

Beet Salad

A Play

Written by: Eliot Hall

Dedicated to C.G Jung where all the good bits are from, and Isabel, who taught me to love myself.

CHARACTERS:

Z:

THERAPIST THEO:

RED/PEPPER:

Authors Note

Time does not happen chronologically. The actors must be prepared to live in the absurd and switch to reality quickly. The veil in the middle of the stage is important, and should not be left out. As for the characters, gender doesn't matter nor does their race. The actors should try to find joy and freedom within their characters. Don't take it all too seriously. Red may begin to bark at times, and Z may stop moving for long periods of time. Set, structure, and conventional movement should be ignored; however, it should not take away from the performance.

Design Note

Music: The movement piece should be accompanied by more unconventional abstract music such as Nine Inch Nails, Radiohead, Tricky, or Massive Attack. The way the actors move and interact with the music should not be a dance, but more of an expression of emotion depending on the scene.

Costumes: Besides the dress in the final scene, the costumes should be abnormal. Not too flashy, but unreal, like from a forgotten ruined city.

Lighting: Go crazy with the lighting.

“The love problem is part of mankind's heavy toll of suffering, and nobody should be ashamed of having to pay his tribute” -C.G Jung

Ay Santa Maria plays. Fades out.

Scene 1

Z: One heart and one soul. That's what she told me once. Now I just remember how cold the room was.

THERAPIST: We constantly overestimate the existing content of consciousness.

pause

Z: I would rather swallow glass than fall in love again.

RED: Why?

Z: Is it natural to want everything in this world?

RED: It depends on where it's coming from.

THERAPIST: It is a great and surprising discovery when we find that what we had supposed to be the final peak, is nothing but the first step... in a very long climb.

Z: It is like a knife in my heart.

RED: Is it coming from your heart?

Z: It's coming from a place in my stomach.

THERAPIST: In order to be conscious of myself, I must be able to distinguish myself from others. Relationships can only take place where this distinction exists.

Scene 2

Z: The grass is always thickest around the end of the drain pipe.

RED: I've been having this ridiculous dream where we are looking for diamonds in a garden.

Z: I forgot what your favorite flower was.

THERAPIST: Nature requires no explanations of principle, but asks only for tolerance and wise measure. One can only thrive when spirit and instinct are in right harmony.

RED: I'm not going to tell you. You'll have to bring it to me sometime.

Z: You're looking down?

RED: I'm thinking.

Z: I can see that... Thinking about what?

RED: Things and places I haven't touched yet.

Z: You're beautiful.

RED: You're a funny tin man.

Z: I want to know what the clouds look like to her.

THERAPIST: Have you asked her?

Z: I'm a little scared.

THERAPIST: Why is that?

Z: You ever realize that the hottest part of a flame is about an inch above it?

THERAPIST: Mhm.

Z: It's sort of like I'm in the little spot between the hottest and the flame with her. I work in a glass blowing factory? Well it's a... it's a temporary job, but I really like it. Watching these guys grab a piece of molten fire. Spinning it like taffy-It's sort of like the ultimate lollipop. It takes precision and strength. Right now I've just been pouring this silica into the furnace. It's not difficult, but the bags weigh like hell. The ceiling is open to the sky, to keep the chemicals outside? It's good in the winter. And I can see the stars sometimes.

THERAPIST: Do you like the stars?

Z: Of course. Who doesn't?

THERAPIST: She seems to be occupying a lot of your thoughts lately.

Z: A lot of my heart too. That's funny isn't it?

THERAPIST: I think it's perfectly normal.

Z: I don't really want to talk about the others.

THERAPIST: Why?

Z: What's the use?

Scene 3

Z: *leaving a voicemail* I didn't think you would pick up. Sometimes I feel like I need to call you because if I don't then you'll just disappear into the background... Maybe you're just at work, or maybe you're looking for another one of those tiny houses. Whatever it is... I just wanted to say that I'm doing okay in the city. I never thought I would miss the smell of manure so much. It doesn't smell like the ocean here. It smells like nothing. Or it smells like the rain. My feet hurt from walking so much. Looking down one street you can see for miles and miles. It never ends... Anyway, the actual reason I wanted to call you was because I need you to feed Gary. He needs a stuart little every 2 weeks. Give him a good misting too he likes that... Oh! And if you could hang out with him for a bit that would be nice. Nothing crazy, you don't have to read him a bedtime story or anything... Just... Keep him up on the newscycle. Give him the crossword or something I don't know. Yeah he's a snake but... I know he misses me when I'm gone. I can see in his beady little eyes. He must be lonely- though he would never admit it... I met some people too. Well... really I met one person. A very special person. I know what you're going to say: That I'm moving too fast, and I'm looking too soon, and all those funny words. I think it's different this time. It's like she kinda has all the answers. I hope you can meet her soon... I can be surrounded by so many people and feel more alone than ever. I don't know how to describe this feeling to you... it's like you're just irregularly tall and everyone notices but says nothing. I'm just this giant leaning over everyone. And they all have to crane their heads to shake my hand, or talk to me. And I'm always stepping on everyone's shoes and knocking over expensive family clocks... I don't know. Maybe I'm overthinking again. I love you. Call me back. It's Z by the way.

