

ARTWORLD

HONORS THESIS

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by

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ARTWORLD

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Artist's Foreword

The process of writing this play, while often wrought with its own unique perils, has, in the end, been a deeply rewarding one. Based in part on the works of psychologists Dan Sperber and Hugo Mercier (*Why do humans reason? Arguments for an argumentative theory*, [2011]), as well as art critic Arthur Danto (*The Artworld*, [1964]; *After the End of Art*, [1997]), this work represents the culmination of my experience thus far in the world of art culture.

It was my intent with this piece to provide a compilation of warring – yet factually sound – points-of-view with which audience members of opposing ideologies could happily find a compatriot of their own. My challenge as a playwright, ironically, was distancing myself from the script as its author, and instead acting as a sort of silent historian – respectful of the story, yet weary of commenting on it.

After finishing a few early drafts of the script, an initial staged-reading was conducted, and with the wealth of information gleaned from it, I intend to continue updating this work in future years.

It has been an honor living with – and learning from – these selfish, passionate, crude, and infinitely righteous characters for as long as I have. I hope they are as inspirational to you as they have been to me.

Ryan Bovee, 2014

Abstract

Artworld is a two-act thesis play on poetics. The plot follows the young life of a spoken-word poet, who illegally takes up residence in a commercial warehouse with a group of fellow artists. The group hosts a weekly open-mic to help pay their electricity bills. The central themes of the piece explore the basic definitions of art (and how those definitions have evolved over time) as well as the artist's need to express. Ultimately, the play asks its audience to consider the differences (or lack thereof) between personal expression and art as forms of outward communication.

Acknowledgements

For Dr. John Hood, who pushed me even when I refused to push myself.

For my parents, Karen and Steve Bovee, without whom I should have no foundation on which to stand, much less to write a word.

Finally, for my grandfather, August Ganze, who introduced me to the magic of storytelling and steadfastly encouraged me to tell the damn things.

ACT 1 PROLOGUE

A warehouse. No one is present.

The space is filled with many various pieces of artwork, ranging from all types of styles and mediums. A worn couch, chair and coffee table are arranged in the center of the room.

A film projection begins playing.

STREET ARTIST

Alright, alright listen, listen, this is what I'd say – I'd look him right in the eye – and I'd say like, "Let me tell you something about *art*: you don't want that shit. If you have any choice," I'd say, "If you have *any* other choice, take that one. Go be like uh.. a doctor or a lawyer or something. Because art is poisonous. It's free thought. And there's no room for free thinking anymore. It's a waste of society's time." So I'd tell him, you know, "Don't think; don't make art; and whatever you do, stay the fuck away from that warehouse." That's what I'd say – every time. He never did listen to me though.

ART HISTORIAN

See, I think the real stigma with the creative process is this idea that it has to live up to a certain standard. I mean, the open-mic? It had no standards. There were no rules. And honestly I think that's what got Steven so excited about it.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Yeah ... I did a series of designs for the warehouse around the time he was there. My older brother used to stencil these uh ... "Dia de los Muertos" skeletons, and I sort of picked it up after him. It seemed ... fitting, you know? Anyway, that's how it was with Steven too – him and his poetry: they just fit together. The minute you saw him at that warehouse, you just knew he was supposed to be there.

WRITER

What it comes down to, for me at least, in the end ... he never thought there were people like him, in the world, anywhere. That's a weird thing to think about. You spend your whole life thinking you're the only one who gets it, and then one day: poof! Everybody gets it. That's a big change. It's funny, I still remember the first time he ever came out to the open-mic. He was like this scared little kid. Seems weird now.

Pause.

The projection ends.

Blackout.

ACT 1 SCENE 1 – THE PAST (OPEN-MIC)

The lights flicker on. It is theatrically lit, with a homemade rigging of flood lights and lamps illuminating the center of the space.

Felicia enters, rolling out a cooler of beer. She is followed by Sydney, who leaps atop the ice chest once it is in place. Laura enters behind them both with a hat in her hands; it is filled with slips of paper. Finally, Steven enters from the front and takes a seat among members of the audience.

SYDNEY

(To the audience.)

What up bitches? Welcome, once again, to yet another week at the warehouse. For those of you who have not been out to see us before, please, repeat after me: ShhhhHhh! What you're about to see is not a sight for the outside world, so let's try to keep it in, yeah? If you *know* then you're in the '*know*'; if you don't, well, you better just turn around and go home, climb back into those comfortable little beds, and dream those same old dreams you've been dreaming. Because this not a place for the complacent. *This* is not the place for you.

Sydney claps his hands and Laura presents him the hat. Sydney draws a slip of paper from inside.

SYDNEY

Once again, welcome to this week's open-mic. If you know any cops, don't tell them we're living here. If you want a set, put your name in the hat. First up: could be ... a painter, a poet, a crudely drawn image of a penis. An infinite number of things, really. But only one true reality.

Pause.

Sydney reads the slip of paper and then hands it to Felicia.

FELICIA

What?

SYDNEY

Read it. It's Art's friend, from earlier.

Felicia reads the paper.

FELICIA

(To the audience.)

Is there a Steven ... Doyen, here?

STEVEN

Uh, yeah. I'm right here.

FELICIA

The poet, right?

STEVEN

Yeah.

Felicia shrugs and hands the paper back to Sydney.

SYDNEY

We didn't know you were doing a set, man.

STEVEN

I thought I'd try it out.

SYDNEY

Well come on up!

Sydney beckons Steven forward.

SYDNEY

(To the audience.)

Ladies and gents – this is fun – we have a relative new-comer among us tonight. See, we found out about Steven here through a mutual acquaintance. Apparently he recently dropped out of school and he's about to get kicked out of his apartment on top of that. So, needless to say, we felt a sense of duty as fellow technically-homeless-individuals to make sure Steven didn't end up on the streets. So, without further ado, let me introduce to you our first act of the night, the soon-to-be-newest resident of the warehouse, hailing from ... New York City ...?

Steven nods.

SYDNEY

...And wasting away here in Austin, Texas – a man who we are very much hoping does not try to kill us in our sleep – Steven Doyen. Oh! Also, guys: buy beer. Buy *lots* of beer. We have to pay the electricity this week, so ... Steven.

Steven hesitantly approaches the others. He takes a moment to get his bearings before beginning.

STEVEN

Um ... Hi. My ... my name is Steven. Doyen. It's french. Uh, my friend Art told me about this place, so ... I'm glad that he did. I don't really know what else to say ... So I guess I'm just gonna start. This is a poem.

Pause.

STEVEN

Story,
Structure,
Rhyme,
And Chaos.
Four things that make up a poem,
And, as it happens, a human life.

I'm going to tell you a story
And then a structure
And then a rhyme
And then maybe you can find the chaos in it.
Alright.

So on top of the fact that I just dropped out of school,
I recently found out that my mother has cancer.
It's not bad, not real bad,
But there's something inside of her now that is bad,
And that has changed things considerably, for me.
See, I started scribbling poems on the walls when I was four years old,
Never told anyone what I was thinking, just wrote it down,
And my mother, she got this idea that I needed to get my ass out of town,
Go to some university, use my words, be a lawyer.
So that became my story, and eventually, my structure.
The structure of my life. Like an idea in the mind finally penned on paper.
And of course I followed this path, right? I wanted to make my mother proud.
Was never very much of a talker, but I always secretly knew how to work a crowd.
So I put up my poetry and I got out my books of law and psychology,
And you see, one of the things that I learned-
I found out that crowds think differently than individuals.
(This all ties back, I promise.)
Again, crowds *think* differently than individuals.
It's true.
Right now, for example, I am thinking differently than you.
And I knew this.
And I was gonna use this.

It became my rhythm and my rhyme.
 So story, structure, rhyme.
 I could do anything that I wanted as long as I had the time
 And the words;
 I could divide a crowd in half,
 A, B, A, B,
 Back and forth like poetry;
 I could bend any will that I wanted to me.

But then I found out my mother has cancer,
 And now I'm here,
 In a warehouse,
 Amid this chaos,
 Seeking an answer that I cannot find.
 I was asked today
 Why I really want to quit school,
 Why I really want to live here.
 (And I do.)
 And the truth
 Is that I don't think I live another year as a lawyer.
 See, I had to be that four year old poet again;
 I had to find where all that happiness had been hiding,
 And providing I found it, I knew that I would never let go.

And so, I am here.
 But the twist:
 My mother doesn't know any of this.
 I'm supposed to graduate in one year
 And I have no idea how to tell her that I won't.

And for the first time, I'm afraid of the future.
 Of the cancer and the chaos and the "What the fuck are you gonna do, sir?"

And honestly, I don't know.
 But until I do,
 I'm going to keep coming back to you,
 Once a week, every week,
 And opening up my mind.
 I am going to bring you a story, and a structure, and hopefully a rhyme.
 And I am going to keep doing this until I figure out how to tell my mother the truth
 And rid this chaos from my life.
 So, thank you for having me,
 And I'll see you next week.

Pause.

STEVEN
That's it.

SYDNEY
Well alright!

ACT 1 SCENE 2 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

Abigail enters from the back of the warehouse; she is holding a voice recorder.

Art enters behind her.

ABIGAIL
So that was the first poem?

ART
Yeah.

ABIGAIL
Of how many?

ART
Five. There's five on that tape. That's not the best one though. Some people wouldn't even call that one *poetry*, but you have to understand, he was just starting out then.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. Of course.

Pause.

ART
Um ... did you bring a camera or anything?

ABIGAIL
No, that's not how we do it. Uh ... I usually do a preliminary interview, and then my husband will follow it up later with the actual camera.

ART
Right. So this is like ... the rough draft?

ABIGAIL

I guess you could say that. Questions now; documentary later. You know, so we can really make sure we're asking the right questions. You don't want to end up with a story that doesn't flow.

ART

I just think it's cool that someone's interested in all this.

ABIGAIL

Oh, we're very interested.

ART

Have you interviewed anyone else yet?

ABIGAIL

The ones we could find. You said Steven lived here for a year, right?

ART

Yeah.

ABIGAIL

Why'd he leave?

ART

You're getting ahead of yourself.

ABIGAIL

Okay!

ART

Steven was ... my friend. Probably my best friend. When he first moved into town, I was like the only person he knew, so when the university said they were gonna kick him out, I knew I had to help. It's weird, sometimes I feel kind of responsible for all of it. I don't know if that's good or bad.

ABIGAIL

Well, I certainly wouldn't be here if there wasn't a story. So, there's that.

ART

True.

The lights flicker.

In the past, Sydney enters, removes his shoes, and falls onto the couch.

ART

The uh ... the power's kind of finicky now days.

ABIGAIL

You know it's crazy – actually seeing this place, in person. Your e-mails didn't really do it justice.

ART

You should have seen it back then. Now it's just ... quiet. Like the ghosts of the past are wandering. Or, I dunno, maybe we're just the ghosts of the future.

ABIGAIL

Well, that's certainly ominous.

ART

I guess so.

ABIGAIL

Would you like to keep going?

ART

Um, yeah. We could talk about, uh ... how about the day I helped him move in?

ABIGAIL

Sounds good to me.

ART

Cool. I can show you where his room was if you want.

ABIGAIL

Lead the way.

Art and Abigail exit.

ACT 1 SCENE 3 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Sydney is fast asleep.

FELICIA

(Off-stage.)

It's at the end of the hall! On your left.

Felicia enters.

Syd.
FELICIA

She nudges him with her foot.

Syd ...
FELICIA

Pause.

Sydney!
FELICIA

What?
SYDNEY

Wake up.
FELICIA

Why?
SYDNEY

FELICIA
Because, asshole, besides the fact that it's the middle of the fucking day, your buddy Art is here. He's in the back with Steven.

Who's Art?
SYDNEY

Felicia stops dead in her tracks.

What?
SYDNEY

Art is your drug dealer.
FELICIA

Oh ... Yeah. Art.
SYDNEY

FELICIA
Yeah. He's helping Steven move his shit in. If you'd sober up for five minutes you could help him.

SYDNEY

Where's Laura?

FELICIA

In the back. Painting.

SYDNEY

Well how come she doesn't have to help?

FELICIA

Because, she's painting. If you were doing something constructive, I wouldn't be bothering you either.

SYDNEY

Obviously you underestimate the ... constructive nature of dreams, Felicia. Freud said "dreams are the road to the unconscious."

FELICIA

Yeah? Well, Freud also said that children secretly want to fuck their parents. And I don't know about you, Sydney, but I don't want to fuck *my* dad.

SYDNEY

Well yeah, of course *you* wouldn't.

FELICIA

What is that supposed to mean?

Pause.

SYDNEY

Nothing.

Pause.

