**It Was a Setup**

by Kirk Wood Bromley

T - Tim, Charise's husband

C - Charise, Tim's wife

J - Juliet, the girl Tim meets

*Before*

T - It starts with a feeling that something isn't childhood,

which continues to this day.

A sparse sexual settlement of sorts unseen

since it became so hard to say:

"Write, rote, rotten."

There's nothing wrong with making good money;

it's just not possible.

The weasel market

won't allow a free association.

I don't need

no fucking gym. I am a fucking gym.

They've taken the big picture out of

the backstory.

So what is this but pruned decibel wreckage?

I know she's out there somewhere, I'm just not

sure I'm out there somewhere.

Red rover,

red rover, can I please come over

and sit facing the wall in the corner?

This is the holding, denied and felt,

that gives so much to so little effect.

Maybe the mountains.

Maybe not the mountains.

But maybe the puppet theater mountains

are preparing me to be weekend

minutes with her.

I will stylishly tug

at her genital noose, loosening

the head enough to inspire its falling

back into the sky.

I will be her super

yeasty vaulting horse.

I will make her smile

in suffocation.

I will, I will, O

incomplete death sentence one two!

This is

the story of a love that never happened

between two people who never met

in a world where no one ever finds love

without the story of love stepping in

and preventing anything from happening.

Of course, such a love happens all the time.

C- I think of myself as a meadow,

a high meadow, so hard to climb to only

6 or 7 spanish adventurers

have ever called it bonita, and to keep

a tram or helicopter tour from lugging

the masses to its flowered burbling mush,

all those adventurers have sworn themselves,

upon pain of death, to false directions,

an oath every single one has broken,

yet no executions have been meted out

because nobody really cares about some

meadow so hard to get to you lose your shirt

finding it, which might be awesome if

anyone trying to bag it had

a torso worth fucking yourself over.

This doesn't make me anything special;

it just means I'm not for sale in a world

where purchase is the only intercourse.

T - Maybe you can sense I've grown unmetaphoric.

C- What is he searching for with his arm

all the way down her throat?

T- She's choke-singing!

C- Won't you climb to the edge of my anxiety

and build the ruins of our ubiety?

T- I 'd like to apologize for that, but

my rules won't allow it.

C- Pleased to meet you,

most recent personal choice fatality.

Let's remake the map we use

to stay where we are.

T- Is getting wound up

how you unwind?

C- Excuse me?

T- Did I cross the line?

C- The line, you fucking

T- bleep

C- runs between your heels!

T- I like you, whoever you are today.

C- I am the beautiful scrappy maiden

who can invaginate this wildly

self-important swinging metronome,

incite the serpent to bipedalism,

do dances about dances to the human

upchuck, lick the time stamp, all the while

arousing slurvian spiel.

T- You shall I

marry, you shall I divorce, Miss Whatever

You Refuse To See It As, and we shall populate

the governing fistulate with our half-

fascinating dissertation tantrums!

C- I want every word on the tip

of my tongue, that in our nasty

macking you receive the squabble

that heals thru boiling silence.

T- Is that your "I'm not sharing" face?

C- Welcome to

Under Achieving. My name is Her Unused

Ovaries, and I beg you to remember

molestation has its hard-to-beat bargains.

T- The love between a man and a woman

Left without saying why

C- Not in the mood for incorrect

directions.

T- You're just another way to say

"Who's that?"

C- O, so we're on speaking terms now?

T- Raise your hackles if you don't know what hackles are.

C- I'm waiting for someone who already came.

T- M'lady, I am hidden in the noodles, and you

are cutting down on carbohydrates in

an attempt to be ikebana enough

to slip in between my coming and going

of a knowing look between merchant

and cyclone.

C- Are you coming onto me, cuz if you are,

I'm over there.

T- I gotta threaten to jump

so you can walk on by, kissing me

with your lack of concern like a colossal

use of wasted space.

C- Lookin' for a lover that isn't my other

but they're so hard to regurgitate.

T- Someone to applaud my electrosleep

somniloquoys.

C- Someone to enthuse the biology of my

slump.

T- Someone to smile when children pour out

my secret mouth.

C- Someone to seduce me into the blender

by climbing in first.

T- Someone to reaffirm

my belief in fuck you meaning fuck me.

C- Someone to shove me in the opposing

direction.

T- Someone to slam into every morning.

C- Someone to agree with me when I bellow,

"I ate it cuz it made me fucking sick!"

T- Someone to hang herself when my spaceship

goes down.

C- Someone to misfire my emotional

triggers.

T- Someone to appreciate my

booger farm.

C- Someone to teach me to listen

when I'm talking.

T- Someone to ejaculate

a swimming hole in my ears.

C- Someone to cuddle

with me as the dirt hits my coffin.

T- Someone to grow young with.

C- Someone

to puke so it's a party.

T- Someone to congratulate

me for what I didn't do.

C- Someone to think

my sense of humor caused the virus to wane.

T- Someone

to read me a poem I could never write.

C- Someone to suggest the perfect indelible

stain.

T- Someone to introduce me to

questionable characters.

C- Someone to lie on top of me until

I blow away.

T- That's the someone for me.

C- But?

T - Portions of her body,

as I visualize it when occupied,

were revealed to me today: the welJ-branded

aboriginal macules of pseudo news,

fitful caramel sighs, unacceptables

in some sward mound, access points

(inoperable), waterfalls too close to

the road to be considered crucially

scenic, but the thing I didn't know what

to do with was that delicate bag of

tuckered dud grudges. Clearly her sentiments

were with me in my new food-trying time,

but you can't fuck a wall that ain't brokened.

