disappear like my mother.

(Wedding music starts. All the following actions are framed at various times by OLD ROSE and OLD SAM, the ANGERS, or YOUNG ARTIST. Wedding picture: OLD ROSE and OLD SAM frame YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM, FANNY, and DETECTIVE. YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM waltz. YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM go to bed; Rose's veil becomes their blanket. YOUNG ROSE and YOUNG SAM set up house. Veil becomes a tablecloth. DETECTIVE rolls up veil, hands it to YOUNG SAM, who hands it to YOUNG ROSE, who stuffs it under her dress. YOUNG ROSE is pregnant.)

YOUNG ROSE: Sam, Sammie—I'm scared, I'm really scared. I hope I'm going to be a good mother.

YOUNG SAM: You will, Rosie, I'm sure you will. And I'm going to be a good father. I'm going to get another job. With two jobs I'll be able to make more—money. Our son will have everything. Everything. Everything—we didn't have!

(As OLD SAM speaks, YOUNG ROSE turns upstage, takes "baby" out from under her dress, turns around holding it, gives "baby" to FANNY. FANNY and YOUNG ROSE exit, leaving OLD ROSE, YOUNG SAM, and DETECTIVE to watch OLD SAM.)

OLD SAM:

This was the man I was.
And that was the plan I had.

I was strong then.

The child survived

and hid his fears

and hid his needs

and hid his sadness.

You know,

I think sometimes, if I had the chance,

I could have played the violin.

That's right, the violin.

That would have been my—instrument.

The sad sound of the violin.

But—I had no chance for that.

I . . . donned my . . .

(Aside.) That's a good word—right? . . .

I "donned" my manly—image

like my Marine uniform

like the "Blues."

And I became the man I needed to be.

I became the man

who could bite the world's head off

before the world could bite me—

anymore.

And I planned the family I never had.

I planned to give my child

the family I dreamed of

and then—GODDAMN!

I didn't know how to do it.

What did I know about being a father?

What did I know about—family?

What did I know

except what I knew.

So I did what I did best.

I worked my goddamn ass off

so that they would never want.

That was what I knew how to give.

And I gave it all.
That counts!

(Music ends.)

I gave it all.
That counts—doesn't it?

(OLD ROSE comes and helps him offstage.)

Music starts.

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years.

ANGER I: What is it that keeps two people together?

ACTOR: Is that a trick question, like how fast is the train going if the engineer is named—Morris?

YOUNG SAM: Not Rose's father Morris.

YOUNG ROSE: Not Sam's brother Morris.

GROUP: Another *(singing)* Morris.

DUCHAMP: When you make a painting, even abstract, there is always a sort of necessary filling in. I wondered why. I always asked myself "why" a lot. And from that questioning came doubt, doubt of everything.

GROUP: What is Art?

DETECTIVE: What is Art?

DUCHAMP: What is What?

YOUNG ARTIST: What is Is?

MR. HIM: What did I do?

MRS. HIM *(speaking):* What do I do?

(Singing.) I buy shoes, lots of shoes.

I buy them loose, I like them loose.

I like the ease of soft, loose shoes.

I buy blacks and browns and blues.

I spend some time before I choose.

Then when I think the shoes are right

Not too loose, not too tight.

Not too dowdy, not too bright.

Not too heavy, not too light.

Not too flat, not too high.

I spend time and then I buy.

I spend big bucks when I buy.

(Spoken over music.) When I buy shoes.

ANGERS: Lots of shoes.

MRS. HIM: I buy them loose.

ANGERS: But not too loose.

MRS. HIM: I like the ease of soft, loose shoes. I buy grays.

ANGERS: and greens

MRS. HIM: and blues.

ANGERS: Then when she thinks the shoes are right

MRS. HIM: Only when I think they're right

When I'm certain I have no doubt

ANGERS: She takes them home and she takes them out.

MRS. HIM (singing):

I take them home and I take them out.

But they're not the same at second sight

They're much too loose or just too tight.

They're too dowdy or too bright.

They're much too heavy or too light.

The heel's too flat, the vamp's too high.

The damned waxed laces won't stay tied.

The left shoe pinches, the right one squeaks.

The rubber sole sticks, the inner sole slides.

(Spoken over music.) I can't imagine how I got these shoes.

I can't imagine who chose these shoes.

Whose were the feet that tried these shoes?

Who was the woman who bought these shoes?

They're royal blue, I hate royal blue.

I have nothing to wear with royal blue.

Who was the woman who bought these shoes?

