

ADAM, a 17 year old male of unspecified race from an upper middle class family

OLD WOMAN ~ an archetype!

SANDRA (29 year old heterosexual female, of Spanish/German ancestry)

RENÉ(E)= A person of unspecified sex, trapped by a relentless insanity

Q—a 30 year old, overweight, male computer programmer of vague and unspecified African/European/North American ancestry.

GRAY: A human being.

The dancers, an unspecified number.

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Setting: Darkness, The essence of. A nameless place with nameless creatures and nameless things. But only for a moment. This is the moment of silence, of slipping into the cracks between the frames of our realities. This is darkness, darkness until Beams of Light project through an anonymous cloudy mist hovering over the bottom of this Nowhere Place. Low rumbling, low in the background and rammed inside your ears as well, whispering to you. Low rumbling noise distortion that thinks it is poetry, remembers once being poetry and song and lovemaking and before that silence, yearning to be silence again.

Recording of suicide-video-tape #1, Projection[Right Wall]. Computer voice reads dancers' instructions while the dancers do what is being said: "Sequence Number One. Recording projected against right wall. Dancers emerge simultaneously with the beginning of the video sequence. They are all dressed in loosely-fit black body-suits and masks and are backgrounded with alternately red and white strobe-lighting. Their races and sexes are indistinct, their hairstyles either flat and androgynous, or completely bald. What little skin can be seen is a glittery, shimmering green. Much of what they do is improvised, having rehearsed specific chunks of dance and movement, they perform impromptu combinations of these chunks through an organic process of intuiting what is appropriate. Low humming machine noise sets their background sound."

ADAM (He is seated before a fixed camera with long hair falling over his eyes. There is a long pause before he begins, at least double the length of time needed for the computerized-voice audio recording. He lifts his head and begins to speak.):

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I guess you're gonna be pissed when you find this, huh? (*laughing*)... Well, fuck you. FUCK YOU, Father! FUCK YOU, Mother... and FUCK whoever else ends up seeing this... 'Cause I don' care... I don't fucking care, I don't fucking care, I don't give a shit... 'Cause you can't do anything about it. It's already happened. I'm already dead.

I dunno. I guess you would probly want me dead anyway. Well, everybody gets what they want now, huh? Everybody's happy this time. Right? Yeah. Hey, Pop, remember when you said you didn't want to ever see me again? ...No, but you didn't say it like that. You said somethin' like, "Get that fucking thing... get that fucking faggot outta my house right now before I get to use my shotgun." And then Momma tried to hold you back from going upstairs to get it, and you pushed her over and made her knock her head on the edge of the table. ... I guess you felt sorry for her. I kinda felt sorry, too. But I wasn't really thinking about that. I was thinking about trying to run away, about not havin' anywhere to go. And she convinced you to let me stay in the house. ... Well... I guess I'll be leaving the house for good this time, maybe. What you always wanted, Pop. Unless she gets me creamed and put in one of those little creepy urns on the fireplace like Ant Eunice is (*laughing*). I guess I really wouldn't mind that, Ma. Pop probly won't let you do it, though. ... So like, this is my last time to say the things that have kindalike been on my mind, and like my reasons for all this, I guess, huh? Time to stop rambling off like a stupid suicidal teenager, all angry at the world... But I can't help but be angry. So um... Yeah, I. I guess I wanted to say how much of a shitty bastard my father is. Ma, I just don't understand how you could live with him, be his WIFE, have sex with him. That's if you guys even have sex anymore. And I don't understand how you can expect me to be enjoying my life right now. Isn't it like totally obvious how awful and shitty life is? Are you happy, Momma? Is Dad? Are those assholes at school who have nothing to do all day but scream the word "Cocksucker!" in my ear? Are they HAPPY? Should I be? I never got why everybody was so surprised a while ago when all those kids got shot at their high school in, uh..., in Columbine or wherever. I've been dreamin' of doin' the same thing since junior high. I used to think everybody felt that way. (*shrugging*) Maybe not, though. But everybody says I'm supposed to be having a ball. The best time of my life, right? The junior prom and gym class are

supposed to really make life worth living for. (**Videorecording begins to crackle with static.**) Everyone always says that. Everyone always says bullshit about when you're a teenager, life is so carefree and wonderful. And then it all goes downhill after that. You get married. You have kids. You sell insurance and you die, right? Or if you're a... if you're like me, you're supposed to run away from home and have sex with hairy old men in sleazy gross bars until you get AIDS. And THEN you die. Not that I would know a whole bunch about that, huh...Downhill from here? Downhill for me? This feels like the bottom already. This IS the fucking bott— (**Video totally fizzles out. We see "snow". And then we see nothing.**)

Dancers complete their movements and exit gracefully into the strobelights.

