

GINETTE. Pete, I — ... *(Beat. She's about to say, "I love you.")*

PETE. What?

GINETTE. *(She can't quite do it.)* I just — am having a nice time, Pete.

PETE. I'm glad, Ginette.

GINETTE. I always do with you.

PETE. I'm glad. *(Pete and Ginette enjoy this moment together. There's nothing else to say, so ... back to the sky.)*

GINETTE. *(Still can't say what she really wants to say.)* And the stars are just — ! I didn't know you knew all that stuff! // After all this time, I didn't know you knew all that!

PETE. Well, it's not — ... It's just stuff my dad taught me ... *(Beat. There's nothing else to say, so ... back to the stars. Beat. Ginette turns to Pete.)*

GINETTE. Pete — ...

PETE. *(Turning to Ginette.)* Yeah?

GINETTE. I love you. *(Beat. Pete just stares at Ginette. Beat. Pete looks away from Ginette. Beat. And does not respond. Beat. Ginette*

PETE. I ... love you, too.

GINETTE. Oh!!! *(Huge relief! Pete and Ginette feel JOY! Ginette shivers — a happy kind of shiver.)*

PETE. Oh, are you cold? // Wanna go inside?

GINETTE. No, no. No. I just wanna sit. Like this. Close. *(Pete and Ginette shouldn't be close to each other at all — but for them, it's close.)* I feel so close to you tonight. It's nice to be close to you, Pete. *(She gets closer to him. Beat.)* It's safe. *(She gets closer to him again. Beat.)* I like being close. Like this. I mean, I can think of other ... ways ... of being close to you *(I.e., sex, and they enjoy this sweetly, truly — Pete probably can't believe she brought this up, but he's probably very happy that she did!)* but that's not — ... I like this right now. This kind of close. Right next to you. *(She gets even closer to him; leans right up against him. Beat.)* You know, right now, I think I'm about as close to you as I can possibly be. *(She is very content.)*

PETE. *(Beat. Honestly discovering.)* Well ... not really.

GINETTE. What?

PETE. *(Beat. He can't believe what she's saying this out.)* Not really. I mean,

# #2

MAN. Sure. (*Beat.*) Okay — . Okay ... (*Beat.*) So you're just lookin' for a place to see the northern lights from?

WOMAN. Yeah. Just tonight.

MAN. Well, you know, you might not see 'em tonight, 'cause // you never really know if —

WOMAN. Oh, no. I'll see them. Because I'm in a good place: Your latitude is *good*. And this is the right time: Solar activity is at an eleven-year peak. Everything's in order. And, boy, you have good sky for it. (*Taking in the sky.*) There's lots of sky here.

MAN. Used to be a potato farm.

WOMAN. I was gonna say — no trees in the way. And it's *flat*! Makes for a big sky! (*Beat.*) So — you're a farmer?

MAN. No. Used to be a farm. I'm a repairman.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Fix things.

WOMAN. Oh. (*Laughs.*)

MAN. What?

WOMAN. You're not a lobster man.

MAN. No ...

WOMAN. I guess I thought that everyone from Maine was a lobster man and talked in that funny ... way like they do in Maine, and you don't talk that way ...

MAN. Nope. You're not Down East. You're up north. And this is how we talk up north, pretty much.

WOMAN. Oh.

MAN. Plus, ocean's a couple hundred miles away. Be an awful long ride to work if I was a lobsterman.

WOMAN. (*Enjoying him.*) Yeah. Well, anyway, thank you. Thank you for letting me stay. I've had a bad enough time of things lately not to be given a bad time here —

MAN. I'm sorry. I just — ... I think I love you.

WOMAN. Really.

MAN. (*Perplexed.*) Yeah. I saw you from my window and ... I love you.

WOMAN. Well ... — that's very nice — ... but there's something I think you should know: I'm not here for that.

MAN. Oh, no! I didn't think you were!

WOMAN. I'm here to pay my respects. To my *husband*.

MAN. Oh —

JIMMY. Yeah. Like, I do Thanksgivin', Christmas, 'cause I let the guys who work for me, like, East helps with repairs sometimes, I let 'em have the day off so they can be with their families since I'm all alone this year.

SANDRINE. Oh.

JIMMY. Yeah. (*Driving the point home.*) I really don't have anybody anymore, really. My brother and sister got canned, so they left town, and >

SANDRINE. Right —

JIMMY. Mom and Dad retired, headed south.

SANDRINE. Yeah, I heard that.

JIMMY. Vermont.

SANDRINE. Oh.

JIMMY. Yeah, winters there are a lot easier. And then Spot went and died on me ...