Who wrote that check, who signed that bill?

Who was the woman who took these home?

These shoes are snake, I don't wear snake.

Who was that woman seduced by a snake?

It wasn't me, I swear it wasn't me.

Who was the woman who bought these shoes?

Who was that woman, it wasn't me?

I swear, I swear it wasn't—

(Music stops.)

MR. HIM: Hi hon I'm home.

(MRS. HIM storms out. YOUNG ARTIST facilitates and imitates Duchamp's actions. ANGERS manipulate MR. HIM as in bed scene. MR. HIM and DUCHAMP carry scripts as in Detective's first scene.)

This is what happened. First nobody liked me or they weren't interested in me or they didn't know I existed.

DUCHAMP: Nobody?

MR. HIM: Almost nobody. A few choice persons.

DUCHAMP: A few choice persons liked you?

MR. HIM: Yes, very few.

DUCHAMP: Very choice?

MR. HIM: Actually, yes, pretty choice.

DUCHAMP: That doesn't sound bad.

MR. HIM: It wasn't bad. I didn't say it was bad. I'm not talking about good or bad. I'm not even talking about me. I'm talking about circumstances.

DUCHAMP: I'm sorry, okay, go on, go ahead.

MR. HIM: Okay, okay, where . . . okay, where was I?

DUCHAMP: Choice persons.

MR. HIM: Oh yes. Well, they thought I had a broader appeal.

DUCHAMP: Who did?

MR. HIM: The few persons who knew about me thought other people would be interested if *they* knew about me and that I had a broader appeal.

DUCHAMP: What does that mean?

MR. HIM: A broader appeal?

DUCHAMP: Yes, appeal to more people?

MR. HIM: Yes, if they knew about me.

DUCHAMP: Did you want that? To appeal to more people?

MR. HIM: I don't know. If you do something you want someone to know about it.

DUCHAMP: Or not.

MR. HIM: Why not?

DUCHAMP: If it's private, your secret.

MR. HIM: It's not about me. It's about what I do. Or what someone does. It's about reputation.

DUCHAMP: You want more people to know your reputation.

MR. HIM: No, to know what I do. To know what I have a reputation for doing.

DUCHAMP: You want more people to know what you do?

MR. HIM: I don't know. A few people said more people would be interested in what I do if they knew about it.

DUCHAMP: And you wanted that.

MR. HIM: I must have. I didn't say no.

DUCHAMP: Unless you would like to think of yourself as the victim of a few choice persons.

MR. HIM: No, I think they were thinking of my good.

DUCHAMP: Or the good of what you do? Or their own good? Or the good of more people?

MR. HIM: Or something, I don't know, I didn't say no. I know that. I said it wouldn't work but that was to protect myself if it didn't work.

DUCHAMP: And this isn't about you.

MR. HIM: No, it could be about anyone. Substitute Trollope, Anthony Trollope.

DUCHAMP: Do you think people nowadays know Trollope?

MR. HIM: Okay, well then there the chosen few were wrong, right? More people didn't get interested or maybe

DUCHAMP: didn't stay interested. Is this—am I getting there? Is this still about broad appeal? About broader appeal? Is this about your broader appeal?

MR. HIM: No, No! It could be really about anyone, about any one. Substitute Queen—uh . . . substitute Queen—Elizabeth or the other Queen Elizabeth or Elizabeth—Taylor!

DUCHAMP: First nobody liked Elizabeth Taylor?

MR. HIM: Or Dustin Hoffman, try tiny Dustin Hoffman.

DUCHAMP: Or they weren't interested in Dustin—

MR. HIM: Hoffman, right—or Madonna.

DUCHAMP: Everyone was always interested in Madonna.

MR. HIM: No, no. We only knew when a few choice persons thought we would want to know.

DUCHAMP: Or when Madonna figured out that wearing her underwear on the outside would win—

MR. HIM: Which that French designer Gaultier figured out too—I mean—remember “I dreamed I was a something in my Maidenform.”

DUCHAMP: Bra! Right, Madonna dreamed she was a rock star in her Maidenform bra! But this is all still about people, persons. Just substitute some name for your name and the game goes on.

MR. HIM: No, no. Try Nicaragua—go ahead—try!

DUCHAMP: First, nobody liked Nicaragua—

MR. HIM: Or were interested in it—try the homeless—try microwave ovens.

DUCHAMP: First, nobody liked microwave ovens.

MR. HIM: Or were interested in them.

DUCHAMP: Or they didn’t really know they existed. And then a few

MR. HIM: Choice persons.