An old woman enters who has heard rumor of another Place. Her worn and tattered body fills worn and tattered rags. She is a nameless creature of this nameless place.

Sired by the darkness and born of the silence, she has known only the mist and befriended only the Beams of Light. She has lived asleep and satisfied with the completeness of her isolated world. Until now. For now she has began to hear rumors in her dreams of another Place. Another way. Now she is awake and groggy.

OLD WOMAN (Her accent is somewhere between Jamaica, 17th Century English Cockney, and Yoda from Star Wars.):

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(Yawning heavily and loudly. Eventually speaking to the audience.)

Ah, there you are. Kha. I do very well see you out there and starin' at me. But I am not being scared by you. Too old me am now for that. Ancient am I now and methinks I be too old to change my set ways about me now. Special' to start be scareda lots of eyes staring at me not moving from I here (*pointing to herself*). One thing's my dreams done told me all this long long time I be in slumber: there be this thing, and that thing. (*She motions to denote "this thing" and "that thing", with her left and right hands, respectively.*) This thing saying that lotta new stuff is going in and coming out in the mist. That thing saying that all that new stuff come from a different world from this one here I am used

to being alive at. And that now be the time for old ladies to be doing their wakin' up. Kha. Methinks me dreams are wantin' to spread some trouble round these here parts. But don't know what to make of the whole shabang, says me withered old brain here. (*pointing to her temple*) Don't know what to make of it a-tall. ... (*She moves throughout the foremost members of the audience, sniffing them, grabbing at them.*) Well, well. Well well well well well say me. Strange little monsters you are for the sniffing. Queer and strange indeed. Kha. Figure out what you are, why you're here, I shall. Kha. That do I for certain. Yes. That for certainly.

(She exits paranoiacally into the rising mist behind her. Looking back often to see that she is not being followed. A looping electronic drum-machine rhythm now begins in the background.)

Recording of suicide-video-tape #2, Projection[Left Wall]. Again, the computer voice reads the dancers' instructions while the dancers do what is being said: "Sequence Number Two. Monochrome recording now projected against left wall. Dancers emerge simultaneously with the beginning of the video sequence. Entering the stage, they march in a single file, ostensibly wearing army camouflages and military face paint. Looping background rhythms rise and fall behind their movements. And as the strobe lights smoothly transition to the color green and slow their frequency by half, the dancers march in a circle. The dancers do this until the lighting has made the appropriate change, and then proceed to partner up and to kiss passionately, with no regard for the sex of their chosen partner. They soon immerse themselves in a choreographed piece about love, romance, and loss. "

SANDRA (She sings, is humming a familiar-sounding tune as she sits before a mirror at a vanity table. The camera is faced into the mirror as well, so that we can see both Sandra's face and the camera lens. She is dressed in a silk bathrobe, her hair tied back into a bun. Though it is obvious she would be very attractive even without it, her face is heavily made-up.):

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(*Singing softly in a slow, bluesy high soprano, holding a hairbrush to her mouth as a "microphone". She is completely aware of the corny, trite nature of the tune. And makes mugging, ironic, theatrical gestures and facial expressions to exemplify this.*)

Now that you're gone, my heart is gone, too.

Now that you're gone, I'm only thinking of you.

Never again is too long, my dear.

When a moment without you seems like a year... (laughing heartily at herself).

What a stupid song. What a ridiculous, ridiculous song. ... (*Staring at herself in the mirror for a long moment. She puts the hairbrush down.*) From now on in, folks, Viewer Discretion is Advised. (*She gracefully removes her robe and leaves herself wearing only a brassiere. She grabs her right breast and begins to squeeze very hard. She digs her fingernails in, trying to hold out stoically against the pain. But it becomes too much, she winces, then tries to laugh it off. She then takes hold of the breast again, begins to press inward, but relaxes and caresses it instead.*) If you haven't yet figured it out, folks, this here is a snuff flick. Hope you enjoy it. Fortunately for those sick bastards of you who are into it, I'm having the whole damn thing broadcast in live streaming video format over the World Wide Web. (*Smiling. She shrugs.*) Just kidding. ... But isn't it sad? Poor little Sandra's going to commit suicide. Join the ranks of Sylvia Plath and Mark Rothko and Kurt Cobain and all those other melodramatic primadonnas who decided they were just too important to be on the waitlist for the hereafter, like everybody else. Well, I leave you, whoever you are, with these two questions: "Whose goddam business is it but mine?" and "Where have you been the past ten years of my miserable little marriages, my miserable little career, my miserable little divorce, and, in general, my miserable little existence?" I guess if you get to see this tape, you've obviously been part of my miserable little problem. In fact, I don't even know why I'm leaving a stupid tape. I don't give a damn about whether you know what I was thinking before the end or whether you wonder till you get your own grave what horrible, horrendous thoughts must have driven me over the brink. After all, I am doing this... No. I did this... just for drama's sake. I would rather have you wondering. Important thing, though, Mr. Andersen, my ex-husband, and Mr. Salvatore, my former husband only now that death has "done us part", I want you each to make sure that our kids see this. You don't have to promise, but I know you are both superstitious enough to believe I would haunt you forever if you didn't. And I just might. ... Now, kids. When you're old enough to see this, I want you to know that I didn't do this because of you. It's not your fault. Helga, you can blame it on your father's prostitutes and drinking. Miranda, blame your dad's tiny little dick and... his walloping punches. (*She caresses an obvious bruise on her abdomen.* **Background drum-loop morphs into a slow heartbeat.** *She then grabs a large knife from the vanity counter, and begins to stroke herself softly with the blade. She runs the tip of the blade along*