SYDNEY

It's just cause, like, the whole *lesbian* thing ... You know, cause you're like ... and stuff. You wouldn't want to have sex with your dad ... cause he's a guy ...

FELICIA

That's the only reason that you can think of that I wouldn't want to have sex with my father?

SYDNEY

I'll put my shoes on.

Probably a good idea.

FELICIA

Art and Steven enter from the back, both carrying boxes.

You're up!

ART

You beautiful man. Do you uh ... have anything for me?

SYDNEY

But of course.

ART

Art produces a joint and hands it to Sydney.

Oh I love you.

SYDNEY

Sydney finally notices Steven.

Steven! You want to smoke a joint?

SYDNEY

No, he doesn't.

FELICIA

Felicia snatches away the joint as quickly as Sydney can hold it out.

I'm alright.

STEVEN

You're poem last night: really good.

SYDNEY

Thanks.

STEVEN

Like really good, really good. You're gonna to fit in perfectly.

SYDNEY

Hey, Felicia, which room was it again? We got lost.

ART

FELICIA

Art, I literally just told you.

ART

I forgot.

FELICIA

Of course you did.

SYDNEY

(To Steven.)

In the event you hadn't put together the pieces yet, Felicia here is not a great big fan of Art.

FELICIA

Shut the fuck up, Sydney.

SYDNEY

You see, she thinks Art is a bad influence. Whereas I am a fairly big fan. And I'm sure you probably already know this, but one of the really interesting things about Art-the-man is that he doesn't actually know a fuck of a lot about art-the-concept. Which is pretty ironic – you could almost say it's "artsy". Like *reverse symbolism*, you know?

FELICIA

Reverse symbolism is not a thing.

SYDNEY

Everything is a thing.

Felicia shoots Sydney a death glare.

Pause.

SYDNEY

(To Art)

Tell you what, I'll show you where that room is.

FELICIA

Great idea!

Sydney offers to take the box Steven is carrying.

SYDNEY

Take a load off poet.

STEVEN

Thanks.

Sydney and Art exit.

FELICIA

You're not a drug dealer too, are you?

STEVEN

No, no. I'm not.

FELICIA

Good. How *do* you know Art?

STEVEN

Uh, we both worked together at a video store, back when I first got here. To Austin. Anyway, when I dropped out, he said he knew a place I could stay, so ... that's pretty much it. I'd never even heard of this place until last week.

FELICIA

Well, I guess you're little drug dealer buddy has some interesting friends.

STEVEN

Yeah. Seems like it.

Pause.

FELICIA

You said your mom has cancer?

STEVEN

Yeah.

FELICIA

That sucks.

STEVEN

It does. But, you know, it's not that bad. She says she's taking care of herself. And besides, even if I went home, I think I'd just stress her out with all of my ... stuff. So, I'm stuck.

FELICIA

'Caught at a crossroads.'

STEVEN

Yep.

FELICIA

Fair warning: I think maybe that's what this place is – a crossroads. Except *we're* stuck as the lame ass crossing guards and everyone else is just passing through.

STEVEN

Honestly, at the moment, I'm just happy to be stuck.

Laura enters, unaware of Steven.

LAURA

Hey, has anyone seen my cobalt blue?

Laura notices Steven.

LAURA

Oh. Hi.

They stare at each other for a long moment.

FELICIA

Hi.

LAURA

You're the uh ...

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

From last night ...

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

The poet.

STEVEN

Steven.

LAURA

Right. Laura.

STEVEN

It's nice to meet you, Laura.

LAURA

I liked your poem.

STEVEN

Thanks.

FELICIA

Laura here is gonna be a painter

STEVEN

Oh, really? That's cool.

FELICIA

Yeah it is. They're gonna be writing books about this chick someday.

LAURA

I don't know about that ...

FELICIA

Bullshit. Of course they are. And I'm gonna get the inside scoop!

STEVEN

So ... you're a writer then?

FELICIA

Art History. But yeah, I guess you have to write a little bit.

LAURA

She's good.

FELICIA

Psh. She's good. I'm surviving. Oh, FYI: me and this one grew up together. Basically she's like my kid sister. I moved to Austin; she followed. Except she went to the good school.

LAURA

ACC's not that bad.

FELICIA

Really? Community college doesn't count for shit. I might as well have just skipped the school and made the contacts. 'Course I have you for that.

LAURA

Whatever.

FELICIA

I love you!

LAURA

I love you too ...

FELICIA

But no, I have not seen your paint. Syd might have it.

LAURA

What would Syd be doing with my paint?

FELICIA

I don't know. Maybe he's shooting it up.

STEVEN

What does he do?

FELICIA

Syd? Um ... "Street art". But mostly he just owns a warehouse and smokes pot all day.

STEVEN

Sydney owns the warehouse?

FELICIA

Yeah. His uncle did, but then he died or something.

LAURA

I think it used to be a machine shop.

FELICIA

But now it is the happy home of hipsters!

LAURA

I'm gonna go find him.

Pause.

LAURA

(To Steven.)

Um ... Maybe we can talk poetry sometime? Since you'll be around.

I'd like that.

STEVEN

Cool.

LAURA

Laura exits.

Well that's adorable.

FELICIA

What?

STEVEN

Just so you know, she's into poets.

FELICIA

Wait, what?

STEVEN

Guys are fucking stupid.

FELICIA

Felicia gets up.

I'm gonna go help her.

FELICIA

Pause.

Are you really gonna be here a while?

FELICIA

Living here?

STEVEN

Yeah.

FELICIA

Until I figure out what else I'm gonna do.

STEVEN

Cool.

FELICIA

STEVEN

Oh wait! Can I get someone's phone number? In case I get locked out or something.

FELICIA

I don't own a phone actually.

STEVEN

Really?

FELICIA

Yeah. Too expensive. But uh ... you can get Syd's number from Art.

Art enters.

ART

What's up?

FELICIA

Steven needs Syd's number.

ART

Oh, yeah, okay, sure.

STEVEN

Thanks.

FELICIA

Oh, and, "Welcome".

Felicia exits.

ART

You know man, I think this is gonna be good. It's not quite the same as it was at the video store, but we still get to hang out and stuff.

STEVEN

Yeah. Except we're not getting paid.

ART

Well, I am ... You know, *drugs*.

STEVEN

Yeah ...

ART

You're gonna keep me updated and stuff, right? On life?

STEVEN

Yeah, of course. And you'll be here from time to time.

ART

Yeah. I deliver to Syd about once a week.

STEVEN

Thanks again for helping me move in.

ART

Anytime.

STEVEN

I'm gonna go check on the ... room.

ART

It's on the left.

Steven exits.

ACT 1 SCENE 4 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

Abigail enters, followed by Art.

ART

Can I ask you a question?

ABIGAIL

Go for it.

ART

Why this story?

ABIGAIL

Feeling insecure?

ART

No. Just ... I don't know. I might have been "the drug dealer friend", but it had an impact on *me*. I just don't know why *you* would be interested. You weren't part of it. Neither was your ... husband.

ABIGAIL

Have you ever heard of Artworld?

ART

Are you answering my question?

ABIGAIL

Yeah. I am.

ART

Okay. Well, I mean ... I've heard the two *words* ...

ABIGAIL

No, uh, one word, actually. *Artworld*. It was coined back in 1964 by this philosopher named Arthur Danto.

Art laughs.

ABIGAIL

What?

ART

Arthur. That's my name. Well, Art.

ABIGAIL

Oh, yeah. That's funny.

ART

It's like fate.

ABIGAIL

Or something. Anyway—

ART

Yeah.

ABIGAIL

There's an essay he wrote, called *The Artworld*, and in it, he talked about this concept that's always been kind of, I dunno, intriguing to me. Basically, he says that the way we perceive something determines how it actually is. So since every person perceives the world differently, that would mean that there are as many possible versions of reality as there are people.

ART

Okay ...

ABIGAIL

That's where "Artworld" comes in. See, we grow with the people around us, and we eventually form communities based on shared ideas. Like little ... bubbles. For example, a warehouse, to most people, would just be a big building you put things in. But to you, and to the little bubble of reality that you were part of, this warehouse was like the cradle of life .

ART

Yeah.

ABIGAIL

So, you and your friends shared a world that was different. A world with its own rules, and its own laws, and its own beliefs. An Artworld. And for me, as a filmmaker, those unique bubbles, or realities, or whatever you want to call them, those are things that I think the rest of us can learn from. It's strange, but it's also very, very important I think. Steven is important.

ART

Okay.

ABIGAIL

Okay?

ART

Yeah. Okay.

ABIGAIL

So can we listen to the next poem?

ART

Well, I probably need to set it up little bit first.

ABIGAIL

Fine by me.

ART

Okay. So, the next one that I have recorded took place in ... October I think. Steven was just starting to settle in at this point. He'd done a few other poems, but he was trying to write a new one about ... cell phones, if I remember correctly.

In the past, Steven enters and takes a seat. He begins scribbling in a notebook.

ABIGAIL

Cell phones?

ART

Yeah. I don't know why. But, it doesn't matter anyway because he never actually finished that one. See, he suddenly found himself ... *inspired* in a different direction. By something else. Or, someone else, I guess.

ABIGAIL

Like a muse?

ART

A what?

ABIGAIL

A person that inspires you.

ART

Okay, well then yeah ... yeah, a *muse*.

ACT 1 SCENE 5 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Felicia enters carrying an art book by the street artist Banksy.

FELICIA

Oh. Hey! You're out of your room.

STEVEN

Yeah. I thought I'd come out and do a little writing.

FELICIA

Well it's good to have you.

STEVEN

What is that?

FELICIA

Uh ...

SYDNEY

(Off-stage.)

Felicia!

FELICIA

Fuck. Don't say anything.

Felicia places the book on the coffee table and then quickly leaps over the couch and hides.

Uh ... okay.

STEVEN

Sydney enters.

Steven!

SYDNEY

Sydney ...

STEVEN

What's up, man?

SYDNEY

Just writing.

STEVEN

Cool! You gonna do another poem soon?

SYDNEY

Hopefully.

STEVEN

What's it about?

SYDNEY

Uh ... cell phones.

STEVEN

Okay. Pretty post-modern, man.

SYDNEY

Yeah ...

STEVEN

You seen Felicia?

SYDNEY

Nope. Something wrong?

STEVEN

Sydney is staring at the Banksy art book.

STEVEN

Sydney?

SYDNEY

WHY THE FUCK IS THIS BOOK OUT HERE?

After a moment, Felicia reveals herself.

FELICIA

Syd, we've been over this.

SYDNEY

Yeah we have.

FELICIA

It's a good book.

SYDNEY

It is. *So good* in fact, that it doesn't belong on a coffee table.

FELICIA

Okay, okay. So tell me, where does it belong?

SYDNEY

It belongs ... out in the streets!

FELICIA

You really want me to throw the book out in the street?

SYDNEY

That's not what I said!

FELICIA

I know. And I also know what you meant, but you're still wrong.

SYDNEY

I'm not wrong.

FELICIA

(To Steven.)

Me and Sydney have kind of a disagreement about this particular book.

STEVEN

What's it about?

FELICIA & SYDNEY

Banksy.

STEVEN

What's a Banksy?

Sydney makes a pained noise.

FELICIA

Here we go.

SYDNEY

Okay, first of all, it's not "*What* is a Banksy?", it's "*Who* is Banksy?" And second, really? I thought you were artsy man.

STEVEN

I never said that. I just said I liked poems.

SYDNEY

Dude. Banksy is only the greatest street artist that has ever lived or ever will live. He's basically like the Picasso-slash-Van Gogh-slash-Rembrandt-slash-I dunno-Bob Ross of wall-painted graffiti. Almost no one has ever even seen his face, so he's like this mystery. One night: empty wall; next morning: master piece. Nothing in between. The guy's a ninja with a can of spray paint.

STEVEN

That sounds really cool.

SYDNEY

Yeah, man. Banksy is the whole reason I wanted to be a street artist in the first place. You could learn a lot from him. You know, I actually met him once when I was in New York.

FELICIA

No you didn't.

SYDNEY

Yes, I did.

FELICIA

Yeah, and I'm sure you also solved the mystery of the Toynbee Tiles. The art community is forever in your debt.

SYDNEY

You know what, even if I haven't met Banksy – which I totally have – I know he doesn't belong in some yuppie coffee table book.

FELICIA

It's not yuppie. It's practical. Not everybody knows about him, right? Exhibit A. But, everyone does know what a fucking coffee table is, so why not spread the word?

SYDNEY

Because. You can't just do that. Banksy is about *protest* – he's anti-government, anti-capitalism – I mean, you can't just take that and sell it at your local book store.

FELICIA

Have you ever considered that maybe art is meant to, I dunno, change the world? Maybe the fact that this is in a book means that it did it's job.