THERAPIST: Human relationship leads into the world of the psyche, into that intermediate realm between sense and spirit, which contains something both, and yet forfeits nothing of its own unique character.

Z: You say that I live more in the subconscious?

THERAPIST: No, we live through the subconscious. It is the most powerful part of us.

Z: Mightier than the pen?

THERAPIST: I guess it depends on the pen.

Beat

Z: You like pens?

THERAPIST: I do.

Z: Ballpoints?

THERAPIST: What do I look like to you?

Z: What, fountain pens?

THERAPIST: Let's pay attention Z.

Z: I'll get you one.

THERAPIST: No need.

Z: But you deserve it.

THERAPIST: You don't know the kind I like.

Z: Why don't you just tell me?

THERAPIST: I don't like getting gifts. It brings a kind of obligation.

Z: It's a gift!

THERAPIST: It's a contract I'm forced to accept and have to sign.

Z: Not without a pen you're not... Have you ever been in love?

Beat

THERAPIST: I would say that's an inappropriate question Z.

Z: Would you, mr. solve all my problems man?

THERAPIST: I cannot solve your problems-

Z: *Mocking him* Only you can. You make your destiny. You like dogs or cats? Blue or Red? I need something from you...

THERAPIST: I'm quite a good dancer actually.

Z: Now that is...fascinating. Do you marimba or cha cha?

THERAPIST: So you work in glass blowing.

Z: So you were heartbroken.

THERAPIST: We are at time.

RED: Trees have faces you know. Each one has a little face. With little tiny expressions that we can't see.

Z: It's starting to rain.

RED: The mushrooms will be so happy. Mushrooms absorb water like we absorb bad ideas.

Z: Am I a bad idea?

RED: Depends if you like mushrooms or not.

Z: I like both. Bad ideas and mushrooms.

RED: Do you see all the rabbits hopping around? They remind me of a song I used to listen to on repeat.

Z: I thought the flowers needed water to bloom. Until I saw the stars in your eye.

THERAPIST: These are things you say to her?

Z: Sort of around that in a way...not really at all. I usually start saying something dumb like that and pretend to cough. Now I got all these bags of Ricola originals. I don't know what to do with them. She likes tossing them in my mouth like grapes.

THERAPIST: Maybe she feels the same way...I begin to worry about you at times.

Z: Why's that?

THERAPIST: The spirit needs love, but love needs the spirit. You must have both. You must know yourself before you can truly know another.

Z: I know myself.

THERAPIST: I think you will find that to be a very foolish thing to say.

Z: I know what runs through my veins. It isn't blood but it's real close.

THERAPIST: I just want you to take care of yourself. I know you can have these obsessions.

Z: What is love without some obsession?

THERAPIST: Love! Again. I'm beginning to think you were given a bigger heart.

Z: You have this hilarious thing you do where you laugh at your own jokes.

THERAPIST: I have to entertain myself somehow.

Z: I thought the wackjobs you talk to would be enough entertainment.

THERAPIST: Unfortunate that you are the only wack job I see then.

Z: I'm not crazy. Ooo how many times have you heard that one?

THERAPIST: Enough for a lifetime.

RED: It's interesting to think that we are the only creatures on Earth that don't like the smell of feces. Name one creature that pricks their nose up at it? I think we're the odd ones out.

Z: Is this the kind of thing that keeps you up at night?

RED: Hardly need any help sleeping. Everytime we walk in the forest I notice all the little bugs crawling away from us.

Z: I miss our walks.

RED: I miss the sun.

Z: I dream about you but it's always just light under glass. I'm surrounded by shadow and there's this light like a lightning bug going in and out. I know it's you. I don't know how but I know it's you.

RED: I like to pop in from time to time. Shine a light on your dark dreary life.

Z: You could do it more often.

RED: The winter is long.

Z: True.

RED: The winter is long Z! It is... having to write an essay with an unlimited word count.

Z: I kinda like all the tea we've been drinking.

RED: The trees have boney fingers. Seems like it's the only season everyone loves to talk about. No one is neutral on it. You either hate it, or you're crazy. Those are the two options.

Z: I can buy another pine candle.

RED: Ah you found it! The secret to happiness is more candles...I found an acorn in your hair last night. I found a tree branch too. I found an oak that grew backwards. I found a redwood tree that grew down.

Z: That's funny I didn't feel anything.

RED: Eyes of pearl. That's what you told me once. Eyes like pearls under rushing water. So dramatic you are.