SANDRINE. Oh, Jimmy, I didn't know that ...

JIMMY. Yeah. He was old, it was his time, he was a good fish though, but, so, like I said, I really don't have anybody anymore, really ... but, so, um, I was wonderin' — would you like to come over? It'd be fun! Catch up, hang out?

SANDRINE. Oh —

JIMMY. So whatta you say? Wanna come on over, for fun —

SANDRINE. No, Jimmy. I can't. I can't. (*Getting up to leave.*) I really gotta get back with the girls.

JIMMY. Naw —

SANDRINE. (*Forceful, but kind.*) Yeah, Jimmy, yeah. I gotta. 'Cause, see ... oh, gosh, I've been meanin' to tell you this for a while: There's a guy, Jimmy. I've got a guy.

JIMMY. (*Huge blow. But he's tough.*) Oh.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Well ... good for you. Gettin' yourself out there again.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Movin' on ...

SANDRINE. Yeah, well, actually, Jimmy, it's more than me just gettin' myself out there and movin' on. Um ... this is my ... bachelorette party. (*Beat. Then, off his blank look.*) I'm gettin' married.

JIMMY. (*Huger blow.*) Oh.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Wow.

SANDRINE. Yeah.

JIMMY. Wow.

SANDRINE. Yeah.



MAN. But —

WOMAN. Trust me. There are things that hurt you that make you bruised and bloody and there are things that hurt you that don't make you bruised and bloody and ... they all hurt. *(Beat. Then, giving him back the book labeled "Things That Can Hurt You":)* I'm Marvalyn.

MAN. I'm Steve. I live on the third floor. Room Eleven.

MARVALYN. *(Deflecting.)* I live with my boyfriend, Eric. I love him very much.

STEVE. Yeah. We saw you move in.

MARVALYN. Yeah. Our roof collapsed from all the snow in December. We're just here until we can get our feet back on the ground.

STEVE. Oh. Well, that's good, 'cause that's what Ma Dudley says her boarding house is. A place where people can live until they get their feet back on the ground. My brother Paul says we've been trying to get our feet back on the ground our whole lives.

MARVALYN. Oh.

STEVE. Yeah, it takes some people longer to do that than others.

MARVALYN. Yeah. *(Beat.)*

STEVE. You guys are loud.

MARVALYN. Huh?

STEVE. You and Eric. You yell and bang. We're right below you.

MARVALYN. Oh. Sorry about that. We're goin' through a rough patch. Happens. Sorry. *(Beat. Then, changing the subject:)* What is it like?

STEVE. What?

MARVALYN. To not feel pain.

STEVE. I don't know. I don't know what it's like to hurt, so ... I don't know. I don't really feel.

MARVALYN. Is this ... how you were born?

STEVE. Yeah. I don't have fully developed pain sensors. They're immature, my brother Paul says //, and because they're immature —

MARVALYN. How does he know that?

STEVE. Oh, he *reads*, >

MARVALYN. But —

STEVE. and because *they're* immature my development as a human being has been suppressed

MARVALYN. But —

STEVE. but he *teaches* me what hurts, though.

MARVALYN. Why??

STEVE. So I won't ruin myself. I have to know what hurts, so I know when to be afraid. See, my mind can't tell me when to be afraid, 'cause my body doesn't know what being hurt is, so I have to memorize what might hurt.

MARVALYN. Okay ...

STEVE. And I have to memorize what to be afraid of. *(Showing her, in his book.)* Things like bears. And guns and knives. And fire. And fear — I should fear fear itself — and pretty girls ...

MARVALYN. Pretty girls?

STEVE. *(He thinks she's pretty.)* Yeah.

MARVALYN. Why should you be afraid of pretty girls?

STEVE. Well, 'cause my brother Paul says they can hurt you 'cause they make you love them, and that's something I'm supposed to be afraid of, too — love — but Paul says that I'm really lucky, 'cause I'll probably never have to deal with love, because I have a lot of deficiencies and not very many capacities as a result of the congenital analgesia.

MARVALYN. Wait, what do you mean you're never gonna have to deal with love .....

GAYLE. *(She's been in a bit of a state, but she collects herself.)* I want it back.

LENDALL. What?

GAYLE. I want it back.

LENDALL. What?

GAYLE. All the love I gave to you?, I want it back.

LENDALL. What?

GAYLE. Now.

LENDALL. *(Little beat.)* I don't understand —

GAYLE. I've got yours in the car.

LENDALL. What?

GAYLE. All the love you gave to me?, I've got it in the car.

LENDALL. What are you talkin' about?