C- There's a discernible euphenic

sensation one gets passing thru the Delaware

Water Gap heading west, a kind of

sonicating intestinal thrum that must somehow

be translatable into a successful dating strategy.

T- Or the sound

of scrapping oak stands.

C- Or what the cop said

to the rainbow.

T- Or how a tiny shove

can shake you to your expired core.

C- It's not that I want to get laid, it's that

I want the sensation of getting laid.

T- I feel like a dying business on a busy block.

C- I'm very mysterious, aren't I?

T- I used to act, but, you know, the rejection.

C- You are America's deficiency in wrath

and conscience.

T- and you are the sexy part

of being beaten to death by someone's breath.

C- I don't mean to sound racist, but it's

pronounced hegemony, like high egg money.

T-- Was your childhood especially difficult?

C- Not after I met someone online.

T- I find the forced retention of facts

tiring when it comes to trying to look

like someone I've never seen.

C- Can you

imagine getting turned on by raping

yourself in a closeted windfall?

T- Maybe. Will any bigshots be there?

C- I'm going to get my ninetieth drink.

T- It's been nice talking to me.

C- May I join me?

T- No.

C- Fine, if you can't love me,

at least do the method.

T- Have you ever seen

such a sight in your life as you being tame?

C- I'm so poor, I love myself.

T- Fly to me, my scrambled egg!

C- Yes, I want you to worship me, and I

expect the same from you, however that

gutterizes the breath of a billion

yogapalloozas.

T- I can't just reach out

and grab your throat cuz there are laws

against making things work.

C- Your shape stands in

for all the teachings of the regretful

scavengers to come.

T- I mean, like, what's the point of being

naked if not everyone can see you?

C- This town smells

of gonorrhea under laissez faire.

T- Haven't we met

before?

C- Yes, but I don't remember it.

T- Squeeze me and I'll burp the answer to

subcellular cackle spackle.

C- I like how

you frown when you smile.

T- We might pop by this afternoon and ask

for enough sugar to kill a large child.

C- I'm a fifth floor

walk-up in handicap heaven.

T- Prejudice will get you everywhere.

C- Every single one of us is sitting on

something that can't breathe.

T- I want my

blanky back.

C- What is it with you and your

high probability of you?

T- I'm trying to get back

to where I've never been: You and your sugar

cereal pre-teen bunkbed, where we played

naked cherokee rockers with nothing

to do but suck nitrous out of the cool

kids.

C- If it gets in my heart, I spit it out.

T- Every door is open and off its house.

C- Now I lay me down to sleep

I pray the lord to sell me cheap.

T- Won't you please let me

enter you from a distance?

C- I love a false sense of accomplishment,

as I must, for I'm thinking of our love.

T- Sing, O flesh bong!

C- Darker nights make for

happier starfuckers

T- Can you hear me thru my mother muffler?

C- Pulse meter, pulse meter, meet me a pulse.

T- Are you coming?

C- No, I'm tied up.

T- That's what I meant, you slip knot!

C- I'd like to repair a port of lust lapse.

I'd like to reprint a past of lopped lists.

I'd like to repeat a pore of lost lumps.

I'd like to report a pair of lost lips.

T- It's always a fence in the middle of a field.

J- You say:

C- There are so many innuendoes

in the setting today.

J- I say,

T- your eyes could kill an iron horse.

J- You say:

C- Do you think when we grow up drugs will still have side affects?

J- I say,

T- do drugs have side affects?

J- You say:

C- I take issue with my irreproachable

desire for your bacterial approach.

J- I say,

T- I just wanna walk into a room full of people I don't know and feel right at home.

J- You say:

C- You're a book I've read but want to keep, won't read it again, unless I do, but something about it

gives me an awkward awesome sense of myself

as the university of the moment.

J- I say,

T- would you mind playing with your hair

so I can feel like that one rakish lad

whose tongue sticks to the frozen pole?

J- You say:

C- Anything for my wingless cricket.

J- I say,

T- if I lived in you, who would my landlord be? And

J- you say:

C- The Captain

of Team Looking Down.

J- I say,

T- so let's hide from each other and never come out.

J- You say:

C- I've got an opening but my cell phone

filled it.

J- I say,

T- so we're done? and

J- you say:

C- Like mudcake in front of a plus model.

J- and you say:

T- I shall be king for a day that never dawns.

I shall leave

my country in the lurch they call victory,

and when you look away, I shall snap your

portrait, cuz nobody gets my shit when

I'm just screaming like I should.

I shall put my poems to sleep then lie next to them

crying in a colossal diminution of the feat

of intimacy's estranging powers.

It's 3 am. I'm alone in the center of the sky

looking down on a midsized mistake

in a state where only felons can vote.

The goof in my ear seems to be sending

signals of a horrible affectation

to which he finds himself incapable,

yet again, of putting pleasing terms.

I turn, I die, I wag, I fart, I scream,

"In my religion, and I have no religion,

there is nothing substantial between us

that cannot be whiskt across the pond

by simply stating what it is we want

without any fear of comedic

recrimination." And he replies,

"Tho I have no type, I can tell you're not mine."

C- My goal

is to drink so many imaginary men

that I throw up, and in my hangover

finally gain the impregnable resolve

to coat my stomach with my mother's

lipstick before I lift my skirt over

my shoulders.

