



Drama

Audition Monologues

Requirements for entry to the Drama field:

***Please read the following instructions carefully.***

**Monologue:** You will prepare two monologues. You may choose from the selection below, or you can search for another one from your favourite play, novel, or film, or by searching on line.

You should aim to choose contrasting pieces that you connect with and which demonstrate your range as a performer. Each monologue should be a maximum of three minutes in length. Each monologue will be performed at a given audition time before a panel of between one and four people.

Notes on preparing your monologues from the ACA lists

* It will help you as an actor to read a synopsis of the play from which your monologue is chosen in order to place the speech in context and understand more fully the situation that the character is responding to or speaking about in the monologue.
* We are interested in seeing how well you can relate to and connect with the character. Try to make the character's situation and circumstances your own at an imaginative level. Aim to connect with the character's use of language and rhythm. Aim to present your monologue in a way that shows your connection with the monologue and the character – we are interested in seeing YOUR interpretation of the text.
* Your monologue must be memorised. We cannot audition you properly if you haven't memorised the text. Memorising the text will allow you to concentrate more fully on your performance. There are lots of tips online about ways to help you memorise lines.
* Before you audition your monologue, it may help you to perform it to some trusted friends or family members so that you remember that you are preparing a piece of theatre (i.e. for an audience).
* Use your natural speaking voice and accent.
* If you are unfamiliar with a word or with imagery or references, make sure to look them up so that you can commit with a full understanding of all the words in the monologue. Again, there are lots of word finder and pronunciation guides online.

Notes for the audition

* Please know that we really want you to do well. We are not looking for you to fail, just for you to try your best.
* If you are feeling nervous, it can be a good idea to do some breathing exercises before you enter the audition space.
* Take time to arrange your space. If you want a table or a chair or anything else to work from, feel free to ask for some help in setting it just how you have rehearsed the piece.
* You don't have to stand still throughout your monologue – you can use movement and gesture to support the intentions of the character/speaker if they are called for.
* You should announce the name of the character and name of the play before performing.
* When you perform your monologue, consider whether your character is speaking to someone else or speaking their thoughts aloud to themselves. You may choose to ‘address’ the other character by pretending they are in the space next to you or around you, or by looking out above the panel’s heads – it is better not to make eye contact with the people on the panel as it can make you and us uncomfortable.

Notes on What to Wear:

* For your monologues, wear neutral or plain clothes with minimal jewellery. It is not necessary to wear make-up or to costume yourself for your monologues. Remember that we are most interested in you and your performance skills.

From **Golden Shield** (2019)

By Anchuli Felicia King

**TRANSLATOR:** A note about the word ‘decentralize.’

There are two ways I can translate ‘decentralize’ into Mandarin. The first, 分散 (fēn sàn), means something like disperse, scatter. The second, closer to decentralize, is 下放 (xià fàng).

Unfortunately, like many Mandarin verbs, it has multiple meanings: to let go, put aside, do away with.

Now, another translator, in an attempt to preserve Marshall’s phraseology, might here tell the Minister that Marshall intends to disperse, or worse do away with, the national firewall. This would derail the meeting.

Happily, I am not that translator.

You see, I don’t just understand the literalities of Marshall’s proposal. I see the whole loop. Marshall McLaren is proposing an ingenious three-tiered firewall, one that will exponentially increase the government’s ability to filter and inspect the online activities of their citizenry. It will come to be called the Great Firewall, and finding ways to climb it will become a national pastime.

In other words, Marshall is talking about an increase in control, an increase in efficiency, effected through decentralization but not resulting in it. So all I have to do is change one little word. I turn to the Minister, and I say:

(To the Minister.) He wants to centralize the firewall. 他想构建一个更集中的防火墙。 (Tā xiǎng gòu jiàn yí gè gèng jí zhōng de fáng huǒ qiáng).

From **Frankenstein** (2011)

by Nick Dear

**CREATURE:** My heart is black. It stinks. My mind, once filled with dreams of beauty, is a furnace of revenge! Three years ago, when I was born, I laughed for joy at the heat of the sun, I cried at the call of the birds – the world was a cornucopia to me! Now it is a waste of frost and snow. The son becomes the father, the master the slave. I have led him across the Black Sea, through Tartary and Russia. I have led him past Archangel, and out on to the ice. We go north, always north. His dogs are dead; his supplies exhausted. But we have a compact we must keep: he lives for my destruction, I live to lead him on. (Calls into the wind.) Frankenstein! Come! (To us.) I used to have dreams… I dreamt we were hiking, over the mountains, under a glorious sky. We would walk together, and talk together… he would tell me how to live. The mistakes to avoid. How to woo a girl. For this I came to find him, but he turned me away! Why did he do that? Why did he turn me away?