DUCHAMP: A few choice persons.

MR. HIM: Broader appeal, right.

DUCHAMP: I’m beginning to . . . is this like Adlai Stevenson?

MR. HIM: Well that’s interesting isn’t . . .? The chosen few were wrong twice! The better man didn’t win. They couldn’t make him president so they made him a myth.

DUCHAMP: Mithter Adlai Thteventhon. The mythtery of Mithter Thteventhon—wait—are you saying he wasn’t great?

MR. HIM: No, I’m not, not at all. Great and popular are not the same—I mean it’s great if you’re both—but . . .

DUCHAMP: Maybe if Stevenson had worn his Jockey shorts outside his Brooks Brothers suit—right! (*He begins to leave, followed by YOUNG ARTIST.*)

MR. HIM: He did get some mileage on the hole in the sole of his shoe—that sounds like a song, doesn’t it? . . . The hole in the sole—

ANGERS: There was a hole in the sole of Stevenson’s shoe

MR. HIM AND ANGER I: which to his team made him seem just like me and you.

MR. HIM AND ANGER II: But he just couldn’t generate enough romance.

ANGERS: Because he wore his shorts underneath his pants.

MR. HIM: Hon, where’s my white shirt?

MRS. HIM (*entering*): I don’t know, hon.

MR. HIM: Hon, I told you I needed my white shirt for Tuesday.

MRS. HIM: What’s today, hon?

MR. HIM: It’s Tuesday, hon.

MRS. HIM: Well don’t get so excited, hon, what’s wrong with your blue shirt? Hon?

MR. HIM: Hon, it’s not white!

MRS. HIM: Well, hon, what’s so important about white?

MR. HIM: Okay. Okay, hon, where’s my blue shirt?

MRS. HIM: It’s not there, hon?

MR. HIM: Hon! Where?

(Music starts. Others return.)

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years. They loved each other at first sight. They courted, committed, engaged, married, became economically interdependent, relatively tolerant, and compromising.

YOUNG ARTIST: The mystery of compromise.

DUCHAMP: There's a difference, isn't there, between mystery and evasiveness, between mystery and ambiguity, between mystery and obscurity. There is a difference between what you intend and what you don't—intend and what you forgot to think about and what you never thought, never knew even—to think about.

YOUNG ARTIST: Half the mysteries in life could be cleared up if somebody would spill the beans.

MRS. HIM: You must stop calling me hon.

ANGERS: As if that's the problem.

MRS. HIM: You must never again call me hon.

MR. HIM: Whatever you say—dear.

ACTOR: I run the committee for keeping things a mystery! Unspill those beans.

MR. HIM: Dear—say you ever what.

MRS. HIM: Hon me call again never must you.

DUCHAMP, DETECTIVE, AND YOUNG ARTIST: Problem the that's if as.

MRS. HIM: Hon me calling stop must you.

GROUP: The mystery of words.

MR. HIM: Are you tired?

MRS. HIM: Tired's not the word.

MR. HIM: Are you hungry?

MRS. HIM: Hungry's not the word.

(Entire company enters, talking as if in noisy restaurant.)

ACTOR (WAITER): Would you like a beverage? I'm your waiter.

(Group, including DUCHAMP, gathers upstage, watching.)

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST (to WAITER): We're waiting for a friend. *(Sees ACTOR.)* Hi, hiiii, We're over here. *(Music and talking upstage stops.)* I'm so glad we could get together.

ACTOR: Oh, I am too. *(Aside.)* Actually I'm not.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: We've been wanting to hear about your new role.

ACTOR: And I'm longing to talk about it with you. *(Aside.)* Actually I'm not.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: Acting must be so . . .

ACTOR (WAITER): Beverage?

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST (to WAITER): No, thank you.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST (to ACTOR): Acting must be so fulfilling.

ACTOR: Yes, yes it is. *(Aside.)* I'm saying yes but I'm acting no. I'm acting as if acting isn't fulfilling. Actually I'm not.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: I mean you play so many kinds of people and you're always so different.

ACTOR: How sweet and flattering of you to say so. *(Aside.)* I said that with a hint of irony in my voice as if I doubt their sincerity. *(To them:)* You're always so kind. *(Aside.)* And I'm doing that to protect myself in case they aren't sincere although I think they are. Actually I don't. *(To them:)* Acting is my life. Delving, revealing, reacting, and acting, acting, acting. *(Aside.)* Sometimes I don't know what the hell I'm talking about.

ACTOR (WAITER): Beverage?

