

Writing Sample

SNAPSHOT

A Play in One Act

by

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SNAPSHOT was produced as an Actors Workshop of Long Island Production in residence at Dowling College and directed by John Monteleone, with the following cast:

WOMAN Pam Zweibel
MAN Mark Ingrassia
CHILD Linda Holleran

CHARACTERS

WOMAN
MAN
CHILD (MALE OR FEMALE)

THE TIME

The present.

THE SCENE

The play takes place in the memory of Child. All props are mimed except the large wind-up feet, and the wind-up Teddy Bear.

THE SET

An empty space. Black boxes to sit on. Black floor. Black vast walls. A feeling of eternity. An actual wheelchair for WOMAN is suggested as it makes an important visual statement about her nearing death.

EXCERPT 1

AT RISE:

A blue spot comes up on a bare stage left. Child, about twenty five to thirty five years old, enters and slowly walks into the spot of light. Child looks at the space around him, and then speaks to the audience.

CHILD

It's like a mirror. You see yourself in them. You see yourself tomorrow. You see your mortality in theirs. It becomes one thing. One whole, on-going thing. Nothings separate. Though you try to separate. And you feel their fear. Their passion. Their frustration. Their inner beings. Their whole lives. Hidden behind their eyes. Trying to avoid the inevitable.

As Child turns their head, a blue spot of light reveals a Woman seventy five years old, sitting in a wheel chair. She wears a white bath cap, blue robe, oversized slippers and dark sunglasses. There is a sense of hiding out in her. She simply sits, looking out.

CHILD (CONT'D)

You try not to think about it. You try not to say it. You try to forget. But it creeps back in, like a maggot. It stares you in the face. Hangs over you. It won't let go.

WOMAN

(to MAN who is off stage left)

I REMEMBER NOW. HUN?!

(no answer)

I remember it all. Right from the beginning. Strait back to the first day I knew. It was then. Back then. What I remembered. Just now. Don't go accusing me of not being able to remember. Don't go on saying I'm losing my memories. They're there. Steady as a heartbeat. Right inside my head. Here.

(points to her head)

Mine. All mine. Not yours or anybody's.

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Mine. I earned it. I lived.

And it's all right here. Even if my toes have been chopped off and I can't walk so good anymore. I can remember. DID YOU HEAR WHAT I SAID? HUN?! DID YOU HEAR WHAT I JUST SAID?

MAN

(offstage)

YEAH I HEARD I HEARD.

WOMAN

What time is it?

MAN

TIME TO DIE.

WOMAN

WHAT?

MAN

YOU HEARD ME.

WOMAN

What?

MAN

I SAID YOU HEARD ME.

WOMAN

COME IN HERE FOR GOD'S SAKE AND STOP TORTURING ME.

MAN

(poking his head in,
very concerned)

Are you alright?

Woman coughs.

MAN (CONT'D)

HUN?

Woman coughs louder.

MAN (CONT'D)

I can't come in there now I'm listening to tapes.

WOMAN

To hell with the tapes.

MAN

What?

WOMAN

I said "TO HELL WITH THE TAPES".
COME SIT.

MAN

What do you mean to hell with the
tapes? How can you say a thing like
that? It's us.

WOMAN

Bring me my feet.

MAN

Not now.

WOMAN

I want my feet.

Opera music comes on, a Woman singing - its beautiful.

She pulls out a teddy bear from the wheel chair seat. Winds
it and holds it up to her making it dance. It speaks to her
when she releases the winding key.

TEDDY BEAR

MMMMwhaaaa I'm your friend. We'll
always be together. Right up to the
last moment.

WOMAN

(to the bear)

I love you. I love you.

(throws a kiss winding
up the bear)

MAN brings out THE FEET. A large
pair of white shoes, that when wound,
and set on the floor, walk across
the stage. MAN and WOMAN watch the
feet as they cross to the center of
the stage, and stop.

Tableau on the feet.

EXCERPT 2

Child rises, moves off and watches his aged parents transform through a lifetime of quick snapshots. Each living moment ends in a snapshot pose and a flash ends the moment frozen in time.

Flash.

Man on back, infant.

Flash.

Woman on back, infant.

Flash.

Man making inaudible sounds.

Flash.

Woman making inaudible sounds.

Flash.

Man on fours trying to stand.

Flash.

Woman on all fours trying to stand.

Flash.

Man walking wobbling.

Flash.

Woman walking wobbling.

Flash.

Man running and jumping like a Child.

Flash.

Woman running and jumping like a Child.

Flash.

MAN
(making machine gun
sounds)
Gotchya!
(machine gun sounds)
You're dead. Ugh! YOU GOT ME!
(machine gun sounds)
Flash.

WOMAN
SEE MY DOLLY? I'm gonna be a Princess
when I grow up.