her face, then slowly, sensually along her neck, then across her breasts and across the bruise on her abdomen. This is not rushed, and is milked for every possible second.) And now for the moment we've all been waiting for. (**Here the tape seems to 'catch' and begins to repeat itself. Over and over again, Sandra says "And now for the moment we've all been waiting for", while gripping the knife in preparation for using it against herself. The tape loops until the dancers finish and the lights fade out, while the heartbeat sound remains strong in the background.)**

(In the beginning, René(e) can only be a voice.)

RENÉ(E) (Everything René(e) says should be heavily echoed and distorted. Allow each ellipsis just enough time for the echoes to die down completely.):

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Hi. ... Hello. ... Everything I say gets repeated. ... Everything I say gets repeated ... I'm crazy. ... I'm insane. ... Where am I? ... Where AM I? I'm scared of the dark, Mister. ... Where am I, goddammit!? WHERE AM I, GODDAMMIT?!! ... I didn't do ANYTHING wrong. Not a damn thing ... I did nothing wrong! ... Did I?... DID I?!! ...

Omygodomygodomygodomygodomygodomygodomygod ... (*René(e)'s voice changes, metamorphosing in the previous line. The voice sounds like a completely different person now.)* Oh, I know where I am. ... I definitely definitely definitely know where I am. ... I'm just dead, that's it. ... (**Lights rise on René(e) standing centerstage, gazing at the surrounding nothingness. The echoes and distortions de-intensify, and René(e) can speak somewhat normally now. René(e) should be costumed elaborately, bordering somewhere between an insane monarch and a connoisseur of BDSM.**) Why, no one else is here. (*glancing around*) It's just me. (*laughing*) I'm all alone here. ... I'm all ALONE! All alone. (*still laughing*) Mom said she would be here. Irresponsible bitch! Stupid bitch. Maybe she isn't even dead. Just pretending so she doesn't have to be bothered with her good-for-nothing son. Don't blame her. I woulda done the same thing. So this is the afterlife? The afterlife is the nowlife. The nowhere life, more like it. What a boring eternity this is going to be. There's not a damn thing here. How very weird. And I don't even remember dying. Isn't that funny? I don't even remember—

Recording of suicide-video-tape #3, Projection[Center Wall]: The video-recording interrupts the speech. It is a split-screen. On the right side of the projection is nothing but snow-static. On the left side is René(e), sleeping

soundly, and dressed casually and conventionally. The video is captioned: "sleeping / dreaming". The sound of slow, heavy breathing accompanies the background sound of the heartbeat. A few moments pass in this manner, interrupted when we see the sleeping René(e) in the left half of the split-screen awaken with a sudden, frantic opening of the eyes. At the exact moment when the eyes open, the lights illuminating the René(e) onstage instantly and completely black out. We do not see René(e) onstage again. In the left half of the projection, we follow the camera in a chaotic jumble held in hand until René(e) sets it down, and we see that the camera has been placed on a bathroom toilet, facing the bathtub. René(e) is filling the tub with water, and, looking into the camera one last time, speaks.

RENÉ(E) (On the split-screen.):

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Just watch.

(Both screens suddenly go black. A half-second later, the split-screen returns, now different. The left half is nothing but snow-static. The right half is René(e) lying still in the bathtub, which has been filled to the brim with water made crimson by blood. The screen is captioned: "the wrists". After ten seconds, the screen goes black and all is darkness. The heartbeat and breathing sounds continue for an additional ten seconds, then suddenly cease.)