T- I'm sorry to interrupt, but I noticed

you from across the cafe and I couldn't keep

from thinking you might need help.

C- I'm sorry I'm crying.

T- Don't be sorry. Would you like to

talk about it?

C- O, I'm just lonely.

T- Me too. It's hard, isn't it?

C- I just wish there was someone

I could talk to, who would talk to me,

and we could open up to each other

and fuse with each other and then everything

would disappear and then reappear

in the incredible oneness of our

I dunno.

T- That's what I want too.

C- That's all

I want.

T- And someday, I bet you'll find it.

C- You think so?

T- Definitely.

C- You will too, I can tell.

T- Really?

C- Yep.

T- Well, it was nice talking to you.

C- You too.

T- Take care.

C- You too.

T-Who knows the form

love will take now it lives under constant surgery?

C - Careful. She's the Asian

equivalent to the Big Mac.

T- She entered me last night. It was a rental

violation. She isn't real, but she's

extremely welJ-versed in reality.

In the movie in my dick, she's 16,

but in the dicks that are in the movie,

she's twice half that. I prefer

her skinny vision of herself.

She's mine now, tho she belongs

to everyone else. History called her

a goddess, but history doesn't wear the pants

in this nudist arctic diorama.

C- My formula is evident in my

formula.

T- Perk it up, girlfriend. You just

have to get drunk enough to crash into

a house fully believing it will get you

pregnant.

C - I fall in love when the wind blows,

and my love is scattered by the wind.

T- Bring her in. We've many uses for her.

She'll dust, replace the toilet twice daily,

round up all my errant earplugs, fuck

the mailman with his endogenous dogspray,

but whether she or ye shall actually gain

an intuition of your plush arrangements

is something I'd prefer not to saddle my

favorite band with. I am in love with her,

making her conditional residence in me

an embarrassment quite thrilling to admit to.

Dear God, please let her never stop crying.

C- The point is to be close while moving.

T- I wish she wasn't just made out of light,

elegantly composed by mysteriously

motivated sales teams of halfway there

suggestionists.

She's so fucking

adorable I wanna shit in her poddy mouth

and yell, "Dad, come wipe me!"

I'd like to sign off on her release from me

but who wants to catch a rocket in

his baby teeth?

C- Oo! Me! Me!

T- Who are you

and why are you pretending to be so needy?

C- You are the brilliant American

version of waiting in line to be told

what to like.

T- I've gathered

all my photos into a tiny chip in my eye

so now when I go out I can stay in.

C - How's that working for you, Mopey?

T- I shall o'errule

you some day with a difference you do not

yet know is governing your indifference.

C- We are the love believers.

T- We never blink in the candy storm.

C- When we die, we don't

rot, we just drink more juice until our

fluidly exchanged carapace of minty

mutton heals the frayed yarn of the hibernating

dean who declared loyalty to sickness.

T- Are you doing

anything tonight other than coming up with

something you're doing tonight to avoid

doing something with me?

C- Maybe that's it.

We're just not meant to be on stage at this

stage. I mean, who can make brain jelly love

with all this I'm-okay coughing, late-comers

flying in on broken glass atv's,

critics asleep in their coke spoons, the psychotic

red-headed midget upstairs screaming

our lines thru the floor half a second before

we blow them, windows onto the fashion

dumpster, remnants of the prior hit peeking

thru our blacks; why did we ever expect

this would change domestic policy to be

more in-line with our abrupt ragamuffin

revelations?

T- The girl who just served me

my veggie wrap has got to be no older

than my wedding rash, but I still wanna

dunk my liver in her silver mine slag.

C- Now I get it. We actually are together.

T- Ten billion fucking losers can't be wrong.

C- We've broken the speed barrier standing

our ground.

T- We make love by letting the help

go.

C- Our relationship is as old as charging

for fake levitation.

T- We've just let it

fall into the middle of the off-ramp.

C- We've taken it for granted by some

defunct foundation so drunk on dis-

empowerment it thinks last night is

the next big thing, so we live on top of each

other, which, while physically impossible,

is real enough to boost our withdrawal symptoms.

T- You don't like how messy I am, and I

don't like how you think you're me in some

crew so disgruntled by the recent union

agreement they sweep the actors off their feet.

C- We measure our marriage in dog years

and our only time together is spent

lobbying seniors against strange signs of

canine longevity.

T- No, we don't speak

the same language, but between us we

can yell in 23.

C- You haven't a clue

in my appetizing murder, but you know

the smell is there, and you like it, and that

fucks with your head when you're not fucking

your head.

T- Cuz, baby, ever since you lost your

passive feminine militancy,

you've diarized a life of impeccable

distribution, and now what do you have?

Zoos so expensive not even the animals

can get in.

C- Wouldn't it be nice to speak like I

want you to?

*During*

T- When I met Juliet, she was dancing

In a relocution of the first eruption

Currently considered childish enough

To exhilarate the diminishment

Of sleeping with your predator

Into generationally deadening

Insignias of unperformable

Heroism, for if anything ours

Was the era of verus ab absurdo.

And with her first twitch, I fell to the floor.

Hers was a form one could

Swim in, had one not given up swimming

In such forms due to the downside

Of swimmer’s ear bringing with it all manner

Of unechoing reverberations,

A form she wielded like pixy wind

Startling some next-gen application

Into cross-format gush, a form that danced

Thru my mind like the ocean in a flag,

Motion so wedded to motive it meant

Nothing when they fought. O how she shone

With the oscillance of all unsettled suns.