SYDNEY

That's bullshit.

FELICIA

You're bullshit.

SYDNEY

You know, you're not being a very ideal lesbian right now.

FELICIA

Excuse me?

SYDNEY

I'm just saying, you're not ... uh, you're not currently doing a bang-up job of representing your ... culture in a non-stereotypical fashion.

FELICIA

Meaning I'm being an angry dyke.

SYDNEY

That's not what I said.

FELICIA

Be real careful there Sydney.

SYDNEY

That's not what I said.

Felicia gives Steven a sly look.

FELICIA

I don't have to be an ideal anything. And neither does this book. If it wants to be a book,
IT CAN BE A FUCKING BOOK!

Pause.

Felicia turns to Steven and smiles.

SYDNEY

Okay.

FELICIA

Don't talk to me right now.

SYDNEY

I'm just saying—

FELICIA

Don't.

SYDNEY

Okay. I'm sorry. I'm gonna go hang out with Art ... which is actually what I came to tell
you in the first place. So, I'm just gonna go ...

FELICIA

Well, have a good life then.

Felicia accidentally lets out a giggle.

SYDNEY

Wait, are you fucking with me?

FELICIA

Of course not.

SYDNEY

You *are* fucking with me!

FELICIA

No, I'm not.

SYDNEY

Screw this, I'm leaving.

FELICIA

Have *fun*!

Sydney flips off Felicia.

FELICIA

Oh, and if you pick up some girl, stay at her place, yeah?

SYDNEY

You know what? Maybe I'll just bring her back here and we'll do it on the coffee table, since apparently anything goes now days!

FELICIA

You're so easy.

SYDNEY

Whatever. Steven, always a pleasure. Look into Banksy, seriously.

Sydney exits.

STEVEN

That was fun.

FELICIA

Right? Syd's a total push over. You just have to know the right button combination and he completely falls apart.

STEVEN

You'll have to teach me your secrets.

FELICIA

Oh, it's simple. Up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, b, a.

STEVEN

Is that the Konami code?

FELICIA

Maybe.

STEVEN

You know video games?

FELICIA

Of course I do. There's a whole lot of art in the world, Steven. It's a waste to only experience part of it.

Pause.

FELICIA

But right now I have to go write a paper. Feel free to hang out, though. It's good to see you finally settling in.

Felicia exits.

Steven browses the Banksy book.

Laura enters. She fishes a beer out of the cooler.

LAURA

Hello ...!

STEVEN

Oh. Hey.

LAURA

Want a beer?

STEVEN

I'm good.

LAURA

You can have a sip of mine.

STEVEN

That's alright. What are you up to?

LAURA

Just taking a break. It's a nice night.

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

What are *you* up to?

STEVEN

Um ... well I was trying to write a poem, but I think I gave up.

LAURA

Having trouble?

STEVEN

You could say that.

LAURA

Maybe I can help.

STEVEN

Eh. I just don't really know what to say. I think I'm running out of words.

Pause.

LAURA

You ever go walking?

STEVEN

Sometimes.

LAURA

I like to go at night. Like right when the sun is going down. I just watch the darkness flood in like a wave, engulfing the world ... And everything changes. Everything takes on a different color and quality. Maybe that's what you need. A different perspective on what you already see.

STEVEN

Okay. And you can offer that?

LAURA

Well, the difference between me and that book in your hands is that I can talk back. So maybe.

STEVEN

You want to hear it?

LAURA

I'd like that.

STEVEN

It's not finished.

LAURA

That's alright.

STEVEN

Okay. Sure. Uh ... right now it's called "The Many Vices of Mobile Devices". It's about cell phones.

LAURA

Cool.

STEVEN

I have been thinking recently about burying my cell phone,
 Giving it a proper funeral
 Or simply skipping it like a flat stone
 Straight out into the ocean.
 But I don't.
 Because everyone keeps telling me not to lose contact.
 As if "contact" were something synonymous with the creation of I-phones and
 Blackberries;
 As if not having a cell phone were as preposterous as storybook fairies;
 As if loving
 And shoving together predestined bodies of flesh
 Could not be achieved without a mesh
 Of cables and wires
 And wireless providers;
 As if all the natural lovers were just ignorant
 Liars.

LAURA

That's it?

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

So what's the problem?

STEVEN

Well I dunno. I don't know where to go next.

Pause.

LAURA

You want my opinion?

STEVEN

Yeah. Obviously.

LAURA

You say it's a poem about cell phones, right? But to me, it seems like maybe you're not
 actually talking about cell phones.

STEVEN

I'm not?

LAURA

No. 'As if love could not be achieved without cables and wires.'

STEVEN

I mean, that's ... that's cell phones.

LAURA

Yeah, but it sounds more like you're talking about the disconnect between people, you know?

STEVEN

Okay, well yeah. I mean ... I guess I knew that.

LAURA

Well, that's how a lot of paintings are too. The image is one thing, but the message is something different. So maybe you're having trouble because you haven't made up your mind about the message yet.

STEVEN

Maybe.

LAURA

So Steven, what do you think about love?

STEVEN

Sorry?

LAURA

Well that's the message isn't it? Love.

STEVEN

Yeah. Uh ... love ... is ... good.

LAURA

Yes it is. Do you believe in true love?

Pause.

STEVEN

No. I don't think so.

LAURA

Why not?

STEVEN

It just doesn't seem possible to me. There's too many people in the world. I mean, how is everyone magically finding their soul mate in the same town? If you can fall in love with someone just because they're in the same room, aren't there, realistically, other worthy candidates?

LAURA

I don't know. But I'm also not the one writing a poem about it. *I've* always believed in it.

STEVEN

Really? Like "knights in shining armor" or whatever?

LAURA

Maybe.

STEVEN

You know, I've always thought that was kind of funny, no offense. It seems like pretty girls are always looking for the "perfect guy". But in reality, they don't end up with the "perfect guy". They just end up with some guy who tries to pretend he's perfect just because he thinks the girl is pretty.

LAURA

So you think I'm pretty then?

STEVEN

Please don't let that be the only thing you take from this conversation.

LAURA

No, no. I see your point.

STEVEN

So it's not cell phones. It's ... it's relationships. But what kind of relationship is a good kind?

LAURA

Well, you say true love doesn't exist, and I disagree, but maybe there's a middle ground. Like a ... "fuck you" kind of relationship.

STEVEN

A what?

LAURA

Sorry. I don't really like that word, but I thought that was a good way to put it.

STEVEN

No, the word is fine. I just don't know what the hell you meant.

LAURA

A "fuck you" relationship. Like, neither person pretends they're something they're not. They just say "fuck it" and act like themselves. Cell phone or no cell phone.

STEVEN

I don't know if something like that is possible.

LAURA

Well, they'd have to agree to coexist – create, like, a little bubble that's all their own.

STEVEN

Makes sense.

LAURA

Is that, hypothetically, something you'd be into?

STEVEN

A "fuck you" relationship?

LAURA

Yeah. Maybe that's what you're missing.

STEVEN

Hypothetically?

LAURA

Hypothetically.

STEVEN

Maybe, yeah. But I know something – I definitely have a poem now.

LAURA

You're welcome. I'm gonna go back to work. Are you sure you don't want this? I'm just gonna pour it out.

Laura offers her beer to Steven.

STEVEN

Yeah, you know what, I'll take it.

After handing him the bottle, Laura exits.

ACT 1 SCENE 6 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ABIGAIL

You know, I still can't get over the fact that you used to be a drug dealer.

ART

Used to be? I'm still a drug dealer.

ABIGAIL

Really? Oh, well then, for the sake of your ... profession, I guess I'll "accidentally" exclude that.

ART

I'd appreciate it.

ABIGAIL

Seems like a dangerous job.

ART

It's not really. It's not like I'm selling meth or anything.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, but still.

ART

You know what was really dangerous?

ABIGAIL

What?

ART

The poem he wrote, after that conversation. Poem number two. I would never do anything that dangerous.

Abigail gives him a look.

ART

No, seriously. Play it.

ACT 1 SCENE 7 – THE PAST (OPEN-MIC)

The lights flicker. It is now theatrically lit.

SYDNEY

(To the audience.)

Annnd we're back, once again, with another week at the warehouse. Our very own Steven Doyen has requested to start things off with a new poem, which I for one am looking forward to. But before that, some housekeeping: we've never actually had a *rule* before, but after last week's display of "performance art" I'm afraid I regretfully have to request that in the future we keep all scenes of graphic sex and/or ritual sacrifice outside of the warehouse. It's not a pleasant thing to clean up after. Lastly, like the movie *Fight Club*, you do not talk about the warehouse. Or, like the movie *Fight Club*, we'll be forced beat you up. So, let's try to keep things quiet, discreet, and ... well, not beaten up.

STEVEN

Hey everyone. Good to see you all again. Uh ... an update: I have *not* told my mother I dropped out yet, but I'm still working on it. I did find a pretty good group of people to spend my free time with though, so that's cool. Um ... this poem was inspired by a friend, who I have been growing closer to over the last few weeks. I'm gonna try to answer a question she asked me a while back. And maybe we can all learn something from it.

Pause.

STEVEN

I am currently looking for one of those 'fuck you' kind of relationships.
 The kind that is not afraid of God or religion, but is afraid of society.
 The kind that says "I don't need the whole world 'cause the whole world's inside of me".
 The kind that does not lie to me.
 The kind that gets in cars and drives until the road ends
 Or watches the stars until the next day opens.
 The beautiful mind that has got no respect for
 Reality,
 Sanity,
 Or refuge from calamity;
 Looks like the old play
 Where everybody's dead by the end anyway.

You see, I want a love that is fiery hot,
 Takes aim at Goliath without having a sure shot.
 The type of cigarette burn that goes to the core of your soul,
 Speeds through epidemic highways like they're not taking a toll,
 And it goes down
 And down
 And down
 With the charred retribution
 'Til you see no solution,
 'Til the bud goes out
 And you shout!
 Because you can't see through the smoke cloud
 Which engulfs the whole crowd

Who's seriously considering that you might be strung out,
 But the truth is: you're not.
 'Cause deep down, that smoking gun,
 That stick of cancer pressed against your body
 Is just the pure recreation of love drug
 And when it hits your heart, it's not just a small thud
 Of smoldering ashes
 Or flinching eye lashes.
 No.
 It is fucking car crashes!

But even with that feeling,
 Even when I am overcome by that sensation that I am dying to be a part of,
 I still cannot even begin to believe it the concept of "true love",
 Because that palpitating blood which collects in the hands you're sitting on
 Is not shown in the plots of Hollywood movies.
 You not gonna learn what love is just by watching The Goonies.
 You gotta feel,
 You gotta hurt,
 You gotta breathe,
 And you gotta live.
 Because love,
 Love is not patient,
 Love is unkind,
 Love is a jealous creature
 And if you're not there,
 Love is not wasting it's time.
 Because love is the master off its own religion
 And looks not to man to make its decisions.
 Love is not a thing that is found at first sight.
 And I *know* that I am right.

Listen to this:
 Who do you think the painter's paint?
 The playwrights greet?
 And the critics taint?
 Surely it is not love.
 Because love it not embodied,
 It is pulled from the skies!
 It is not there until somebody tries!
 If you spend your whole life contained by the image of Love,
 Relating this nothing-ness to God above
 Then you. Will be. Without.
 You will be a poet of tragedy.
 You will be somebody...
 Kind of like me.

Or at least like I was,
Until I learned not to be.

So please,
Spread your arms, not your wings,
Just, stop believing in stupid things!
I do not advise
That you trivialize
The Cherubim's cries
But please,
Just compromise.
Stop wasting your innocences
On hookers and picket fences;
Forget the whole concept of mediocrity
And you set the example of what the media ought to be;
Learn to love for love,
Not the image of love,
Because push just is not enough
If you're not willing to shove.

So take your hand from the glove,
Step out of the queue,
Run away with the world
And just say, "Fuck you."

Pause.

STEVEN

Thank you.

ACT 1 SCENE 8 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ART

So?

ABIGAIL

So ... he's a romantic.

ART

Yeah. But it's more than that. This was about ... finding his voice. Laura gave him that voice. She was the thing that he built his courage on. This was by far the strongest poem he'd done.

ABIGAIL

They became a thing then? Obviously.

ART

Oh yeah. He was obsessed. In a good way – I mean, she was good for him. She took his mind off his mom and his future and all the months that were ticking away. But more than that, she inspired him. They inspired each other.

ABIGAIL

It sounds like they had pretty different concepts of the world though.

ART

Yeah, but that was one of the things that held them together actually. She was the optimism that balanced his natural pessimism. And the poems that came out of it, my God. He wrote so much the first few months they were together, I don't know how he even had time to spend with her.