From **hungry ghosts** (2018)

By Jean Tong

**1/2/3:** The pistol shrimp is a species of crustacean that only grows to about 3 to 5 cm long, but competes with sperm whales for noisiest animal in the ocean. Colonies of pistol shrimp generate so much background noise that they misdirect military and scientific sonar used to detect underwater objects.

One of theirs claws, which is actually a snapper over half the size of its body, makes this noise.

When this snapper slams shut, it creates a cavitation bubble—a literal cavity, a void, a millisecond of nothingness, a vacuum suspended in the middle of the ocean—that explodes when the rest of the ocean rushes back to fill that rip.

I wonder what it’s like in that bubble. In that absolute quiet, in the silence of a million waves, billions of networks of oceanic activity. Imagine that peace. It stretches on forever, a silence where anything could happen. I could be anyone. Do anything. I could hide in that silence. I could become something in that silence. I could weaponise myself, kill a king. I could make myself the greatest, most invisible danger of the big blue sea wrapped in a tiny, tiny, shrimp body.

And then the moment passes, and the great crushing weight of the ocean whooshes back in.

From ***The Three Sisters*** (1901)

By Anton Chekhov (Transl. R. Hingley.)

**IRINA**: Tell me, why is it I’m so happy today? I feel as if I were sailing, with the wild, blue sky above me, and great white birds soaring about in the wind. Tell me why? Do you think--? This morning I woke up, got out of bed, washed – and suddenly I felt everything in this world was clear to me – I felt I knew how life had to be lived. Dearest Doctor, I know everything. We must toil, live by the sweat of the brow, whoever they are; that’s the only way one can find the sense and purpose of life, happiness, joy. How wonderful to be a working man who rises at first light and breaks stones on the road, or a shepherd, or a teacher, or an engine driver on the railway… Lord, never mind being human even – better to be an ox, a simple horse, just so long as you can work – anything rather than a young lady who rises at noon, drinks her coffee in bed, then takes two hours to dress . . . oh that’s so awful! You know how in the heat you long to drink the way I began longing to work. And if I don’t start getting up early and working, then you must shut your heart to me, Dearest Doctor.

From **The Crucible** (1953)

by Arthur Miller

**MARY WARREN:** I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleeps in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then- then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin' up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then (entranced) I hear a voice, a screamin' voice, and it were my voice and all at once I remembered everything she done to me! (Like one awakened to a marvellous secret insight) So many times, Mr. Proctor, she come to this very door, beggin' bread and a cup of cider-and mark this: whenever I turned her away empty, she mumbled. But what does she mumble? You must remember, Goody Proctor. Last month-a Monday, I think-- she walked away, and I thought my guts would burst for two days after. Do you remember it? And so I told that to Judge Hathorne, and he asks her so. "Sarah Good," says he, "what curse do you mumble that this girl must fall sick after turning you away?" And then she replies (mimicking an old crone) "Why, your excellence, no curse at all. I only say my commandments; I hope I may say my commandments," says she! Then Judge Hathorne say, "Recite for us your commandments!" (Leaning avidly toward them) And of all the ten she could not say a single one. She never knew no commandments, and they had her in a flat lie!

From **Dags** (1985)

by Debra Oswald

**GILLIAN:** All right. I'm going to admit something I never thought I'd admit to anyone ever. I've got a crush on Adam. Head over heels. Uncontrollable passion, etcetera. Unrequited passion, of course. Now I know this sounds like I'm throwing away everything I've said so far. And I guess I am. I know every girl at school except Monica is in love with him. I know he'd never go for a dag like me. I know it's hopeless. I know all that. But I can't help it. Just thinking he might look at me, my heart starts pounding like mad. And then I worry about whether he can tell my hearts going crazy, and I have to act really cool. This crush - it's like a disease. Do you know - oh, I'm almost too embarrassed to admit this - Adam misses the bus sometimes. 'Cos he's chatting up some girl or something. And do you know what I do? I get off the bus after one stop and walk back to school, so I can hang around the bus stop hoping he'll turn up. Just so I can ride on the same bus with him. Isn't that the most pathetic thing you've ever heard? I'm crazy. I can lie here for hours thinking about him. Writing these movies in my head where Adam and me are the stars. I try to imagine how he'd notice me and fall hopelessly in love with me and all that. Like, one of my favourites is that the bus breaks down one day in this remote place and there we are stranded together. He discovers that I was this really fascinating woman all along. Far more interesting than all those silly girls at school. But - I say that I can't bear to be just another notch on his belt. So, Adam has to beg me to go out with him. Grovel almost. That's a pretty over-the-top version.