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST (to WAITER): No. Thank you.

ACTOR: One woman's honest search for theatrical reality. (*Aside.*) I'm acting sincere. (*To them:*) I'm sincere. (*Aside.*) I may, in fact, be sincere. Probably not.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: Are there . . .

ACTOR: There are sometimes, *is*, sometimes, on stage, moments, a moment, when you know, you suddenly know. (*Aside.*) You know sometimes I lie and call it acting. (*To them:*) You suddenly know who you are. (*Aside.*) I'm acting like I really want to believe this. (*To them:*) Or if not, if you don't know *who* you are, you know *that* you are. (*Aside.*) I'm acting like this could be true (*to them:*) and acting becomes action and you— (*Aside.*) No, not them, me, me and I, I am entire and consumed, entirely consumed. (*All enter.*)

GROUP: Marcel Duchamp

YOUNG ARTIST (to DUCHAMP): I have the impression that every time you commit yourself to a position you undercut it by irony or sarcasm.

(*Music starts.*)

DUCHAMP: You're right. Because I don't believe in positions.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: What do you believe in?

DUCHAMP: Nothing. The word belief doesn't mean anything. It's like the word judgment. I hope there won't be words like that on the moon.

GROUP: But you believe in yourself.

DUCHAMP (*shaking head*): No.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: Not even that.

DUCHAMP: I don't believe in the word being.

GROUP: But you like words so much.

DUCHAMP: I like poetic words.

DETECTIVE AND YOUNG ARTIST: "Being" is very poetic.

DUCHAMP: No, not at all. Being is an idea.

YOUNG ARTIST: What is the most poetic word?

(*Music stops. Pause.*)

DUCHAMP: Maybe "backward."

(*Music starts. OLD ROSE and OLD SAM return. An ANGER brings on a table. They sit down to dinner.*)

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years. They loved each other at first sight. They courted, committed, engaged, married, became economically interdependent, relatively tolerant, and compromising. They had one child. The mystery of being the only, the oldest

(*Repeated material is said slightly faster each time, slowing down for new information.*)

OLD ROSE: of being everything to them

OLD SAM: to them, everything

OLD ROSE: everything.

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X had one child.

(*Music stops.*)

OLD ROSE: Mr. X went *out* to work.

OLD SAM: Mrs. X stayed home with the baby. How much did we pay that doctor?

OLD ROSE: What?

OLD SAM (to CHILD): She doesn't listen. (*To OLD ROSE:*) The doctor. The baby doctor. How much did we pay the doctor?

OLD ROSE: I don't remember. (*To DETECTIVE:*) Who can remember?

OLD SAM: We paid him. We paid him plenty. And the hospital. The private hospital. (*To DETECTIVE:*) We paid plenty.

OLD ROSE: And then my water broke.

OLD SAM: Your water broke. (*To DETECTIVE:*) It's true. Her water broke.

OLD ROSE: In the middle of the night.

OLD SAM: We had to get the police.

OLD ROSE: We couldn't get the doctor.

OLD SAM (*to DETECTIVE*): How could we get the doctor?

OLD ROSE (*to DETECTIVE*): Who knew where to get the doctor?

OLD SAM (*to OLD ROSE*): It was the night. (*To DETECTIVE:*) It was the middle of the night.

OLD ROSE (*to DETECTIVE*): The middle of the night—it's true!

OLD SAM: So we got the cops.

OLD ROSE: We were scared.

OLD SAM: Sure we were scared. They tied you—remember?

OLD ROSE (*to DETECTIVE*): To a stretcher. (*To OLD SAM:*) You remember?

OLD SAM: Sure I remember. (*To DETECTIVE:*) How could I forget? (*To OLD ROSE:*) They had to get you down three flights of stairs.

OLD ROSE (*to OLD SAM*): Over the banisters. (*To DETECTIVE:*) That's the truth.

OLD SAM: From one to the other. That was something. Those cops.

OLD ROSE: That was something.

OLD SAM: How could I forget? (*To DETECTIVE:*) You can't forget a thing like that.

OLD ROSE: She was almost ten pounds. (*To DETECTIVE:*) You were almost ten pounds.

OLD SAM: She was something. She was one big baby.

ALL MEN: The mystery of babies. (*ACTOR makes baby sound punctuating scene and underscoring key lines.*)

ALL MEN: The mystery of babies.

YOUNG SAM: Of having babies.