ABIGAIL

Do you have any of those?

ART

No. No I didn't record anymore for a long time.

ABIGAIL

That's too bad.

ART

Yeah ... well, maybe. Have you ever seen that Banksy painting of the camera-man and the flower?

ABIGAIL

I don't think so.

ART

That's all it is. Just a camera-man and this little flower. And he's kneeling down and he's pulling out this flower from the ground just so he can get a better shot of it. He's killing it. Just for the exposure.

ABIGAIL

That's terrible.

ART

Yeah. I think maybe that's what those poems were though – the ones I didn't record. They were like these beautiful things that you're not supposed to mess with. Like honeymoons. You just let them be.

ABIGAIL

I thought you said you didn't know anything about art? Here you are making metaphors.

ART

Well, you spend enough time around these guys and some of it's bound to rub off.

ACT 1 SCENE 9 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Laura is busy painting at an easel.

FELICIA

So ...?

LAURA

Oh, Hey.

Felicia gives her a look.

LAURA

What?

FELICIA

You fuck him yet?

Pause.

LAURA

I'm not going to answer that.

FELICIA

Aw! Come on! It's a simple question! Did you fuck him yet?

LAURA

No, I haven't.

FELICIA

Seriously?

LAURA

No. We haven't done anything.

FELICIA

You fucking prude.

LAURA

Language! Geez, you're the most vulgar person I know!

FELICIA

So what? That just means I have a bigger vocabulary. *And* I'm more honest.

LAURA

I don't think so.

FELICIA

Oh yeah? 'Vulgarity', as you put it, is the very foundation of honesty. You have to be willing to say bad shit if you want to find real balance. You think my White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant professor goes home to his wife and tells her what a nasty little whore she is?

LAURA

Probably not.

FELICIA

But, what if she secretly gets off on it? And you *know* he's just dying to say that kind of shit. But neither of them are gonna share anything more than missionary because their both too pussy to be honest. Filthy, disgusting honesty – the key to any good relationship.

LAURA

Uh-huh. And you're just the patron saint of those.

FELICIA

Excuse me? Am I being lectured by little miss slut over here? Uh, you've been with way more guys than I've been with girls.

LAURA

It's not a competition. I was ... casting the net, okay?

FELICIA

I'm just saying. You like this guy right?

LAURA

I mean, yeah. I do.

FELICIA

So ... put him in your mouth already.

LAURA

Okay, ugh, okay, first off: gross. Gross! Second, I just don't want to rush him. I actually don't think he's like that.

FELICIA

You poor delusional child. All guys are like that.

LAURA

He's not.

FELICIA

Well then, I guess you bagged yourself a unicorn, princess. Maybe you can fly off to fairyland together and get married with all the rest of the Disney bimbos.

LAURA

Fuck you.

FELICIA

Language!

LAURA

Shut up.

They share a laugh.

LAURA

You look ... exceptionally happy today. You didn't like murder Sydney and bury him in the back, did you?

FELICIA

No ... That's a good fucking idea though.

LAURA

So why are you smiling?

FELICIA

You really want to know?

LAURA

No, I'm just hoping you'll cuss at me some more.

FELICIA

Oh I can do that shit all day. You play enough Halo, you're gonna learn a thing or two. For real.

LAURA

Seriously! What's your deal?

FELICIA

Well ... I might have gone to see Mr. White, Anglo-Saxon professor-man ...

LAURA

Uh-huh?

FELICIA

...and he might have approved my thesis.

LAURA

Felicia!

FELICIA

Yep.

LAURA

That's awesome!

FELICIA

I know. *Big accomplishment*, right? Now I just have to write twenty pages by the end of next semester.

LAURA

Still, you got approved! That's great!

FELICIA

Yeah. Thanks.

LAURA

What's it about?

FELICIA

You're gonna laugh.

LAURA

Just tell me.

FELICIA

Okay, well, I've just been thinking, there's a whole lot of different kinds of art in the world, right? And it just seems ridiculous that some of it is deemed 'good' and some of it is deemed 'bad'. I mean, why is a bad poem better than a good comic book? Even a lot porn has more merit than a typical Shakespearian love story. But everyone is ashamed of porn. And that's bullshit – that one is bad and the other is acceptable.

LAURA

So what's it called?

Pause.

FELICIA

Alright, check it out: "Shakespeare and Sucking Cock."

LAURA

What?

FELICIA

Yeah. I wanted something that mixed the classical and the obscene. It was either that or, let's see ... "Folios and Fellatios", um "To Blow or Not to Blow", or "Going Down on the Bard".

LAURA

Well, I'm happy for you.

FELICIA

Thanks.

LAURA

You know, Steven was talking about something like that earlier today.

FELICIA

Blow jobs? I'm sure he was.

LAURA

No! No. He was out here watching me paint and he was talking about how ... what did he say? I hadn't made very much progress yet, but even though I only had a few lines on the paper, he said it was already beautiful – not because of what it might be, but because of what it wasn't yet. It still has all its potential because I haven't finished it.

FELICIA

So it's not good or bad.

LAURA

No. Just beautiful.

FELICIA

Lot of pressure to make it good then. If it's already beautiful.

LAURA

Did you know he believes in God?

FELICIA

Honestly, I'm surprised you don't.

LAURA

You don't.

FELICIA

So? I'm jaded. You're like the most idealistic person I know, Laura. I mean, who the fuck believes in fairy tales?

LAURA

I dunno. That's part of the reason I haven't pushed him to, you know, *do anything*, yet. I think he's like *saving himself* or something.

FELICIA

Wow.

LAURA

What?

FELICIA

You did get a fucking unicorn.

LAURA

You think?

FELICIA

Fuck yeah.

LAURA

Language!

ACT 1 SCENE 10 – THE PRESENT

Abigail's cell phone goes off.

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ABIGAIL

Shit.

ART

What?

ABIGAIL

Oh, I just ... I forgot I was meeting my husband for dinner tonight.

ART

Do you need to go?

ABIGAIL

No, uh, no, not yet. Let's do one more poem.

ART

Are you sure?

ABIGAIL

Yeah. He can wait.

ART

I just don't want you to miss out on your life because of some story.

ABIGAIL

Art, if someone's not around to tell the stories, they're meaningless.

ART

You really believe that?

ABIGAIL

I do. I assure you, my husband can wait. What's the next poem, number three? That should put us over halfway, right?

ART

Yeah. Uh ... yeah ...

ABIGAIL

What?

ART

Uh ... well, it's just ... the next one's kind of a doozy. Are you sure you don't want to just wait?

ABIGAIL

Art, I have time.

ART

Okay. Well, the event that led up to the next poem happened in December of that year. It was right after the semester got out.

ABIGAIL

Oh, we're already done with the whole semester?

ART

Yeah. I'm focusing on the poems, remember? Not the events. Besides, we still have a whole semester after that.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

ART

So there was a good part of the night and a bad part of the night.

ABIGAIL

The good part was first, I'm assuming.

ART

Yeah.

ABIGAIL

So start there.

As Art describes the situation, Steven and Laura take their places in the past.

ART

Well, I remember I was there for it. I uh, spent the night on the couch. It was late, around midnight I think, but Laura and Felicia were supposed to be going out for drinks to celebrate the end of the semester. Uh ... Steven was in the living room with me. And Laura was there too ... Oh! Yeah. Felicia was getting ready. She was like making an event out of the thing. Man ... I forgot how happy we were. Let me see ...

ACT 1 SCENE 11 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

STEVEN

Art. Hey, Art!

Pause.

STEVEN

I think he's frozen.

LAURA

You know, if I didn't know him better, I'd say he was imitating The Thinker.

ART

I seriously can't remember it! That's gonna drive me crazy! What was the name of that movie?

STEVEN

Were you high when you watched it?

ART

I mean, yeah, but I should still remember the name. It was about dimethyltryptamine.

LAURA

That sounds terrifying.

ART

No, it's awesome. I need to tell Sydney about it. DMT. It's like this natural drug. Apparently we even produce it in our bodies and stuff. They called it "the spirit drug".

LAURA

You know, I've heard you can actually make yourself high without using drugs. It just has to do with focus and perception.

ART

Yeah, but I mean, what's the fun in that? There's some kind mixture they make out of plants that has DMT in it ... Hold on, I think I might have it on my queue.

Art gets out his phone.

LAURA

Oh, that reminds me, I dropped my phone in paint earlier.

STEVEN

Really? What color?

LAURA

What?

STEVEN

What color was the paint?

LAURA

Are you not concerned about my phone?

STEVEN

Well yeah, that too. How's the phone?

LAURA

Well, it's phone's broken.

STEVEN

And the paint?

LAURA

Not broken?

STEVEN

No, what color was it?

LAURA

Oh, blue.

STEVEN

Cobalt?

LAURA

Yeah.

Steven laughs happily.

LAURA

What?

STEVEN

Cobalt blue! "Where's my cobalt blue?" That's the first thing I ever heard you say when we met.

LAURA

You're ridiculous.

STEVEN

You're ridiculous.

LAURA

Whatever.

Steven and Laura share a kiss.

ART

Ayahuasca!

STEVEN

What?

ART

Dude! Ayahuasca. That's the name of the drink. Oh, I want to try it so bad!

STEVEN

There's got to be something better on the internet than drug documentaries. Surely.

ART

Um ... no. What do you want me to do, watch a romantic comedy?

LAURA

I like romantic comedies.

ART

Romantic comedies are the reason people are unhappy. You realize life doesn't just work like that, right?

LAURA

Sometimes it does.

Laura gives Steven a look and they kiss again.

Felicia enters.

FELICIA

Barf! Why did I ever set you two up?

LAURA

You didn't set us up.

FELICIA

Um yes I did. You think John Keats over there had the courage to write that sappy love poem on his own? No. I told him you liked him the minute he met you.

LAURA

You traitor!

FELICIA

I think you mean cupid.

Felicia staggers forward, aiming a make believe arrow at Steven. She fires and makes a noise.

LAURA

Are you drunk already?

FELICIA

Pre-game, beautiful. Come on, let's go! I need some serious bar time before the sun comes up, so divorce yourself from your *husband* for five seconds so we can get the hell out of here.

LAURA

I think we have to go. Are you still good to pick us up later?

STEVEN

Yeah. Can I just call Felicia's phone?

FELICIA

Don't have a phone! We've been over this!

LAURA

Crap. I forgot that too. Hey Art, are you gonna be here a while?

ART

I can be.

LAURA

Would you mind sticking around so I can call you to pick us up? I'll just take Steven's phone with me.

STEVEN

Oh, you will, will you?

LAURA

Yeah.

STEVEN

Yeah?

LAURA

Yeah.

They kiss once more. Laura snatches away Steven's phone.

LAURA

Bye!

STEVEN

Love you.

Love you, too.

LAURA

Wait, where's Syd?

FELICIA

Uh ... I dunno!

STEVEN & ART

Well, don't let him fuck anything up while we're gone.

FELICIA

Will do captain.

ART

Later bitches.

FELICIA

Felicia and Laura exit.

Pause.

ART

So ... you guys seem to be doing well ...

STEVEN

Yeah ... yeah, actually ... We, uh, we had sex last week.

ART

Oh, good.

STEVEN

For the first time.

ART

Oh, good!

Sydney pokes his head in.

SYDNEY

Are they gone?

ART

Yeah.

Sweet!
SYDNEY

Sydney enters, carrying six cans of spray paint, cardboard, and a paper bag.

Why do you have so much spray paint?
STEVEN

Five for the art. One for inspiration.
SYDNEY

Sydney sprays paint into the bag and she proceeds to huff it.

Oh dear god.
STEVEN

It's gonna be a good night boys.
SYDNEY

ART
(To Sydney.)
Felicia was asking about you.

Was she drinking?
SYDNEY

Yeah.
ART

Yeah, she gets clingy when she's drunk. To *me* for some reason. Remind me to go hide once it hits about two o'clock.
SYDNEY

Will do.
ART

Pause.

ART
(To Steven.)
Anyway, you're happy then?

STEVEN

Yeah. You know, I haven't actually told my mom about Laura yet, but I think I'm almost ready, too. Actually, I think I'm ready to tell her a lot of things. Come clean, you know?

ART

No more secrets?

STEVEN

No more secrets.

ACT 1 SCENE 12 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

First Sydney exits, then Steven.

ART

(To Abigail.)

He'd actually somehow begun to find this courage in himself. He was gonna tell her. About all of it. The dropping out. The warehouse. His girlfriend. After that night ... I seriously have not been a fan of irony ever again.

Art reclines on the couch.

ACT 1 SCENE 13 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Felicia enters and sees Art sleeping face-down on the couch. She is drunk.