So lustrous her transparency, looking

Thru her you saw her.

God, she

Is your daughter, and you have given up

On her curfew, dropping the hang-tongue

World into her ultraviolet scotoma,

As she slimes light. Gorgeous, gorgeous, gorgeous,

She so supple sharp, she sprang from her pants

Smoked rebirth over the paralyzed

Spasming neophilic masses,

Like nothing ever happened without her.

She is what we eat when we sleep.

Every man of the house dumpt his smoothie

Into her shoes, hoping to go as her

To his execution. She was what

Foresight had evolved into.

To say she was grounded implies a ground

She hasn’t yet become.

This is the sex of the storm.

She is a message to me from my children

Stationed on some mutagenic capsule

Saying, “Father, we are flagging you down,

For she is our desired emergency.”

Her lips played off each other like two slides

End to end, faux-memes crashing in blossom

Extemporaneous primitivity

That swisht like tomorrow’s wagging tail,

Chiming, “When I grow up, I’m going

To be a teenager.”

Following

Juliet’s performance, the cast and kind

Went to a bar, and as I had workt with

The producer in pornography

And plagiarism, I was invited

In gest. We started the night at opposite

Ends of a long table, and as I had

No hope of meeting her, I proceeded

To assault my neighbors with bragging

Disguised as curiosity, until

I heard my name being called from the other

Version of the room. It was the producer.

C- “There’s someone I want you to meet. I’ve been

Telling her all about you, telling everyone

How important you might someday be.”

T- And so it was that I met Juliet.

After our introduction, she rose and walkt

Directly to where I stood an unsafe

Distance from the table, and looking so

Deeply into my eyes our spines rubbed toes,

She whispered like space junk recently

Upgraded to possible flying baby:

J- They say you’re a great [insert profession].

T- I have been known to grate on those who lack

Soft behind their shield, but the only greatness

In me is my great desire to serve

The greatness in you.

J- So you enjoyed

The performance?

T- You mean all that stuff

Happening around you?

J- No, I mean

All that stuff happening inside me.

T- That was as far from performance as I

From feeling capable of commenting

On what’s inside you yet.

J- Are you one of those

Who’s against theater in the theater?

T- I’m against what in the theater keeps

Theater from being more than theater.

J- Demands that usually end in divorce.

T- I guess I believe the action valued

By theater is now most importantly

Depicted as the drive to escape theater.

I mean, what else are you doing when you

Base what you’ll become on what I’ve been?

J- I am filling my body with thoughts I love.

T- Yes, and why do that? What is it

About you that makes you feel genuine

Doing what is meant for everyone?

J- My desire to make the general

Personal is not only self-creating,

But feels an important aptitude

To defuse, to share, to educate in.

T- How do you get to that place where you feel

Like you’re not there? Do you feign a wild

Reception? Do you pity the eye

That loathes you? I mean, what flavor are you

On stage?

J-You’re in my mind; you tell me.

T- The taste of my fingers in the face of fear.

J- Then why do you seem so out of work?

T- I need your body.

J- I need

Your information.

T- Where are you going

When you look at me?

J- I am too full of you

To speak for myself.

T- We measure each other,

So we are infinite.

J- You have dark circles

Under your mouth.

T- That is your wilderness

Of waiting.

J- But where am I in all this worship?

T- I see no solution behind my absorption

Into you.

J- You cast me and I hook him

In the mouth, and he says what a lovely rock.

I think I will eat it, but no, it is

My elbow, and I am broken by my will

To behave. How will this all end? Neverish,

As always. Place a lamp above the bed,

As we may choose in what recess we gaze

Against the too parallel day that shoots

The fountain of youth into our eyes

Before we’ve learned to close them with a simple

Line about drowning in a dry hump while

Everyone’s looking.

T- I don’t doubt you,

And there’s the crazy pitfall we enact

Every night by tripping up in a state

Of admirable gullibility.

J- Nothing is harder than what we do, except

Not doing what we do.

T- The cast and crew spilled into the street,

And by acting like I had nowhere to go,

I ended up alone with Juliet.

We each pulled out a cigarette and smoked,

The energy between us lighter, both

Of us, I assumed, wrapped in the heavy

Shroud of incertainty on the next step

In our standing still dance. I askt her which way

She was headed, and offered to see her home.

She was staying across town, and a journey

Across Central Park at night was deemed

The quickest route. She was nervous at the thought,

And I promised her she would be safe in

My presence, a promise I half meant to keep.

This seemingly comforted her, which made me

Feel very, very good about things.

We spoke more as we strolled thru the dark park,

Totally alone, everything slightly wet,

Occasionally glimpsing each other

In yellow lamp glow, then disappearing

Into a more viscous blank, we smoked, laught,

And let the conversation roll across us.

we talked about acting, the german word for trying

To get laid, stood close, spoke rapidly,

Gesticulated sharply, locking eyes,

Interrupting and being glad to be so,

Laughing, striving, wondering together,

Thrusting huge electrical jolts

Of empathetic soul vigor directly into

Each other’s chests, synchronized mouth

Swimming, touch foregone but had, swaying,

Swinging, lunging and not landing, drinking

Smells, eating sights, thrashing in language,

Easy as trees, bright, palpitating, laser thin

Flesh volleys slamming repeatedly

Into our dark twisted gawping word mist,

staring, smiling, great vaguenesses

Clouding us with intense sexual shine.