Beat

THERAPIST: The same feeling again. Sliding on a thin razor. Walking down the same streets. Spitting in the same alleys. Looking pale at death's door. When I try to remember why I do this. I see the same pattern. The same dream. The same step. The same shoes. When I think about how they carted her away. How she smiled one last time in that little corner of her mouth. All the things I wish I had done to her. Before... before...before all of this.

Scene 4

Z: The recurrent laryngeal nerve. A vocal cord that runs up by the heart. I can't really speak from it anymore. I used to have a very hoarse voice. It loops all the way down and under the aortic arch and meets the vagus nerve which looks like a bit of string cheese stretched to its breaking point. It loops around the heart and unfortunately they had to cut it when putting in my own stark arc reactor. I kinda always had a quiet voice. I would have to say the same thing twice a lot... Why does it loop around the heart? Well, when we are a fetus, our bodies are circular. All of the stringy bits of us are coiled up tight. And as we grow, the nerves stretch all the way through our bodies. This one all the way up to the larynx. Right here. Speech is interesting in that way. It's not just a box making voice. It takes everything from around our hearts and stomachs all the way to our mouths... So much work into the motor and sensory function of such an essential way of communication: For people to say dumb shit all the time. Speaking from the heart. Speak from your heart. It is connected... I do have these episodes, sometimes? Where I... I actually turn into the tin man and fall on my ass. Or, if you're really lucky you'll see me standing still like the statue of liberty staring death into the poor soul across from me... There was this joke I wanted to tell once about a dog that lost its tail and wandered off into the world by himself- finding the sea using his nose, ended up getting his brain split and forgot he had a tail at all. He was a pitbull, and I'm supposed to say something about how pitiful it was... I used to see differently? Not so differently. Not like I couldn't catch something being thrown at me. But more like looking through a pinhole camera. Looking at just small points of light. Colors were brighter before, sand felt softer, the air was clearer, it was... Now I just see myself alone again... Logs were falling on the shore I think, right? Am I right? Buds were breaking open in sea green weeds, where, where, where runny eggs dripped off sharp concrete edges...

RED: Z?

Z falls down

RED: Z? Oh my God are you ok?

Z: I'm ok...I'm ok

RED: I'm going to call someone.

Z: No no no. It's ok I just need a second.

RED: I'm calling an ambulance.

Z: No please, it's ok.

RED: What do you mean it's ok you just went blank and fell to the ground.

Z: It happens a lot just calm down I need-

RED: How can you tell me to-

Z: Just go. You can help by going.

RED: Don't make me go... Z? I can't leave you like this.

Z: What do you not understand?

RED: I...I'm scared.

Beat

Z: *whisper* Go.

She goes up to him slowly. He thinks she's gone. She reaches for him.

Z: Don't touch me, please. Please. Please.

Scene 5

THERAPIST: The shadow belongs to the wholeness of the personality: the strong man must somewhere be weak, somewhere the clever man must be stupid, otherwise he is too good to be true and falls back on pose and bluff. Is it not an old truth that women love the weakness of a strong man. And the stupidity of the clever man more than his cleverness?

Z: I'm hungry.

THERAPIST: You are always hungry.

Z: This time it's different. I'm hungry for love. Insatiable, unbaited, unhinged fiery love. The kind that leaves you pulling your chest apart.

THERAPIST: Sometimes it feels like you're not listening to a word I say.

They are looking at the stars

Z: She liked the stars?

RED: Yes. She would sit out and count them.

Z: She counted them?

RED: Yes.

Z: Why?

RED: I don't know, I never asked her. Add that to the list.

Z: Of what?

RED: Regrets; Z.

Z: That's interesting.

RED: Is it?

Z: Yes, no, maybe...

RED: What, low on oil or something?

Z: No. I'm just... tired.

RED: It's 8:30.

Z: Psht late enough you know? I'm sorry, if that means anything to you?

RED: It does. I like you more than you think...It's our anniversary today.

Z: What?

RED: Yeah, two and a half weeks. Our seventeenaersery- I don't know, let's start a new thing. What are days anyway?

Z: Ok.

RED points at the night sky

RED: Which one is your favorite?

Z: I always liked draco.

RED: That's a good one.

Z: What about you?

RED: I like the North star. Polaris.

Z: Which one did your Mom like?

RED: Bold, very bold.

Z: You don't have to tell me.

RED: She liked planets more.

Z: Really?

RED: She loved Saturn. Can you just sit down for a sec? You're always moving around. Just sit with me. Don't run so far.

Z: It's just been a while.

RED: Oh, you're more of a stander?

Z: No, I-

RED: It's not cool for metal dudes to sit?

Z: No I meant...Oh.

RED: I understand. Come here. Put your arm around me. You are allowed too.

Z: You smell like candy.

RED: What kind of candy?