GAYLE. I don't want it anymore.

LENDALL. Why?

GAYLE. I've made a decision: We're done.

LENDALL. What?! —

GAYLE. We're done. I've decided. And, so, I've brought all the love you gave to me back to you. It's the right thing to do.

LENDALL. *(Bewildered.)* Um, I —

GAYLE. It's in the car.

LENDALL. You said. *(Beat. He's kind of paralyzed trying to figure this out.)*

GAYLE. *(Waiting for him to take some action and go get the love.)* I can get it for you, or ... you can get it.

LENDALL. Well, I don't want it back. I don't need it —

GAYLE. Well, I don't want it! What am I supposed to do with all of it, now that I don't want it?

LENDALL. Well, I don't know ...

GAYLE. Well, under the circumstances //, it doesn't seem right for me to keep it, so I'm gonna give it back. *(She leaves.)*

LENDALL. Wow. What the heck am I gonna do with all this? I mean ... I don't know if I have room.

GAYLE. *(Upset.)* I'm sure you'll find a place for it *(i.e., another woman.)* ... And now, I think it's only fair for you to give me mine back because ... I want it back. *(Beat.)* All the love I gave to you?

LENDALL. Yeah?

GAYLE. I want it back. *(Beat.)* So go get it. *(Lendall doesn't move. He's probably trying to figure out what is happening and why it's happening.)* Lendall, go get it. *(Lendall still doesn't move.)* Please. *(Lendall still doesn't move.)* Now!!!

GAYLE. What is that?

LENDALL. *(It's obvious — it's exactly what she asked for.)* It's all the love you gave me.

GAYLE. That's — ...? That is *not* — . There is no way — ... That is *not* — . *(Mortified.)* Is that all I gave you?

LENDALL. It's all I could find ...

GAYLE. Oh. Okay. *(Taking in the little bag ... and then at all the big bags.)* Okay. *(And she's crying.)*

LENDALL. Gayle ... What's goin' on, here?

GAYLE. I told you: We're done.

LENDALL. Why do you keep saying that?

GAYLE. Because — . *(This is hard to say, but has to be said.)*

Because when I asked you if you ever thought we were gonna get married — remember when I asked you that? *(Lendall doesn't seem to want to remember.)* In December? ... It was snowing?

LENDALL. *(But he remembers.)* Yeah.

GAYLE. Yeah, well, when I asked you ... *that*, you got so ... *quiet*. And everybody said that that right there // shoulda told me everything.

LENDALL. Everybody *who*?

GAYLE. Everybody!

LENDALL. Who? .....

# #6

CHAD. *(Sitting.)* I don't know. Just sometimes ... I don't know why I bother goin' "out." I don't like it, Randy. I hate it. I hate goin' out on these dates. I mean, why do I wanna spend my Friday night with some girl I might *maybe* like, when I could be spendin' it hangin' out with someone I *know* I like, like you, you know?

RANDY. Yeah.

CHAD. I mean ... that was rough tonight. In the middle of Sally tellin' me how she didn't like the way I smelled ... I got real sad, >

RANDY. Aw, buddy ...

CHAD. and all I could think about was how not much in this world makes me feel good or makes much sense anymore, and I got really scared, 'cause there's gotta be something that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right? But then I kinda came out of bein' sad, and actually felt okay, 'cause I realized that there *is* one thing in this world that makes me feel really good and that *does* make sense, and it's you. *(Everything stops. Chad isn't quite sure what he has just said. Randy isn't quite sure what he has just heard. Long, long beat of these guys sorting out what was just said and heard.)*

RANDY. *(Escaping the discomfort.)* Well, I'm gonna head. *(He starts to leave.)* >

CHAD. Yeah ...

RANDY. *(Deflecting throughout the following.)* I gotta work in the mornin' ...

CHAD. Well, I'm just supervisin' first shift at the mill, so I can pick you up anytime after three —

RANDY. Oh, I don't know, Chad: Me and Lendall, we got a long day tomorrow — we're still catchin' up, fixin' roofs from all the snow in December, // gotta do Marvalyn and Eric's, and —

CHAD. Well, four // or five? Or six or seven?

RANDY. Prob'ly busy all day, I don't know when we'll be // done.

CHAD. Well, you just // say when —

RANDY. I don't know, I don't know!, so, >

CHAD. Well —

RANDY. *(Putting a stop to this — he wants outta there.)* hey-HEY!! I'll see ya later! *(He leaves.)*

CHAD: Yeah. Yeah-yeah-yeah ... *(Chad watches Randy go. Then:)* Hey, Randy! — *(Suddenly, Chad completely falls down on the ground. Maybe it's more of a crumple to the ground. Love is, after all, often described as making people weak in the knees.)*

RANDY. *(Rushing back, seeing Chad on the ground.)* Whoa! Chad! You okay?