We finally emerged from the park, and came

To her building, the very one before which

Lennon had been shot, or so I thought.

We embraced, she kisst me on the cheek,

And before she went inside I let her know

I’d be available Thursday or Friday, and that

I had a show on Saturday I’d love

Her to see.

T- She said

J- that’s great,

T- She said

J- I’ll be there,

T- she said

J- I’ll get the info from your friend,

T- She said

J- it was wonderful to meet you,

T- she said

J- I look forward to seeing you again,

T- and then she disappeared.

I walkt

To the subway, and as I stood above

The stairs, harsh light belching from the earth

Like a radioactive geyser

Of rapid sitting, I thought, she likes me.

Does she like me? She’s got to like me.

Why would she spend so much time talking

To me if she didn’t like me? Why would she

Have let me walk her home if she didn’t

Like me? Why would she have stared at me

Like that if she didn’t like me? No one

Stares at someone like that unless they’re thinking

Something inappropriate to say

Too soon, you know, something like I like you.

She did those things, and why would she do

Those things unless she liked me? She likes me.

She’s got to like me. There was an energy

Between us. It meant something. It was unique.

This doesn’t happen all the time. There’s just

No way she’d act like that unless she was

Feeling like that. Like she liked me. She must

Like me. She’s just got to like me. She likes me.

The train ride took 2 1/2 hours.

It was 5 am when I got to my door.

I got undresst, laid in bed, my wife

Sleeping soundly beside me,

and I reacht for my intangible Juliet.

J- You’re smiling.

T- It’s my allergy to you.

J- Such a brilliant man.

T- You shine, I reflect.

J- You made me feel alive tonight for the

First time since the birth I can’t remember.

T- I feel as if I were born of you.

J- A second life, and we give life to all.

T- Touch your face.

J- Only if you assume me

True enough to nature to accept.

T- You’re so focused.

J- A potential

I never knew I had.

T- I am a starfish

Clinging to a cliff.

J- The sea shall rip you

Free.

T- A reunion, self to self, time to light,

Was to can, thru you, tangled in your hair,

Swimming thru your translucent skin,

As you lie on top of me, I become

Weightless, put wings to my words,

Fallen into your esker, sinking, rose

Above my body. I love your lips

Because they spray delicious cookies.

Toes tangled, eyes rubbing, our skins

Won’t keep it down. Your hair is growing

Into my head, I’ve got a chalet in your pelvis,

Nipples keep getting in my throat,

We’ve lockt elbows in my mouth (around the moon)

Pieces of your heart are under my nails,

Tummies are touching, digest in my head,

Whose ankle nose is this? I think I

Just kisst my ass, I’m on my back

And I can see you beneath me, we’re swapping

Drives, we are the mist making moon,

I like it in your dream, we kiss, we hump,

we melt, we start,

T/C - and we are Juliet.

*After*

T- I never saw her again.

I’d invited her to my show, Me, but

She showed me. I tried to contact her,

But nothing. I never saw her again.

It took me

About six months to get there, but I’ve finally

Come to accept she didn’t like me.

I mean, sure, she liked me well enough, but

She didn’t really like me well enough.

Girl like that, you know, she walks in

Pretty intense circles, big circles,

Like only comes back around once every

3.62 million years type circles,

Maybe she thought

I was a pretentious prick. Maybe I am

A pretentious prick. I do tell myself

All the time, you’re a pretentious prick,

But I always thought it was something

No one else noticed.

For me she was a star, and when

I saw her the lid poppt off the world

And a trillion little earth friendly plastic

Wedding cake figurines swirled out

And danced thru my brain and it seemed to me

Like the ultimate coupling, like she was

Born to bear my bumble babes, but for her

It was just one more hot night at a bar.

Just another conversation, another

Chance to act, just another chance to be

Juliet.

The thought of this

World where there are Juliets and

Those that actually get to taste them,

The thought that this world exists without me

Both tempts and revolts me.

It tempts me because I want in

And it revolts me because I know

That were I in, what I felt with Juliet

Would become mundane, like a drug

That’s lost its jellyroll. Then again,

Fuck that. I want in. I want it all

The time, yet none of this demeans her.

Juliet will do what Juliet will do.

C- I've never known what to answer,

even when I was very young, when askt,

"What's your favorite color?" I mean,

on the basis of what am I to make

such an assessment? How each color

makes me feel? But how do I arrive at

that sensation? Do I actually trust

myself to know myself? Do I actually

feel my relationship with color

to be something I can understand? If all

these colors make me feel all these different

things, don't they cancel each other out,

leaving me, in effect, feeling nothing,

or feeling a plethora of things?

J- What does plethora mean again?

C- I think it means too much.

T- No, it means too little.

C- Yeah, same thing.

T- Not really.

J- Yeah, same thing.

C- What should we talk about?

T- What is there to talk about?

C- Before we can figure out

what there is to talk about, we've got to

figure out what there is.

T- What is there?

C- My first reaction to that question is

that great painting is an affront to me.

J- What?

C- I'm sick today.

I'm told that makes this a sick day, which makes

this your day in the annals of oracy,

T- So I ask you, mule, what's wrong with my work?

Why do people leave just as I start

to spray the room with thrilling infection?

C- Am I too much?

T- Too little?

C- Too lush?

T- Too sparse?

C- Too raw?

T- Too polisht?

C- Am I

underdone?

T- Overdone?

C- Am I pretentious?

T- Am I feckless?

C- Am I too crude?

T- Too neat?