OLD SAM: The mystery of a baby

YOUNG SAM: of having

OLD SAM: of wanting

YOUNG SAM: of wanting to have

ALL MEN: a baby (*baby sound*)

ANGER I: the mystery of wanting to have a baby,

YOUNG ARTIST: a tiny

ANGER I: dependent

YOUNG ARTIST: a very tiny

ANGER I: very dependent

YOUNG SAM: iddy biddy

OLD SAM: widdoo, widdoo

ALL MEN: baby. (*Baby sound.*)

OLD SAM: The mystery

MR. HIM: of wanting to *have* one

OLD SAM: of wanting to *own* one

MR. HIM: of wanting to have one's *own*

ALL MEN: baby. (*Baby sound.*)

YOUNG SAM: I want to have a baby.

ALL MEN: Why?

YOUNG SAM: I want to hold it in my arms.

ANGER I: Here, hold mine.

YOUNG SAM: I want to *have* one, one baby.

ANGER I: Here, have *this* one. This *extra* one.

YOUNG SAM: No, I want to have my own.

ALL MEN: Why?

YOUNG SAM: To be like me.

OLD SAM: To look like you.

YOUNG SAM: Yes, yes, I want a baby.

(*ACTOR goes out.*)

OLD SAM: To look like you.

YOUNG SAM: Yes, yes, I want to look

OLD SAM: at that baby

YOUNG SAM: and see

ALL MEN: yourself.

MR. HIM: Yes, and my mother

ALL MEN: father.

MR. HIM: Yes, yes, and my mother's mother

ALL MEN: father's father.

MR. HIM: Yes, yes, yes, I want my baby to be

ACTOR (DOCTOR) (*coming back on, holding veil as baby*): your history

ALL MEN: Ohhhhhh.

MR. HIM: My history, yes.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Your history and

MR. HIM: yes my history and

ACTOR (DOCTOR): your legacy.

MRS. HIM (*entering*): Yes, *my* legacy, *my* history and *my* legacy.

MR. HIM: Okay ho—

ALL MEN: *Dear.*

MR. HIM: Whatever you want.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Here's your baby.

MRS. HIM: *My* baby.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): He's going to grow up (*Exits.*)

MRS. HIM: *Oh*—not too fast I hope.

GROUP: to be an artist.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: *Oh*—there must be some mistake.

(*Baby sound. All exit. DUCHAMP and DETECTIVE enter. YOUNG ARTIST follows DUCHAMP.*)

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years. They loved each other at first sight. They courted, committed, engaged, married, became economically interdependent, relatively tolerant, and compromising. They had one child. Mr. X went *out* to work. Mrs. X stayed home. For thirty-five of their more than fifty years together, Mr. X left for work before six in the morning and never came home before eight at night, six days a week. On the seventh day, like God, he rested. (*To DUCHAMP:*) When did you make the decision to stop painting?

DUCHAMP: I never made it. It came by itself.

DETECTIVE: And you never had the longing to paint since then?

DUCHAMP: No.

DETECTIVE: You never touched a brush or a pencil?

DUCHAMP: No. I think a painting dies, you see. After forty or fifty years a picture dies. Sculpture dies.

GROUP: We don't believe that.

DUCHAMP: No one believes this, but I don't mind. I think a picture dies after a few years like the man

DETECTIVE: or woman

DUCHAMP: or woman who painted it. Afterwards it's called the history of art. And the history of art is what remains of a time in a museum. But it's not necessarily the best of that time.

DETECTIVE: So you stopped. (*Music stops.*) You took a walk. You disappeared. (*DUCHAMP and YOUNG ARTIST exit.*) The mystery of the disappearing Dada.

GROUP (*offstage*): Daddy.

DETECTIVE: Mom, where's Daddy?

YOUNG ROSE (*offstage*): Working.

DETECTIVE: Mom, where's Daddy?

YOUNG ROSE (*offstage*): Resting.

DETECTIVE: Six days a week she kept house and cared for the kid and on the seventh day she kept the house quiet and the kid quiet so God could rest. What did she do for fun? Did she have fun? (*All enter.*)

GROUP: The mystery of shopping for fun.

(*Music starts.*)

ACTOR (SALESPERSON): If I can help. If I can help. If I can be of any help.

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: Just looking.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: Just looking.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: Just looking.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: I'm just looking.

ALL: We're just looking.

ACTOR (SALESPERSON): Are you looking for anything special? Anything special? Anything in particular?

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: No, just looking.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: No, no, just looking.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: No, no, no, just looking.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: No, no, no, no, I'm just looking.

ALL: No, no, no, no, no, we're just looking.