CHAD. Yeah ...

RANDY. What the — ... Here ... *(Helps Chad up.)*

CHAD. Thanks. Umm ...

RANDY. What was that? You okay? What just happened there?

CHAD. *(Trying to figure this out.)* Umm ... I just fell ...

RANDY. Well, I figured that out ...

CHAD. No — ... I just — . *(Beat.)* I think I just ... fell in love with you there, Randy. *(Beat. Randy is silent. What has Chad just said? What has Randy just heard? Chad looks at Randy, then suddenly and completely falls down again.)*

RANDY/CHAD. Chad! / Whoa ...

CHAD. *(On the ground.)* Yup. That's what that was. *(Getting up.)* Me falling in love with you ... *(He looks at Randy, and falls down again, suddenly and completely.)*

RANDY. Chad: What are you doin'? Come on, get up! *(Randy gets*



# #7

MARCI. You gotta pay attention.

PHIL. Why do you keep sayin' that?

MARCI. What?

PHIL. That I gotta pay attention?

MARCI. 'Cause you don't.

PHIL. What are you talkin' about? —

MARCI. Phil: Happy Anniversary. (*Beat.*)

PHIL. Huh?

MARCI. Happy Anniversary. That's what I'm talkin' about. (*Beat.*)

PHIL. I'm — . (*Can't quite say he's sorry. Beat. Then, instead of apologizing.*) I knew you were mad.

MARCI. I'm not mad, // Phil!

PHIL. You're mad at me, and pretty soon, outta nowhere, it's gonna get ugly. >

MARCI. Phil, I'm not mad, I'm —

PHIL. I mean, Marce: I'm *sorry*!! I know I missed some things, but I gotta work! I gotta take a double when Chad needs me at the mill! He's helpin' me — *us* — out, you know, // offering me the overtime!

MARCI. I know, I know —

PHIL. No, you *don't* know: Me workin' is for *us*, and the kids, and it's a lot sometimes, and it messes me up!

MARCI. Phil! I'm not mad about you workin'. You gotta work. I understand that. What I don't understand is why I'm lonely, Phil. I got a husband and a coupla great kids. And I'm lonely. (*Beat.*) You just — ... you don't pay attention anymore. You go away. And I don't know where you go, but you go somewhere where you can't pay attention and you forget your son's first hockey game and // you forget Missy's birthday and >

PHIL. Hockey equipment costs money!

MARCI. you forget your *anniversary*! I mean, I brought you here hoping you'd remember about us. But you didn't. And that makes me so mad I don't know what to do anymore ... (*Beat.*)

PHIL. You *lie*.

MARCI. What?

PHIL. You lie so bad.

MARCI. What?

PHIL. You're mad at me. But you don't *tell* me — even when I ask you over and over —

MARCI. Because *you* wouldn't // pay attention if I *did* tell you —

PHIL. No! No! No! Because *you* don't know how to tell me what you feel like about me, so I never know where I am, where I stand! Maybe that's why I go away! So I can know where I am for a second! And you know what, it's lonely there too, where I go. And you sent me there. You went away a long time before I did. And now all's you do is lie.

MARCI. I don't lie!

PHIL. (*Furious.*) Yes you do! You say you're not mad, but you're mad! You say you have fun, but you didn't! You didn't have fun tonight, did you?

MARCI. No.

PHIL. But you kept sayin' you did.

MARCI. I didn't. I didn't have fun, Phil. I don't have fun with you anymore. (*Beat.*) Did you?

PHIL. No. I had a rotten, lousy time. (*Beat.*)

WOMAN. (*Defending herself.*) I mean, I told him I'd have to think about it, that I'd think it over overnight and that I'd be back before the sun came up with an answer. And then I left. Left him standing right ... (*Where the man is standing.*) ... there ... and then ... I didn't make it back with an answer before the sun came up or ... at all.

MAN. That sounds like an answer to me.

WOMAN. No! That wasn't my answer! I just ... went off into the world, and that's not an answer, and I think — ... (*Little beat.*)

MAN. What?

WOMAN. I think he thought I'd say, "Yes."

MAN. Well, a guy's probably not gonna ask a girl that question unless he thinks she's gonna say, "Yes."

WOMAN. I know, and ... I'm afraid he probably waited up all night, hoping for me to come by, and I just want to tell him that I know now that you just can't do a thing like not answer a question like the one he asked me, you can't do that to a person. Especially to someone you love.