C- Inevitably, it's because I'm ugly.

Were I beautiful, no one would leave me.

Yet, of what is my ugliness constituted?

T- I think people find me angry.

C- Unclear.

T- Problematic.

C- Discomforting.

T- And something

about me throws them back on themselves.

C- And they don't like that, cuz they're heavy,

and it hurts to have something heavy thrown

onto your back.

T- I think people can tell

I'm talking to myself when I'm talking to them,

but of course I'm not alone.

C- Actually,

I am alone

T- So being with me is

lonely.

C- I don't believe in character anymore.

I don't believe what we call a person

with a personality is what a

person really is. I believe we're all

basically the same thing, it's just that thing

is hidden beneath varying degrees

of unwillingness to be down with it.

What is this thing and why our unwillingness

toward it?

T- I don't know, and I know this is

the easy way out, but I want out, so

doesn't it make sense I'd take the easy way?

Why should I take the hard way? Or rather,

Why do you want me to take the hard way?

What are you, some kind of armed accountant?

C- Winds are heavy

across nine forms of not quite getting there,

T- You have got to contact me!

I have something important to put on

your head (hint: sexy negligence).

C- It's just

so funny how everything happens in

sequences that don't include any of

the middle terms we assume found their way

into proclivity thru our flitting

measurements.

T- Think of that. Flitting

measurements. What will they fail to think

of next?

C- I'm good, but I'm not good for you.

T- They said our poetry didn't push

the story forward, so we pusht the story

aside, and now all we have is the thought

of letting folks in for free, which they

won't let me do, cuz "free says bad," or so

they say, those that one must pay to say

what one will pay for dearly once it's said.

C- Here's a thought:

Your spaceship is caught in a giant

vortex, and you're swirling toward a tiny

hole. You've got three minutes to do something,

or you'll be smoosht to the size of my prospects.

Engines are down, Captain's got a hearing problem,

the crew can't take their lips off the flashback,

two minutes. Gimme a call. Oops, sorry.

I'm busy getting my nails done. The ones

you pounded into my maven organ.

T- Sorry, darling. Since you, I don't do

positive.

J- Who said,

C- Genius is drudgery.

J- Who said,

T- The future belongs to dense.

J- Who said,

C- Our clothes are killing us.

J- Who said,

T- Birth always comes too early.

J- Who said,

C- Misinformation breeds progress.

J- Who said,

T- We but rehearse our exit.

J- Who said,

C- I left my faith in that rock.

J- Who said,

T- Empty seats are for lovers.

C- Where I'm from, they shoot cats like you for doing what they do best.

T- See, the emptiness you bring to the room

fucks me chocolate chip pancake style,

C- so pass the warm towelette before I hope

for more bricks to the brow.

T- This is the healing you started, then

abandoned mid-injection, leaving me

unable to roll over in my urn

lest I crush my belief you weren't above

the law of averages.

C- I think you're shy to a fault, and I think

I've fallen into that fault, and I think

that fault is closing up, and I think

I'm being presst into admitting

it's my fault, but I don't admit it,

cuz it's true, and girls much prefer big lies

to kind gestures.

T- Welcome to the

one-stop argument metropolis.

C- What we like about story

is that things come back around, giving us

the illusion that things come back around,

but you never came back around, and there's

a story there somewhere, tho it's likely

to have been drained and converted into

a motorcycle race.

T- It's the story

of a story not taking place, which is

the only story I know, other than

that one about the 6 zillion victors

and the three girls dainty enough to dissolve

into their own hums.

C - Is this that new kind

of conversation where words fear to tread?

T- The ways in which we know each other

have nothing to do with what we are.

What we are is not knowable.

C- It is tangible, yet never toucht.

T- We'll never touch.

C- Stop saying we when you mean not you.

T- I sit and think pennyroyal we.

C- Clean up before yourself.

T- Nothing will always come between us.

C- So where does that leave us?

T- It leaves us right here, and it

never returns.

C- Or, rather, it does, but we

don't recognize it cuz it's still the same,

and now it's us.

T- Heavy bad buzz, heavy bad buzz.

C- You're talking to yourself

again.

T- I'm my only captive audience.

C- Not being with you is like being with me.

T- It's like counting your change while being

buried alive.

C- We are gathered here today, and everything else is Juliet.

T- If only i could drop by once,

I promise to make it feel like I'm

your only option for seeing more of me.

C- Look, the fact that this is going nowhere

is great for me, cuz that's right where I am.

T- Okay, so you're non-responsive. But how can you possibly

reject my advances if you refuse to receive them?

J- You were never a very warm rug.

C- Fuck, I drink too much schizophrenic spit.

T- I don't believe in character anymore.

I believe character is a psychosis

that's killing us, depriving us of all we

need, shunting our minds into dead-end

obsessions, both ludic and nociceptive,

which merely perpetuate a growth cycle

in the solutions we need problems to,

so we generate more problems, our one

renewable resource that is not only

never new but mocks the very idea

of resource in the sense of being

something outside of us that revives us,

because we are not being revived

by the problems that fund our story wars;

we are being stabbed into our own eyes.

And I don't believe in Juliet anymore.

Sure, everyone gets lucky now and then,

but living for the exception is dying

Every day. May I put you on hold?

80 years later, click. And throughout it all

you suffer that inane music that's supposed

to assure you someone's still there, but

no one's there. The system is on you.

C- Isn't "not getting any" sticking to the subject?

T- I thought so too, until I thought so.