Z: Red Hots.

RED: Cutie.

They kiss

THERAPIST: Sixth night. My soul leads me into the desert, into the desert of my own self. I did not think that my soul is a desert, a barren, hot desert, dusty and without drink. The journey leads through hot sand, slowly wading without a visible goal to hope for. How eerie is this wasteland. I take my way step by step, not knowing how long my journey will last.

RED: Z?

Z: Red?

Beat

RED: Z?

Z: Red?

Beat

RED: Bread.

Z: If we were food we'd be bread.

RED: I want to hold your hand.

Z: Here you go.

RED: Sex is like holding hands in a sink on fire.

They kiss

THERAPIST: I come with empty hands to you, my soul. What do you want to hear? But my soul spoke to me and said, “If you come to a friend, do you come to take?” I knew this was true. I wanted to at least feel the breath of your presence. My way is hot sand, dust paths. Reaching like long fingers to the horizon.

Scene 6

Z is sitting on a bench. He is looking through binoculars at the audience. RED sits next to him. She is looking at the ground, maybe humming.

RED: Tulips keep growing when you put them in water.

Z: I’m sorry?

He turns the binoculars

RED: Sometimes I talk to myself loudly.

Z: Oh yeah, no worries.

Beat

RED: My name’s Pepper. Or you can just call me Red.

Z: Z. Nice to meet you.

RED: Z?

Z: Yeah.

RED: That’s an interesting name. Did your parents suck at hangman?

Z: Did your parents hate green peppers?

RED: No. You really think you’re a poet, but you aren’t.

Z: Why do you say so?

RED: I can tell these things.

Z: Are you always this forward with strangers?

RED: Oh you're a stranger now? I was having a perfectly interesting conversation with myself and you interrupted.

Z: I'm sorry about that.

RED: Nothing to be sorry for.

Z: You are a very forward person.

RED: I'd rather be forward than backwards.

Z: That's a good point.

RED: I don't like wasting my time. It seems to me if you're gonna stab someone, why stab around their hearts?

Z: You're assuming.

RED: What, that I won't stab you?

Z: No, that I have a heart.

RED: See this is what I mean about being a poet.

Z: No, no. I mean, I don't have a heart. Like, I actually don't. What? You like people being forward. I'm being forward.

RED looks puzzled

Z: Look just... Give me your hand for a sec. Is that ok? See there's no heartbeat. Not here, not over here, not even here.

RED: I don't understand.

Z: I was born with a failing heart. Well I guess everyone has a failing heart, but mine had an especially bad habit of trying to kill me at every occasion. So some doctors from Leiden made

this mechanical heart, and they stuck it in my chest. Works just as well, but it has no beat. It doesn't work like that.

RED: You have a metal heart.

Z: Well it's not just metal, it has a gold and cobalt interior. It looks like a strange Christmas ornament.

RED: You have a Christmas ornament in your chest.

Z: Yeah I guess so.

Beat

RED: Are you always jolly?

Z: Always.

RED: Z, Z, Z, Z. I like this.

Z: What do you mean?

RED: I like this a lot. You are your perception Z. Did you know that?

Z: I did not know that Pepper.

RED: Well, now you know that Z. How do you feel?

Z: Extremely jolly.

RED: Jollity. Extreme jollity Z. Jolly Z. You like Christmas music?

Z: Christ-Music? Hardly. What kind of music do you like?

RED: The good kinds. The ones that make my ears feel good.

Z: Interesting.

RED: What about you?

Z: Anything with singing really.

RED: You must have very long playlists.

Z: Not long enough.

RED: Be punctual, always punctual. Put some hair on your chest.

Z: I was bird watching if you were curious.

RED: Did you know that the sound of a cello has the same range as the human voice? Songs can be transcribed from voice to cello.

Z: I had no idea.

RED: Of course you didn't. Tin man like yourself.

Z begins to slow down and come to a complete stop like in the wizard of OZ

RED: Z? Are you ok?

Z: Oil...

RED: You are so weird.

Z: C'mon I'm funny. You like me.

RED: I like your baggy clothes.

Z: At least I have something going for me.

RED: You got a lot going on. Help me find the prettiest ones.

Z takes a moment and decides

Z: Do you just want tulips? What about some of these roses?

RED: Not roses, peonies.

Z: What about some of them?

RED hums to herself picking flowers. Z goes around picking flowers sort of awkwardly. She laughs to herself watching him.

Z: I didn't know Tulips keep growing when you put them in water. Who are these for?

RED: Take a guess?

Z: Your boyfriend?

RED: No.

Z: Oh.

RED: My husband.

Z: Ohh cool.

RED: You think so?

Z: Yeah I mean that's, so cool.

RED: Yeah, I like him because his heart *and* his liver are metal.

Z: Really?