ACTOR (SALESPERSON): Well, if I can direct you. If I can direct you. May I direct you?

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: No directing.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: No, no directing.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: No, no, no directing.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: No, no, no, no directing.

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: No.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: No.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: No.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: No.

ALL: No thank you, no directing, no direction.

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: Just looking.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: Just looking.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: Just looking.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: I'm just looking.

ALL: We're just looking.

ACTOR (SALESPERSON): Oh. Oh well. Did you have something in mind? Something in mind? Did you have anything—at all—in mind?

(YOUNG SAM and YOUNG ROSE begin a round; OLD SAM and OLD ROSE, DETECTIVE and FANNY, and MR. and MRS. HIM enter in, in turn, at "no mind.")

YOUNG SAM AND YOUNG ROSE: No, no, nothing in mind, nothing in mind, no mind, no mind, never mind, never mind, just looking.

OLD SAM AND OLD ROSE: No, no, nothing in mind, nothing in mind, no mind, no mind, never mind, never mind, just looking.

DETECTIVE AND FANNY: No, no, nothing in mind, nothing in mind, no mind, no mind, never mind, never mind, just looking.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: No, no, nothing in mind, nothing in mind, no mind, no mind, never mind, never mind, just looking.

ALL: We're just looking.

(*Music stops.*)

ACTOR (SALESPERSON): Well, if you see anything you think is fun I'm Miss Something.

(*Everyone starts to exit.*)

MRS. HIM: Oh—actually—I *do* need something for my husband.
(*Music starts.*) A white shirt. (MR. and MRS. HIM reenter with ANGERS.)

ANGERS: So here we are,

MRS. HIM: we are so far,

MR. HIM: we are so far.

MRS. HIM: I think I'll change.

ANGERS: She'll change her life.

MRS. HIM: I'll be his good wife.

ANGERS: Good grief.

MR. HIM: The problem's solved.

ANGER I: He thinks he's saved.

ANGER II: Now she'll be well behaved,

MRS. HIM: I will be well behaved

ANGERS: Uh oh!

ANGER I: Here's the ointment.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: Where's the ointment?

ANGERS: Here's the fly,

ANGER I: Unless she learns

ANGER II: that who she is

ANGERS: is who she is.

ANGER I: Unless he learns

ANGER II: that what he does

ANGERS: is what he does.

MR. HIM: That what I do, I do.

MRS. HIM: That who I am, I am.

ANGER I: And greets his anger.

ANGER II: Greets her anger.

MRS. HIM: With a grin.

ANGERS: And learns to love.

MRS. HIM: To love.

MR. HIM: To love.

MRS. HIM: Unless I learn to love

ALL: to love the question (*singing*) "Why?"

MR. HIM: Why?

ANGERS: And learns to live.

MRS. HIM: To live.

MR. HIM: To live.

MRS. HIM: I just have to learn to live.

ANGERS: To live unafraid with doubt and give up envy.

MRS. HIM: Why are other people so happy?

MR. HIM: So famous.

ANGERS: Give it up.

MR. AND MRS. HIM: Oh, I'm so happy for them.

ANGERS: And give up envy to care for other people's Art.

ANGER I: Unless she learns,

MRS. HIM: I'm learning.

ANGER II: He learns,

ANGERS: They learn,

MR. AND MRS. HIM: Our grapes are sour.

ANGERS: They'll not have power.

MRS. HIM: No power.

MR. HIM: No power.

ANGERS: They'll never have power.

(Music stops.)

MR. AND MRS. HIM: No power, no power.

ANGERS: They'll never have power.

(All exit. Music starts.)

DETECTIVE (entering): Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years. They loved each other at first sight. They courted, committed, engaged, married, became economically interdependent,

relatively tolerant, and compromising. They had one child. Mr. X went *out* to work. Mrs. X stayed home. For thirty-five of their more than fifty years together, Mr. X left for work before six in the morning and never came home before eight at night, six days a week. On the seventh day, like God, he rested. Six days a week she kept house and cared for the kid and on the seventh day she kept the house quiet and the kid quiet so God could rest. Then things changed. Fanny, who always lived next door, died. It's time now to talk about Fanny.

OLD SAM: About how she was the center of it all.

DETECTIVE: And is.

OLD ROSE: And is still somehow in the center.

DETECTIVE: About being haunted. About being haunted by Fannie's last days.

(Music stops.)

OLD ROSE: Doctor, there's something wrong with my mother. She says sometimes time passes and she can't remember.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Well dear, those are little strokes.

FANNY: That's really what the doctor said. "Little strokes." It don't sound so bad. Big sounds bad.

