

Beginning

[*Justin*, dressed in a bloodletting tuxedo and surgical mask, taps a floating *Cadaver* with a conductor's baton. His cheeks are swollen tungsten red, eyes quivering with spit, his nose quietly undoing its falsetto interruptions. *The Moment to Begin*, veiled in a white shore, addresses *Justin*, singing to stop. *Baton* steps over *Justin*, drifting toward *Sound*. *Sound* takes this moment, possessing *Cadaver* with a key in the process. *Cadaver* moves, sinking towards an embrace with the ground. *Baton* sprouts a wilting *Timpani*, thumping until still. *Sound* is quiet.

Unmoved, *Cadaver* places *Baton* in its mouth, playing spoiled intervals over *Justin*, a slowly disquiet duet. The air hardens as *Sound* breathes again. *Cadaver*, now the darkening shore sweeping with sinking steps, continues its improvised movement to a stop, ingests its instrument, and with a brushstroke becomes *Stage*. *Sound* ingests its phantoms, waiting while *Justin* continues to hold on to the duet, wringing the droplets. In the painted background, *Stage* skins its sheet music, sprouting its naked curtains...

After many years of *Stage* growing into shape, *Mom* runs onto *Stage* panting, reciting words to collect her sounds, consequently phantoms. *Justin*, with a full collage of faults, becomes many, all singing to stop.]

Mom: I am at fault for this.

[*Mom* impales her left wrist with a swooning cleaver, a chandelier of *Blood* enters through her, and *Justin* is left. He plants his unsoiled tongue into his chest, so that it may pollinate with his heart. *Mom* is dragged offstage and thrown into the inner ribs of *Mental Ward* to recuperate.]

Justin: [Eyes holding back the image.] My mother—

Blood: I am Blood, the
bleeding finite.

Justin: Is this the beginning?

Blood: [Plucks *Justin's* left iris.] Yes, and all beginnings need victims.

Justin: My mother just cut—

Blood: Yes, I saw. Now the play can get started.

Justin: This is cruel.

Blood: No, this is narration. [Shapes *Justin's* remaining sight into a calloused blade. *Blood* slits the entire length of *Justin's* torso.]
There, you've been branded as The Narrator.

Justin: [Ignores his intimate spilling.] I didn't want this.

Blood: You have a story to tell, so here are your stage and canvas.
[Lops an ear off *Justin* and cuddles the earlobe with whispers.]
Narrate.

[*Mom* reconfigures her inner dialogue.]

Mom: Hello?

Justin: I didn't want this.

Blood: [Licking the scent of earlobes.] Narrate!

Justin: [In a syncopated off-meter.]
My name is Justin
and my mother
slit her wrist
with a cleaver

[Stage Theory 1]

[*Mental Ward* opens to reveal]:

Schrödinger's Cat¹: A thought experiment, sometimes described as a devised paradox. It illustrates what the audience sees as the problem of everyday objects—

[a bowl of milk,
dead dialogue flapping on the floor,
flat cooing over sleep,
the audience crawling out of the litter box,
still a cat,
Schrödinger,
a devised scheme,
the newly minted term,
his alternate cat,
everyday,

no remorse for dead things]—
resulting in a dead-and-alive cat contradiction with common sense
depending on an earlier random event in a box.

¹ Coined the term “entanglement.”

Suicide's Monologue [*Turning Point*]

Enter *Suicide*.²

[*Suicide* is visibly an opal bruising: blemishing crimson, blue contortions, limbs cracking beneath bone, possibly green somewhere. Hunched over, there is a regal impatience to *Suicide*, quietly smoking a stick of gum, carving the floor with an ivory cane. Most of *The Audience* is in hibernation. *Justin* is caught off-guard, intently watching this new character.]

Suicide: My name is Suicide, and this is a greeting. My name is Suicide repeatedly. My suicide was a naming, and I am here to tell you something. My name in robes is Suicide. I stole a color with a naming. In brush strokes, there is a swifiting breath of suicide. You might be wondering why this is all relevant? I can assure you that my name is Suicide and there is relevance in brush strokes. A happening will occur, but I am not omnipotent. I am Suicide, and for this act, that means everything.

[Waits for *Applause*, but commits *The Audience* to a noose. A fog engulfs the curtains in sage. There are stars drowning underneath the canvas: a skinning embroidery. The canvas begins to gurgle in the throes of shape (a molded blood orange). The fleshed orange is worn in folds. *The Audience* awakens and accumulates. They follow *Suicide* offstage.]

²Note to actor in role of *Suicide*: The rest of the play hinges on the success of *Suicide*.

Godot Enters through a Body of Curtains

Enter *Godot* to an empty *Audience*.

Godot: Hello?

Stage: [No response.]

Godot: [The first introduction of light binds to *Foresight*.]
Hello? Can somebody tell me what my line is? Hello?

[He looks at his watch. An impatient *Watch* melts. *Watch* melts from waiting. *Watch* cuts its intent of numbers. *Godot* and his watch melt. There is a time that needs to be 12:00. No response. No saying, "Hello, my name is Godot and thus extinguishing the impulse to wait." *Godot* and his watch, "What is my line again?" continue to wait. *The Audience* folds *Godot* into *Watch* telling time. *Godot* "Hello" and his watch. The scarring of time into *Godot* festers a ticking *Watch* and you will be [No response.] too. *Godot* and his consumption of watches. Hello? Hello? "I can't really hear what he's saying, like it's melting," and no *Godot* to strip into units of beating seconds. *Godot* breathes in, and out comes across *Time*, all arms and legs. *Godot* continues to an empty *Audience*. Wait. Wait. *Watch*, a 'no please' response, I beg [stop] of you. Can somebody tell me what my line is again? *Godot* looks at his and everything else together. Wait, no don't tell me. "Is he okay?" Foot tapping, arms crossed waiting name. *Godot*. What time is it, and why is it so important? Last time I checked, it was 12:00. To find fault in time. To read into time's inaccuracies and salty dilemmas. Wait. Twelve hours ago, what was I doing? *Godot* winds up with a watch correctly ticking away with "Hello." The sun rises and sinks, rises and sinks, with *Watch* holding up a tied-down *Time* smiling. An empty "Hello" greets this sinking feeling. *Godot*, what am I supposed to say? Besides "Wait." An empty line. *Godot* stares at a blank *Watch*. Wait. *Godot* continues to act surprised, waiting for 12:00 and its ticking.]

Enter *Mental Ward* carrying a disfigured 12:00.

Mental Ward: No, not yet.