RED: No doofus... These are for my father. I'm not unlucky enough to be married... Make sure to get the red ones. He likes stapling them around his mirror.

She takes out her phone and messes with it. He notices her.

Z: What are you doing?

RED: I'm seeing if I can airdrop something to your chest.

Z: You're funny Red.

Pause, they smile at each other

Scene 7

THERAPIST: White baked sand for miles and miles. Watercolor hills. Barron trees. I rest under the shade of a gum tree. Silence. Kids with moon eyes surrounded me tying desert tyme around my wrist. Hanging from my arms. Camel tongue leaves. It was the final frontier. A great leap into the dark. Only myself to lose. Waves of black spiders descended on me. We reach the edge everyday without knowing it. What else can you do but jump. I asked God once why he was born with death written on his heart. God told me he writes death on all hearts just as he writes life. It is both together. Brick and mortar. Bird and feather. It happens Z. It happened to me.

RED is packing lunch and sends off their child. She waits, watching him leave. The acting changes from absurd hysteria to hyperrealistic. Light shift should happen, creating a harsher atmosphere. The next scene is 15 years after this one. RED comes in singing. Slower movements etc.

RED: Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
and sings a melancholy strain:
O listen! for the vale profound
is overflowing with the sound.

Z: What happened today?

THERAPIST: Men and Women often suppress traits of the opposite sex. Which is why often a man seeks a woman who responds to his suppressed unconscious femininity. A woman often seeks a man who can relate to her repressed masculinity. With this they can unhesitatingly receive the projection of their souls. Although such a choice is often regarded and felt as ideal, it may turn out that the man or woman has manifest married his own worst weakness.

RED: *soft*
Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
for old, unhappy far-off things,
and for the battles long ago.

RED: I don't want him to come back. I hope he never does.

Z: What do you mean?

RED: I think it would have been a girl.

Z: You don't know.

RED: The same dream for months.

Z: The flower.

RED: It was the color. A gold I've never seen; You weren't there. You can't dream.

Z: Red.

RED: Call me gold. //Please please please.

Z://I'm sorry Pepper. It's hard on me too.

RED: You look so funny when you lie.

Beat

Z: What am I?

RED: Oh! You understand me now.

Z: You are never here.

RED: Now I should stay inside?

Z: Your head is somewhere else.

RED: Your heart is gone.

Z: Grow up.

RED: Bloody red oranges. Bloody, bloody, red oranges.

Z: You can at least pick up some of this shit... Are you leaving today?

RED: Mirrors broken. Fists of glass. Split twigs.

Z begins to pick up things, stuffed animals, toys, then begins to leave

RED: Where are you going?

Z: I'll be back.

RED: Don't come back.

Z: Pick him up today. I won't be able to.

RED: Where the fuck are you going too? Out again? Out again? Out again?

Z: Just go outside today or something. Get some air. Get off your ass.

RED: All those fucking things on your face. You lie, and lie and lie. All the time. Only now do I see it.

Z: All this shit too. C'mon.

RED: All those things, I wish I could just rip them off like velcro. Spit in your fucking coffee. Why don't you?

Z: What?

RED: You're so funny again. Again and again and again and again. JUST FUCKING LEAVE ALREADY LIAR! GET OUT!

*She picks up the stuffed animals and throws them at him. He exits.
San Francisco by GAI plays. RED walks up to the audience.*

Z: *Leaving a voicemail* Hey again... It's me. I know it's been a long time, but I have some news to tell you. I guess it could be good or bad. Red's pregnant. She has been for a while. I know it's crazy. I can't really believe it either. There's like a *thing*. Like an actual *thing* growing in her like one of those dinosaurs that you put in water and it grows... That was a weird thing to say. Anyway, I feel so full of light and love and wake up crying all the time and I don't why! I talk to it more than I talk to Red. At night, when she's asleep I just whisper to it. I think it's a girl. At least that's what she says. I tell her all the things that you need to know before you really step foot in this place: How to change a tire, file a W2 form, geometry, chewing with your mouth closed; basic stuff... It's stupid I know. But I really don't want to mess this up. I feel like all the time I'm just looking for this perfect moment... When the sun sets, and I can see a storm in the

distance far away, and the air is just warm enough, all I can do is close my eyes... I don't want her to live like that. Looking for a perfect moment. Looking too far forward or back... I hope when she closes her eyes the sun sets and rises, just with her breath. I love you. Thanks for feeding Gary all this time.

The next scene is 5 years before this

Scene 8

THERAPIST: She was right there I think. I could see her plain as day walking down the sidewalk. She was nothing like the sun. She was a pool of crystal. Dark hair. Black as night. A dream that is not understood remains a mere occurrence; understood, it becomes a living experience. Often it is just as well that we do not know the danger we escape when we rush in where angels fear to tread.