FELICIA

Syd.

Pause.

FELICIA

Sydney ...

Pause.

FELICIA

Wake up. Hey! Wake up!

Huh? ART

Whoa! You're not Syd. FELICIA

Are you okay? ART

Yeah. FELICIA

Where's Laura? ART

What? FELICIA

Where's Laura? ART

Outside. Where's Sydney? FELICIA

Why is she outside? ART

What are you doing here? FELICIA

Felicia! ART

FELICIA
She's paying the cab driver, okay! Fuck! Stop yelling. *You* were supposed to answer your phone! If you would have answered the damn phone she wouldn't be down there, would she?

I fell asleep. ART

Where's Syd? FELICIA

ART

In bed. He passed out and Steven took him to his room. They're both asleep.

FELICIA

He's such a fucking deadbeat.

ART

Syd?

FELICIA

Of course Syd-ney! Deadbeat. All he does is fucking sit around all day. He never actually gets any real work done. He says he wants to be like Banksy but he just smokes weed with you all the time.

ART

I mean, Felicia ... that's his decision ...

FELICIA

Fuck you. You don't know what's good for him. None of you know anything. If Laura hadn't dropped her stupid phone in paint, you wouldn't even need to be here. "Cobalt blue! Cobalt blue! Did you know that's the first thing Steven ever heard me say!" You're all too busy trying to find symbols in things where they don't exist. You want to know the truth? It's meaningless. All of it.

Pause.

Felicia produces a cell phone from her pocket.

FELICIA

Fucking cell phones.

ART

Is that Steven's?

FELICIA

Who else's would it be?

Felicia begins laughing hysterically.

FELICIA

Oh man, that phone call, though. That was *crazy*, right?

ART

What phone call?

Pause.

Felicia's face contorts with recognition.

ART

Felicia. What phone call?

A long pause.

FELICIA

(Despondent.)

We got a call while we were out. It was a hospital. In New York.

ART

Shit.

FELICIA

She died.

ART

Jesus Christ ...

FELICIA

Apparently it was worse than she said it was. She kept it a secret from Steven. Seems like the two of them kept a lot of secrets.

Silence.

Laura enters.

LAURA

Hey guys.

Pause.

LAURA

Fuck.

FELICIA

Language.

Laura goes to Felicia and lifts her to her feet.

LAURA

Let's go to bed.

ART

Are you gonna tell him?

LAURA

I'll tell him in the morning.

ACT 1 SCENE 14 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

Abigail's phone goes off again.

ABIGAIL

I'm so sorry.

ART

No, it's fine. If you need to go, really–

ABIGAIL

I don't. He's just being pushy. Honestly, I can stay to listen to the third poem at the very least.

Pause.

ART

You know, why don't you just take the recorder with you. I don't really like listening to this one. I've heard it too many times already.

ABIGAIL

Are you sure?

ART

Yeah. Just don't listen ahead. There's still two left.

ABIGAIL

No, of course not. I appreciate you trusting me with this.

ART

I was told once that trust is like jumping out of a tree and trying to fly when you're a little kid. You're always gonna hit the ground eventually, but that doesn't mean you ever stop jumping.

ABIGAIL

That's crazy.

ART

It's a crazy world, Abigail. A crazy *Art*world.

ABIGAIL

See you tomorrow morning?

ART

I'll be here.

Abigail exits.

ACT 1 SCENE 15 – THE PAST (OPEN MIC)

The lights flicker. It is now theatrically lit.

STEVEN

(To the audience.)

You ever have a worst day?

You know, those fucked up, everything's broken, falling apart, piece of shit kind?

Well, as it happens, this one is mine.

I found out today that my mother died.

She had lung cancer,

She lied to me about it,

And then afterwards she died.

She *is* not.

She *was*.

And what she was...

Was a middle-aged chain-smoker with lung cancer.

And that is so fucking disgustingly cliché, I think.

I mean, everybody knows that person.

The nagging bitch mother.

But you see, the thing is, this one was mine.

She was not just some character to me.

She was a living breathing being

In a nightmare play

Where the curtain goes down

And everyone's sad

Because they're so full of shit

That they don't know what's bad or good or beautiful.

And she was *beautiful*.

She lied to me, but I lied to her too.

I knew who I was and I never told her the truth.

I'm going to share with you some things that I have learned from this,

So that your experience will not be mine.
 Because this is my worst day,
 But it's also my best.
 Because tragedy is the father of clarity.
 And I have a little bit more of both now.
 Because I love you
 And I want you to be happy.
 Even if I'm not.
 So, here we go.

I was told once, when I was a little kid,
 That trust is like jumping out of a tree and trying to fly.
 You hit the ground.
 Every time.
 Because you are not a bird.
 You're not a bird,
 And you're not an angel either.
 Because just like the ground,
 And just like the earth,
 Life harms.
 When you are falling, you are not spreading your wings,
 You are just spreading your arms.
 You hit the ground.
 Every time.
 Because you are not a bird.

I heard that from my mom.
 And it was the truth then as much as it is now.
 My mother told me that I could not fly.
 But she also told me never to stop trying.
 Falling. Failing. Trying.
 Falling. Failing. Trying.
 Falling. Failing. But never, ever flying.

And maybe that's okay. Even if we won't succeed. Even if it's more than unlikely.
 It's the hope that keeps us going. The hope in the moment. I dunno.
 My mother said the following to me before I left New York k –
 It is the last thing that I will say to you, because it is the last thing that she said to me
 before I left her forever:
 "This moment
 Is passing
 You by.
 This is a real moment and it is passing you by and you will forget it.
 All of it.
 You will not remember me–
 You will not remember me,

Because I am already gone.
Because I am nothing
But a memory
Of a sound,
A vibration
In the air
In your past.
The past that is passing you by, right now. There it goes,
Gone."

I hope to God that someone will remember her words, even if they don't remember mine:
"This moment
Is passing
You by."
And I have a lot to do.
Thank you.

The lights flicker off.

END OF ACT

ACT 2 PROLOGUE

The warehouse. No one is present.

A film projection begins playing.

ART HISTORIAN

The prospect of death is ... the cloak of every great artist. Death protects us from eternity, but if we are not careful, it can simultaneously blind us to the beauty of our own present. And death weighed heavily upon the poet.

STREET ARTIST

Fuck that. For real. No, no. I mean, we all lose people. But this one was like ... this one was wrong, you know?. You're not supposed to go off to college and have your mom die. I mean, what do you do at that point? *I don't know* ... I mean, it was rough for a while.

WRITER

Focus and perception. That's the key. You make yourself accept the pain. You channel it. You tell yourself that it's temporary and you welcome it into your life. That's the only way that we profit off of death. We make it a part of life. And we never *ever* let it govern our future. That's just stupid.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

He wasn't stupid. He was just having a hard time. The whole reason I even became an artist was because of my brother. When he died ... it made me think about some things differently. It teaches you what's important.

Pause.

The projection ends.

ACT 2 SCENE 1 – THE PAST

The lights flicker on. It is lit from inside.

The warehouse is empty.

Felicia enters from the back, holding a beer. She starts music playing - it is classical.

Felicia exits.

Felicia re-enters with a broom.

Felicia begins dancing with the broom while sweeping to the rhythm of the music.

Felicia soon hears voices arguing and stops to listen.

STEVEN

(Off-stage.)
What was I saying?

LAURA

(Off-stage.)
I don't know.

STEVEN

(Off-stage.)
What was I saying?

Laura enters, followed by Steven.

Felicia hides herself.

LAURA

Steven, I don't remember.

STEVEN

Seriously? I'm not talking to myself.

LAURA

I know that. I know. I just don't remember.

STEVEN

You don't remember any of it? *Nothing?*

LAURA

Something about Greek gods and Roman gods, and then comic books. I don't know.

STEVEN

Yeah, I've been talking about *that* for an hour! I mean ... what specifically?

LAURA

I don't remember!

STEVEN

It's because you're not listening.

LAURA

I am listening!

STEVEN

Then you would know what I was saying.

LAURA

Steven, it is hard to follow you sometimes.

STEVEN

Okay, okay so ... Ancient gods are like comic book heroes in that they both represent ideal human beings. They both teach us lessons. They both have powers. There is a ... hierarchy in the Olympian gods just like there is a hierarchy in the ... the.. superhero community. But what else? Why do we create gods for ourselves to rule over us and tell us what we're supposed to be doing with our lives? A poem ... it has to be a circle, you know? A poem has to connect. Fuck! I don't remember.

LAURA

Steven. Calm down. It's okay.

STEVEN

I haven't written a poem since she died. You know how long that's been? It's February! Something is off.

LAURA

Baby. I know. I know. But you have to let it happen on its own. You can't force these things.

STEVEN

It's just all messed up. I can't think. I don't know what I'm gonna do. You don't even get out of school for two more years. What happens until then?

LAURA

I don't know.

STEVEN

Laura, I don't know what I'm doing with my *life*.

LAURA

You don't have to. You don't have to know anything *yet*. No one is making you.

STEVEN

Yeah. No one's making me do anything anymore.

LAURA

You just need to take your mind off of it. I *promise*.

STEVEN

Fine.

LAURA

Okay?

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

I love you.

STEVEN

I love you too.

LAURA

Why don't we do something else?

STEVEN

Like what?

LAURA

I finished my painting.

STEVEN

You did?

LAURA

Yeah. You want to see it?

STEVEN

Sure.

Laura retrieves a covered painting and presents it to Steven.

LAURA

Ready?

Pause.

Laura reveals a painting of a man and woman together.

LAURA

It's us.

Silence.

LAURA

Well, what do you think?

STEVEN

You don't want to know what I think.

LAURA

I do actually. That's why I asked.

STEVEN

It's good.

LAURA

Yeah? But what? It's not *beautiful*?

STEVEN

No. It's ... I dunno. It's good. It's perfect, actually. But I kind of liked it better when it wasn't.

LAURA

Oh ...

STEVEN

Honestly. If you want to know my honest opinion.

LAURA

I do.

STEVEN

I liked it better when it was ... still had potential. Now it's just locked in. Now, it's so perfect ... you can't do anything with it.

LAURA

So you don't like it because it's too good? You know, you're critique sounds an awful lot like a compliment.

STEVEN

Well it's not. I'm sorry.

Pause.

STEVEN

I think I'm gonna go lie down.

LAURA

Okay.

Steven exits.

ACT 2 SCENE 2 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

Art enters from the back with a box and takes a seat.

Moments later, Abigail enters from the front.

ABIGAIL

Morning.

ART

Oh, hey. You're early.

Abigail hands Art the recording.

ART

Thanks.

ABIGAIL

Yeah.

ART

You listened to it?

ABIGAIL

Yeah. I didn't skip ahead or anything!

ART

Good.

ABIGAIL

What are you doing?

ART

Oh, I was just going through some stuff. I figured Syd'd take most of it with him when he moved out, but he actually left a lot. There's boxes and bins in the back just full of art.

ABIGAIL

Like an art graveyard.

Art gives Abigail a look.

ABIGAIL

Sorry.

ART

No, that's pretty much what it is.

ABIGAIL

You ever feel like you're trespassing?

ART

Everyday.

ABIGAIL

I'm really glad you're letting me tell this story, by the way.

ART

I'm glad someone's interested. You and Arthur Danto.

ABIGAIL

Can I ask you a question?

ART

Sure.

ABIGAIL

What do *you* think about all of it?

ART

What do you mean?

ABIGAIL

How does it affect you? Steven's mom. The warehouse.

ART

I dunno. It's not my story.

ABIGAIL

What if it is?

ART

It's not.

ABIGAIL

Well ... I don't see anyone else around ... And like I said, the whole reason I'm here in the first place is to make sure we're asking the right questions with this film.

ART

Trust me, it's not my story.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

ART

I do wish they were all here, though.

ABIGAIL

You talk to anyone anymore?

ART

Not in a long time.

ABIGAIL

That's too bad.

ART

Yep. But hey, maybe they'll see the movie or something – give me a call.

ABIGAIL

Maybe.

ART

So, you want to hear about poem four, or what?

ABIGAIL

Yeah, I do.

ART

Okay. Well, Steven didn't actually write that one.

ABIGAIL

Wait, I thought you said they were all his?

ART

Nope. Never said that.

ABIGAIL

Well you're just full of surprises, aren't you?

ART

I guess so. Steven actually didn't write for ... a long time after his mom. I think the next poem he did was his last one. Yeah. Right before they all left.

ABIGAIL

And they left because ...?

ART

We're not there yet!

ABIGAIL

Fine.

Pause.

ABIGAIL

Well, why wasn't he writing?

ART

You know, at first I thought it was because he was depressed, but honestly I think the real problem was with him and Laura.