MAN. (*Taking this in.*) You loved him?

WOMAN. Well — . I don't know if — . I mean, we were kids. (*She considers. Then, honest and true:*) Yes. I did. I do. (*Beat.*) I feel like I dashed his hopes and dreams.

MAN. (*This speech is not an attack. It's more of a rumination — one that doesn't do much to make the woman feel better.*) Oh, come on. You give yourself too much credit. He was young. That's all you need to get your hopes dashed: Be young. And everybody starts out young, so ... everybody gets their hopes dashed, and besides ... I don't think you really dashed his hopes. 'Cause if you *dash* somebody's hopes — well that's ... kind of a nice way to let 'em down, 'cause it *hurts* ... but it's quick. If you'd have said, "No," that woulda been "dashing his hopes." (*Beat. Maybe a little pointed here.*) But you didn't say, "No." You said nothin'. You just didn't answer him. At all. And that's ... killin' hope the long, slow, painful way, 'cause it's still there just hangin' on, never really goes away. And that's ... kinda like givin' somebody a little less air to breathe every day. Till they die.

WOMAN. (*Taking in this very unhelpful information.*) Yeah ... (*Beat. Then, at a loss:*) Well ... thank you.

MAN. For what?

WOMAN. (*Considers; then, honestly:*) I don't know. (*She starts to leave.*)

MAN. (*After a beat.*) Goodbye, Hope.

HOPE. Goodbye. (*Stopping.*) Agh!, I'm so ... sorry to have bothered you ... It's just, I was all alone out there in the world with no place in it, and I realized what I'd done to him, to Danny, and that with him was my place in the world — ... Wait ... (*Realization.*) You called me Hope. How did you know my name? (*The man gently presents himself — maybe removes his glasses — and the woman recognizes him: He's Daniel Harding.*) Danny!?

DANIEL. Hello, Hope.



DAVE. So, this is, um ... Well, we been ... together now —

RHONDA. (*Scoffing.*) Together?

DAVE. Well —

RHONDA. Together?? What are you *talkin'* about, "together"??

DAVE. Well, we been friends for quite a few years // now, and, well —

RHONDA. You gettin' all girl on me?

DAVE. — *shh!* — and, and, and — ... And, here. (*He presents her with his gift.*)

RHONDA. (*These two don't give each other presents.*) What are you doin' here, bud?

DAVE. Open it.

RHONDA. "Together." Hmm. I don't know about this ...

DAVE. Just open it.

RHONDA. (*She opens the present downstage center. The present — a wrapped canvas painting — must be opened in such a way that the audience cannot see what it is. Once Rhonda opens it, she props the painting up against a crate — still so that the audience can't see it. She has no idea what it is a painting is of. Beat.*) What is it?

DAVE. What do you mean, what is it? Can't you ... see what // it is —

RHONDA. It's a picture ...

DAVE. Yeah ...

RHONDA. A paintin'.

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. Where'd you get this? It looks homemade.

DAVE. What do you mean, it looks homemade?

RHONDA. Looks like someone really painted it.

DAVE. Well, someone really *did* paint it.

RHONDA. (*Realizing.*) Did you paint this?

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. For me?

DAVE. Yeah.

RHONDA. Oh ... (*She has no idea what it is, what to make of it.*) Why?!!

DAVE. Well — ... (*He painted it 'cause he thinks the whole world of her.*)

RHONDA. I mean ... thank you! // Thank you, thanks, yeah.

DAVE. There you go!, that's what people say!, there you go! You're welcome.

RHONDA. (*Sitting in chair, center, staring at her painting.*) So, Dave ... I didn't know you *painted*.

DAVE. Yeah. This is — ... (*Turns his painting right side up — Rhonda propped it up wrong. Then:*) I'm takin' adult ed art. At nights. Merle Haslem over at the high school's teachin' it, it's real good. And this is my version of one of those stare-at-it-until-you-see-the-thing things. Ever seen one of these? Some of the old painters did it with dots. They called it — ... (*Searches, but can't quite come up with "pointillism."*) somethin' ... but I did it with a buncha little blocks of colors, see, and if you just look at the blocks of colors, it's just colors, but if you step back and look at the whole thing, it's not just little blocks of colors, it's a picture of something.

RHONDA. Picture of what?

DAVE. I'm not gonna tell you, you have to figure it out.

RHONDA. Oh, come on, Dave!

DAVE. No, it takes a little time, it can be a little frustrating.

RHONDA. Well, why would you give me somethin' that's gonna frustrate??