RED: The life beyond the walls is farther. You imagine yourself far from this place. You there. In that little space somewhere where the branch dips in the water... I see my father in you. I see my brother in you. And I hate it. Stop looking around in that way you do! Find the condition-not like that. Not like the knob on the wall. The kind of condition we can trust to fall into. Do you see yourself in me? I know you do. Bring yourself to the back of your mind. To that little person you think has the mystery you hope to live up too. It is a fool's errand. Believe me. You know nothing. I know nothing. We used to speak to Gods. Did you know that? And you ruined it... I could see dead people once. Now I don't. I was given a stone that blinded me to their world. It was a relief... but I miss her sometimes. You'd think it would be easy to find someone you know that's dead. You'd be wrong. It was all strangers. This is a world of the dead. We just occupy it. There are just so many and... How do I see her again? Like that one. That one. That one time...

Z: I don't have dreams.

THERAPIST: Are you feeling ok?

Z: Something is coming, I can feel it. There are things she's keeping from me.

THERAPIST: Like what?

Z: She never keeps anything from me. I caught her looking out the window. She sits there thinking so loud I can hear it from across the room.

THERAPIST: She may still be getting over the uh...

Z: No, I thought it was the miscarriage as well, but it was different when that happened. That was heavy. She couldn't leave the house. Only when the sun was hidden. This is like she's seeing through the walls, and it's somewhat of a disappointment to her. She left the dinner table to stare at the moon... We started trying for another kid. She says it'll be a boy this time.

THERAPIST: How does she know?

Z: She always knows.

THERAPIST: Maybe it would be good for both of you to spend some time apart.

Z: Why?

THERAPIST: Too much truth can be harmful.

Z: Why should I be afraid of truth? What else is there?

THERAPIST: Don't be so dramatic... Tell me something you're thinking that has nothing to do with her.

Z: I want to eat more salads...I think I'm going to ask her to marry me.

THERAPIST: Well that was quick.

Z: Quit the metal shop for a bit. Move to Puerto Rico. The usual fantasy.

THERAPIST: Do you know any good jokes?

Z: What?

THERAPIST: Any jokes.

Z: Why?

THERAPIST: I'm watching my friends stand up routine this weekend and he keeps saying that he'll call me on stage. I want to be prepared.

Z: Go for a good knock knock joke.

THERAPIST: Can you give me one?

Z: Knock, Knock.

THERAPIST: Who's there?

Z: Tank.

THERAPIST: Tank who?

Z: You're welcome.

THERAPIST: I think I'll just not go.

Scene 9

RED: You have a snake.

Z: I have a snake.

Beat

RED: Do you like your snake?

Z: I do like my snake.

Beat

RED: Is it a nice snake?

Z: More of a brooding one.

RED: Like a teenager?

Z: Yeah. Like a teenager that eats mice.

RED: So how do you spend your non off days?

Z: Mortuary embalmer.

RED: What's that?

Z: It's the technical term for someone who arranges flowers.

RED: No it's not.

Z: No it's not. I fill corpses with cleaning chemicals.

RED: That is so disgusting. Great date material. What do you really do?

Z: I worked in a glass blower factory for a while.

RED: Did you make sculptures?

Z: I made window panes. A lot less interesting.

RED: I think that's interesting.

Z: What do you do?

RED: Gastroenterologist.

Z: Cool.

RED: Do you know what that is?

Z: Nope.

RED: I'm actually a nurse.

Z: Really?

RED: Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

Z: Are you always covered in blood?

RED: Sometimes.

Z: Suits your name.

RED: People don't call me Red... Only you do.

They catch each other's eyes

RED: Where is this going?

Z: What do you mean?

RED: I can't, I don't want a um...

Z: I don't know, do we have to define it?

RED: No, but I can't Z, It's not who I am. Relationships, all of this. Dates.

Z: I'm not looking for anything. That isn't important to me.

THERAPIST: But it was important to you?

Z: I wanted it so bad.

THERAPIST: And you lied to her?

Z: I lied to her. I lie to her a lot.

THERAPIST: Why?

Z: I'm scared that I'll lose her.

RED: I'm glad we're on the same page.

Z: I can't even tell you why the sky is blue. But I know I love you.

RED: The moon is playing a familiar song. Can you hear it?

Scene 10

THERAPIST: Simple things are always the most difficult. In actual life it requires the greatest art to be simple, and so acceptance of oneself is the essence of the moral problem. The self is the collective. That I feed the beggar, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy all for virtues sake. But what if I should discover that the least amongst them all, the poorest of all beggars, the most impudent of all offenders, the very core itself are within me? That I myself am the enemy who must be loved.

Red is very pregnant. Realistic acting. Sounds of a nature show. 2 Years after the previous scene

RED: I don't want to pee anymore!

Z: I don't know how to help you with that.

RED: Can you just take it for a bit?

Z: What?

RED: Just, can I loan it to you for a day. I wanna go skydiving.