ABIGAIL

Really?

ART

Yeah, they weren't doing too well.

ABIGAIL

Would you care to elaborate?

ART

Um ... no. I actually probably shouldn't have even said that much.

ABIGAIL

What?

ART

I mean, we'll *get* to it. It's part of the story.

ABIGAIL

But you *know*.

ART

Well of course I know.

ABIGAIL

And you're still not going to tell me?

ART

Fine. I'll tell you one thing. But only so you don't keep asking.

ABIGAIL

Okay ...

ART

The two of them, they don't ... exactly end up together.

ABIGAIL

What does that mean?

ART

You'll see. I just don't want you to focus on that single element. There's more to the story than just Steven and Laura. But trust me, we'll get back to it. It all ties together.

ABIGAIL

Fine.

ART

Aren't you at all curious about who the new poet was?

ABIGAIL

I don't know. I'm dealing with a lot right now. Was it you?

ART

No. It wasn't me. It was Felicia.

ABIGAIL

Felicia the poet?

ART

Well, yeah. She wasn't *always*. But yeah.

ABIGAIL

And there's also a break up in here at some point?

ART

Yes, but that's later!

ABIGAIL

Okay!

ART

I have to warn you though, this first part is a little depraved.

ABIGAIL

Well, I would expect nothing less from Felicia at this point.

ART

Aren't filmmakers supposed to be unbiased?

ABIGAIL

Supposed to be.

ACT 2 SCENE 3 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Sydney is sitting on the couch reading from the Banksy art book.

Felicia enters with a beer and sit beside him.

SYDNEY

Hey.

FELICIA

Hey.

SYDNEY

What are you doing?

FELICIA

I'm cold.

SYDNEY

Okay ... there's blankets ...

FELICIA

I see you've grown accustomed to Banksy being on the table.

SYDNEY

Um ... accustomed is not the word I would use, no. I'd probably say ... angry. I think 'angry' sums up my feelings pretty well.

FELICIA

Whatever.

Felicia relaxes in to the couch. She closes her eyes.

Sydney promptly begins waving his hand in front of her face.

SYDNEY

You in there?

FELICIA

Yes.

SYDNEY

You look dead.

FELICIA

I'm not. This is just ... nice.

SYDNEY

Yeah. I feel like things are finally settling down again.

FELICIA

Maybe.

SYDNEY

What?

FELICIA

I heard Steven and Laura fighting last week.

SYDNEY

Really?

FELICIA

Yeah. I thinking he's freaking out about what to do with his life now that his mom's not around to tell him.

SYDNEY

That's tough

FELICIA

Yes it is.

Felicia chugs her beer.

SYDNEY

So ... how's your thesis going?–

FELICIA

You know what we should do?

SYDNEY

What?

FELICIA

Fuck.

SYDNEY

Excuse me?

FELICIA

Fuck. We should fuck.

SYDNEY

How much have you been drinking?

FELICIA

I don't see how that matters.

SYDNEY

It does.

FELICIA

Don't worry Sydney, I'm not gonna cry date-rape.

Pause.

FELICIA

What? Okay! I've had a *few* beers.

SYDNEY

A few?

FELICIA

Jesus, really? Criticism? Coming from the drug addict? I'm trying to fuck you right now.

SYDNEY

Why do you always do that?

FELICIA

What?

SYDNEY

You always twist things around. You just constantly point out everyone else's problems and you ignore your own.

FELICIA

I don't have problems. You have problems.

SYDNEY

You know, Freud would say that that's a classic sign of—

FELICIA

I don't give a fuck what Freud would say or what Banksy would say or what you would say. So stop trying to tell me what I'm thinking, because you don't know.

SYDNEY

Fine.

Pause.

FELICIA

You really think I drink too much?

SYDNEY

Sometimes.

Felicia hiccups, and then lifts Syd's legs onto the couch.

SYDNEY

What are you doing?

FELICIA

Relax.

Felicia starts giving him a foot message.

FELICIA

You know, for a pothead, you're really uptight.

SYDNEY

Well, I kind of have to be when my best friend won't admit she has a drinking problem.

FELICIA

Aww. We're best friends now?

SYDNEY

Shut up.

FELICIA

That's not very nice.

Pause.

FELICIA

But you know ... sometimes I kind of like it when people aren't nice to me. It turns me on.

Felicia begins unbuttoning Syd's pants.

SYDNEY

Felicia! What the fuck?

FELICIA

Come on. You're clearly into it.

SYDNEY

You're like my sister.

FELICIA

Some people get off on that ...

SYDNEY

Stop.

FELICIA

Fuck you!

SYDNEY

What is your deal?

Felicia grabs another beer from the cooler.

Felicia sniffs the air.

FELICIA

God! It smells like weed.

SYDNEY

I smoke weed.

FELICIA

You didn't turn the air conditioner off.

SYDNEY

Yeah, 'cause I didn't want the living room to smell.

FELICIA

The air conditioner *circulates* idiot. Open a window next time.

SYDNEY

Okay.

FELICIA

You don't *think*, you know? You and every other guy. I mean, why are you even here? It's not like I need you. I'm an *ideal lesbian*, remember?

SYDNEY

Which is why you just tried to give me a blow job?

FELICIA

Yeah ... You know, I've been thinking a lot about my thesis lately – "Shakespeare and Sucking Cock" – and the thing is, I know *a lot* about one of those things ... but I don't know a lot about the other. And since I'm such a 'fucked up' human being, and *clearly* there's something wrong with you, I thought maybe we could try a little experiment ...

SYDNEY

Uh-huh? And I don't get a say in any of this?

FELICIA

Oh come on, Sydney. You're a guy. I'm a girl. That's what you do, right? Weed and pussy. It's the male fantasy.

SYDNEY

No. It's not.

FELICIA

Of course it is. So what's one more little fuck in the scheme of things? Besides, you'd be doing the lesbians of the world such a *great* service.

SYDNEY

Look, I know you're writing a paper about how good art and bad art can coexist or whatever, and how nothing is actually good or bad at all ... but it's different with life. You know that, right? Some things really are bad. And if you were sober, I think—

FELICIA

Stop. Let me tell you something. You don't know anything about me. You don't get to decide what I do. My *professor* doesn't. Nobody does.

SYDNEY

Did he say something to you?

FELICIA

It's just ... it's not a perfect world, Sydney. All the potential, it turns into life. It gets fucked up. I mean, we're not gonna be here for ever. Somebody else is gonna die or one of *us* is gonna die or one of us is gonna hate the other one. And we're gonna leave. It stops being a crossroads and it turns into the road you took and the road you didn't. I'm just trying to ... make some memories along the way. What's wrong with that?

SYDNEY

Come here.

Felicia walks slowly over to Sydney. He wraps his arms around her.

SYDNEY

It's gonna be okay. You know that?

Felicia kisses Sydney.

SYDNEY

Listen, it's not gonna help you.

FELICIA

Who cares?

SYDNEY

I do.

Fuck you.
FELICIA

They kiss again.

Sydney and Felicia exit, entwined.

ACT 2 SCENE 3 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

You're not saying anything.
ART

I'm processing.
ABIGAIL

Well?
ART

Well, you're right. It's ... depraved.
ABIGAIL

I said it was.
ART

Yeah, but ... *geez* ... I'm kind of surprised he even agreed to it.
ABIGAIL

I think he somehow thought he was trying help her.
ART

By facilitating it? That doesn't seem like helping.
ABIGAIL

I'm not saying it worked. I think it's one of those situations that's a lot easier to judge than it is to really understand.
ART

Maybe, yeah.
ABIGAIL

ART

Anyway, I dunno. I can't tell you *why* it happened. But I *can* tell you that that one little event became the spark that would change everything. Without that, nothing ever would have happened.

ABIGAIL

And that would be a bad thing?

ART

Change is inevitable. If we fight against it, we lose. This was a necessary evil.

ABIGAIL

Okay ...

ART

So, that happened. And it was crazy. But it actually gets a *little* bit crazier before poem four.

ABIGAIL

Does it? There wouldn't happen to be, uh, I dunno ... a break up, would there?

ART

No. Still not there yet. This next part is how Felicia becomes the poet. And ... how Sydney faces the truth.

ACT 2 SCENE 4 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Laura, Felicia, and Sydney all stand around as Steven lays out various objects in a circle. He then marks off a center point.

STEVEN

Okay. So we start off in a circle, right? And there's a center point. Now, everyone walks to the center and turns around.

SYDNEY

So ... why are we doing this?

FELICIA

Just let him do it.

STEVEN

We don't have to. I just thought it was cool.

SYDNEY

Just, what is it called again?

STEVEN

A 'circumpunct'. Are you okay?

SYDNEY

Yeah. Circumpunct, right? Sounds ... Jewish.

FELICIA

It's not a *circumcision*, Sydney. Is it?

STEVEN

No, it's a symbol. It's a circle with a dot in the center. It used to be an ancient symbol for the sun, but I changed it. See, I had a dream about it last night. It was in this book I was reading. The way I see it, the center represents our potential and the circle represents whatever direction we take in life. Circumpunct.

LAURA

Does this have to do with your poem?

STEVEN

No. This is different. I'm not doing that anymore.

LAURA

Why not?

STEVEN

Because, I don't know. This is more important.

LAURA

You can't just give up on things, Steven.

STEVEN

What?

FELICIA

She's right.

Sydney lets out a bitter laugh.

FELICIA

Problem?

SYDNEY

Nope.

STEVEN

So ... can we do this?

FELICIA

Go for it. I'm interested.

Steven begins to walk the others through his example exercise. They all follow his instructions.

STEVEN

Okay, so like I said, everyone stands at the center and faces the outside. Cool. Now, I want you to imagine that you were just born. You're currently at the point in your life in which you have the greatest potential. You're an empty vessel. Now, I want you image the culture you were born into, the religion, the values, whatever. And take one step away from the center.

They all take a step.

LAURA

So you're saying we're losing potential?

STEVEN

No. Just ... just wait. I'm not at the point yet. Okay, we're gonna take another step. But this time, instead of your culture, I want you to imagine your identity, your self, your sexuality. So take another step.

They all take another step.

STEVEN

Okay, last one. Philosophy and art. How do you see the world? How do you create? Last step.

They all take a final step.

STEVEN

Cool. So there you go. Culture, Identity, and Philosophy – three things that create our path in life. And if you'll notice, you should now be so far from the center that you can't see everyone around you anymore. And *that* is the whole idea of the circumpunct. The further you get from the center, the more difficult it becomes to empathize. So by finding the center, we find our humanity. And that's it. That's the idea anyway.

Pause.

LAURA

Well, so how do you find the center?

STEVEN

Communication. So ... first one: 'Culture'. If I were to tell you about my God, in my own words, you would now understand my culture better, so you could take a step forward.

FELICIA

Okay. So, hypothetically, what was the next one?

STEVEN

Identity. So like, sex.

FELICIA

Well I guess that would *obviously* fall on me then.

STEVEN

Sure. I guess.

LAURA

Syd could do it.

A long, strangely uncomfortable pause.

FELICIA

No, that's alright—

SYDNEY

No, you're right. I could do it.

FELICIA

Syd, you really don't have to—

SYDNEY

No, it's fine. I've been thinking about this one a lot actually.

Pause.

SYDNEY

I think I might be an asexual.

LAURA

What?

SYDNEY

No, I'm serious. I don't think I like sex. In fact, I think I only make myself do it because of other people. I just realized that. I'm like a masochist – a closeted asexual masochist who smokes too much weed.

FELICIA

Sydney ...

SYDNEY

On the plus side, it looks like your circle of friendship works, though. So that's cool.

FELICIA

Syd.

SYDNEY

I'm gonna go get ready for the open-mic.

FELICIA

Syd, you need to talk to somebody.

Sydney leaves.

LAURA

Is something going on between you two?

FELICIA

Uh ... yeah, kind of.

Pause.

FELICIA

You said the last one was Philosophy and Art, right?

STEVEN

Yeah.

FELICIA

Well, I actually just came to the conclusion that I don't know my philosophy or my art anymore. So there's that.

STEVEN

That kind of fell apart, didn't it?

FELICIA

Yes it did.

Pause.

Steven?
FELICIA

Yeah?
STEVEN

Would you teach me how to write a poem?
FELICIA

Sure. Why?
STEVEN

I think I need to write one.
FELICIA

Okay. I'm gonna go check on Syd.
STEVEN

Love you.
LAURA

Steven exits.