OLD ROSE: Will it get worse?

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Well dear, you never know.

FANNY: That's what the doctor really said. "You never know." It didn't sound so bad. At least fifty-fifty.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): It's in God's hands, dear. *(Exits.)*

FANNY: That doctor really said that. “God’s hands.” I shoulda known I was in big trouble. Goddammit, if it’s in God’s hands, why am I paying so much to this doctor?

DETECTIVE: Did the doctor say what to do about it?

OLD ROSE: The doctor gave her something. A pill, more pills.

FANNY: I remember. That stupid gave me more pills.

DETECTIVE: Did you take them?

FANNY: Sometimes I took them. Sometimes I forgot. Maybe I was having a little stroke.

DETECTIVE: When did Fanny start dying? Was it then? Those little disappearances. Little deaths. Where did you go?

FANNY: Don’t ask stupid questions Detective Big Shot. If I went someplace good I woulda sent you a post card.

OLD ROSE: All right. It’s supper time. Come to the table.

OLD SAM: I don’t remember where I sat.

OLD ROSE: At the head of the table where you always sit.

FANNY: Wait a minute, I remember this. It was Sunday and the day kept going away and coming back.

OLD ROSE: Mama, please eat something. But watch out for the bones.

FANNY: I said to somebody—to who?—I said, “Why is this happening to me?”

DETECTIVE: You said it to me.

FANNY: And did you have an answer Miss Big Shot Detective?

OLD ROSE: C’mon. Before everything gets cold. I made everybody’s favorite.

DETECTIVE: I’ll have some of that. Not too much please.

OLD SAM: Try some of this.

OLD ROSE: Here try this.

DETECTIVE: Just not too much please.

OLD SAM: I hope you didn’t come to not eat.

OLD ROSE: Leave her alone, maybe she’s on a diet. Look in your own plate.

DETECTIVE: This is when everybody stopped talking.

OLD ROSE: We saw what she was doing.

DETECTIVE: You kept putting food in your mouth. You didn’t chew. Just more food. And then more. And then more. Why? Why did you do that?

FANNY: What do I know? I think I sat down—I know I sat down and the day went away, and went away, and went and went. I know I wasn’t so hungry for your mother’s cooking.

OLD ROSE: Mama, be nice.

FANNY: The day went and went, and finally went and never came back.

OLD ROSE: I pulled the food out of your mouth. I put my fingers in your mouth to pull out the food.

FANNY: And you pulled out my teeth. In front of everybody. And you slapped me in the face—don’t think I forgot that.

DETECTIVE: I held you in my arms and I tried to keep you from falling off the chair. You were looking into my eyes. You were looking right

into my eyes and I told you not to be scared. I told you everything would be all right.

FANNY: That shows how much you know. Maybe *you* should be a doctor. Wait a minute—who called the police?

OLD SAM: I did. I called emergency.

FANNY: What for? What did you have to do that for? You couldn't drive me?

OLD ROSE: Mama, we were scared. We didn't know what happened. We didn't know.

FANNY: Yeah, I know. But that's when I started to get mad. Everywhere was strangers. I had so many daughters but they left me with strangers. That made me really mad.

DETECTIVE: C'mon, you were always mad. You had a hard life and you married the wrong man and you were an angry woman.

FANNY: So now you're a *head* doctor, Lady Big Shot. If you're so smart why didn't you fix me up instead of sitting and yelling stories from the newspaper at me.

DETECTIVE: You knew. Goddammit you knew I was there.

OLD ROSE: Watch your language. You're talking to your grandmother.

DETECTIVE: You knew I was there in the nursing home. In that damned yellow room. I was trying to get through to you. I didn't know if you could hear me.

FANNY: They could hear you in Poughkeepsie. Just because I couldn't talk back didn't mean I was all of a sudden deaf.

OLD ROSE: Did you always know when we were there?

FANNY: How should I know? And if I didn't know, then how would I know? Anyway, sometimes I was visiting with my mother, or with Ida. I even saw my old friend Mary. Rosie, you remember Mary. She didn't look too bad.

OLD ROSE: But Mama, they were dead.

FANNY: So, what was I? You call that living? And besides, ain't you here with me right now?

DETECTIVE: Fanny spent two years in that nursing home.

FANNY: "Spent" is a good word Big Shot. All the money it took my whole life to save got "spent." All the time I had left got "spent." I spent it till I used it up.

(DOCTOR *enters.*)

OLD ROSE: Doctor, there's something wrong with my mother. She's having trouble breathing.