Z: You've never wanted to do that.

RED: I want to eat sushi, I want to go skydiving, chainsmoke camels, and ride a horse... Like really fast.

Z: Hey! Look, look at the elephants! You love when they come on.

RED: Awwww-No! No more elephants! I want to be upside down!

Z: What?

RED: I-I don't know I just want to be upside down! Stop asking questions.

Red tries to turn upside down

RED: Sssssssssuuuushhhiiiiiii

Z: You're allergic to fish.

RED: Yeah but since the dude told me I couldn't it's all I think about. Slimy smelly mmmmm-Fuck!

They both look at each other and laugh loudly

RED: We should buy overalls and start a garden. Live out our dreams.

Z: I didn't know that was our dream.

RED: I dream of you most nights. You have great long slinky arms that wrap around the world over and over again. Light pours from your mouth, and these great waves of flower petals cover us. We can't breathe, but it's a good suffocation. We die together. In each other. With each other. Is not that strange?

Scene 11

THERAPIST: The feminine Eros consciousness has a lunar rather than a solar character. Its light is the "mild" light of the moon, which merges things together rather than separates them. It does not show up objects in all their pitiless discreteness and separateness, but blends in a shimmer the near and the far, little into big, high into low, softening all color into a bluish haze, and blending the nocturnal landscape into an unsuspected unity.

RED enters writing in her diary

RED: Riding the oxytocin high, looking at you baby. Two weeks postpartum, everything covered in breast milk, engorged, saturated like a Southern day that I crave but never lived in. I tried wine for the first time, didn't like it, went back to chocolate cake, its nostalgia comforts everything. I cry at 5pm daily, maybe from exhaustion, but really for my own mother, my son looks just like her. He came wide eyed, like she released him with a willful kiss that graced his head with fire. Ocean eyes, her eyes. Maybe we should have named him after her, her after him, but we didn't. Jody, Joanna, Jo, he said save it for his sister. New sister, different vessel. Savor it. I'm lost now, in this milky state, salting my breasts with tears, eat up little one.

Z comes in singing Tom Waits, All the world is green, sounds of a baby in the other room

Z: I fell into the Ocean, and you became my wife.

RED: How is he?

Z: Gross. Like a slimy gremlin.

RED: Perfect. So perfect.

Z: C'mon let's go get-

RED: I love you.

Beat. He smiles at her

Z: I love you too. Baby, What is it?

RED: I am so happy.

The veil begins to drop covering her. She moves very slowly under the veil. THERAPIST revealed. He is standing there looking at Z. Z has dropped to the floor. THERAPIST brings his chair forward sitting next to her. He is talking to himself. Also the audience. Like a journal voice memo. Harsh light.

THERAPIST: She was blind I think... Or she had a blindfold on I don't remember. Moths from her open mouth. Dead. Like dry flower petals. Something she said. A word. Not my language, but I could understand. Like a far away yelp. Fixed on part and parcel of the final syllables. Words she knew I couldn't understand. A snake? I asked. "I was a river song once, and the little willow branches that dipped in the water were like dog ears folded down." "I was a single refrain. The last chord in a symphony you couldn't name, but remembered. And all these times-maggots gnawed away at the honey in my heart." "Little chicken hearts and marrow the size of a teaspoon." I've never been with a woman before. She looks familiar. She looks attractive. I can't believe the things that go through your mind at these times. Crises. Crying times. What thoughts wander in that we pretend to ignore. The intangible stories we create to fit a narrative to the people around us. Maybe they have constructed their narratives as well. This is truth. This is "emotion" as they say. All together. Not separate. She looks good naked I bet, but I would have to hate again. I have it, then I hate it. It's a cruel cycle. Fingernails keep chipping on my teeth. She looks like the icky part of a pineapple. Lust is a great foe. It sneaks up on you. Lust is more powerful than ever when we ignore these thoughts. It can get the best of you then. When the lights are out, or the souls are closer. Around others maybe, or in a tent. It's like the day after, or the regret before. So much imagination. So much feeling in our fingers. Tongues feel good on my thumb. I like to crack the bones open sometimes. The last temptation.

Scene 12

THERAPIST: A place in your stomach? What do you mean?

Z: I don't really remember.

pause

THERAPIST: I'm sorry Z. None of this is easy.

Z: Uhhhhhhh. I feel insane.

THERAPIST: Why?

Z: I don't remember. I wish we could see the stars at night.

THERAPIST: You can see the planets sometimes.

Z: That's not the same.

THERAPIST: It's not, but it's still something.

Beat

THERAPIST: I have been in love before Z. You asked me once. If you remember. I believe most of us have been in love at a time. Or thought we were.

Z: That makes me feel better. Have you ever seen a rhinoceros?

THERAPIST: I have not.

Z: They always interested me.