Flash.

MAN
I'm gonna be a FIREMAN!

Flash.

WOMAN
NURSE!

Flash.

MAN
YOUR IT!

Flash.

WOMAN
GOTCHYA GOTCHYA!

Flash.

MAN
Girls...yuk.

Flash.

WOMAN
Yuk.

Flash.

MAN
Look at that beautiful...Wow...Hey
guys? Guys? Let's go...

Flash.

WOMAN
Is that all you want from me?

Flash.

MAN

We won the game, Man. We won, we're the champs.

Flash.

WOMAN

Please dad? Please let me go with him?

Flash.

MAN

I don't feel the same way you do that's all, I'm sorry.

Flash.

WOMAN

I love you. How can you say you don't love me.

Flash.

MAN

We lost. Shit. Life sucks.

Flash.

WOMAN

(to mother in coffin)

Mom. I love you. You look proud...It wasn't a bad life.

Flash.

This sequence continues going through their lives, each changing roles, until old, and in the present, Woman sits in the chair, puts on sunglasses, picks up teddy, Man wobbles, then looks at her again, worried.

EXCERPT 2

Child winds LARGE WHITE toy feet and in silence they walk in the opposite direction they walked in the beginning of the play to center stage and stop. They are lit by a red pin spot. Tableau.

WOMAN
(all of a sudden)
I feel sick.

MAN
(jumping to his feet)
WHAT'S WRONG?

WOMAN
Angina pills. PAIN...

Man runs into the other room and rushes out opening a small brown medicine bottle.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Oh...

CHILD
Calm...calm now...

MAN
Here, under the tongue... relax...

WOMAN
I know...

MAN
HURRY...

WOMAN
DON'T RUSH ME I'LL DIE MY WAY...

Pause as they both watch her. Pause. She removes her hand slowly from her chest. Man and Child relax.

MAN
My baby...

WOMAN
That was a close one...

CHILD
Are you alright, mom?

Child and Man look at each other. Woman looks at the toy feet in the red spot and smiles at them. They put their heads together, comforting each other.

Tableau.

Lights lower on CHILD in an amber silhouette, glowing sadly.

Woman wearing her white bath cap, sun glasses and robe, sits looking off into the audience unfocused, as if looking eternity in the face. Her smile turns to fear and slight anger. Man looks at her.

A pool of blue light engulfs Child as moves into the stage left area. Child sits on the floor and is thirty. The feet are still center stage in the red spot.

CHILD (CONT'D)

I think back. I see and hear all the years of my youth living in this place. Like shadows, echoes, moving through the hallways and rooms. Right here...flashes of experience. The baby sitting. Your first bicycle. Holidays together. The family coming over. Having crushes on each other standing at the bus stop for school. Being sensitive and not knowing how to express it. Trying to look naive, so your parents wouldn't think you had a sexuality lusting out in all directions. Pretending to go to school to learn instead of seeing your latest crush. Separating. Going away from home. Beginning to feel your youth pass, but not believe it's happening. Writing letters. Feeling loves that were never resolved in youth because you didn't realize it would end. There'd be time. Never hearing from your friends again. A time. A whole time... dyeing. Like the day turning black. The dreams and hopes and thoughts and loves and fun and pain and... dyeing away...so fast...you can't re... mem... ber... them... echoes...echoes of a life...you lose yourself to it. You lose the memory of the time that passed. You can't remember who you are because you begin to forget who you were. All the dreams of tomorrow are now faded memories of yesterday. And you open your eyes. Walk in the door.

(MORE)

CHILD (CONT'D)

And they're old. And you're older. You die inside again but try to feel alive. The pain whips you silently as you smile to comfort them. And yourself. You hear the thoughts. The words. The things you fabricate to make it all make some kind of sense. But it doesn't make sense. It's just awful to see life ending. You run outside in the middle of your life into the black night and look up at the eyes in the heavens so immense it's impossible to keep looking... because it's so unreal. Yet so...real...and you feel your feet on the ground and you stamp them to be sure you're there...and you are...but where are you...time passes under them like a raging river, each moment taking your precious breath away, as if pulling you into the ground like quicksand...

(pause)

You look at them

(he looks at his
parents)

I don't want them to die. I can't bear to think I'll never see them again. I want to always have them here to hug. To feel their flesh. To know I'm alive. I don't want them to become a faded memory...

He begins to slowly, rise up to standing. As he does, he becomes older and older until very old. He looks at Man and women. Man continues to look at Woman, Woman out at the audience unfocused. The feet are still in the red spot down stage center.

Very slowly, Child, now old, desperately grabs the air. Stares in horror at his hand and the empty air he attempted to grab hold of.

Tableau. Long moment of waiting.

Fade out very very slowly - over 30 seconds.

END OF PLAY EXCERPTS