C- I'm a dragonfly taped to a dead duck.

T- Everyone is so good these days at being

funny and weird and approved; well, I've got

something to share with the group: I prefer

women written by men.

C- I prefer the spotlight up my bung.

T- Music coming from the bars on a hot

summer night, laughter, cheers, and I

realize joy is possible as long as I'm

not there.

C- You stuck me in the glasswares jungle,

you broken panic button.

T- I want you screaming naked on my

flatware, so I can shriek, "This steak stinks,

and I love it!"

C- I say you meet under the park.

T- Can I see the manager?

C- This meal is rightly irked.

T- She should have called me weeks ago. Am I

out of range?

C- Fire in the fountain!

T- She says I’m going insane, but where is sane and how do I get in?

J- Hey, loser. Got a light?

T- I'm not getting paid to do this. I'm an

unfilled billboard for turning your headspace

into an unfilled billboard because because...

C- It's like that time you were everywhere and

nothing happened.

T- I can feel you thinking of me with whatever part

one uses when one is thinking only

of one's self.

C- Sit down.

T- There are no good seats.

C- Ideally,

I need to talk to you, free of ideals.

T- Just let me repeat one thing before

you go: you never came.

C - Sex doesn't sell until it starts to scab.

T- That drink I bought you? I hope it turns to piss.

C- O, so you're the end of the world? Yeah, well,

I've seen worse when acting like a child.

T- This is a dream

that's eaten its way out of my head

and now it's too full to move.

C- You said my way or the highway,

so I took my way, and it was the highway,

so here I am, alone in Ohio.

T- In what sense are you qualified to give

your opinion?

C- I'm always taking nine

or two intelligence tests without even

knowing it.

T- Yes! I'm high again!

J- Hi!

C- There's art in here somewhere, due to a defect

in workmanship.

T- Why am I having such a hard time finding

someone to knit me a cocksock out of

their own skin.

C- O, goody. Semen on the breeze.

T- It's my hips, isn't it? My hips are too womanly.

Well, that's what happens to a guy after

he gives birth to 28 anticlimaxes.

He fills out.

C- He's not sure what he fills out,

but it gets him a gig scraping himself

off her heels.

T- I'm pretty good looking

C- if you don't look.

T- I gave you everything I had, save for

my ability to hold your interest.

C- Maybe I'll just move back to the heartland.

Then, getting sick will be getting better.

People will run across the street just to get

a more panoramic view of my

tired eyes.

T- I just wish you were here

in this room so I could impress you

with my floorplans for fame.

C - All I think about now is what

my performance art piece will be like once

I figure out what it is.

T- My genitals are like

a giant box of crayons - unused most of

the time, and when it is, little hands

mess it up, but the job offers pour in.

C - I think I just had a genetically

modified orgasm.

T - Clearly

absorbing my bruise art is like eating

too much pizza right after your parachute

failed to open.

C- It would be nice to meet someone like you,

or you, but I'd take like you, which might be

more like you than you, since you don't like me,

and as far as I can't see, I am you,

cuz you're all I've got and I ain't got you.

T- Babe.

C- Let's recapture what we never had,

my $3000/hour intuitionist.

T- Maybe I'm just too long. Maybe if I were

3 1/2, 2 1/2 minutes even, people would walk away saying,

"You've got to see that. It's so barely there."

I'd be a viral hit, and everyone would get sick with me.

C- Let us go then, you and I, our separate ways.

J- So much talking, so little talking.

T- I walk into a bar in a western.

It's a one-horse town too poor to keep horses.

Some dead lookin' hombre in the corner

plays the part. Hizzoner is asleep

on a whore's bill, the same whore, I'magine,

what tries to catch my attention by

standing up in her crib and drooling down

her rifle hole. Three god-scaring bad

asses strafe me with scowls as I approach

the keeper, a greasy chip of a half-man

with massive forearms and a tiny head.

You seen this girl? I say, holding up

a photo of Juliet's face super-

imposed onto an artist's rendering

of Cortez dropping a loaf on Tobasco.

C- You think if I seen that girl I'd be standing

here without that girl?

T- A simple yes or no

will do, friend.

C- Allright, friend. Yes or no.

T- I grab him by the gobs and lay him gently

on the ceiling. Look here, Mr. Supreme

Individual. I just lost my honey,

and I'm lookin for a hive to stick my dick in,

so if you want your slurb to be that hive,

I am more than happy to get even with

someone who's never dun nuthin to me

by taking out my eyes and thinking you're

the Princess of Misplaced Formaldehyde

Fishing, so I suggest you come to my

meeting of minds ready to cave like any

black snow leopard should, or I will mind

your meat, and trust me, friend, you will mind.

C- If I'd a known you were so sensitive

on the topic, friend, I'd a never been

so, how shall we say, helical with my words,

but from hereonout you can count on nuthin

but my whole-hearted willingness t'impugn

myself before a self-appointed jury.

T- I appreciate it, friend. I truly do.

C- So, what can I do ya for, friend?

T- I need you to help me pull my balls off

the marshmallow stick.

C- How long they been on there?

T- How you like em?

C- White on the outside,

black on the in.

T- This is America,

ain't it?

C- No, sir. America done

gone outta business; employee theft.

This here's feudal Japan, but with a much

depleted costume budget and zero sense

for hygiene or macrobiotic cooking.

T- Then let me put it this way, Mifune:

(kono onna no kodomo ni aitta ka?]

C- Now that you put it

that way, I reckon what maybe I have

seen that girl.