Recording of suicide-video-tape #4, Projection[Right Wall, Left Wall]: The same video recording is projected against both the right and left walls. At downstage center is a gray cube large enough for a human being to fit inside. Inside the cube is Gray, in a gray body-suit. The red and white strobelight pattern reappears, at half-speed. The soundscape should be a mixture of hard electronic sounds as well as soft natural forest sounds. Gray lifts off the cube's lid and begins to slowly unfurl and rise from within. Gray then proceeds with a choreographed movement sequence. The beginning of this is simultaneous to the beginning of the video sequence.

Q (He is seated before his computer screen. The quality and look of the projection are that of a video streaming in from the World Wide Web.)

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I'll start by saying this. I don't expect to impress anyone in killing myself. It is purely for my own final gratification. This video exists for the same reason. My own... final... gratification. My reasons for this suicide are many-fold, and each of the main reasons for this act shall hereby be enumerated. The first is simply that I have never felt a member of the human race. This is not to say that I have felt particularly a part of any subgroup or subrace of the Human race, either. I no more felt a particularly active part of the male sex as I felt a part of the female. No greater a part of the African than I felt of the Native American or European or East Asian or Australian Aboriginal. In a world of pigeon-holes from which everyone struggles to break free, I always knew there would be no way for me to slip into those holes in the first place. Unfortunately, I have never been a pigeon, despite my great longings to be. I wanted to be a pigeon, for the sake of simply feeling that I might discover a way to belong. But wanting to be a pigeon did not make me one; or at least it never seemed to make me a brand of pigeon there are any available holes for. Consequently, I am an alien on my own planet.

The second reason for my suicide results directly from my alien nature. Being an alien, I am alone in the fulfillment of any needs I might feel that are not completely akin to humanoid needs. In a society built for human beings, I can only fulfill those needs of mine which are the same as human needs, namely the need for oxygen and the need for food. Yet my innately ingrained need for alien companionship cannot be satisfied by a human world, which has no built-in mechanism for providing suitable alien friends and sexual partners, nor for accomodating alien courtship rituals, marriage ceremonies, or anything of the like. Nor should it be equipped with such a cumbersome un-necessity.

Especially, indeed, if I am the only alien on Earth. Thus being alive on this planet, and knowing of not a single other of my kind, I am perpetuating a certain throbbing, unfulfillable longing in my heart, which is born of the lack of, and the ultimate impossibility of, true companionship.

The third reason I am going to kill myself is that, after thirty or so years of bearing this burden, I have realized that the life I live is simply not worth the price I must pay for it. Being, as I am, trapped on Planet Earth and totally lacking in any hope of releasing this great load, I find the idea rather appealing of a premature release from the load of life itself.

And those are the major and over-arching reasons for my suicide. For the minute details and petty complaints I have had which contributed to my existential angst, see the World Wide Web page <http://Panicattack.tripod.com> . I fervently hope that this explication has

been to your satisfaction. I am simply and sincerely grateful merely to have been able to justify this death to myself and to the world. Thank you. (**Q turns off the computer screen and the projection turns to the royal static blue of a nonexistent television channel. Gray completes the movement sequence, and ends standing atop the cube at downstage center.**)

(**The soundscape is morphed to looping technotronic beats. The strobelights turn to deep indigo and blue, slowing their strobing frequencies to the lower bound.**)

OLD WOMAN (She enters slowly and cautiously, perhaps afraid to approach Gray. She moves closer and closer to Gray despite her apprehension, eventually circling Gray in enthralled observation.)

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(*Squinting.*)

Kha. Invader! Kha. That what you be. Youman, you call yeself. Y-hyouman. Funny name that be certain. Is funny name for funny creature from the Other Place. Kha. What that be now? Not you can even see me standin' right before your face and eyes? No! See me you don't. Maybe you can't. Maybe you blind. ... That other youman I saw before, the one who came and went, never did he see those faces and eyes starin' right at him neither. (*She points out at the "faces and eyes".*) Man alive, did he scream about bein' so all alone, so all alone now that he was here in my place without his Mamá to keep comp'ny wit him. Kha. But that all be done and over with a-now. Them all done came and went. ... But you stay. Mewants to wonder how come you stay when others just drop in so...

(*Gray turns to face Old Woman, and steps down from the cube.*)

But this place not be much like your place, where they struggle, your friends, to run from. This place is just a home to old ladies, where be lots o' blinkin' light and foggy mist. Not much else to be happy or sad about. But if you're stayin' with me here, maybe then I won't have to go back to slumberin' and sleepin' like I used to do. Maybe you can keep me company. (*Gray reaches out and grabs Old Woman's hand.*) I say then, what shall we do?... we ain't got nothing but time.

Lights fade out.

THE END.

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