THERAPIST: Why is that?

Z: Something to do with the birds that live off of them. They care for each other.

Beat

THERAPIST: Life is crazy and meaningful at once. And when we do not laugh over the one aspect and speculate about the other, life is exceedingly drab, and everything is reduced to the smallest scale.

Z: You ever got your heart broken?

THERAPIST: If you think about it, nothing has intrinsic meaning. Meaning comes from interpretations, and interpretations are only for those who don't understand; it is only the things we don't understand that have any meaning. Man woke in a world he did not understand, and that is why he tries to interpret it.

Z: Hey, I'm trying to talk to you! Hello!

THERAPIST: Hi, Z.

Z: Can you stop monologuing for a second?

THERAPIST: You will love again.

Z: How do you know?

THERAPIST: Being heartbroken is par for the course.

Z: I don't think you understand.

THERAPIST: How else can one perceive the light without the shadow, hear the silence without the noise, attain wisdom without foolishness? Love without the risk is not love. When we are young, we think there will be one person who will save us. It is not until we are older that we realize-

Z: Just shut up.

THERAPIST: You came for my help.

Z: Did I?

THERAPIST: I assume you didn't come here for me to hurt you.

Z: It is like you feed off of my pain. I am not a number in your books. A rat in a box. I see light sometimes you know? I feel the walls close in tight. I see the moon through tall grass, hear coyotes wail at night, smell priests through window pains. I can't hear the voice in my head anymore.

THERAPIST: I thought we were on the way to a friendship.

Z: Isn't that unprofessional?

THERAPIST: Not at all.

Z: There are so many times when I have walked out on you in my mind.

THERAPIST: Are you trying to hurt me?

Z: I want to feel again. I want to see you... I don't even know what color your eyes are.

THERAPIST: Look at me... I'm sorry for being distant.

Z: An old friend. Familiar eyes huh?

THERAPIST: I have not been replaced. It is the same blood, just a different motor.

Beat

THERAPIST: Z, Did you hear me?

Z: What?

THERAPIST: I said my door will be open for you, but my patience is not everlasting.

THERAPIST goes to the door and opens it for him

THERAPIST: I don't think we will be getting anywhere today.

He waits at the door. Z does not move.

Z: She didn't even say goodbye.

THERAPIST: I'm sorry to-

Z: She left a letter.

Sensing that he wants to talk, THERAPIST goes back into the room

THERAPIST: What did it say?

Z: I don't know. I didn't read it.

THERAPIST: Why not?

Z: I burned it.

THERAPIST: Before you read it.

Z: Yes.

THERAPIST: Can I ask why?

Z: Cause it was something she would do. She would burn it before looking at it, then go out into the sunshine. She burned all our mail. She said it threw off our whole family aesthetic. She was crazy. I think it was a little symbol of how I set off her aesthetic, or she set off mine. It's ok though.

THERAPIST: Why?

Z: She looked tired.

THERAPIST: What do you mean?

Z: She was tired.

THERAPIST: How's Amias?

Z: I picked him up today. He was very happy.

THERAPIST: That's good.

Z: His breath smelled like apples.

THERAPIST: Really?

Z: Yeah. He makes me douse them in lemon juice. He says he's trying to have a refined pallet. I Don't know what that means. He looks like her.

THERAPIST: You are enough Z.

Z: I don't believe that.

THERAPIST: We are all enough.

Z: Is that what love is?

THERAPIST: I don't know what love is.

Z: I understand. How did it end?

THERAPIST: It never ended. It never does. As to the ultimate things we can know nothing, and only when we admit this do we return to a state of equilibrium. Reality contains everything I can know. Everything that acts upon me is real and actual.

Z: I love you.

THERAPIST: I love you too.

Z: You are a funny guy. Wanna dance?

THERAPIST: That's very kind of you, but I'll pass.

Z: You should try stand up.

THERAPIST: I think it would go poorly.

Z: You know that for sure?

THERAPIST: Absolutely not Z.

Z: So you don't know then?

THERAPIST: I don't want to.

Z: Boring

THERAPIST: Would you like to take a walk? It's beautiful outside.

Z: Yes.

THERAPIST and Z exit. Blackout. RED exits the stage. The sounds of a raging thunderstorm. Sounds of people calling her name Lights flashing on the veil. RED comes back on stage testing the rain in a different dress. She gives a look back then jumps full on into it. Z enters after a time. Sounds/lights of a dinner party going on. Someone calling out for RED

Scene 13

Z: Red it's not safe! Please come back inside!

RED: Let me have a little fun! Please!

She screams running around spinning in a dress lighting strikes

Z: Please! Red.

RED: Stop worrying about me.

She laughs and holds out her hand. He takes it surreptitiously. He drops to his knees kissing her stomach. She looks up into the sky smiling, blinking away the rain; Stroking his hair.

End of Play