T- What'll it cost me t'improve

your memory?

C- Only 15%

and a rewrite for the Big Bad Wolf.

T- You clearly have no idea how badly

I wanna hang my holster round your ears.

C- Do you?

T- That depends on where you fall in the feud

between those who believe in the power

of words and those who believe what they say.

C- Well, I believe in the power of keepin

my eyes on the floor, but the other day

I just had to look up when I snifft

the sweetest lady smell this here ole pug

had ever had the pleasure of snortin,

and I do believe I saw that very face

starin at me as pretty as the sight

of St. Louis to a visiting team.

T- And?

C- And I said, "May I help you, missus?"

T- And?

C- And she said,

J- "A shot of water, please."

T- A shot of water, please?

C- That's what I thought!

Strangest funkin request I ever heard.

Can you imagine havin the purse of peace

to stroll into some ritzy outhouse like this

and calmly purr,

J- "A shot of water, please."

T- She's a mighty unique creature.

C- Ain't we all?

T- So, wudja do?

C- I said, "Sorry, missus,

but I'm gonna have to see some ID."

T- You carded her for a shot of water?

C- Only so I could take down her vitals

and suck on em next time I had a bath.

T- We're getting off topic.

C- So take us back.

T- What was her name?

J- Got No Clapper.

T- Got No Clapper?

C- That's what her ID said - Got No Clapper.

Musta been one a them paleface squaws.

T- Are you sure it didn't say Juliet?

C- Well, now, come to think on it, it coulda,

but you know me.

T- No, I don't.

C- I can't read!

T- Is this the woman we're talking about?

Think hard, and answer true, or I'll teach you

to read your own coroner's report.

C- As sure as I'm a worthless piece a splunk,

that is the woman we're talkin about.

T- Did you get her a shot of water?

C- Yessa did.

T- Did she drink it?

C- Yes, she did.

T- And then?

J- And then she uppt and went.

T- Which way did she go?

C- See, that's the weird part.

T- I thought this was the weird part.

C- O, no. This is the part folks find familiar

cuz we're sharing useless information.

T- So, which way did she go?

C- She didn't go any which way, really.

T- How does someone not go any which way?

C- She walkt thru them doors and just disappeared.

T- Yeah, I know the feeling.

C- Will that be all,

or can I get you a shot of water?

T- One more thing - was she alone?

C- By the looks

a the fella she's with, I'd say yep.

T- Could you describe this fella without hurtin

my feelings?

C- Nope.

T- I thank you for your lack

of specificity.

C- Anytime, friend.

T- I leave the bar, and walk into the Exxon

Desert Wilderness Consortium.

I can smell Juliet in the bedrock.

In the cold heat, my mind

starts playing tricks on me, those mean kinds

of tricks like brothers too close in age

play on each other, always resulting

in someone losing a leg or running

thru a glass door and severing the vein

that carries sympathy to the knuckles.

Juliet's face pops up in some cobwebs

wooft between two saguaros, their 13 arms

waving at me like,

C- "Hey, dude, over here.

Wanna rise above it? Climb a cactus."

T- A pack of burros, driven by a desire

to die, clamor around a salt lick

on a rusty barbed wire fence, and I

see Juliet in her motley herding skirt

giving them tender slaps on the backside

with my toothbrush, saying,

C- "Come on, now,

too much salt enlarges the heart,

and a small heart is a happy ass."

T- A sandstone outcropping assumes the shape

of Juliet sitting with her knees

in her hands, head down, like a hiker lockt

between a rushing grizzly and six vultures.

J- What's a girl to do when playing dead

is the only way to live?

C- Yet really

living is the quickest way to die?

T- I should have taken that shot of water,

cuz I'm starting to flake. I feel like

a 3 year old pinned under the seat

of a carnival ride, and the carnival

is closed, and everyone's gone home, and my screams

merely accentuate the cackling racket

belching from the old school Spook-o-rama,

which no one's been able to figure out

how to turn off for years, so it's degraded

to a shrill sonic blur of electrical

feedback with nothing to feed on but

feedback, so I break my neck trying to eat

the cotton candy in my backpocket.

Maybe this is love. Maybe this is

9 actors in a room doing a cold

reading of a wordless play written

by a wooden duck. Either way it's

neither way, cuz I'm lying face down

in the scorching sand, kissing this frigid earth

goodbye, for which I fully expect

an harassment charge to be droppt

decorously into my airy grave.

All the women in my genetic headwound

are standing over me squabbling about

who should pick me up and skin me for shoes.

I say, "Mom?" and they all answer,

J/C- "Daughter?"

T- "Why doesn't Juliet like me?" and after

a bout of laughter that could scrape the paint

off a Pollock model, my mothers retort:

J/C - "Because you didn't make her,"

T- and with that

I breathe my last fistful of exhaust

and pass into a poster sitting in

a discount bin in a Kinshasa print shop.

It's a picture of a kitten clinging

to a string with a look of terror

and playfulness in its eyes. Beneath

the picture is supposed to be a pithy

caption meant to motivate Congolese

laborers to give more of themselves, but the

caption has been rippt off; hence the discount.

THE END

First produced in 2010 at The Home Of in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

Timothy Fannon as Tim

Charise Greene as Charise

Lucy Stack as Juliet

Directed by Kirk Wood Bromley

Choreography by Leah Schrager

Music by Ivan Khilko

Costumes by Anna Mains

Stage management by Bettina Warshaw