From **Away** (1986)

by Michael Gow

**MEG:** I saw the carton. I saw it in the hall.

I saw it. It was near the telephone table, wasn’t it?

You saw it too, didn’t you? You saw the box sitting there. You must have. It was sitting next to your vanity case. Everything else that was in the hall got packed in the car. You did see it.

You were the last one out. You’re the one who shuts the door, after you’ve made sure the stove’s off and the fridge has been left open. You saw the carton and you left it there on purpose.

You left it behind.

And you knew what it was. You knew what was in it and you left it there.

Why did you do that?

Why would you do a thing like that?

I want to know why you did it.

Tell me why you deliberately left that box behind.

We have a game we play every year. We sneak presents home, we hide them, we wrap them up in secret even though we can hear the sticky tape tearing and the paper rustling; we hide them in the stuff we take away, we pretend not to see them until Christmas morning even when we know they’re there and we know what’s in them because we’ve already put in our orders so there’s no waste or surprise. And Dad always hides his in a pathetic place that’s so obvious it’s a joke and we all laugh at him behind his back but we play along! You knew what was in that box. You left it behind. I want to know why.

What were you trying to do, what did you want to gain?

Did you want to have something we’d all have to be sorry for the whole holiday? There’s always something we do wrong that takes you weeks to forgive.

You have to tell me.

From **Blackrock** (1992)

by Nick Enright

**CHERIE**: *(at a cemetery by Tracy’s grave)* It was my fault. If we stuck together like we said, you and me and Leanne, you wouldn't be here. But I lost youse all. Now I've lost you. And no-one knows how. You should hear the rumours. Someone seen a black Torana with Victorian number plates. It was a stranger in a Megadeth T-shirt. All these ideas about who did it, who did it, like it was a TV show. It is a TV show. Every night on the news. I want to yell out, this is not a body, this is Tracy you're talking about. Someone who was here last week, going to netball, working at the Pizza Hut, getting the ferry, hanging out. You were alive. Now you're dead. But I know you can hear me. I can hear you.

*(She plays a bit of a song)*

Your song. Times we danced to that, you and me and Shana, Shana singing dirty words, remember? Mum hearing and throwing a mental... I shouldn't laugh, should I? Not here. But all I can think of is the other words.

*(She turns off the song)*

You were wearing my earrings. You looked so great. And some guy took you off and [hurt you]. Wish I knew who. You know, Trace. Nobody else does.

From ***Sunshine Super Girl*** (2020)

By Andrea James

**EVONNE**: This is a good spot here. This is Mum’s spot.

That current there? Swirling around and around? That’s the backwater. Leaves and twigs and bugs. That’s what the fish are after and that’s what I’m after. The fish.

My dad told me about the magic of fishing at the backwater. He used to say, “See that big hole down there? Plenty of fish. Big ones. That’s where you go to catch a fish.” But to tell you the truth, if I don’t catch a fish, that’s okay too...

No-one knows I’m here. Not even family. I’m not ready to go into town. Just yet. Yesterday I fished around the corner. A bit closer to the bend and I caught three fish! One yellow belly, one red fish, and one cod.

One pan size and one baking dish size. And one Family size. Caught ‘em on some worms. Took me two hours.

*[She smells her fingers.]*

Still got that fishy smell. It’s starting to sink in.

Look out!

*[A fish bites, she scrambles to hook it, but misses]*

Missed him!

Freshwater woman, through and through.

When I throw in a line and I’m waiting for a bite, it’s like I’m on the court. In the zone.

Your hearing changes – like you’re underwater.

Your muscles shift and tighten. Ready for anything. Your vision is sharp. Every twitch, every flutter. And when everything aligns, that ball moves in slow motion and comes up to meet you.

Like an old friend.

And when you hit that sweet spot.

“toc!”

It’s like pure heaven.

That ball flies like a bird.

You watch your opponent scramble and before she hits the ball..

Wham!

You’re there. You know where to be.

From ***Dance Nation*** (2018)

by Clare Barron

**ZUZU**: People say I dance with a lot of grace and that I'm beautiful and above-average and stuff. Here's what they don't say.

They don't say I'm sensational.

They don't say I take their breath away.

They don't say they could watch me forever.

They don't say they cry when they watch me dance.

When they watch Amina dance, they cry. I know.

Because I cry when I watch Amina dance.

My Mom asked me to dance for her cancer. She saw a documentary about this woman who did a dance and it cured her cancer and so she asked me if I would do a dance for her and my Mom is not normally like that but she was feeling really emotional at the time and she kept breaking down all the time so I did this solo at the year-end recital for my Mom and her cancer. And I tried to make it the best dance I had ever done. I tried to like feel things with my arms and my legs. I tried to make people feel things with my arms and my legs ...

But it was just an ordinary dance, really. A lot of people didn't know it was about my Mom's cancer at all. They thought it was about whatever our dances are usually about. Flowers. Or sailors, you know. Not cancer. I didn't make them cry. I didn't make myself cry. I don't even think I made my Mom cry. She told me that she liked it. But she didn't cry. And it didn't cure her cancer, so. Her cancer actually got worse after that, so. It was just an ordinary dance.

From **The Fantasticks** (1960)

music by Harvey Schmidt and book and lyrics by Tom Jones

**LUISA:** This morning a bird woke me up. It was a lark, or a peacock; something like that. So I said hello. And it vanished, flew away, the very moment I said hello! It was quite mysterious. So do you know what I did? I went to my mirror and brushed my hair two hundred times, without stopping. And as i was brushing it, my hair turned mauve. No, honestly! Mauve! Then red. then some sort of a deep blue when the sun hit it.... I'm sixteen years old, and every day something happens to me. i don't know what to make of it. When i get up in the morning and get dressed, I can tell...something's different. I like to touch my eyelids, because they're never quite the same. oh, oh, oh! I hug myself till my arms turn blue, then I close my eyes and cry and cry till the tears come down and I can taste them. I love to taste my tears. I am special. I am special! Please god, please, don't let me be normal!

From **Romeo and Juliet** (1597)

By William Shakespeare

**JULIET:** Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek  
For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny  
What I have spoke; but farewell, compliment .  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say ‘Ay’,  
And I will take thy word; yet, if thou swear’st,  
Thou mayst prove false. At lovers’ perjuries,  
They say, Jove laughs . O gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully,  
Or if thou think’st I am too quickly won,  
I’ll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo, but else not for the world.  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,  
And therefore thou mayst think my haviour light.  
But trust me, gentleman, I’ll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard’st, ere I was ware,  
My true-love passion. Therefore pardon me,  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

From ***Cost of Living*** (2016)

By Martyna Majok

**JESS:** Most people assume my name’s Jessica. It’s not. My mother came to the country with no English, very little, and she’s in this hospital in Newark—it’s not there anymore this is clearly like a few years—and the nurse hands me to my Mom for the first time. She was here alone. No family. And the nurse asks my Mom like, what’ll you call her? And my Mom just looks at her. She said that’s the moment it hit her, how alone she is. How little English. How everything now it’s hers. Her shoulders. And she thought the nurse said—When my Mom was asked a question, she’d usually either just say ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or okay like judgin on if it was a man or a woman she was answerin, or if they looked nice, I mean most times people just asked her like, do you want a bag or are you okay and so she says ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or I’m okay. And so my Mom, when the nurse asked my name, I think she meant to say yes but, in her, y’know, her accent...

So my name’s Jess. Just Jess.

They were nice enough to put in two s’s.

From **Transit of Venus** (2006)

by Maureen Hunter

**CELESTE:** No. I don’t do it, you see. I don’t do any of it. I don’t baste, I don’t sew, I don’t knit, I don’t mend, I don’t darn, I don’t tat, I don’t embroider and I do not do petti-point! I do, however, read. And because I can read, I can learn. Oh, I can’t actually travel – you have the advantage of me there - but I can read about travel, I can dream about it, I can imagine what it’s like. I’ve been everywhere with you. You don’t know it, but I have. I know every inch of sea you’ve sailed, every island you’ve set foot on. I know how the rains come sweeping across the mountains of Ile de France, and how the island itself lies curled in the sea like an oyster. I know about the doldrums and trade winds and tides. Tides! Tides are so mysterious. We’ve known about them since the days of Alexander, yet there’s so much we don’t know. Why, for instance are there two high tides and two low tides every day in some places, and only one in others? Why the tides of Saint Malo rise almost ten meters and only a fraction of that on the islands you visited? They do; did you know that? I want to know why. I want to know everything there is to know before I die. This was your gift to me, you see? You pointed me at the sky and said, look! And when I looked, what did I see? Mirrors! Mirrors reflecting mirrors reflecting mirrors, on and on to infinity. So much to know, so much to learn, so much to wonder about. Once you begin to wonder, it’s impossible, isn’t it – inconceivable! – to abandon that sense of wonder for anything as straight-forward and mundane as a needle and a piece of thread.

From **Macbeth** (c1623)

By William Shakespeare

LADY MACBETH  
Out, damned spot: out, I say. One; two. Why  
then ’tis time to do’t. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord,  
fie, a soldier and afeared? What need we fear? Who  
knows it when none can call our power to account?  
Yet who would have thought the old man to have  
had so much blood in him?

LADY MACBETH  
The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is she now?  
What, will these hands ne’er be clean? No more  
o’that, my lord, no more o’that. You mar all with  
this starting.

LADY MACBETH  
Here’s the smell of the blood still. All the  
perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.  
Oh, oh, oh.

LADY MACBETH  
Wash your hands, put on your nightgown, look  
not so pale. I tell you yet again, Banquo’s buried; he  
cannot come out on’s grave.

LADY MACBETH  
To bed, to bed: there’s knocking at the gate. Come,  
come, come, come, give me your hand. What’s done,  
cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed.

From **The Seagull**  (1895)

by Anton Chekhov

(Translation from the Russian by Elisaveta Fen)

**NINA**: Why do you say that you have kissed the ground I walked on? You should kill me rather*. [She bends over the table]* I am so tired. If I could only rest--rest. [She raises her head] I am a sea-gull--no--no, I am an actress*. [She hears ARKADINA and TRIGORIN laughing in the distance, runs to the door on the left and looks through the keyhole]* He is there too. *[She goes back to TREPLIEFF]* Ah, well--no matter. He does not believe in the theatre; he used to laugh at my dreams, so that little by little I became down-hearted and ceased to believe in it too. Then came all the cares of love, the continual anxiety about my little one, so that I soon grew trivial and spiritless, and played my parts without meaning. I never knew what to do with my hands, and I could not walk properly or control my voice. You cannot imagine the state of mind of one who knows as he goes through a play how terribly badly he is acting. I am a sea-gull--no--no, that is not what I meant to say. Do you remember how you shot a seagull once? A man chanced to pass that way and destroyed it out of idleness. That is an idea for a short story, but it is not what I meant to say. *[She passes her hand across her forehead]* What was I saying? Oh, yes, the stage. I have changed now. Now I am a real actress. I act with joy, with exaltation, I am intoxicated by it, and feel that I am superb. I have been walking and walking, and thinking and thinking, ever since I have been here, and I feel the strength of my spirit growing in me every day. I know now, I understand at last, Constantine, that for us, whether we write or act, it is not the honour and glory of which I have dreamt that is important, it is the strength to endure. One must know how to bear one's cross, and one must have faith. I believe, and so do not suffer so much, and when I think of my calling, I do not fear life.

From **Blue Stockings** (2013)

by Jessica Swale

**TESS:** There was a girl at home. Lived at the parsonage. Annabel. She’d spend a whole afternoon sewing a ribbon onto a bonnet, and she’d be content. Why wasn’t that enough for me, Celia? You know, I’d climb the roof of Will’s classroom just to listen. Once I lost my footing and they found me hanging by my underskirt, but I wouldn’t let go of my notebook. I should have fallen and cracked my skull right then and there, I’d have been better off. But no. I was stubborn. Forfeit any hope of reputation, of a good match, wreck Mother’s nerves with worry, all for this, to be here. And then I meet a boy. A poet. A poet! In a library. And I fall for him like a rock. And suddenly I can’t think because my mind is full of him. I read Keats and hear his voice. I look at Vermeer and there he is, in oils. And I love him with every thought and bone and sinew. And then he buys a ring. But it’s not for me. And now. What am I now? He’s caved out my heart, Celia. What do I do?

From **Walking into the Bigness** (2014)

By Richard Frankland

Running into the Willy-Willy

**RICHARD:** Later. We’re about 3000k’s in. Me and Mum. Yeah, I’d gone back home. Now I’m outside of a town on the Nullarbor somewhere, hungry, walking – been up to Broome for my sister’s wedding, hitchhiked to Perth, slept under a tree at the Kalgoorlie turn off. We’d lost our house in Portland but most of the family’s in Canberra so we’re heading there. Things hadn’t turned out so we’d left Broome with no money. Not a zac, not a brass razoo. I am the man. I am 15. It’s 1979. We walk and walk and walk.

Here the land seems to go on forever. And I, I’ve lost everything. Got nothing. Can’t even get a feed. No money. No blankets. And I am not sure why, but - I have this canvas bag full of my songs, poems, stories. And so I, I just walk into the bigness - Mum’s watching - and I pull it all out and throw it as hard as I can.

From nowhere a Willy-Willy comes and picks it up mid-flight and grabs it all and whizzes it around. Mum yells: ‘No!’ - and runs into the Willy-Willy.

Her hair’s flinging about, whipped up, down, to the side. She’s yelling and snatching it all back from the wind. It was like she was challenging nature itself. And she snatches the stuff, the songs, the poems, and the rest.

I am breathless, watching. The Willy-Willy passes, off into the distance, a whirl of dust, fearless in its journey. Mum stands there, tears falling, hair everywhere, handfuls of my writings. Without a word I take them from her and stuff them back in my bag. Dunno what else to do with ‘em. Now, gotta get out of here and find myself another job.

From **Berlin (**2021)

by Joanna Murray Smith

**TOM:** I wasn’t interested at first. I didn’t want to get drawn into…I don’t know. but my mother showed me the databases…It was just a – a casual thing-but the pieces started to come together…The Nazis meticulously documented what they stole. Over 20,000 works on neatly typed index cards, now online. I found the Picasso and the Chagall and the Klee. But no Constable. No Aphrodite. I went back through the records to see how the works were acquired…And I began to wonder if the dealer hadn’t kept a memento for himself. Lo and behold, the Constable was formally listed when your parents put it into the Sotheby’s sale in ’89. They retracted it as you know.

[Beat.]

Perhaps they knew someone might be looking for it. Beat. He allows a moment for this to sink in. It wasn’t hard to track your mother via her own website. I told her I was writing my doctorate on English Romantic painters and I’d love to see her Constable. ‘My daughter Charlotte has it,’ she said. In Berlin.’ Your Facebook page had enough clues to narrow it down. Shots of you hanging out of a window in summer above a ramen place, et cetera. There’s a photo of you in your street in a crazy wig with your street number behind you. Your neighbour was kind enough to tell me you were working at the bar when I bumped into him in the stairwell. [Beat.] And there you were. [Beat.] And here I am.

From ***The Cherry Orchard*** (1904)

By Anton Chekhov (Adap. S Stone.)

**TROFIMOV:** We talked a lot yesterday, but we didn't get anywhere. A proud man, at least in your sense of the word, has something mystical about him. And you may be right. But if we look at the thing quite simply and don't try to be too clever, then what room is there for pride and what's the sense of it all anyway, if in fact man is a pretty poor physiological specimen and if the great majority of humanity is crude, stupid and profoundly miserable? It's time we stopped admiring ourselves. The only thing to do is work . . . Here in Russia very few fine people actually do any work. The kind of intellectuals I know don’t do anything. They call themselves an intelligentsia, but they speak to their servants as inferiors and treat the peasants like animals. Science is something they just talk about and about art they know precious little. Oh they're all very earnest, going around looking all solemn. And what does it mean to die? Perhaps we have a hundred senses and perhaps, when we die we lose only the five we know, while the other 95 live on. Still I see a bright and beautiful future for humanity. For so long the greater part of human existence has been this suffering. A select few controlled the wealth, grinding the majority into the dirt beneath them. And recently, as the world has developed and machines start to replace the worker, another kind of tyrant is emerging. Not born of wealth but having fought tooth and nail to gain it, he is greedy and uncouth without any of the delicacy or the generosity of the aristocrat, instead all righteous, self-satisfied and clumsy. And both the aristocrat and the oligarch ignore the one strongest asset of mankind, the community. This is the future I see before us. Yet what we have got now but dirt, vulgarity and squalor. I loathe all the earnest faces. They scare me and so do earnest conversations. Why can't we just keep quiet for a change?

From **Henry V** (c1599)

by William Shakespeare

**BOY:** As young as I am, I have observed these three swashers. I am boy to them all three: but all they three, though they would serve me, could not be man to me; for indeed three such antics do not amount to a man. For Bardolph, he is white-livered and red-faced; by the means whereof a' faces it out, but fights not. For Pistol, he hath a killing tongue and a quiet sword; by the means whereof a' breaks words, and keeps whole weapons. For Nym, he hath heard that men of few words are the best men; and therefore he scorns to say his prayers, lest a' should be thought a coward: but his few bad words are matched with as few good deeds; for a' never broke any man's head but his own, and that was against a post when he was drunk. They will steal any thing, and call it purchase. Bardolph stole a lute-case, bore it twelve leagues, and sold it for three half pence. Nym and Bardolph are sworn brothers in filching, and in Calais they stole a fire-shovel: I knew by that piece of service the men would carry coals. They would have me as familiar with men's pockets as their gloves or their handkerchers: which makes much against my manhood, if I should take from another's pocket to put into mine; for it is plain pocketing up of wrongs. I must leave them, and seek some better service: their villany goes against my weak stomach, and therefore I must cast it up.

From **A Midsummer Night's Dream** (c1594)

by William Shakespeare

**LYSANDER:** A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager

Of great revenue, and she hath no child:

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;

And she respects me as her only son.

There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;

And to that place the sharp Athenian law

Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,

Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;

And in the wood, a league without the town,

Where I did meet thee once with Helena,

To do observance to a morn of May,

There will I stay for thee..

From **Three Sisters** (1900)

by Anton Chekhov

(Translated from the Russian by Elisaveta Fen)

**ANDREY:** Oh, where has all my past life gone to? – the time when I was young and gay and clever, when I used to have fine dreams and great thoughts, and the present and the future were bright with hope? Why do we become so dull and commonplace and uninteresting almost before we’ve begun to live? Why do we get lazy, indifferent, useless, unhappy?… This town’s been in existence for two hundred years; a hundred thousand people live in it, but there’s not one who’s any different from all the others! There’s never been a scholar or an artist or a saint in this place, never a single man sufficiently outstanding to make you feel passionately that you wanted to emulate him. People here do nothing but eat, drink and sleep… Then they die and some more take their places, and they eat, drink and sleep, too, – and just to introduce a bit of variety into their lives, so as to avoid getting completely stupid with boredom, they indulge in their disgusting gossip and vodka and gambling and law-suits. The wives deceive their husbands, and the husbands lie to their wives, and pretend they don’t see anything and don’t hear anything … and all this overwhelming vulgarity and pettiness crushes the children and puts out any spark they might have in them, so that they, too, become miserable half-dead creatures, just like one another and just like their parents!

From **Choir Boy** (2012)

by Tarell Alvin McCraney

**PHARUS:** I know, I know, Momma…I’m not going to

embarrass anybody,

It will be good. Maybe…I don’t know if I am going to

Be singing this year. I know that’s the thing I’m good

At. No, I’m not giving any speech. You know I don’t

like

Being up having freedom of will to say what I please.

Right. Right…Something I didn’t mean come right on

Out. I just called to say hey, really. I mean it’s getting

close,

I didn’t even really believe it would happen

I mean I did, I know you would have killed me, but…

Mama, that’s not Christian. Or lady like. I’m sorry,

I’m not trying to tell you how to be a woman. What?

I…right…right. He’s good. He asked about you

the other

Day. No that’s, that’s David, he’s the one going to be

A minister. Anthony is my roommate. On the…right

On the baseball team. Mama, please don’t let nobody

catch

You saying that Anthony is a fine-ass li’l boy. They will!

They will put you in jail. No…I don’t know what

they doing for

Graduation, prolly just walking like I’m is…I am.

You…you coming, right? I know you got a lot but I

Just asked. Right you don’t have to be here to

Know I graduated. Hope you proud. You will be…

You will be.

From **OFF CENTRE** (1993)

by Haresh Sharma

**VIDOD:** Ask me another one…no, there is an answer. You see when we are on the conveyor belt in babyland, God gives us something special…blind, AIDS, hole-in-heart, short-sighted, schizophrenia, depression… actually, he’s not there standing at the conveyor belt. That’s too tiring. His administrative assistant does it. God works from His aircon room. And that’s where He decides. And it’s not easy. But He does it well. And you know what I think? [Whispers] I think it’s His admin assistant that’s corrupted…anyhow change, change. I was supposed to be given a good voice… be a top singer. Instead He gave me mental illness. Yours also is a mistake. You were supposed to be a doctor.

It doesn’t matter, Saloma. God… God is not important. I’ll take care of you, ok?

From **You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown** (1967)

by Clark Gesner

**CHARLIE:** I think lunchtime is about the worst time of day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes, mornings aren't so pleasant either. Waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night, too. Lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between when I do all those stupid things. Well, lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. Peanut butter. Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely...I guess they're right. And when you're really lonely, the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. There's that cute little red-headed girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she would do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her?...She'd probably laugh right in my face...it's hard on a face when it gets laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over and sit there. I could do that right now. All I have to do is stand up...I'm standing up!...I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward, she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why shouldn't she look at me? Is there any reason in the world why she shouldn't look at me? Is she so great, and I'm so small, that she can't spare one little moment?...SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! *(he puts his lunchbag over his head.)* ...Lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. If that little red-headed girl is looking at me with this stupid bag over my head she must think I'm the biggest fool alive. But, if she isn't looking at me, then maybe I could take it off quickly and she'd never notice it. On the other hand...I can't tell if she's looking, until I take it off! Then again, if I never take it off I'll never have to know if she was looking or not. On the other hand...it's very hard to breathe in here. *(he removes his sack)* Whew! She's not looking at me! I wonder why she never looks at me? Oh well, another lunch hour over with...only 2,863 to go. *(BEAT)* Now remember what I said.

From **Too Young For Ghosts** (1985)

by Janis Balodis

**GILBERT**: We merely see things differently and place different importance on what we see. You charge from one thing to another and because you cover a lot of ground you think you have seen a lot. Consequently, you make no sense of what you see or how one thing is related to another. You want to see it all and yet see nothing. Others will come afterwards and be astounded at the things we missed. But still a moment. Notice this tree grows in the soil, that this beetle is found on this tree and the birds feed on its berries. Look deeper still. Open up the bird, split the tree, dig the soil. That way you can steal nature's secrets. You can learn so much just sitting here. Move fifty yards in any direction and everything is different. My world is what is within my field of vision. If I go to see what is there, I miss what is here. I build a picture of this clearing by putting together the little things that make it up. I build a picture of Australia by putting together the clearings. I am happy, but for the knowledge that I won't see it all. I can't cover the ground fast enough.

From **Away** (1986)

by Michael Gow

**TOM:** Yeah, that's what I had. An infection. Everyone knew I had some infection. I was sick. I was told the infection was running its course. That I had to fight. I did. One day a doctor came and sat on my bed and had a long talk with me. He told me that before I got completely well again I would get a lot worse, get really, really sick. And no matter how sick I got not to worry because it meant that soon I'd start to get well again. He was full of it. He couldn't look me in the face to say it. He stared at the cabinet next to the bed the whole time. And the nurses were really happy whenever they were near me, but when I stared them in the face, in the end they'd look away and bite their lips. When I was able to go home the doctor took me into his office and we had another talk. I had to look after myself. No strain, no dangerous activity. Keep my spirits up.

From **The Matchmaker** (1954)

by Thornton Wilder

**CORNELIUS:** Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers for years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs Molloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether - from where you're sitting - you can see - well, for instance, the way (pointing to the edge of his right eye) her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time, and bought this and that, and I said "Yes, ma'am", and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed, in my opinion. They're so different from men! Everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. (he laughs) Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious, too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time - of pride and a sort of play-acting: I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important; but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

From **The Season at Sarsaparilla** (1962)

By Patrick White

**ROY:** When summer closes the door on chalkdust, and foxy questions of forty children, the mind should find release. But it doesn’t. Nobody who has been boxed is ever quite free. His thoughts home like pigeons, to roost on their familiar perches . . . with the boxed thoughts of those he has never really left.

Here I am then . . smelling of salt, sun and seaweed capsules popped in the heat of the day. Wearing its glaze of summer, my body is more or less renewed . . while my mind lurks in stuffy corners, filled with Genoa velvet and silky oak veneers. Where the body ignores, the mind reminds . . that the radio hasn’t left off playing in empty rooms . . that the TV will continue to dissolve human personality, like gelatine in tepid water.

Of course, We-Who-Know-All-This hate it, and promote ourselves to escape to something better. But wonder if that exists . . and depend on those twin dazzlers, time and motion, to help us believe we are doing and being. Who can resist deceiving himself when the razzle-dazzle is on . . .

Here they go now. That nice girl Judy Pogson can’t give the violin away. She won an Instrumental Section once. At night her dreams breathe music. Its curtain hides whatever she has to discover.

All the afternoon my sister Mavis will have had the wind. Her time is getting close. This evening she could kill the carrots

And the dogs . . . the dogs have never really stopped barking in anyone’s mind.

From **Harry Potter and the Cursed Child** (2017)

by JK Rowling, John Tiffany, Jack Thorne

**SCORPIUS:** (exploding) Try my life! People look at you because your dad’s the famous Harry Potter, saviour of the wizarding world. People look at me because they think my dad is Voldemort. Voldemort. Can you even slightly imagine what that’s like? Have you ever even tried? No. Because you can’t see beyond the end of your nose. Because you can’t see beyond the end of your stupid thing with your dad. He will always be Harry Potter, you know that, right? And you will always be his son. And I know it’s hard, and the other kids are awful, but you have to learn to be okay with that, because – there are worse things, okay? There was a moment I was excited, when I realized time was different, a moment when I thought maybe my mum hadn’t got sick. Maybe my mum wasn’t dead. But no, turns out, she was. I’m still the child of Voldemort, without a mother, giving sympathy to the boy who doesn’t ever give anything back. So I’m sorry if I’ve ruined your life because I tell you – you wouldn’t have a chance of ruining mine – it was already ruined. You just didn’t make it better. Because you’re a terrible – the most terrible – friend.

From **Death Of a Salesman** (1949)

by Arthur Miller

**BIFF:** Now hear this, Willy, this is me. You know why I had no address for three months? I stole a suit in Kansas City and I was in jail. I stole myself out of every good job since high school! And I never got anywhere because you blew me so full of hot air I could never stand taking orders from anybody! That’s whose fault it is! It’s goddam time you heard this! I had to be big boss shot in two weeks, and I’m through with it! Willy! I ran down eleven flights with a pen in my hand today. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me? And in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I stopped in the middle of that building and I saw—the sky. I saw the things that I love in this world. The work and the food and time to sit and smoke. And I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don’t want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am!