You think Syd's alright?
LAURA

Um ... no. I think he *will* be though. Are *you guys* alright?
FELICIA

I don't know.
LAURA

ACT 2 SCENE 5 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

So that's how she becomes the poet.
ABIGAIL

ART

Exactly. It was her way of making amends. She messed up, obviously, but Syd wasn't handling it in a healthy way. He'd put on this happy face every week at the open-mic, but

then he would just ... sit around the rest of the time and do nothing. It was like he'd finally admitted his problem but he didn't know how to fix it. So Felicia tried to give him perspective again.

Art hands Abigail the recorder..

ART

Here.

ACT 2 SCENE 6 – THE PAST (OPEN MIC)

The lights flicker. It is now theatrically lit.

SYDNEY

(To the audience.)

Welcome, once again, to the warehouse. I have been asked by management to make an announcement. Um ... first off, there is no management, so if you have complaints, uh ... go home? Second, we received a tip recently about a cop that's been looking around the warehouse. I don't know what that's about, but maybe we can ... put a stop to it? I'm not saying *kill* the cop ... but maybe just, like, don't tell more cops? 'Cause ... that would be bad. So anyway, moving on ... next up is ...

Sydney draws a name.

Pause.

SYDNEY

Felicia. Who is ... doing a poem.

FELICIA

Hi. I'm sort of guessing at this. It seems like a pretty good way to communicate, and ... I have something that I need to communicate, so ... yeah. I fuck up sometimes. And I ... I have problems. But aside from that, I also know that my mistakes can save other people from making bigger ones. So ... here's my two cents.

Pause.

FELICIA

I recently admitted to myself that I have an addiction
I drink too much.
And when I lose control of a situation, I choose to act out.
And I realize that it is hypocritical to criticize the junkies when I clearly am one
But I have a friend, who I believe needs a friend
And at this moment I believe I have a hand that I can lend him.

So, please, my friend, listen
 I am not here to fix you.
 And I don't care what you do.
 I just want to give you some clarity.

You see, Isaac Newton said that for every action, there is an equal yet opposite reaction.
 It is a very simple concept.
 For everything you do, something happens.
 And it got me thinking,
 There are many substances in this world, only some of which are criminal
 And there are many paths in this life – some difficult and some minimal
 But the problem is you can only take one path
 And you can take an infinite number of substances along the way.
 Sex, drugs, repression, anything really.
 For every action, there is a reaction.
 For every moment that you are not following the path that you have set,
 You are veering from it.
 It's a very simple concept:
 A life of the substance you want, or the substances you don't.
 My friend taught me this,
 But I need to teach it back to him now.

So, please, my friend, listen.
 I am not trying to fix you.
 And I don't care what you do.
 But maybe I can give you some clarity.
 I have taken the wrong path, time and again.
 I have wandered away into a world of pretend.
 I am an addict and sometimes a bad friend.
 But please, listen.
 This is important.

You need to stop smoking weed with the AC on high
 'Cause nobody else is looking to try it.
 If life is the essence and pot is the purpose,
 Then just go ahead and roll me up and smoke me out of this worthless world,
 Because I will not fight it
 Any longer.
 I am tired of the argument.
 It is not a substance to criminalize,
 But you need to conceptualize the difference between you and me
 I have a "pre-school addiction", but you have a degree!
 You can't just pretend that your life is a joke or it will be.
 The trap doors and the drawstrings will dismantle your hoax and the audience will leave.
 You'll go for your sword and find you have no sheathe.

And you will ask yourself "Why?"
 And the answer,
 I will tell you,
 Is time .
 Time is dying
 To take whatever you have left of those plans you have been hiding
 And superimpose the shit you've been buying
 For every action you take,
 There is a reaction
 And it makes me scream out into the heavens
 In the name of Banksy and the fever dream of every street artist
 Who has ever wanted to fight the power but couldn't even fight their own high.

I don't want to fix you,
 I have my own problems, obviously.
 And I don't care what you do,
 Because you're already perfect, even though you don't know it.
 But you need clarity.
 For every action,
 There is reaction,
 So be aware,
 And be free.
 Because you are my friend,
 And though I may criticize and patronize and fuck up royally,
 I still want you to win in the end.
 And I am very very sorry.

ACT 2 SCENE 7 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ABIGAIL

She cared about him.

ART

They cared about each other. And despite her opinion of me, I always really liked Felicia. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with smoking a joint, but Sydney had a problem. I didn't know it, but what he was doing was keeping him from living his life.

ABIGAIL

So, did the poem help?

ART

Yeah, to some extent. I mean he didn't stop doing drugs or anything, but he did start focusing on the things that mattered. He started spray painting on the outsides of the

warehouse for practice. He had this anti-government agenda. He called the U.S. the "Jaded Empire", and he was ... what did he call himself? The Monkey King.

ABIGAIL

Oh! I think I saw some of those outside, actually. I didn't realize those were his.

ART

Yeah. I guess Felicia got him back on track. Like I said, it all connects – even Steven and Laura.

ABIGAIL

So *now* we get hear what was happened.

ART

Yes. And I promise, it is *nothing* like you would expect.

ACT 2 SCENE 8 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Steven paces about the room, looking at his notebook. He notices a sketch.

STEVEN

Hey, Laura, did you leave a sketch out here?

Pause.

STEVEN

Laura!

When Laura doesn't respond, Steven goes back to his writing.

A moment later, Laura enters.

LAURA

Did you say something?

STEVEN

What?

LAURA

Did you say something?

STEVEN

Oh, hold on, I just need to uh ... sorry, I just need to get all this down real quick.

LAURA

What are you writing?

STEVEN

Just some ideas.

LAURA

A poem?

STEVEN

No. Uh, Felicia's poem got me thinking about the circumpunct again though – well, circles in general, actually. Cycles, and bubbles, and particles. I don't know – action and reaction, it's like this whole thing ...

After a moment, Steven looks up at Laura.

STEVEN

What's up?

LAURA

I don't know. You called me.

STEVEN

I did?

LAURA

Yeah.

STEVEN

Oh ... Oh! Yeah, I did. Uh, is this yours? It's really good.

Steven hands the sketch to Laura. She looks at it for a moment and then returns it.

LAURA

That's not mine.

STEVEN

Well it's not mine.

LAURA

Well I don't know whose it is. Maybe Syd did it.

STEVEN

Syd doesn't do sketches, does he?

LAURA

I don't know Steven, but it's not mine. I'm sure you don't just free-hand grafitti. You probably have to make a blue print or something, right?

STEVEN

Yeah. Maybe.

LAURA

Do you have a minute? I actually, uh ... I wanted to talk about something.

STEVEN

I mean, yeah ... I can stop I guess.

LAURA

Okay.

STEVEN

You alright?

LAURA

Yeah, I'm ... good.

STEVEN

Okay ... So what's up?

LAURA

I don't want you to get mad.

STEVEN

I can't promise that.

LAURA

You have to. That's the only way this works.

STEVEN

What happened to "fuck you" relationships? I though this was a laissez faire kind of thing.

LAURA

Well, maybe that's the point.

STEVEN

What do you mean?

LAURA

You have to not get mad.

STEVEN

Okay ... What?

LAURA

I've been thinking about what I said before, last semester, about how a perfect relationship is one where people accept each other for who they are.

STEVEN

Yes

LAURA

Well, I accept you.

STEVEN

Why would I get mad about that?

LAURA

You wouldn't.

STEVEN

Are you high?

LAURA

No, look, the important thing is, I don't think that that kind of acceptance is possible without a certain level of compromise.

STEVEN

Yeah. Okay. So ...

LAURA

What I'm getting at is ... I don't think some people ... *should* compromise.

STEVEN

Who's compromising?

LAURA

You are.

STEVEN

Laura, I'm more than happy with you if that's what you're getting at. You know that, right? I love you.

LAURA

I know. And I love you too. Very, very much. But maybe that's the thing. I don't think I can love you anymore than I already do. I don't know *how*.

STEVEN

You know, your critique sounds an awful lot like a compliment.

LAURA

It's not. This is the part where you have to promise not to get mad.

Pause.

I think we need to break up. But in a good way!

STEVEN

What does that mean?

LAURA

Syd and Felicia aren't gonna understand this. They're gonna think this is bad, but I want you to understand. This isn't about anything you've done.

STEVEN

It's not?

LAURA

No. I've been thinking about this ever since that day with the painting.

STEVEN

If this is about your painting, look, it was good. Just because I didn't *love* it—

LAURA

It's not about the painting. It's not about me or you or any of it. See, I've been trying to figure out why you've been having so much trouble writing, and for a while I thought it was because of your mom. But the truth is, it's not, is it?

STEVEN

I don't know.

LAURA

But I do! And that's why I came up with this. You remember the stuff that happened with Syd and Felicia?

STEVEN

Yeah.

LAURA

Well, look at Felicia; look at what she was going through. The only reason she wrote that poem is because she was hurt. And that inspired her. You operate off of potential, Steven, that's what inspires you. And with me, there's no potential left. Because I already love you.

STEVEN

I love you too—

LAURA

I know, but that's the problem. See? *Felicia* is writing more than you are and she's not even a poet. You're not writing. You're just floating through space in the little bubble we've created for ourselves. And that's wrong.

STEVEN

Why?

LAURA

Because, you're eventually going to give up on this whole circumpunct thing just like you gave up on the last poem, and you're going to keep doing it until you start seeing the potential again, until you stop compromising because of your need for happiness.

STEVEN

I like being happy.

LAURA

I like being happy too. But in reality, it's just a feeling. People like us, artists, we have a job to do – a skill that other people either don't have or, more often, they just refuse to admit that they have. We see the world for what it is. We can show people what they refuse to see. And if we can do *all of that*, what is happiness? In the big picture? Maybe people like us don't get to be happy. Maybe it's better if we're not. Actions and reactions. See, I'm betting, if we're not together, our art gets better. It's just like I said, when we first started, the thing with the painting – it's the same problem: you're seeing the image, but you're not seeing the message. And I can't help you find the message anymore. You have to find it on your own now.

STEVEN

You can't know that.

LAURA

Let's ... let's test it then. Let's test it now, while we're young and still somewhat happy. Before we're old and gray and unfulfilled.

STEVEN

You want to break up ... *because* you're too happy?

LAURA

Yes.

STEVEN

That's ridiculous.

LAURA

If I let you have a say in this, you'd convince me differently, I know you would, but I'm not going to let you. I'm breaking up with you, Steven Doyen, and it is because I am happy and in love and I couldn't imagine being with anyone else. I am giving you back your potential. Do you understand?

STEVEN

I think so.

LAURA

Are you mad?

STEVEN

No.

LAURA

If this doesn't help you write again, I will marry you. I swear. But I think I'm right.

STEVEN

What if I think you're wrong?

LAURA

You've always thought I was wrong.

Pause.

STEVEN

It's like a circle... the same thing that brought us together is the thing that pulled us apart. My complete lack of understanding.

LAURA

I don't know about that. But there's certainly a lot of potential in the idea, isn't there?

STEVEN

You're crazy.

LAURA

Don't let that be the only thing you take from this conversation. This is a good thing.

Laura exits.

A moment later, Sydney enters.

SYDNEY

Oh hey, did you see my sketch? What do you think? Felicia said it was good., but I'm not sure.

STEVEN

It is good. It is.

ACT 2 SCENE 9 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ART

It's irritating because it makes so much sense.

ABIGAIL

No. It doesn't.

ART

But it *does*! In a strange, artsy kind of way, it does. Maybe it's pretentious to say this, I don't know, but they really were different than other people.

ABIGAIL

I'm so mad!

ART

The story's not over yet.

ABIGAIL

Well what the hell is left?

ART

Well, without Laura, Steven was allowed to wallow in his sadness. His ... delirium. His melancholy. And *that* is where Felicia fits back in again.

ABIGAIL

I can't possibly imagine what this is building to.

ART

Poem number five. Almost. We're almost there.

ACT 2 SCENE 10 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Steven paces about the room.

As he talks aloud to himself, Felicia enters, unnoticed.
She is holding a letter.

STEVEN

I will be remembered
I will be remembered
I will be remembered
For what?
By who?
What's the point?
There's not one.
Because at the end of the day,
After all the things you thought you'd say weren't said
And all the things you thought you'd do weren't done
The reality of the riddle is that you will be forgotten.
I will be forgotten.

Maybe not today,
And maybe not the day that I die,
But someday,
Soon,
Some lonely afternoon
I will be forgotten and you will too

So why?
Why? Why? Why? Why
Not just sit down and die?
Because you will be forgotten and so the fuck will I.

FELICIA

You doing alright there?

STEVEN

Yeah. I am.

Pause.

STEVEN

Uh ... Me and Laura broke up.

FELICIA

Are you serious? That *sucks*. I'm sorry.

STEVEN

It's okay.

FELICIA

Why are you smiling?

STEVEN

You know, I'm not actually sure.

FELICIA

Are you *high*?

STEVEN

I asked her the same thing!