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Well dear, she has pneumonia.

OLD ROSE: Will it go away?

ACTOR (DOCTOR): Well dear, you never know.

OLD ROSE: Will she live?

ACTOR (DOCTOR): It's in God's hands dear. (*Exits.*)

FANNY: Goddamn, how much did you pay that idiot?

DETECTIVE: They moved Fanny from the nursing home to the hospital and her anger turned to fury.

FANNY: Why didn't you stop them? Why didn't one of you stop them? Why didn't someone stop them from putting all those tubes in me—in my arms—taped to my face—down my throat—why didn't you stop them when they tied me—when they tied me up?

OLD ROSE: Mama, you were tearing out the tubes. Mama, please, we didn't want you to go.

FANNY: So, you tried to tie me to the world.

DETECTIVE: We weren't smart. I wasn't smart.

FANNY: No my sweet child, you were not smart.

DETECTIVE: And Fanny died.

(Preparation for the funeral procession.)

FANNY: Now, I wanna know—how much did that coffin cost? And whose idea was it to put makeup on my face for the funeral and why did you let them put that goddamned ugly blouse on me?

(Music starts. Funeral procession begins. The entire company, led by OLD ROSE and OLD SAM, who head slowly back toward their TV set.)

DETECTIVE: Mr. and Mrs. X have been married for more than fifty years. They loved each other at first sight. They courted, committed, engaged, married, became economically interdependent, relatively tolerant, and compromising. They had one child. Mr. X went *out* to work. Mrs. X stayed home. For thirty-five of their more than fifty years together, Mr. X left for work before six in the morning and never came home before eight at night, six days a week. On the seventh day, like God, he rested. Six days a week she kept house and cared for the kid and on the seventh day she kept the house quiet and the kid quiet so God could rest. Then things changed. Fanny, who always lived next door, died. The only child grew up and moved out. They were sorry to see her go, but go she went, and Mr. X grew old, grew ill, retired, and moved in.

(OLD ROSE and OLD SAM, who have previously always faced upstage when at TV set, now face audience.)

OLD SAM: Rose, Rosie

GROUP: Wake up Rose

OLD SAM (to self): I'm Sam, I am Sam. What's left of him, that's what I am. I was your man. I was *a* man. *(To ROSE:)* Rose, Rosie.

GROUP: Wake up, wake up Rose.

OLD ROSE: What? Sammie? Are you all right? Do you need something?

OLD SAM (to self): I'm Sam, I am Sam. God damn. I am a man. *(To ROSE:)* I love you, I love you Rosie.

GROUP: He still loves you Rosie.

OLD ROSE: What are you—crazy? Why all of a sudden do you love me?

OLD SAM: My head clears. It's when my head clears, like those pills, like a decongestant, Rosie, you know?

OLD ROSE: What? Sammie, what are you talking about?

GROUP: He's making love Rosie.

OLD SAM: A decongestant! A god damn . . . capsule! Every once in awhile my head clears. And I remember how I *loved* you. I *know* I love you. *(To self:)* Sam, I am Sam, I am Rose's husband Sam. *(To ROSE:)* I feel the feeling of loving—of loving you.

GROUP: He still loves you Rosie

(Pause.)

OLD ROSE: I love you. I love you too Sammie.

GROUP: She still loves you Sammie.

(Music stops.)

OLD ROSE: So *(pause)* what do you say? Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat? Can I make you a sandwich?

(OLD ROSE and OLD SAM move slowly, like old people, back to face TV.)

DETECTIVE (to DUCHAMP): In an interview you said there's one question which you're never asked and which you'd love to be asked, namely—

GROUP: How are you?

DUCHAMP: Thank you for asking. Actually, I'm doing very well. I undergo the troubles which bother all people at my age. Watch out! But otherwise, I am very happy.

DETECTIVE: Do you think about death?

(Music starts.)

DUCHAMP *(laughing)*: As little as possible. You think about it from time to time, at my age, when you have a headache or heartburn. You imagine the worst. You think about it as you lose your friends—the people who knew the world as you knew it. It's true—then death appears.

GROUP: Death appears.

DUCHAMP: Despite yourself you're impressed—

GROUP: Wait.

DUCHAMP: by the undeniable fact

DETECTIVE: This sounds like a conclusion.

DUCHAMP: that you're going to completely disappear.

GROUP: Of sorts.

(Music continues. The stage slowly empties of actors till only OLD ROSE and OLD SAM are left, watching TV. They are holding hands. Lights fade.)