FELICIA

Well you're not gonna, like, kill yourself or anything, are you?

STEVEN

No, I couldn't do that. It freaks me out. Although I can see the *appeal* ...

Felicia gives Steven a concerned glance.

STEVEN

But no, seriously. Not– *Not* even considering. At all. That's not what this is.

FELICIA

What is it then?

STEVEN

Did you know I read somewhere that rejection fuels perception and creativity? Apparently it has something to do with our biological need to reproduce. When we get rejected, we become more likely to pick up on things that other people don't.

FELICIA

Where did you read that?

STEVEN

I don't remember.

FELICIA

Well gee, that sounds like an incredibly reliable source.

Who knows.
STEVEN

Pause.

Felicia hands Steven the letter she has been holding.

What is this?
STEVEN

Creativity. Or maybe just rejection. Who knows.
FELICIA

Steven reads the letter.

When did this happen?
STEVEN

Apparently at the open-mic last week. Some dipshit was smoking pot out behind the building – probably got it from Art. Anyway, cop picked him up, asked him what was going on inside, and the asshole told him everything. Apparently the cop thought we were running a meth lab. I bet he was disappointed to find out we were just living here .
FELICIA

So what happens now?
STEVEN

Well, apparently we stumbled upon the nicest cop in the world because he said he wouldn't post an eviction notice until the semester ends next week, but after that we're gonna get kicked out. Either that or they arrest us for vagrancy.
FELICIA

Steven begins laughing.

What's funny?
FELICIA

Just life. The way things happens. It doesn't have a beginning, middle, and end, you know? It just happens.
STEVEN

Sit down.
FELICIA

Steven obeys.

STEVEN
Can I ask you something?

FELICIA
You're going to anyway.

STEVEN
No, I really won't, if you don't want me to.

FELICIA
Go ahead.

STEVEN
You think people with strong opinions can stay together?

FELICIA
Like date?

STEVEN
Or whatever.

FELICIA
I don't know. People change.

STEVEN
I guess it's just about what matters more.

FELICIA
Yeah. I think so. Didn't you say something like that in your sappy little love poem? Love doesn't exist unless you make it exist?

STEVEN
Yeah I did say that. Seems like a long time ago.

FELICIA
Yeah.

STEVEN
So is this gonna mess you up?

FELICIA
No. It shouldn't. I'm turning in my thesis tomorrow.

STEVEN
You finished?

FELICIA

Yeah. And if my professor doesn't like it, he can suck *my* cock.

STEVEN

Positive thinking.

FELICIA

Yeah. After that I guess I'll just get an apartment or something. Maybe I can get a job at a museum.

STEVEN

That'd be cool.

FELICIA

Steven?

STEVEN

Yeah?

FELICIA

Thank you.

STEVEN

For what?

FELICIA

For being here. For contributing to this little world while it lasted. I always thought there were rules to poetry, like you had to do it a certain way. I actually liked it.

STEVEN

I'm glad you did.

FELICIA

And Laura, you know, she's still young—

STEVEN

Whoa, hey. I'm ... I'm not mad at her.

FELICIA

No, I know. I'm just saying, maybe she hasn't made up her mind yet.

STEVEN

That's ... not it at all, actually.

FELICIA

What do you mean?

STEVEN

Laura has the purest intent of any person I've ever know.

FELICIA

You think?

STEVEN

I do. But hey, thank you for looking out for me.

FELICIA

Yeah. I think I'm going to start looking out for myself now, though.

STEVEN

(Dryly)

What will Syd do without you?

FELICIA

Sydney's a big boy. He'll be alright. We'll all be alright. Don't you think?

STEVEN

I'm not sure I think anything anymore. I spent so much of my life trying to give my mom the son she wanted. And I love her, but I think it's time to find my own path. And I do mean *find it*. I'm not gonna plan for it this time.

FELICIA

I guess the crossroad is about to force us forward.

STEVEN

You know, I prefer to think of it like a bubble. A bubble that's about to pop.

ACT 2 SCENE 11 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ABIGAIL

Human beings are so strange.

ART

What?

ABIGAIL

The way we naturally seek order when the universe naturally seeks chaos. It's like we were created to be at odds with our own existence. We're not powerful enough on our own to stop the flow of entropy; we can either submit or rebel, but either way, we eventually find ourselves swept up in the chaos of it all. Like a wave, engulfing the world. Did you know that Arthur Danto had another idea? One that acted as the foundation for the Artworld?

ART

What was that?

ABIGAIL

He believed that art, as we once knew it, does not exist anymore. It's like a ghost. A flickering afterimage of an era that has passed.

The lights flicker.

ART

Art is dead.

ABIGAIL

Art is dead.

Pause.

ABIGAIL

That's the idea anyway. We used to create art as a way of reflecting the things that we already saw. But now, we create to comment, using our own unique perspectives. In the end, Arthur Danto believed that art had the potential to manifest in anything, so long as it acted with intention.

ART

As interested as I am in all of this ...

ABIGAIL

Oh, do we need to hurry?

ART

No, no. It's just, Steven actually came up with an idea that's almost exactly the same as that. Maybe you'd like to hear it?

ABIGAIL

I would.

ART

Okay. So, the fifth poem.

ABIGAIL

The fifth poem.

ART

It was written an hour before the very last open-mic. Everyone was packing to leave. The cops were supposed to show up the next morning. And once again, I was there for it.

ACT 2 SCENE 12 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now lit from inside.

Steven lounges on the floor, skimming through the pages of the Banksy art book.

Sydney sits on the couch, folding clothes and blowing soap bubbles.

Art notices the bubble wand in Sydney's hand.

ART

Why would you have that?

SYDNEY

Better question, why would I not have it?

ART

Fair enough.

SYDNEY

You know, I might have to stop buying weed from you for a while.

ART

Why?

SYDNEY

Well, I've never had a real job, I barely have an education, and I'm about to be homeless. After we sell the last of the beer tonight, I'm broke.

ART

You don't know where you're gonna go?

SYDNEY

Nope. I still have a couple hours to figure it out though.

ART

I might know a place. You could stay for a little while.

SYDNEY

Really?

ART

Yeah, it's not great, but I think the people are moving out for the summer. I don't know what you'll do after that though.

STEVEN

Hey Sydney?

SYDNEY

What's up man?

STEVEN

You wouldn't happen to have any more sketches, would you?

Sydney pulls a folder full of sketches out from under the couch cushions and tosses it to Steven.

STEVEN

Cool.

Steven begins comparing Sydney's sketches to the designs in the Banksy art book.

ART

You know, you were like my best customer.

SYDNEY

Really?

ART

I feel like I should get you a gift or something.

SYDNEY

You should name a joint after me.

ART

Dude. "The Sydney Vicious".

SYDNEY

What?

ART

Like Sid Vicious, from the Sex Pistols. Except Sydney.

SYDNEY

People aren't gonna know it's me.

ART

Yeah they will. Besides man, you share your name with a god. Stuff like that is important. What famous Arthur's do you know?

Laura enters with a box.

SYDNEY

King Arthur.

STEVEN

Arthur Miller.

LAURA

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle . What are we talking about?

SYDNEY

Famous Arthur's.

LAURA

Felicia was telling me about some art critic named Arthur.

ART

Do I look like an art critic to you?

LAURA

Not really.

STEVEN

Hey, do you need any help with that?

LAURA

No, I'm good. This should be the last of it actually.

ART

Where are you taking it?

LAURA

I'm moving into an apartment near campus. It's a studio loft. I'll have more room to work there.

STEVEN

Are you gonna be back for the open-mic tonight?

LAURA

I don't know. Maybe. If not, I mean, I'm sure we'll all see each other again. It's not like it's forever.

STEVEN

Yeah.

Laura exits.

STEVEN

What are you gonna do Art? After all this?

ART

Me? I dunno. Probably the same stuff. I don't really change much.

STEVEN

Yeah.

ART

You want my advice?

STEVEN

What's that?

ART

You should be going after her right now. She's good for you man. You don't want to lose that.

STEVEN

Do you remember that comment you used to make when we worked at the video store? About how romantic comedies are the reason people are unhappy?

ART

Yeah. Life doesn't work like that.

STEVEN

Well doesn't this seem like the exact moment in a romantic comedy where I'd go running after her, and like, cry out my undying affections?

ART

I guess so.

Steven jumps to his feet and runs over to Art. He kisses Art on the forehead.

STEVEN

I love you. You're amazing.

Steven starts to leave.

ART

What was that about?

SYDNEY

Isn't obvious? He's got a poem to write.

Steven stops suddenly and turns back to Sydney.

STEVEN

Oh! Syd.

SYDNEY

Yeah?

STEVEN

You're sketches ... they're really good.

SYDNEY

Like Banksy good?

STEVEN

Like Banksy good.

ACT 2 SCENE 13 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

Art

Last one.

ACT 2 SCENE 14 – THE PAST

The lights flicker. It is now theatrically lit.

SYDNEY

(To the audience.)

Welcome, one and all, to the very last week at the warehouse! For those of you who have not been out to see us before ... I'm sorry to say you've missed out. And for those of you who stuck around, I'd like to thank you. For your interest, your creativity, your eyes and ears – and a little bit for your money, too ... Because without those things, none of this would ever even begin to have any relevance. Um ... we're gonna start off the night with a poem. A final poem, by a dear friend of mine. As of tomorrow morning I will be handing the keys of the warehouse over to Art, so this is truly our last hurrah. As for me, I think I'm gonna scrounge together the money for a cheap plane ticket, and go find Banksy. But anyway, on with the show. Steven.

STEVEN

A single seemingly meaningless string of situations
 A single dead parent. A single failed relationship. A single trial and subsequent tribulation.
 A single lonely poet leaving with no more sense of purpose than when he began
 Yet doing so without a single hint of the hesitation he once knew
 Falling and failing and hoping even when hope is not there
 Loving and shoving and choking on a true love-love affair
 Striving and thriving; provoking you, so maybe you will be aware
 Of this world while you have it.
 Because this moment is passing
 And you will not be remembered
 And neither will I,
 Like Ozymandias the King,
 Whose statue fell as time passed him by
 Like it always does.
 We will die. We will die.
 But right now, we are alive.

Right now, we are in the middle of the cycle.
 The circle of life.
 The circle of the universe.
 The circled dot that is our own enlightenment.

And the only way that we achieve that enlightenment
 Is by getting outside of the circle.
 Stepping away,
 Gaining perspective,
 But realizing, inevitably,
 That it will be for nothing.
 On earth, it will be for nothing,
 Because life and death –
 They never stop.
 But that does not mean that we should either.

In the words Gandhi:

"Everything that you do in this life will be insignificant,
But it is incredibly important that you do it."

Dead poets having one sided conversations with living poets;
Dead scientists paving the way for a future they will never see;
Dead parents and dead lovers, loving unrequitedly.
Art is also dead, but that does not mean it died quietly
Without us.
It means that there is a new cycle dawning.
So stop conning yourselves with cynicism
And open your eyes to it,

For this is the cycle of man and woman, speaking from their own hearts
Instead of relying on artists to fill in all the parts that they're afraid of.
I am not here for me.
I am here for you,
For one purpose,
To tell you
That you are the artists now
And I
Am redundant.

ACT 2 SCENE 15 – THE PRESENT

The lights flicker. It is now naturally lit.

ART

So, what are you gonna call it?

ABIGAIL

What?

ART

The film. Once it's done. What are you gonna call it?

ABIGAIL

Well. I'll have to talk to my husband about it, but I was kind of thinking we might call it
"Art's World" Two words. After you.

ART

But it's not about me.

ABIGAIL

Yes it is.

The lights flicker out.

ACT 2 EPILOGUE

The warehouse. No one is present.

A film projection begins playing.

WRITER

I always like the part when the credits roll. I don't ever, like, *read* the credits or anything, but I like the idea of the credits. It's like absolution. You know it's over, but your still faintly thinking about it. Like the moment has passed, but nothing has really changed. It's nice.

ART HISTORIAN

I would agree with that. Change is essential. We just ... keep doing it. We evolve or we die. Because nothing in the universe is concrete. And if art is a reflection of the universe, or at the very least a reflection of the people that live in it, art also has to change.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Life is a shooting star tearing through the atmosphere, and we're just the little human beings trying to scurry out of the way.

STREET ARTIST

You know, I think this movie is a pretty good idea. At first you said, you know, "I want to make this movie about Steven and the warehouse and stuff." But then now you come back and say it's gonna be about people instead. And I kind of like that. You know, we try to answer all the question with art, and we can't, really. I mean *really*, seriously. In the end, it's not about plays or pretty pictures or poems or whatever. It's about something else. It's about something entirely different.

Pause.

The projection ends.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY