

BRIDGE AT THE CLOSE

A show by
Nate Sheehan

Cast of Characters:

Rosa–

A smart, sharp wit that sometimes can be a mask, Latina, 18

Also plays *Santa Muerte* – Nurturing, protective, Mexican folk goddess of death

Malcolm–

A lost soul, early 30s.

Also plays *Mictlantecutli* – Charming, frightening, an Aztec god of the dead

Lilly–

A mature kid who feels weird showing it, Latina, 17

Leo–

The artist of the bunch, temperamentally, Latino, 18

Asif–

A Persian-American officer, A mix of hard and soft, Mid 50s

Note –

*When a prop enters the set or 'play' area, if it's not notated to exit it, it never has to. These shoes, chairs, flowers etc. and anything added production to production can unobtrusively leave memories of what came before.

ACT ONE

LIGHTS UP ON:

Prologue

A moving bus, in which a teenage girl (LILLY) sits and teenage boy (LEO) stand. There's chatter around them.

But the boy and the girl don't speak. They just stare at one another. Not so much that it becomes overtly noticeable. Both might look one direction or another. But for the most part, their eyes stay on each other. For the most part, their gazes find one another and stay there. There should be no sense of awkwardness in this—

An offstage voice calls out.

JOSH (O.S.)

Yo, Leo - Leo!

LEO looks away from LILLY.

JOSH (O.S.)

What was the name of that girl that Rafa was seeing? Caroline thinks she might know her.

LEO

Um... um fuck I don't think I remember.

JOSH (O.S.)

(to someone else)

Well, I guess we'll never know.

LEO looks back at LILLY and shrugs. She smirks in response.

LEO

Why are you looking at me like that?

LILLY

Why am I looking at you like what?

LEO

... I don't know.

LILLY

Ok then.

LEO

Alright. You go ahead and play like that.

LILLY's phone rings. She stares at it.

LEO

Are you going to pick that up?

LILLY

I don't know who it is.

LEO

It's probably a serial killer who took your mother hostage.

LILLY

Don't say stuff like that—

LEO

Ok, sorry. Your brother.

LILLY

Hm. What a nice thought.

She picks up. LEO looks off to the side, watching someone else on the bus.

LILLY

Hello?... Uh-huh..... uh no.... Wait yes sorry.... Ok..... ok.....ok.....yep..... great. Th-- oh..... got it, yes, 3:30, I'll— yes thank you. Oh and what's your address again?.... Ok... ok--.... Ok. Thank you. Bye.

LILLY hangs up. LEO turns back towards her.

LEO

Your brother still alive?

LILLY

Unfortunately.

LEO

What was is about?

LILLY

Reminder call to go to my doctor's appointment.

LEO

I hate when they do those.

Yeah, it's annoying.

LILLY

Never had one.

LEO

What do you mean?

LILLY

They just email me.

LEO

What? Mine have always called.

LILLY

Maybe they don't have your email.

LEO

They have my email.

LILLY

Do they have my email?

(beat, to herself)

I don't know. You tell me.

LEO

Huh.

LILLY

LEO looks off to the side again.

Do you see that girl over there?

LEO

LILLY cranes her neck.

What? Where?

LILLY

The one—

LEO

Oh shit. She's gone. She moved.

(looking)

LILLY

What was she doing?

LEO

She was looking up at the ceiling like she was going crazy seeing God or her neck froze... I-I thought she looked like somebody.

A quizzical look from LILLY.

LILLY

What do you mean?

LEO

It's nothing.

LILLY

You're weird.

LEO

I'm not weird.

LILLY

(not buying it)

Really?

LEO

All you do is judge me. It's so unfair.

LILLY

Maybe because you deserve it.

LEO

I'm not weird. I don't pick up phone calls about doctor's appointments from unknown numbers.

LILLY

Literally everyone gets phone calls for their doctors appointments. I only picked up because you told me to.

LEO

Oh, so you do what I say.

LILLY

Shut up. I commit my life to doing the opposite of what you say.

The bus slows to a stop. LILLY cranes her neck.

LILLY

Do you want to get off the next stop instead?

LEO

Why?

(now looking the direction LILLY's looking)

Oh. Definitely.

(calling to the front)

Hey! Don't fucking open the doors, man. We'll get off at the next one.

The sound of the doors opening.

LILLY

Mierda.

LEO

They're in front of it now. We can't go anywhere anyway.

LILLY

They're not going to come onto the bus, are they? They don't know who anyone on here is—

LEO

They're kind of looking like it. Like they been waiting at this stop.

LEO begins to hyperventilate. LILLY grabs his arm.

LILLY

Mierda.

The sound of boots. The sound of screams. LEO, separating from LILLY, starts to run.

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP ON:

Scene One

A separation in action, real or imagined, is drawn. This can also be referred to as a curtain. Behind this curtain, stretching from one exit to the other is a bridge lined with marigolds. The bridge might have a railing that may be slightly rusted, showing its age, its durability or its weaknesses. It is sunrise or sunset. A woman called ROSA makes her way up the bridge. Once she reaches the top, she looks out on us, and whatever view there may possibly be.

A man named MALCOLM enters from the same way and mounts the bridge. As he walks, he spots ROSA. He looks at her with curiosity and the slightest hint of confusion. He keeps his gaze on her as he continues walking until he is just a little ways past her, beginning to descend down the bridge. At that point, his head turned, still watching her, he stops.

MALCOLM

What are you doing?

ROSA

Excuse me!?

MALCOLM

What are you looking at?

ROSA

The sun – why are you talking to me?

MALCOLM

Oh no. Don't do that.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM

Don't look at the sun. It's bad for your eyes.

ROSA

Wha-- don't tell me what to-- Did you follow me here?

MALCOLM

No, I –

ROSA

This is my bridge. It has nothing to do with you. So why don't you skiddle-a-daddle your ass down the other side. Oh and looking straight ahead, and not staring at me like the per--

MALCOLM

Hey. You never gave me a chance to answer your first question.

ROSA

Which was?

MALCOLM

Why I am talking to you.

ROSA

Why do you want to talk to me?

Beat. MALCOLM says nothing. ROSA, beginning to lose interest, starts to look back over the bridge.

MALCOLM

Don't look at the sun!

ROSA

I think I'm fine with the sun. Maybe...

She trails off.

MALCOLM

Know anything about theatre?

ROSA

Why would I know anything about theatre?

MALCOLM

I don't know. I know nothing about it. I was hoping to meet someone that would know something about it.

ROSA

Oh. Well sorry I guess.

ROSA looks back out onto us or past us.

MALCOLM

You know, you have pretty eyes.

ROSA

So you are tryin to hit on me.

MALCOLM

What no? I'm gay.

ROSA

No you're not. You're straight as you are awkward.

MALCOLM

You're right. I was lying.

ROSA

Wait, really?

MALCOLM

I like girls too. Have you seen Hamilton?

ROSA

No.

MALCOLM

Me neither.

ROSA

I'm not gonna talk theater with you. I'm gonna keep staring at the sun—

MALCOLM

That's just so stupid. Why would you want to stare at the—

ROSA

I MEAN THE SUNSET.

MALCOLM

Oh. I guess that's... fine.

ROSA

Does it look different to you?

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

The sun. Or the sunset.

MALCOLM considers for a moment.

ROSA

I just feel like it's so much redder. I was wondering if we're about to have like an eclipse or something. Or something's in the atmosphere.

MALCOLM

I—

ROSA

I get it. I'm sorry. I'm weird. The sun looks a little different or maybe looks a little different and I of course start obsessing over it. It's just I haven't seen anybody for a really long time. And this is my bridge— You can leave. I'm sorry.

MALCOLM

Can?

ROSA

(considering)

Yes. Can.

MALCOLM

Is that the same thing as an invitation to stay?

ROSA

Definitely not.

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

I just won't yell at you if you do.

MALCOLM

Got it--

ROSA

But don't talk to me. I want some quiet.

MALCOLM

Got it.

(awkwardly.)

I'm uhh. actually gonna-- I'm gonna leave now.

ROSA

(anxiously)

What?! Why??

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

Now you should stay.

MALCOLM

Why should I stay?

ROSA

To berate me about staring into the sun, to talk about theater --

MALCOLM

You haven't even seen Hamilton!

ROSA

You know how hard it was to get tickets!

MALCOLM

Well maybe make a sacrifice for once in your life. Sure you'll have to buy the bad pasta for a couple months, but for a magical two and a half hour experience.

Beat.

ROSA

Wait! You didn't see it either!

MALCOLM

No, I didn't!

ROSA

And do you regret it?

MALCOLM

I have no idea! I haven't seen it!

ROSA

Have we met? Have we talked before?

MALCOLM

This is our first conversation.

ROSA

I don't usually forget a face.

MALCOLM

Sure.

ROSA

Did you follow me? How did you get here?

MALCOLM

No. I was just walking.

ROSA

Just walking? – Nobody walks through here. That's the whole fucking point–

MALCOLM

Do you know if this bridge has a name?

ROSA

Why would I know--

MALCOLM

You called it yours.

ROSA

I don't know if it has a name. It's just my spot. My place to collect myself.

MALCOLM

Hm.

ROSA

Is there something wrong with that?

MALCOLM

No, it's just not what I really expected.

ROSA

That the woman alone looking at the sunset is having some time to herself? – And I know, don't look at the sun.

MALCOLM

That's not what I was going to say.

ROSA

What were you going to say?

MALCOLM

I was going to say that 'I mean, it's lower now, so maybe it's alright to look at it. And the moon is beginning to peek out from behind the light. And that's kinda nice. I like to think of colors like dust, but not like my allergies, like in a magical way.'

Beat. ROSA sneezes.

ROSA

Achoo! Sorry, the sun, at a certain angle makes me sneeze sometimes.

MALCOLM

Is that an actual thing? I feel like that's not an actual thing.

ROSA

Achoo!

MALCOLM

Was that a real sneeze? That was a bit—

ROSA

Of course it was a real sneeze! Why the fuck would I fake a sneeze?

MALCOLM

I don't know, theres' ---

ROSA

Achoo!

MALCOLM

It can't be the sun.

ROSA

The light prickles my nose.

MALCOLM

So you're allergic to light?

ROSA

I don't like people like you.

MALCOLM

You've barely met me.

ROSA

Maybe we've met before. Or maybe I had a friend like you.

MALCOLM

which of those is it, we've met or you had a friend like me?

ROSA

Neither really. At least off the top of my head. I don't usually forget a face.

MALCOLM

Sure.

ROSA

You headed anywhere in particular?

MALCOLM

Nowhere. Otherwise I wouldn't have stopped.

ROSA

What type of person has no place to be?

MALCOLM

I like to walk. You like to stare at the sun. Where are you supposed to be?

ROSA

I don't know.

MALCOLM

I was just thinking that maybe I could clear my head.

ROSA

Really?

MALCOLM

And then along the way I forgot what I meant to think about.

ROSA

That's me. I forget everything.

(Beat.)

Do you know what I did today?

I went to my funeral.

Silence.

ROSA

Everyone I knew and some people I didn't really know were there, and then there were some people who I'm gonna assume must of had a really good excuse, or maybe, maybe it was too painful to see them put a little girl's coffin into the ground. And the priest was nothing but a drone, was nothing but static because I was dead and I couldn't hear him. I tried eating, but I obviously couldn't taste anything cause I'm a ghost. My little girl is somewhere else now.

ROSA picks up one of the marigolds and fiddles with it.

MALCOLM

I'm so sorry. You've been keeping it awfully well together for your child just dying-- sorry, that's the wrong thing to say, I didn't mean it--

ROSA

She's not mine. She's my step-sister.

MALCOLM

Ah. Now it would be mean to leave, wouldn't it.

ROSA

Yes it would. So I told you about me, now tell me about you.

MALCOLM

I don't have anything to say. I'm from Pittsburgh. I work at Eagle Bank. I'm really sorry. What you said about your step-sister really threw me. I'm--I'm having trouble talking to you.

ROSA

Forget it. It actually never happened. I was being cruel.

MALCOLM

Forget it? It neve--

ROSA

It never happened. Just talk to me.

MALCOLM

Forget it?

ROSA

Forget it.

MALCOLM

I'm confused.

ROSA

Then just don't say anything.

MALCOLM

I--

ROSA

Don't--

MALCOLM

But I like my voice.

ROSA

Well that doesn't mean I have to like it.

MALCOLM

Like what?

ROSA

You speaking.

MALCOLM

That's rude.

ROSA

Life's rude.

MALCOLM

I can't tell if you actually went to a funeral—

ROSA

To hell with funerals.

MALCOLM

Whatever it is... Life's a bitch and then you die. That's kinda just how it goes.

ROSA

Oh my god! Look!

ROSA points out over the bridge. By now the sky is dark orange and purple.

ROSA

There's some sort of... something in the sky. Like a shooting star or.. even though it isn't quite dark yet.

MALCOLM

That's not a shooting star. It was in the sky way too long to be a shooting star.

ROSA

Well I don't know, maybe the shooting star just woke up and was hungover, so it moved slower.

MALCOLM

That would be... interesting.

ROSA

Then what is it?

MALCOLM

I think that shooting star is really part of a meteor headed towards the Earth at billions of miles an hour destroying our atmosphere and our lives as we know it.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM

But I came here to talk to you about theater, how did we get so far off that?

ROSA

I think you can blame yourself – so there's this meteor headed towards us – so we're going to, we get to have our last few moments on my bridge. That's nice. I like that. I should've made a bucket list so I'd know what to do right now.

MALCOLM

Remember how there were all these disaster movies coming out when we were kids. Like the late 90s. Well I don't know how old you are–

ROSA

I wasn't around but I watched a lot of movies growing up.

MALCOLM

Ok so like Armageddon or..

ROSA

Deep Impact!

MALCOLM

Or even the Die Hard movies, like on a smaller scale, a disaster. All of them have Bruce Willis--

ROSA

And his smolder!

MALCOLM

Literally through the entire film, smoldering. And that was just part of the psyche. Disaster movies, earthquakes and meteors, and Bruce Willis smoldering. And now here we are with a meteor headed towards us. I guess – I guess what I'm trying to say is – What I'm trying to say is I wonder what Bruce Willis is doing right now.

ROSA

Waiting till the last possible second before we perish. Does it look different to you?

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

The sun.

MALCOLM

No.

ROSA

I don't think I ever got your name.

MALCOLM

Malcolm.

ROSA

You're not a ghost, are you?

MALCOLM

As far as I know. And what's your name?

A pause.

ROSA

(uncertain.)

Rosa?

MALCOLM

Rosa, like uhhhh no one I know or heard of. You're thorny and you smell good.

ROSA

You know it wasn't actually my step-sister's funeral. It was mine. I was trying to spare you from knowing that. I was trying to be kind, but I guess I couldn't do it.

MALCOLM

I-- do you have a step-sister?

ROSA

Yeah. *(to herself)* I wonder how she's doing.

MALCOLM

Have we met before?

ROSA

No. This is our first conversation.

MALCOLM

Are you dead?

ROSA

I don't know.

Streetlights on the bridge turn on, illuminating ROSA and MALCOLM just as they were becoming difficult to see.

MALCOLM

I was just about to say I should get going cus it's getting dark.

ROSA

And I'm so tired.

MALCOLM

But of course now we have to stay, right?

ROSA

You're probably right.

Streetlights flicker, then dark.

ROSA

Or maybe fate wants to keep us apart. This fucking city.

MALCOLM goes to inspect the closest lamp.

MALCOLM

Well, what's this about?

ROSA

(half-jokingly)

I'd say it's probably the meteorite.

MALCOLM

No, really- wait, you don't think—

ROSA

Why not? The rest of my day has been hell.

MALCOLM

... Because you went to your funeral?

ROSA

Yes, we've been over this.

MALCOLM

Did you die today?

ROSA

Yes, we've been over this.

MALCOLM

You're- you're serious, aren't you?

ROSA

Maybe. Are you?

MALCOLM

... Maybe I can fix it.

ROSA

Don't be stupid.

MALCOLM jumps on the bridge's railing and inspects the lamp closest to them.

ROSA

Hey just warning you if you break you fall and break your neck, I won't call for nobody. I don't want to deal with all that hassle.

MALCOLM

(not taking her seriously)

Yeah, yeah, yeah—

ROSA

I'll just leave you. To die. Possibly a second time – I don't know.

MALCOLM

I did gymnastics in high school. I'll be fine.

ROSA

Shit you are kinda gay.

The light MALCOLM seems to be fiddling with turns back on.

MALCOLM

The bulb just wasn't screwed in all the way, that's all.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM hops down now that they have minimal light.

MALCOLM

The bulb. It wasn't screwed in all the way.

ROSA

Oh. Seriously?

MALCOLM

You're welcome?

ROSA

There's no need for that.

Quietly, the sound of meteor booms ease into the atmosphere.

ROSA

Is that... is that coming from the light?

MALCOLM

No, much farther away.

Both look out over the bridge.

ROSA

Maybe you weren't lying about the meteor.

MALCOLM

(laughs)

That'll be something.

A slightly louder boom.

MALCOLM

(slightly concerned)

That'll be something.

ROSA

It's a perfect night.

MALCOLM

A perfect night for the world to end?

ROSA

As good as any.

ROSA pulls out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. She lights one and begins smoking. She then holds out the pack to MALCOLM.

ROSA

Do you?

MALCOLM

No, thanks though.

ROSA

You don't mind?

MALCOLM

No. My Dad needed his Newports as much as my mother.

ROSA

Much prefer a night alone on my bridge.

MALCOLM

The city doesn't own it then?

ROSA

Of course not.

MALCOLM

But the rest of the park?

ROSA

I don't know about the rest of the park.

MALCOLM

I don't know if it's just a hunch, but I think this is your first time here.

Beat.

ROSA

Yeah, you're right I've never been here before.

MALCOLM

I knew it.

ROSA

Ok you don't need to be like that.

MALCOLM

Like what?

ROSA

A child.

MALCOLM

You're the one that lied to me for some reason!

ROSA

When I found this bridge I thought no one else had seemed to claim it. So it might as well be mine.

MALCOLM

I had that exact same thought when I first walked by here, but then I saw you and--

ROSA

I beat you to it. What's your biggest regret?

MALCOLM

Because the world is ending?

ROSA

Naturally.

MALCOLM

Get me a fishing pole. I need to think about this.

ROSA retrieves a fishing pole. She hands it to MALCOLM. He lowers the line.

MALCOLM

This is how my Dad thought about things. Probably. No one's really asked me that. Probably meeting all the right people at the wrong times. Not taking advantage of my relationships when I had them. Like I wish I was closer to my brother when I was a teen. I wish I met this person at a different stage of life. It's always felt out of order. You?

ROSA

No I'm not gonna answer that.

MALCOLM

We don't have all night. There's, you know, the apocalypse.

ROSA

Well then how about you save it. You're not Bruce Willis. He's probably out there working his ass off to keep us from obliv--

MALCOLM

I. Turned On. That. Streetlight. I stood on the edge of the bridge at my own risk – I could've fallen-- and turned it on!

ROSA is suddenly very still. She looks down at the water. She looks a little pale. She sways a little bit.

MALCOLM

Does that count for anything?

ROSA begins to look as if she'll umble over the bridge railing. MALCOLM notices.

MALCOLM

Rosa? Hey, Rosa! ROSA!

ROSA seems to come out of her trance.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM

You were rocking back and forth. I thought you were gonna fall.

ROSA

I was?

MALCOLM

Yeah, you just started swaying. I was yelling your name.

ROSA

Oh. I heard you say it, but, um.

MALCOLM

But, um - what?

ROSA

Um- I- ...

ROSA struggles for words.

MALCOLM

Where did you go?

ROSA

Um nowhere. I haven't moved.

MALCOLM

Yes physically, but-

ROSA

I've had a rough day. I was lost in space.

MALCOLM

... I just think about how people try to persevere and put themselves through the weirdest shit sometimes, you know?

ROSA

No I don't but also yeah I think I know what you mean. To be clear, that's not me though, I just—I don't know what you thought I was doing.

MALCOLM

No, I think about that with myself sometimes. You get drained. And you keep pushing. And when you froze there, I just saw all the color go out of your face. It felt like me being drained.

ROSA

I push however much I need to.

MALCOLM

(dismissively)

Fine, be like that, but that's not a thing.

ROSA grows anxious, somewhat suddenly.

The streetlight flickers dramatically. MALCOLM seems to become not himself, his energy shifting ever so slightly. He stands his fishing pole up on its own.

MALCOLM

Dumb bitch.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

What did you just say to me?

MALCOLM

I didn't say anything!

ROSA

No, you--

MALCOLM

Sheesh first the freezing thing and now you're hearing things? You sure you're alright?

ROSA

I-- I had a rough day.

MALCOLM

Yeah I guess you must've.

The streetlight flickers dramatically.

ROSA

Get away from me.

MALCOLM

I-- I don't understand what happened. One moment we were trying to think of if we've met and the next you're really upset – what-- what--

ROSA

Something-- you reminded me-- Just let me be alone for a moment.

MALCOLM

Ok. I'll just be towards that end of the bridge. If you need me, just come over or give me a shout or whatever.

ROSA nods and begins to control her breathing as MALCOLM exits. She looks up towards the sky.

ROSA

Why-- every single--

LEO enters from downstage, walking through the house looking very lost. The sound of running water eases into the soundscape. He mimes wading through a river of sorts until he is a little bit underneath ROSA.

LEO

Do you know where I am?

ROSA

Not really actually.

LEO

I was trying to get off at Union Station but I lost track of the boys and now I'm in a river.

ROSA

Yes, I can see that. Not that you were at Union Station or that you lost the boys, but uh you are definitely in a river.

LEO

Yeah, uh did you come from the bus?

ROSA

Um no I did not.

LEO

Huh. I thought I might've-- nervermind.

ROSA

What?

LEO

I thought I saw you on the bus.

ROSA

Haven't been on any buses today.

LEO

Weird.

ROSA

Uh where you from?

LEO

South Park.

ROSA

L.A.?

LEO

Yes, is that-- is that not where I-- oh. um. I'm going to keep going up this river and see if I can get back to my stop. My friends are probably wondering where I am.

ROSA

Ok. Well good luck!

A boom reverberates in the background.

ROSA

Jesus well that's still going.

LEO

What is that?

ROSA

A meteor. Me and a friend of mine who you'll probably pass by-- he's somewhere round here--- we saw it.

LEO looks at ROSA like she's crazy.

LEO

Oh well ok. Have a good night.

LEO continues wading, heading upstage, going under the bridge before exiting.

ROSA

You too.

LEO

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

ROSA

I- I won't. You don't have to worry.

ROSA exhales loudly. She looks back up to the sky.

ROSA

Why is it--

MALCOLM reenters.

MALCOLM

Did you see that kid wading through the river? What the actual frickin-- what?

ROSA

Yeah I talked to him for a little bit. He said he came from the bus. I think he might've hit his head on something.

MALCOLM

I mean, it is the apocalypse. I imagine people are coming from all over.

ROSA

Yeah but wading through a small river. Tengo bastante de los hombres. Ayyy I sound like one my aunts or grandmas. Bastante. Bastante. Bastante. It gets passed down I guess. I had this one older cousin, we'd always make fun of our older relatives and now I sound like them. I wonder if she sounds like--

MALCOLM

Do you want to talk about whatever happened a little earlier?

ROSA

No.

MALCOLM

Ok.

A pause.

ROSA

Back there, you made a gesture or it was something you said about ‘not a thing’ and you just suddenly you started to become completely different in my-- my head. I know it sounds dumb. it’s just what occurs since – well
None of that’s really important now.

MALCOLM

No I guess not... but also... everything’s important.

ROSA

That’s just not true.

MALCOLM

Is it? Sure, I guess you could take the expansive view and say if the world is ending and you went to your own funeral – nothing much at all really matters. But nothing matters, then everything is just what we give meaning to. And then everything can be important. We can make it all matter.

Silence. It lasts for a little while, long enough so both ROSA and MALCOLM begin looking in other directions. ROSA eventually puts her gaze on the sky. MALCOLM’s rests his on the water below.

MALCOLM

There are entire worlds we don’t even know about. There are these places that’ll we’ll never see, that’ll we’ll never even hear of. I know people tell us to look at the stars and the universe is so expansive, but what about this rock. There are places we’ll never see. I-- I don’t even know what’s on the other side of that bridge. I don’t even know who in my life is alive right now or if they’re astroid dust.

ROSA

I keep everything so close to my heart. My heart floods my mind. It’s too often misty and cloudy. My neck is always stiff cause my eyes are tunnels so I can’t move side to side. I can’t see what else is out there. Except a light somewhere towards the end, maybe it’s in the middle, there’s no way for me to know when the light is coming from. I heard there was a ladder along here for me to climb out of this cell, but I don’t even know what’s on this side of the bridge.

MALCOLM

Where was that boy going again?

ROSA

Up the river somewhere. To find his friends.

MALCOLM

He thinks that’ll work?

ROSA

He seemed to think it made sense.

MALCOLM

I don't know how much sense that makes.

ROSA

Kids don't make a lot of sense.

MALCOLM

No, I never did.

ROSA

I didn't either.

MALCOLM stands. He heads over to his fishing line. He exhales loudly.

MALCOLM

Do you know what I did today?

ROSA

What?

A long beat.

MALCOLM

... I can't remember all the facts. It's muddled.

ROSA

Did it matter? You said everything did.

MALCOLM

It might've mattered. I don't really know what to say about it. Or if there's anything to say. I've never made it past half-truths.

A loud boom reverberates. The bridge rattles. The singular street light flickers then goes dark. A roar returns to MALCOLM's voice.

MALCOLM

God Damn't!! I just fixed that!

ROSA

It's fine. Was bound to go out again.

MALCOLM

Oh really? And how do you know this?

ROSA

Because you fixed it by screwing the bulb tighter.

MALCOLM

A tried and true method. Fuck this shit. I thought I did something good today. I fixed a fucking light. No actually I did not fix a fucking light.

ROSA

You're prettier in the dark.

MALCOLM

When you can't see me as well? Thanks bit–

ROSA

No, it's just you look interesting all shadowy.

MALCOLM

Oh, do I?

ROSA

You do. Do you want to fuck a ghost?

MALCOLM

You don't know the type of shit I'm capable of doing.

ROSA

I can imagine.

MALCOLM

You really don't. You know what, I'm going to see what's on the other side of this shit. I don't care if I die. I don't care if I kill somebody. I'm tired of being half-way–

MALCOLM walks off the other side of the bridge. His voice cuts off as he exits. ROSA considers for a moment and then chases after him.

ROSA

Malcolm!

*There are a few moments of silence and then a few more.
LEO reenters, still wading through water.*

LEO

I think I'm pretty lost. Like dawg – I was on the bus – then I was off the bus – then I was here. Then I met this weird lady and this weird man. I thought both couldn't of been real, but like none of that ghost shit. Or I'm the ghost. There's this girl that died.... She's not here. She's not back at the station. She's not anywhere. I can feel it in myself I don't really know what that means.

That's honestly really frightening. And now I feel like I'm just waiting to make sense of it. I'll look around here and say to myself "Well, went to Narnia?" or I'll get a little higher than I usually do, a little more trashed cause I don't understand something. Why don't stuff make sense no more? If it did all make sense or at least mostly make sense or even half make sense – I was wading up that way as if I was crawling up a mountain. The sky, the air slowly turned a pinkish orange. With anything and everything else crumbling, the trees suddenly became, like, more alive. They were the new us. I saw only two people the whole time, both around this bridge.

So I kept going, after a while I realized I was significantly gaining height. I was wading up a mountain. The trees became shorter and for some strange shit, air traffic was off the rocker. Big, commercial planes passing by me. A few at a time, sometimes right over my head. It was fucking deafening. Just ringing and ringing and ringing in my ears. I had no reception this whole time. I got to the summit and it was pitch black everywhere around me. I see no lights of anything, but it's foggy by the water.

The stars were brighter than I ever seen them before. Just kinda dotted across the entire sky in this mystical, almost protective way. But uh that wasn't it though, the air was that pink for a reason I guess, 'cause as soon as I was about to call it quits and head back down the wind picked up and these thundering firecracker bangs and all these little, or probably not so little flames began popping up around the hills. I heard some bangs in the distance a little earlier, but this shit was like close. I was probably in danger. We was at a pitch dark midnight black blue star covered sky and it just exploded. The air became really dense. But that's not important, cause those fires let me see where I was. Or kinda where I was. I wasn't in Narnia. I wasn't in heaven or hell – I was in Los Angeles. And all the stars disappeared in the light of the blazes. The city sprawled out to my right. The city lights blinking in some sort of confused pattern of morse code. All synchronously. And that was wack, but it was L.A. Those little fires burning across the landscape lit the water in a really wonderful way. I kept asking myself if I was dead. Instead I sat somewhere comfy and said to myself this must be one hell of a bender. But I don't remember drinking. I feel like this is the weekend I like to think I have. As I was hiking and wading, I just kept thinking I don't know who the fucks I am. Who is in this body that I seem to inhabit? No matter what I do with myself, how I build myself or how I spend my time, who I spend that time with or shit, I feel like I'm inscrutable to myself. I don't have an identity. I'm just the opposite's perception of me. Pulled off to every direction, I can't tell what days they fence me out and what days they fence me in.

I hiked some Hollywood hill today. I saw air traffic moving in the way of an apocalypse and all these hills catch on sky fire. I was haunted on a bus that might not exist. I waded through a long ass river and I contemplated whether I was still alive or not. And so what? Who gives a fuck? Who gives a fuck what I'm saying? I'm all fucking wet.

There was this girl and she died. Inscrutable. She's technically my cousin, biologically. That side of the family isn't involved with us. My dad didn't grow up with all his siblings. But my family was invited to the service, but I only met her a few times, she's a cousin I don't really see so I went to a soccer tourney I had that weekend instead. We were knocked out in the group stage. We played like shit. It was a waste of a weekend. I hit my head on a beam in the bathroom earlier tonight. The ceilings were low.

There are people like me who'd be happy just to be alive, especially now, and we, the people around me just be slowly or quickly killing ourselves. I mean, you're rich then you're a nihilist. But I always feel stuck in the middle of that cause I live with like more fear. It's like I'm always

sitting, waiting to get murdered even when I prolly ain't. But at the same time, I always seem to sneak out alive. No matter what I do. No matter how we try to self-fulfill our narcissistic prophecies. And she crashed her car I think, one way or another, cause she was really, really genuinely sad. But like, who decided she'd be feeling that way? Why do I feel so much empathy? Why do I feel like I'm behind her eyes? That I saw it all happen. That I was in her head that night she went into that ditch. But if I was that little voice, what did I say? To someone I never met in her last moments. The air's become so hot and dense. Like the inside of a burning car. Maybe, somehow, I'm there right now. Maybe I'm really actually there right now. But I found water. I get to live.

LIGHTS DIM.

Scene Two

Let's go to a beach. It's early morning. The sound of waves can be heard. Stage right brightens. ROSA, stands stage right facing audience, who are the ocean. She gazes out at the waves solemnly. There are two chairs spaced about a foot apart behind her. She abruptly sits on the "driver's seat" chair, the chair on the left. She curls up into a ball on the chair.

Stage left brightens. There are an additional two chairs spaced a foot apart stage left. ASIF, a middle-aged Persian officer, sits in the driver's seat chair on the left. ASIF rises from his chair, does a motion suggestive of opening a car door, and walks around in front of the chairs over to ROSA.

ASIF

Excuse me?

She is unresponsive.

ASIF

Excuse me, I've been told you have been parked here for quite some time.

ROSA

(quietly)

What do you want?

ASIF

I was called. There was a loud noise. I've been told you've been here for quite some time.

ROSA

I want to go home.

ASIF

If you step out the car, I'm here to make sure—

ROSA

(abruptly, quickly, panicked)

I DIDN'T SAY THAT.

ASIF

I--

ROSA

(turns head towards ASIF for first time)

I'm waiting. Do you want to sit?

ASIF
(surprised)

Sit?

ROSA
(pleadingly)

Sit.

ASIF stands a moment, thinking about what ROSA just asked, then walks around in front of the chairs and ROSA. He stands for a moment, does a motion suggestive of opening a car door then sits down in the chair next to her. As he does this, ROSA takes a container of pills from her jacket pocket and swallows a couple. She quickly hides them as ASIF sits down, and does a motion suggestive of closing a car door. ASIF does not notice the pills, rather, he looks about what could be a mess of a car – visibly uncomfortable.

ASIF

You left it unlocked.

ROSA

I'm waiting.

ASIF

For what?

ROSA

My sun.

ASIF
(surprised)

You have a child? How old are you?

ROSA

No, I'm waiting for the sun. My sunrise.

ASIF
(hesitating)

Sunrise won't be for a couple of hours.

How about we get out of--

ROSA
(forcefully, panicked)

NOOO!

ASIF studies ROSA, for one moment and then another.

ASIF

If you don't comply, I will have to use force.

ROSA

Fuck you.

ASIF does a motion which suggests opening the car door on his side. Then, he grabs ROSA by her wrists.

ROSA

AHHH. HEEEEELP. HEEEEELLPPP. You have to let me wait. YOU HAVE TO LET ME WAIT.

Very suddenly, ASIF lets ROSA go. He does a motion suggesting he closes the car door he opened.

ASIF

Ok. Maybe that wasn't the right move. Let's talk.

ROSA

I'm waiting.

ASIF

For the sun?

ROSA nods.

ASIF

What will you do when the sun does come up?

ROSA

(quietly again)

I don't know.

Brief silence.

ROSA

What's your name?

ASIF

... Asif.

ROSA

What's that from?

ASIF

It's an Arab name, but I'm Persian.

Do you know what it means? ROSA

I was told it translates as forgiveness. ASIF

My name is Renata. I don't know what it means. ROSA

How old are you? ASIF

17. ROSA

17? What are you doing here at *this* time? ASIF

I already said. I'm waiting for the sun. ROSA
(slight irritation)

Right. Where's home? ASIF

-- the sun. ROSA
(stressed in response)

What will you do when the sun comes? ASIF

Tell it to go away. It burns me. ROSA
(continued stress)

Then why are you waiting for it? ASIF

No more questions ... I need to get out. I need to touch the waves. I need ... ROSA
(emotionally, then panicked)

ROSA stands, does the motion of opening the car door, then stumbles out. The sound of ocean waves fades into the sound of traffic.

ASIF opens his car door, realizing she is headed towards the street and a car is coming her way. Car noises fade into one distinct car noise, which becomes louder as ROSA wanders downstage. ASIF runs after her.

ASIF

ROSA!!!

Car noise reaches its loudest volume just as ASIF pulls ROSA upstage out of the car's path. Car noise fades away.

ASIF

(soothingly)

Let's get you to the car. Let's get you to the car.

ASIF walks ROSA to the two chairs where he started the scene.

ASIF

Do you want to sit?

The sound of ocean waves return.

ROSA

Yes. The ocean is better sitting.

ROSA mindlessly takes the bottle of pills from her pocket. ASIF notices.

ASIF

Turn over the bottle, please.

She is unresponsive.

ASIF

Turn over the bottle.

She is unresponsive. ASIF pries the bottle from her hand.

ASIF

Let's get you to the car.

ASIF walks ROSA stage left to his car. He opens the door, on the right side and helps ROSA into the car. Then, he closes the door.

Somewhere, LEO appears from upstage. He wades until he is just past the bridge. He looks out upon us.

ASIF then walks around the car to the left side, opens the door. He picks up a radio from his belt, and holds it up to his mouth.

ASIF

Requesting assistance at the corner of Beacon and Tyler. I found the car. There was a female minor in it. I have her now. I think she is going to need an evaluation.

ASIF puts the radio back on belt. He sits and then closes the door behind him. LEO wanders elsewhere offstage.

ROSA

(surprisingly calm)

I don't want to go in an ambulance or anything.

ASIF

I'm doing protocol. I'm ensuring everyone is--

ROSA

Safe, ok.

Silence.

ROSA

You were told your name means 'forgiveness'. When did that happen?

ASIF

When I was just a little younger than you.

ROSA

What brought it up?

ASIF

It'll take a while.

ROSA

Ok.

ASIF

(sighs, takes some time before speaking)

When I was a teenager, my country was going through many changes. I lived in Kolah... It's a village on the coast of the Persian Gulf. We lived on a hill and our houses were made out of clay, almost blending into the countryside. Every day I would go down to the water.

ASIF stands up from chair wanderers center stage. Distinctly different ocean noises begin. Seabirds can be heard. The sound a car makes when its door is open can be heard.

ASIF

We fished a lot where I lived. The sand always burned your feet. Every summer, you had to tiptoe as fast as you could across the sand. I made a game out of it.

*(ASIF hops a little as he says 'tiptoe',
mimicking his response to the sand'.)*

It was at the beginning of one summer that rumors began, that an opposition leader of some sort was hiding in our village. By late summer authorities came, threatening the whole town if we didn't turn in or find Omid Taleghani. Everybody was at each other's throats. I heard occurrences of people who searched their neighbors' homes more vigorously than the police. We were scared ... One night, one neighbor we didn't get along with, his name was Hamid, led the police to our doorstep. He claimed he found Omid Teleghani. My older brother who lived in the city was staying in town with us at the time, and Hamid pointed them to him.

They took him. My parents had me sleeping in a corner of the closet that night. They said for now just in case. They said they'd be fine ... The next day I woke up and my parents were gone ... the house was wrecked ... I slept *through* it ... I feared that when they realized our family had a second son, they would look for me too. A refugee boat was leaving that night, only half a mile from the ocean side of my town. The waves ran through my toes as I ran through the darkness. The waves were wild with rage and fear and sorrow. I was one of the first ones to find the boat. We departed at 2:30. It was not just 10 minutes later, when we had settled into the ocean, that I remember seeing a red-orange reflection on the water. I knew we were looking at my village. When I looked up I saw the mountain side aflame, the clay crackening, becoming blackened rock. A man was sitting behind me, I didn't know he was there until he spoke. Shadows ran across his face. He was old. I think he could tell I was affected by the fire. He asked my name. He spoke in the language of the Book. I told him. "ASIF" he said. "That means forgiveness where I come from". I looked back at the flames. The firelight now glowed on the boat. I looked back to where the man was, but he wasn't there. I was talking to a lifejacket.

Ocean noises stop. ASIF returns to the driver's seat in the car. Doesn't mimic opening door. Car noise stops. Both ASIF and ROSA sit silently for a while. After sufficient silence, the sound of raindrops begin. First softly, then slightly louder-- should still be soft enough for characters to speak.

ASIF

It rained later that night. It never rained in Kolah.

Silence.

ASIF

Renata, what will you do when the sun comes up?

ROSA

(quickly, panicky)

I'll wake up and everything will be better.

ASIF

Renata.

ROSA

(breathes)

I'm in a car.

(inhales again)

I always knew I was in a car. I must have, right?

ASIF

I don't know.

ROSA

I'm in a car. This isn't my car, this is your car. I parked here at around 2:30. I was listening to music to try to calm myself. I was trying to calm myself. I can't remember why I was anxious. I wanted his brightness, his color, his heat. I thought he was going to burn me into a million ashes. I thought I was going to die. I'm waiting for the sun.

ASIF

The sun is a person?

ROSA

(ignores question)

I love the rain though.

ASIF

Do you?

ROSA

Yes, it has so many emotions. It can represent anything, and I am anything. He is the sun and I am the rain and sometimes we make a rainbow. The problem is that he kills me.

ASIF

Does he hurt you?

ROSA

Are you asking about the sun?

ASIF

-Yes.

ROSA

He burns me because he is my sun. He can't do anything but give me light, color and blisters. Not physically though, he burns me on the inside and it's worse.

ASIF

Where are you right now?

I'm floating.

ROSA

In the ocean?

ASIF

Yes.

ROSA

Do you know where you really are?

ASIF

In your car.

ROSA

Is it raining on the ocean right now?

ASIF

Yes, but it doesn't bother me.

ROSA

Do you like it?

ASIF

The droplets are soft on my skin.

ROSA

Rain noises cease.

What will you do when the sun comes up?

ASIF

What did you do ... when you were in that boat the next morning?

ROSA

ASIF

I laughed. Just as the sun came up, a pod of dolphins began porpoising, diving in and out and in and out of the water. One particular dolphin, had a certain character to him which amused me. All of us on that boat were so tired. We all had stories. I think all of us on that boat, if we are still alive, have a special place for the memory of that morning.

Will I have a morning like that?

ROSA

ASIF

Maybe...

(humorously)

Tell me if you see any dolphins.

ROSA

(humorously)

I mean, It's still raining, so just maybe...

ASIF

It's not that cloudy. When the sun comes, we might see a rainbow.

ROSA

We just might.

ASIF

We just might.

The sound of waves meditate on ASIF's and ROSA's unspoken thoughts for a moment or two.

LILLY enters. She seems to be looking for something or someone...

LILLY

Leo!!

Silence. LILLY grabs her ear.

LILLY

Somebody told me, well, my grandma – that when your ear starts ringing, that's the universe speaking to you but you see I have tinnitus in my left ear, so the universe won't shut up. It just won't-- it won't stop jabbing at me.

(beat.)

Fucking hell. LEO!!

LEO reenters, still wading through water. He hears her, but can't see her. He begins wading in LILLY's direction, but then enters into the house.

LEO

Lilly!

Looping back around, LEO returns to the stage with a stumble and a crash. LILLY rushes over to him, finding him drenching wet head to toe. He looks maniacal.

LILLY

Bro, Jesus! Where the fuck were you?? You're drenching wet! We've been looking for you all night and you have my joint!

LEO

You left me at the stop! // With that I.C.E. pig. You know I don't bring my papers.

LILLY approaches him.

LILLY

What've you done // with my joint?!

LEO

Lilly, I been to fucking hell and back // and you tell me--

LILLY

Where's my joint? What the fuck have you done with my // joint? You can't stay in one place bro, huh? You always have to go off--

LEO

Are. You. Hearing. A. Word I'm Saying!?

LILLY

on your own little adventure! Why do you never stay with the group!?

LEO

You separated from me. I lost y'all. I was trying to avoid the--

LILLY

(angrily)

I know! Fuck I know! I didn't know what happened to you!

(smally)

I didn't know what happened to you...

LEO

Hey, it's ok. I'm here.

LILLY

No it's not.

LEO

No, really. I'm fine. You don't need to get like that.

LILLY

(annoyed)

Well sorry!

LEO

I just needed some time alone.

LILLY

So alone you couldn't answer my calls.

LEO

Maybe... my phone died.

LILLY

Of course you're fucking phone died. You're asking to be murdered.

LEO

Where is this coming from?

LILLY

Where the fuck do you think? We... that was chaos. That was scary. They came onto a fucking bus. If that homeless guy didn't start throwing hands, maybe they would've taken all of us. And you didn't stick with us. You should've stuck with us.

LEO can't think of a response. LILLY checks her pockets. She pulls out a pill container enclosed with a small joint.

LILLY

Oh, I have it.

LEO

There you go. There's your fucking weed. Fuck you.

LILLY

Do you still want to smoke?

LEO

Honestly - No, not really. I don't know if they're still looking for me. Does that not register in your head?

LILLY

No you're right it's dumb. It is. It's registering. I thought you were gone gone. But you're here. I'm trying to fucking cope...

LEO

I need you to fucking cope.

LILLY

Ok then. I'm coping.

LEO

You're coping?

LILLY
Yeah. Do you need somewhere safe to go?

LEO
Are you suggesting somewhere?

LILLY
No, I just need to know if you don't already have someplace.

LEO
Where's everyone else?

LILLY
Not looking for you. And I don't think they're looking for me.

LEO
What are friends for?

LILLY
Do you know if there was someone they were searching for on the bus? Like there has to be, right?

LEO
I don't know. Maybe. Someone tips them off.

LILLY
If it's fucking Josh-

LEO
Josh would never do that.

LILLY
He's been going down this red pill shit. He started following Nick Fuentes.

LEO
I know all that. He still wouldn't do that.

LILLY
You might be ok. I saw them like arresting five other people—

LEO
You for real?

LILLY
Yeah.

LEO

Fuck yes. Thank God. I mean, for me.

LILLY

Let's think of where to go.

LEO

Or not. We could just walk for a bit.

LILLY

You're fucking ridiculous. Crazy.

LEO

I have a tendency.

LILLY

Ok then while we do, I'm going to light this up for myself.

LEO

YOU'RE fucking ridiculous. Crazy.

LILLY

Huh. Love ya.

LEO

Fuck ya.

LILLY

You don't mean that.

LEO

Oh I so do.

LILLY

I went looking for you alone, bro, in the middle of the night. The amount of times I— you fucking owe me so much.

LEO

Yeah. Maybe.

LILLY

Oh c'mon. And I found you. No - so I'm gonna smoke. You're gonna protect me now. And I'm with you now, so that protects you. Just my tinnitus is killing me.

LEO

The weed don't do shit for that.

LILLY
Not true.

LEO
... I'm grateful you found me.

LILLY
There you go - gratitude. Not that hard.

LEO
And I get to copy off your Bio homework tomorrow morning.

LILLY
I haven't done it yet.

LEO
Stop lying.

LILLY
I haven't! I was going to do it in a study hall before.

LEO
Bro, c'mon. Please. If there's any point in time I'm more deserving. I-

LILLY
You're deserving. You're a dumbass.

LEO
But like I obviously haven't had time to do it tonight.

LILLY
Ok, fine - you can copy it tomorrow morning.

LEO
So you've already done it?

LILLY
Yeah.

LEO
This is why you're the fucking worst person I know. I almost get detained and you still want me to do my own homework.

LILLY
Don't say stuff like that. You don't hate me. You hate yourself.

LEO
(offended)

Hey.

LILLY

It's true.

LEO

No it's not.

LILLY

You love literally everything else though. That's what's alright about you. Like look at the ocean right now. Somehow the waves are more calming at night even though they're more aggressive. There's so much to love in that. Or the beach. The sound of the sand under our feet is so soft. I would take off my shoes if it weren't cold right now and I'm pretty sure I'd lose track of them in the dark— Do you want to carry my shoes?

LEO

No.

LILLY

Why not? Is chivalry dead?

LEO

Because I don't want to. And if anyone loves the waves at night, it sounds like it's you.

LILLY

Chivalry is dead.

LEO

You love literally everything else but me.

LILLY

That's not true! I hate everything.

LEO

I think you got us mixed up.

LILLY

Says the man that never does his bio homework.

LEO

What does that have to do with anything?

LILLY

You don't understand, I don't know, the difference between a mixture and a compound.

I do.

LEO

You literally don't.

LILLY

It's... fuck.

LEO

(beat.)
You don't know it either. Like don't act like you're so smart.

LILLY
Compounds are chemically bonded. Mixture is just a bunch of different things together, separate from each other.

LEO
That sounds...

LILLY
Right.

LEO
That wasn't what I was going to say.

LILLY
It is right though.

LEO
No I mean I wasn't going to say it doesn't sound right.

LILLY
Huh?

LEO
I was going to say that sounds like some bullshit that some scientist came up with to make my life more difficult.

LILLY
There's a lot worse things than science.

LEO
Yeah. Evidence from earlier tonight. That's science. Bro, have you even been to Mexico?

LILLY
No.

LEO

It's not that bad.

LILLY

Wait, you've been there?

LEO

Not since I was 3.

LILLY

Oh I thought you meant recently.

LEO

No. Came here because my mom wants me to be whiter. More shade here. So I don't burn as much.

LILLY

Yeah, there's so much shade. There's so many trees in a city and a desert.

LEO

Whatever.

LILLY

Are you really ok?

LEO

What are you talking about?

LILLY

What do you mean what am I talking about?

LEO

What do you mean?

LILLY

You seemed really panicked when I found you. That makes sense--

LEO

No, I was chilling.

LILLY

O-k.

LILLY lights her joint. Then begin walking along the beach. LEO follows.

LILLY
I'll share if you want.

LEO
No, I'm good.

(beat.)
Why are you acting like an ass about this?

LILLY
(mimmicky)
Why are you acting like an ass about this?

LEO
This isn't funny.

LILLY
I'm serious.

LEO
I'm not the one acting like an ass.

LILLY
Really? Says the person that didn't look back once to make sure his friends were ok. It was everyone for themselves. Doesn't answer his phone when we're trying to find him—

LEO
You're a citizen.

LILLY
You know that doesn't—

LEO
Yeah, but you're better off.

LILLY
I get it.

(beat.)
Fuck, I just don't know if I still want this or not. I already lit it.

LEO
Stub it and then twist the paper. Your tinnitus will handle—

LILLY
Is just my tinnitus. I manage to live with it.

LILLY put out the joint and twist the ends of the paper together. The smoke drift through the air.

ASIF squints in their direction.

ASIF

Do you see smoke?

ROSA

What? I think that's just the fog coming in.

ASIF

Fuck.

ASIF turns on his high beams, which shine towards LEO and LILLY. He spots LILLY with her weed and LEO with her. He moves to get out of the car.

ASIF

Stay here. Don't go anywhere.

ROSA

Where are you going?

ASIF gets out of the car and locks it behind him. He slowly approaches the kids.

ASIF

Police!

LILLY

Fuck!

LEO

Mierda! Follow me.

LEO starts running into the waves.

LILLY

Into the ocean??

LEO

Trust me.

ASIF

Stay right there!!

ROSA unlocks her door and gets out the car. She begins waving her arms.

ROSA

Hey!! Hey!! Hey!! Hey!!

This distracts ASIF for a second as he looks towards her. LEO and LILLY disappear into the waves. There's a silence.

ASIF

What the fuck are you doing?

ROSA

What the fuck are *you* doing?

ASIF

My job. I can't just watch kids smoke on the beach.

ROSA

Why'd you start pointing your gun?

ASIF

I didn't point it. I just told them to freeze.

ROSA

They were kids.

ASIF

Well, we don't know how old they were.

ROSA

So?

ASIF

They could be dangerous. They'd at least get a fine if not more—

ROSA

I'm technically an adult. Am I dangerous?

ASIF

So you lied to me?

ROSA

What? No.

ASIF

You said you were 17.

No I didn't.

ROSA

Is this car you're in? Is this your car?

ASIF

Yes.

ROSA

It don't belong to anyone else?

ASIF

N-no.

ROSA

There you go. Lying again.

ASIF

I'm not.

ROSA

ROSA sighs.

You're not I.C.E., are you?

ROSA

I'm a police officer. LAPD.

ASIF

You better not be lying to me. If you're fucking I.C.E.--

ROSA

None of that concerns me. That's not my job... But don't tell me anything more.

ASIF

But ... what the fuck - You're an immigrant!

ROSA

Exactly.

ASIF

Exactly? How could you-

ROSA

I- you're not listening to me.

ASIF

ROSA

I now know why they named you forgiveness.

(beat.)

I'm leaving.

ASIF

I can't have you do that. I can't let you drive.

ROSA

Then I won't drive.

ROSA heads for her car. ASIF intercepts her.

ASIF

You can walk from here. But I just don't think that's a good idea. It isn't safe.

ROSA

Let me go.

ASIF lets her go.

ROSA

Don't you have a wife and kids to go home to?

ASIF

I do, actually.

ROSA

Then just go home to them.

ASIF hesitates.

ASIF

Maybe I should. Something's telling me I shouldn't.

ROSA

The pills... they're for my head. They aren't recreational. I want them back.

ASIF

Are you sure about that?

ROSA

(exasperated)

Yes!

ASIF

If I give them back, will you talk with me?

ROSA

You can't just do that. Those are mine!

ASIF

If I give them back, will you just talk with me?

ROSA

I don't know.

LIGHTS DOWN.

LIGHTS UP ON:

Scene Three

The fog has now completely settled in. MALCOLM enters and wanders for a bit. ROSA does the same. They each find a spot distinct from one another and face away from each other.

MALCOLM

No, I don't go to grad school here.... I'm not from here either.... I came with Derek.... yeah, he brought me... We went to high school... yeah.

ROSA

No, it's not like that. No, he's never--

MALCOLM

I'm here for the weekend. Passing through.... Could be moving.... No, I don't know that yet.

ROSA

Like the other day, we went to the cider mill and the sweetest thing... No let me tell you, the sweetest thing, he put me in this little wooden cart and drove me around the orchard... it was so much fun.... yeah, but it's not just that one...

MALCOLM

I've looked at places... could be an upgrade... maybe not... ... yeah maybe I'm just jealous of him-- no, for real... shit it's starting to rain, we need to move. Everyone else is inside anyway, what the fuck we doing... Right?

ROSA

Ok, so what I've told that one before... I told you I hit myself on the dishwasher at work! No, it's not him. It's not him. It's not him. It's--

MALCOLM

It is so much warmer in here, what were we doing?... *(to someone else)* Heyyy. Hey! Yeah, I met --uh what's your name?...

ROSA

Do we really need to have this conversation now? Is that necessary? Is that really what we need to--

MALCOLM

Oh, ay -- just passing by me there. I come to this shit with him, now he's just ignoring me?... But you live in Columbus, right?... Yeah I got a few places in mind, if you know anything about the area.

ROSA

This isn't your place to judge.... No, you're not concerned. You're just--- I don't even know what you are. This is the choice I've made, ok? This is my choice. You don't be telling me who I date. I don't tell you-- I don't tell you--

MALCOLM

Oh, my name's Malcolm.... Yeah, from Pittsburgh... No, I'm pretty sure I'm the only Malcolm he knows... What do you mean "I'm dead"? uhh Did I do something?

ROSA looks down.

ROSA

Oh shit, he's been texting me. I've-- I've got to go. He's really sensitive about this stuff. I need to go see him.... Uhhh-- bye!.... I don't have time for this. I've got to go.... No, bye. ... Fine. I agree to talk to you later... ... Get the fuck out of my life!

MALCOLM

Dead? Literally dead?... Who are you? Uh, I mean, um, what now?

ROSA

What now?

After a bit, MALCOLM slowly approaches ROSA.

MALCOLM

Have we met before? I mean, before this night.

ROSA

I don't think so.

A beat.

MALCOLM

(still not processing it)

I died.

ROSA

Yeah, I figured. I died too. A few years ago. Time's different here somehow. Sometimes I see little glimpses of the other side in the river. For my friends and family it hasn't been that long.

MALCOLM

When did I die?

ROSA

I don't know. Do you remember how?

MALCOLM

No.

ROSA

It took me a while.

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

It took me a while to remember how I... how I went.

MALCOLM

Ok. I guess, if I am, I'll remember in a little while.

ROSA

(quietly)

Yeah.

MALCOLM

How did you-- you don't have to say it actually. You're young. Where you this young?

ROSA

I think I was a little bit younger. I feel... older somehow. I feel like time has passed, but I also know it hasn't. I don't know. I should say it. Somebody should know. I... I killed myself. I think something with my car. But it's hazy.

Silence.

MALCOLM

Why didn't you mention any of this before?

ROSA

I said it's hazy! And I didn't know who you were or what you were doing here. I didn't know if I could trust you or if you were sent to punish me or--

MALCOLM

Yeah, ok. Slow down, I get it. The world didn't end. We just did.

ROSA

I don't know maybe it is? I don't-- it's confusing.

MALCOLM

Confusing as fuck.

(beat.)

Is this real?

Silence.

MALCOLM

This can't be real, right. Like how can this be real? I haven't died. And if I did, I'd definitely remember how. That's not something you forget. And I definitely – I don't know if there's any after life, I feel like there isn't, but if there is – It definitely doesn't kind of remind me of Griffith Park.

ROSA

I think San Gabriel Mountains.

MALCOLM

You know where we are??

ROSA

I'm just saying what it reminds me of.

MALCOLM

Did you bring me here? What the fuck did you do to me?

ROSA

I didn't do anything! You found me!

MALCOLM

Yeah, I was going for a walk...

ROSA

You were. And?

MALCOLM

When the fuck did I start walking?

ROSA

I don't know I guess you must've walked all the way from Pittsburgh.

MALCOLM

FUCK. Who the fuck are you?

ROSA

I've told you– I've told you things no one else will ever know about me.

MALCOLM

Bullshit. Bullshit. This is fucking bullshit. Do you have a phone?

ROSA

No.

MALCOLM grabs ROSA. Begins searching through her pockets.

MALCOLM

Bullshit. This is fucking bullshit.

He finds nothing. He lets her go.

MALCOLM

You're... you're— I need some time to think.

(beat.)

Was that kid we saw dead too?

ROSA

I assume so.

MALCOLM

He was – he was looking for his friends. We should find him. We should tell him he's dead, right?

ROSA

I guess. I mean, do you think he's dead?

MALCOLM

How am I supposed to know? I mean, if we are apparently?

ROSA

He came here on a bus.

MALCOLM

What?! Where is this bus?

ROSA

I don't know. He was looking for it—

MALCOLM

Am I dead or not?

ROSA

I just said—

MALCOLM

Who are you, huh?!?!?

ROSA

I don't know, ok?!? I don't know!!

MALCOLM

You don't know.

ROSA

I don't know. I'm just guessing. I just got here and – and – I'm not even that sure I know how I died. When you asked me-- and my memory comes and goes and I can't tell you what half my life looked like before this. It's just in and out and in and out, coming and going, coming and going –I'm just guessing, Malcolm. My last memory is being upside down surrounded by fire in the driver's seat and took me forever to get there, ok? Ok?!

MALCOLM

Alright.

MALCOLM re-mounts the bridge to check on his fishing pole, stood up. He stares at it.

MALCOLM

It's not picking up anything.

ROSA

I don't know if there's any fish.

MALCOLM

Know-it-all, Rosa. Come up here.

Rosa obliges.

MALCOLM

There's nothing everywhere. Every direction. Just the trees and the shrubs. I spotted a beetle. But in the midst of it all, for no particularly obvious reason, lies a bridge. With a fucking lamppost. And it's your bridge, right?

ROSA

Not actually, that's just something I said–

MALCOLM

And apparently there's also a bus. But for there to be a bus, there needs to be more people. There needs to be a society, right–

ROSA

I don't think there's actually a bus–

MALCOLM

Did you kidnap me?

ROSA

What? How would've I–

MALCOLM

Did you kill me?

ROSA

No! Jesus—

MALCOLM

Well, you at least half convinced me I'm dead. The world is ending. A kid walks in a river. Sometimes we have light. Sometimes we don't. And the only constant thing is you. So what are you hiding?

ROSA

I could say the same thing to you. There were no meteors or explosions until you showed up. But I eventually decided to trust you, but maybe that's misplaced. I don't know.

MALCOLM

Stop trying to flip it!! This isn't about me! I'm not the one who has all these theories. I'm just trying to figure shit out. I just realized five minutes ago that I don't remember starting walking. I don't remember how I got here. So either you drugged me or killed me or I'm dead or some wack shit is going on.

ROSA

What the fuck do you want me to say?!?!?

MALCOLM

The truth!!

ROSA

I don't know shit!!

MALCOLM

Gah!

LILLY enters onto the scene with a yoga mat. She lays it down, sits and begins meditating.

ROSA

Lilly?

MALCOLM

Wait, you know that person??

ROSA

Not really—

MALCOLM

You need to start giving me answers, Rosa. What did you do? You need to start giving me-- none of this doesn't add up here--

ROSA

Malcolm--

MALCOLM

I don't even know who you are. What are doing with me? You know this is your fault and you aren't even sorry. Do you want me to tell the world what you've done to me? How'd you like that? You're lucky I've been so nice to you bitch. I'm fucking dead!

MALCOLM pushes ROSA to the edge of the bridge. She almost falls off but recovers, clearly shaken. MALCOLM has a quiet look about him.

ROSA

Malcolm, calm down.

MALCOLM

You aren't real.

MALCOLM pushes ROSA again but this time off the bridge. By the side of the river, she lands and dies.

The action freezes, as if painted.

A long moment. LILLY grabs her ear.

LILLY

Ah, ow.

LEO enters. He meets LILLY at her yoga mat.

LEO

There the fuck you are.

LILLY

(half-there)

What-- oh... hey.

LEO

Hey.

LILLY

How did you find me?

LEO

Because I always do.

LILLY

Sure, but how?

LEO

Because we grew up together. And somebody has to and...I wandered about for a bit.

LILLY begins looking around.

LILLY

I don't know where we are or how we got here or how we get back or—

LEO

Ok, calm down.

LILLY

(absence of any calm)

I am calm! I'm perfectly calm!

LEO

This is just a place that I found earlier tonight where I collect myself.

LILLY

I'm so high. I actually might be so high right now.

LEO

No you're not. You barely smoked—

(beat.)

Well, yes you are. Sure. But this... this is just some place you followed me. And you can follow me back. And we're fine. It's a nice spot to think.

LILLY

Think about what?

LEO

Just... stuff.

LILLY

You bring me here, but you still don't want to talk about shit.

LEO

I—

LILLY

I swear to god, I was sitting here... I thought I heard...

LEO
Heard what?

LILLY
I thought I heard her.

LEO
Renata?

LILLY
Yeah...

LEO
There's a woman I've seen her I swore looked exactly like her, but just a little older than I think she'd be... at least than I remember her.

LILLY
(observing what's underneath her)
Yoga mat?

LEO
You tell me.

LILLY
It's just... here I was with a yoga mat. Sitting on a yoga mat.

LEO
Better entrance than me. My first trip I found myself submerged a little downstream.

LILLY
Jesus.

LEO
I thought I was drowning.

LILLY
I'm really trusting you right now. We went into the ocean. Why is there a forest in the ocean?

LEO
The oceans do have forests.

LILLY
You know what I mean. An above ground one.

LEO
I don't know.

LILLY

How do you know we aren't stuck? How do you know we aren't actually drowning?

LEO

I just... got a feeling.

LILLY

I don't have that.

LEO

I didn't at first either. But I learned to trust—

Some crackles and boom interrupt LEO.

LILLY

That is?

LEO

Meteors.

LILLY

What??

LEO

Do you want to see? At the top of the hill you can see them falling. It's pretty cool.

LILLY

I want to go back.

LEO

No. We need to wait the police out.

LILLY

So this is your safe place? Meteors. Drowning.

LEO

Yeah, it's my safe place.

LILLY

You know, it's weird. I have actually started meditating lately. It's been... helping.

LEO

I think about her all the time too. I mean I don't think about her as much as you but - sometimes.

LILLY

You think about me?

LEO

No, I mean, I don't think about Renata as much as you do.

LILLY

Oh, yeah.

LEO

But I also think about you sometimes.

LILLY

Pervert. That's weird.

LEO

Yeah, sometimes.

LILLY

I think about you too sometimes...

A slightly awkward beat.

LEO

How was the funeral?

LILLY

Why weren't you there?

LEO

I mean, I didn't know her that well—

LILLY

It would've been nice if you were there.

LEO

I had this soccer tournament. I probably could've skipped it. It wasn't really that important. I know you were close with her—

LILLY

Not that close.

LEO

Really?

LILLY

Well... with Renata... I knew her better when we were younger.

LEO

Weren't you like best friends?

LILLY

In 5th grade, but yeah - we use to be neighbors and we'd go to school together and we both liked horses. She was a good person. I hate saying 'was'. Even for someone that was a bit more, like, by high school, not someone I'd see too often. Like the second ring of my circle. One moment they're around. And they'll never be around again.

LEO

Want to see the meteors?

LILLY

Fuck it. Fine

LEO helps LILLY up. They begin to walk upstage before circling around to wherever might be the 'top of the hill'.

The crackles and booms echo a little louder through the space.

LILLY

Wow, Jesus Christ, it's the apocalypse. We're fucked.

LEO

Maybe. I think we're just witnessing it all. That don't mean we're fucked.

LILLY

You're so confident.

LEO

I guess.

LILLY

And you're so stupid.

LEO

You've said it enough times tonight I'll start to believe you.

LILLY laughs.

LILLY

It's true. I just... care about you.

Her words drift through the air for a moment or two.

LEO

You're also really cool. Life would suck a lot more...

LILLY
Life just sucks.

(beat.)
You know, our families are still close.

LEO
You and Renata's?

LILLY
Yeah.

LEO
You mean then your and my families.

LILLY
That too but I mean like her parents, her siblings, her grandparents.

LEO
My grandparents too.

LILLY
But we're all on the same block and we've been making more an effort to see each other. But it's been weird.

LILLY
Because it feels mandatory. But then each one feels less mandatory. This week we all went to one of my neighbors to watch *sports*.

LEO
Oh that sounds very fun for you.

LILLY
Yeah it was a soccer game. Cruz Azul vs. I don't know, somebody. And there was this guy there that kept telling me how many mosquitos he killed sitting on the porch. I don't even know who he was.

LEO
Was he drunk?

LILLY
Yeah.

LEO
Was he like— what was the purpose of him saying that?

LILLY

I think he was boasting? It was exhausting to listen to, buzzing in my ear. They can't keep forcing us to get together.

It's just awkward. Maybe it's nicer than being alone, I don't know.

It's just bad. Everyone's devastated. We all obviously devastated. You know, they still don't know if she intended it – We don't know what she intended – If I somehow found out what she wanted, then there'd just be something else – then another question, then another question. Even at the funeral, I snuck out early. I felt like shit. I'm worse than you. It didn't feel real. I remember seeing everything and everyone but not seeing them at all. And it's still like that.

LEO

That doesn't make you bad.

LILLY

Doesn't it? What type of person leaves a funeral like that?

LEO

Probably more people than you think.

LILLY breaks down, begins sobbing. LEO puts his arm around her.

LILLY

What's so fucked up – what's so fucked up is I wouldn't even be telling you any of this.... I can't tell anyone shit.

(beat.)

You almost got deported! What the actual fuck??

LEO

I just need to get home and get my papers. I'll be ok.

LILLY

What if they're already at your home?

LEO

Even better. Then my Uncle can show them.

LILLY

What if they like don't recognize them or something? Wasn't there an issue–

LEO

(unconvincingly)

They'll recognize them. I'll be fine. Enough about that. I don't do that shit here.

LILLY

(taking a moment to understand)

In your spot here?

LEO

Fuck no.

LILLY

Discovered it today and you already making rules. Colonizer.

LEO

Fuck you.

LILLY

You can't just stay in your spot here all night. It's kinda creepy, not gonna lie.

LEO

I know.

LILLY

Not bad creepy necessarily, just a lot to take in.

LEO

It's easy to get lost.

LILLY

I don't want to get lost.

LEO

Fair.

LILLY

Then let's get going.

LEO offers his hand to LILLY. Ocean noises ease back into the atmosphere.

LILLY

Yes, good – we should be going.

LEO turns in the direction of the fallen ROSA, pauses.

LEO

I don't want to go just yet.

LILLY

Is that a good idea?

LEO

Who cares anymore? Let's just...

LEO sighs. The ocean noises have fully returned.

LEO

Ok. Want to go walking along the beach? Looks like police are gone.

LILLY

Are you sure?

LEO looks behind himself again.

LEO

Yeah, he's gone.

LILLY

You can tell there's no car? What do you have, like laservision? Are you secretly Superman?

LEO

No but some people call me Clark Kent Rodriguez. Let's go.

LILLY

I can't really in these shoes. But I can take them off.

LILLY begins taking off her shoes and socks. LEO does the same.

LILLY

Are you ever going to be ok?

LEO

I don't know what you mean.

LILLY

With your status. Time doesn't really have a plan...

LEO and LILLY amble on with no socks or shoes.

LILLY

I've known you forever, but sometimes I like barely know you. Sorry, that sounds weird to say--

LEO

No, I know what you mean. I don't really know you either. But yeah, I've been aware of you.

LILLY laughs.

LILLY

You gotta go home.

LEO
So do you.

LILLY
No I don't. My mom doesn't care.

LEO
Right.

LILLY
What were your expectations for this?

LEO
For this walk? I don't know. I thought it'd be a little warmer.

LILLY
Ok. I thought we were going to have that conversation.

LEO
When you're high?

LILLY
I'm not even high. I'm just crazy. When are you going to tell the difference?

LEO
Yeah let's have it. Do you wanna sit? It's not too windy here.

LILLY
Yeah, sure.

They sit. LILLY sighs.

LILLY
You know what, maybe it's easier just not to have any particular conversation. Let's just talk – like--

LEO
I don't know. Don't we kinda need to have it though?

LILLY
No.

LEO
What do you mean?

LILLY

Why can't we just talk?

LEO

Cause it's like bad not to be specific I feel like.

LILLY

Why's that?

LEO

Cause I never know what the fuck is going on.

LILLY

Me neither. But what is there to say about it?

LEO

I don't know, I guess that...

Silence. Both bite their lip. Until...

LILLY

I guess that there is something frightening about a relationship being put on you rather than really naturally allowing it to build. Sometimes someone tells us what we are rather than us just growing into it. Sometimes those people are ourselves. We put these expectations of this label or that label onto something that isn't really this label or that label. Instead, we think it's going to be or we want it to be. We become so caught up in that prediction or fantasy that we stop seeing ourselves and after that anyone else enclosed in that unreality. We're so small out here. The water and the sky. You can't dream up someone else without dreaming up yourself first. I don't really wanna call you my boyfriend.

LEO

I don't really wanna call you my girlfriend.

LILLY

But in my head.

LEO

In my head.

LEO AND LILLY

Of course I do.

LEO

In my head.

LILLY

In my head.

LEO

If we try to get too close, too comfortable, we're going to fall apart. We'll be fated to never be. Cause if we try, we could fail. So all I do is try to avoid failure. Avoid hurt, cause what am I living for if I'm putting my heart in harms way? So I live recklessly everywhere else.

LILLY

What am I living for if I don't try, but try with someone I judge is safe, where I think I have an out to spare myself, to not sink when he realizes those stars don't want us. So in my head.

LEO

In my head.

LILLY

These anxieties

LEO

pile on

LILLY

until

LEO

the fantasy is easier. Let's get married.

LILLY

Let's get married--

LEO AND LILLY

--As a joke.

LEO

Or maybe as a final resort

LILLY

to boredom. For your green card. Or maybe to self-

LEO

sabotage. Or in an unrealistic play!

LILLY

Or in Vegas!

LEO
Maybe just give up on it all together.

LILLY
The whole charade.

LEO
Or just be ok with failure. A girl died.

LILLY
She did.

LEO
I thought I saw her ghost on the bus earlier tonight but we won't talk any more about that.

LILLY
We never will.

LEO
No. Think she's really out there

LILLY
somewhere? Why would I know? I hope that

LEO
she is. Sometimes I

LILLY
Just think

LEO
That

LILLY
The universe is

LEO
Just strands of missing

LILLY
Pieces

LEO
From someplace else

And really we're all accidents

LILLY

And someone else is saying

LEO

"Ah FUCK"

LILLY

About us

LEO

Somewhere else.

LILLY

A silence.

Then, the ocean takes LEO and LILLY away.

LIGHTS DIM.

ACT TWO

LIGHTS UP:

Scene One

*ROSA sits in a chair next to a desk.
ASIF enters onto the scene, carrying a clipboard.*

ROSA

Where the fuck am I?

ASIF looks up from his clipboard.

ASIF

What do you mean?

ROSA

Why am I here? I don't want to be here.

ASIF

Well you have to be.

ROSA

Why?

ASIF

Because then where else would you be?

ROSA turns herself towards ASIF, searching for his gaze. He won't return it.

ASIF

... We don't want you to hurt yourself. And you're under suspicion of driving under the influence.

ROSA

I was parked!

ASIF

I know.

ROSA

I was parked. My car was parked.

ASIF

I know. Parked at the edge of a cliff.

Silence.

ROSA

You're so fucking fake. Who the fuck even are you?

ASIF

Renata, you're not making sense.

ROSA

Is that little story with the dolphins and your dead family – is that even real?

ASIF

My family's not dead.

ROSA

What do you mean?

ASIF

They were prisoners. My mom and brother were able to join me in California.

(beat.)

My dad and brother weren't given enough food when they were in jail. My dad gave my brother his food. He got sick and died while he was in there.

(beat.)

My brother, he wasn't Omid Teleghani but he was a radical. They found the wrong flyers and the wrong books in our home. My father convinced the soldiers that they were his before he died. Or he must have made some sort of deal. I don't think Radin has ever been fully honest with us about what happened, but I do know he is the reason baba died. He's always been careless.

Silence.

ROSA

For a former refugee, you're kind of fat.

Another awkward silence. Then ASIF starts laughing.

ASIF

That was actually pretty good. I'll give you that one.

ROSA

Where are we?

ASIF

Do you seriously not know?

ROSA makes eye contact with ASIF. She shakes her head.

ASIF

We're in my car.

ROSA

What?

ASIF

I said we're in my car.

The desk rolls away. ASIF crouches into the chair behind it to sit. As he does, we hear him close the door behind him. The sound of an ocean returns.

ROSA

Oh, we are. I thought...

ASIF

Thought what?

ROSA

Nothing... do you have an office?

ASIF

No.

ROSA

So this is your office?

ASIF

... No. This is my car. We haven't moved...

Silence.

ASIF

Are you listening to me?

ROSA

A little bit.

ASIF sighs.

ASIF

I understand it's easy to get lost. But you gotta talk to me. You said you were going to talk to me.

ROSA
If you gave me your pills back.

ASIF
And you'll get your pills back.

ROSA
Then where are they?

ASIF
Ok.

ASIF grabs a pill bottle from the pocket in the drivers seat door.

ASIF
Here you go.

ROSA
Ok bye.

ROSA gets up and out of the car. ASIF shortly does the same.

ASIF
Hey that wasn't the deal.

ROSA
I don't make deals with pigs.

ASIF
Well you need to cooperate with the pig.

ROSA
Why? What are you going to do? Arrest me? For what?

ASIF
I'd rather not arrest you. I'd rather talk. But I will if I have to. So you're going to do the right thing and tell me how you got that car.

ROSA
It's my car.

ASIF
It's not your car. Either someone gave it to you, you stole it or it's abandoned and you're sleeping in it. I'm guessing it's the first one because we know that the car is registered to—

ROSA

It's MY car.

ASIF

Fucking hell.

ROSA

Don't worry. I've always been a bit of a difficult person. You're not the first. It goes back to like second grade. I had strep throat for almost the entire school year. I was a little too quiet. I mean - I needed to be because of my scratchy throat. Or maybe it goes back further. I think I was dropped a lot as a baby. Or maybe it was when I was 13 and... Or maybe it was when I was conceived but it honestly doesn't even really matter. Because I'm going to be-

A bright light shines onto ROSA. She screams.

ASIF

Oh my god-

ROSA

(gasping)

I'm going to be free soon. My sun will be here.

ASIF

What is this? What's going on?

ROSA

It's my sun.

ASIF

I don't understand.

ROSA

Yes you do. You saw it the day you left home.

ASIF

(fearful)

I never saw anything like this.

ROSA

You told me you did.

ASIF

Yes, I told you I did. And I did. But it wasn't like this!

ROSA

It'll hurt you. But it doesn't... it doesn't want to.

ASIF

What the fuck is this? Why are you so calm?

ROSA

(takes a breath)

I don't know.

(beat)

Maybe it's just my imagination again.

ASIF

No I feel it right now. Something's here. What the...

The light fades.

ROSA

I guess it's taking its time.

ASIF

... You need to go to the hospital.

ROSA

He's shown himself. Nothing's going to help me now.

ASIF

Your son?

ROSA

My sun.

ASIF

Is it— are you saying is that light going to come back?

ROSA

Yes.

ROSA begins to slump over. ASIF rushes over to her.

ASIF

Hey, hey, stay with me.

ROSA gasps for breath.

ASIF

Hey, stay with me. Tell me your your name?

Renata. ROSA

Your full name. ASIF

Renata. ROSA

Your name isn't just Renata. ASIF

You say your full name first. ROSA

Asif Shahidi. ASIF

Renata Ramírez de Santillana. ROSA

Renata Ramirez de Santillana, where are you? ASIF

I'm in your car. ROSA

No, we're just outside it. And where were you earlier tonight? ASIF

My car. ROSA

How old are you? ASIF

18. ROSA

What's your mom's name? ASIF

I think I'm drifting away now. ROSA

ASIF

No, you're not. You're going to answer my questions. You're going to be right here with me.

ROSA

I'm going out to sea.

The light returns, significantly brighter than before.

ASIF

What the fuck, no - Renata.,.

ROSA

He's getting closer. Ask your questions. I've been like a wave for so long now. I'm in and out. As long as I remember. Keep asking your questions. Do whatever you think you need to do.

ASIF

I need you to stick this out for me.

ROSA

I feel him on me.

ROSA hesitates.

ROSA

What happened to the people that you radioed?

ASIF

They're coming.

ROSA

But it's been hours.

ASIF

No, it's not been that long. They're on their way.

ROSA

But it's been hours. I thought we were at the station.

ASIF

I assure you it's not been hours.

ROSA

What time did you find me?

ASIF

A little after 5.

ROSA

What time is it now?

ASIF checks his watch.

ASIF

It's almost 5:20.

ROSA

oh.

ASIF

This has... taken longer than I thought it would. But help is getting here soon.

ROSA

I'm burning up.

ASIF goes to touch ROSA's temple, but then retracts his hand suddenly and yelps.

ASIF

Ouch!

ASIF tries a second time, seething in pain as he moves his hand through the light before placing his palm on ROSA's forehead.

ROSA

Tell me another story.

ASIF

I don't think now is the time for that.

ROSA

There's always a better time.

ASIF

Ok, I'll tell you a story. You reach a certain age and you either realize how stupid you are or that you knew everything all along.

(beat.)

I knew everything all along.

(beat.)

That morning, leaving everything I knew then forever, that was a lesson that's stuck to me. It taught me everything I needed to know. It's what's helped me survive this world. And you're going to survive too. When everything is gone, you still have yourself.

ROSA

I'm nothing like you.

ASIF

Yes you are. You're a survivor. And my colleagues are going to be here soon and we'll get you a proper evaluation. I'm going to radio them again real quick. My radio is in the car, so I need you to come with me.

ROSA

Fuck. Fine.

ASIF helps ROSA back to his car and places her back in the passengers seat. Then, he goes around to the driver's side. Opening and shutting the door behind him, as he retrieves and puts his radio to his lips.

ASIF

Update on that evaluation needed at Beacon Street.

(beat.)

This is Adam coming in. Update on that evaluation needed at Beacon Street.

A moment of silence. Then a moment's more.

RADIO (O.S.)

They're on their way.

ASIF

Thank you. It's urgent.

ASIF opens back up the car door and ducks in. Then, he shuts it behind him.

ROSA

Adam?

ASIF

It's easier for some people.

ROSA

So you want to bring in people to tell me what's wrong with me. That's why you're here.

ASIF

I'm here to help.

ROSA

Yeah, right. They're going to try to tell me what's wrong with me. And if I just let them fix me - that's how it always starts.

ASIF

Renata—

ROSA

They're going to tell me what's wrong with me and then send me somewhere. You can't let them do that.

ASIF

I know what you must think. I'm not the type of person you think I am.

ROSA sinks into her seat, disappearing into a hoodie.

ROSA

I want to see my baby.

Brief silence.

ASIF

Who wouldn't?

ROSA

Right?!?

ASIF

Why can't you... see him?

ROSA

I just can't do it.

Silence.

ASIF

The light you were talking about – What did you mean when you said I saw it the morning I left home?

ROSA

Sometimes... we see things that can't be real. We feel things that can't be felt.

ASIF

Yeah. I think I understand that.

ROSA

Like I remember once my family took a vacation to New England. I'd never been on a plane before. My Dad wanted to see all the sites where the American Revolution was. Went to Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill - all these places where there were battles. And it was fall. So we got to see the leaves change. When watching all the leaves fall from trees, in reds and yellow, oranges and browns – a windy day – it'd feel like something was guiding them. Like a child with a toy spaceship.

Or walking back from school, there's always this one park on a hill I walk through to get home. Just yesterday, as I was walking, I saw a lady standing at the top. The sun was setting. She wore all red. A red puffer jacket and red jeans - but not a bright red, a dark maroonish shade. And her back was to me and her hair cascading down to her mid back. I could tell she must be beautiful. I wanted to see her face. And I had never seen someone wear a puffer jacket before. At least not since I went to New England. As I walked up the hill, she disappeared from my view. And when I got to the top, she was nowhere. It was just me. I could've just walked around the hill. That's what I usually do. But what I did find was a better view of the setting sky - deep red, almost maroon. A messy, complicated color. The type of color that makes you think "oh, she's complicated. She's got some sort of story, doesn't she?" But she can't remember anything that's ever happened to her. Anyway, after that, I just went the rest of the way—

The light returns, shining onto ROSA. Much brighter than before.

ROSA

Home— Why does it hurt so much?

ASIF

What hurts? What's hurting right now?

ROSA

Everything! It burns. It burns so much.

ASIF

Do you need water?

ROSA

I want it to stop. Please make it stop. Make it stop.

ASIF

Just breathe with me, ok. Just breathe.

ROSA

I can't.

ASIF

You have to try.

ROSA

I'm like a wave. I'm there and I'm back. I'm there and then I'm back again. But some waves don't come back. Some waves just...

ROSA trails off. She slumps over in her seat. ASIF begins to shake her.

ASIF

Renata! Ah—

ASIF moves into the light, and it burns him again. He recoils then resumes shaking ROSA.

ASIF

(through gritted teeth, pain)

Renata. Renata. What the fuck? Renata.

A moment. Then another.

ROSA

(exhales)

It's fine.

ASIF

No it's not fine. You're here.

ROSA

I'm not sure I am. Remember? I said I was floating?

ASIF

And I asked you if you knew where you really were.

ROSA

I lied.

ASIF

You said my car.

ROSA

Because it's what you wanted me to say. I think I'm...

ROSA squeezes her eyes shut.

ROSA

I see it. I see where I am. Or where I was. Or where I'm going. I'm not sure. But I'm there now. I'm going... I'm going to see him.

ASIF

Your son?

ROSA

The sun.

ASIF

Well I think you have to stay right here.

ROSA

No, you're wrong.

ASIF

I'm not.

ROSA

I gotta leave.

ASIF

You're here. Right now.

ROSA

... do you think you would remember me?

ASIF

Where do you think you're going?

*ROSA looks as if she's seeing clearly for the first time. Or is seeing nothing at all. Then, she's still.
The light fades.*

ASIF

Renata! ... Renata! Fuck.

ASIF shakes ROSA. She doesn't move. He puts his finger under nose. Then he checks her pulse.

ASIF

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

ASIF makes a motion to open his car door and then shuts it behind him. He walks around his car to ROSA's side. He opens her car door. He just looks at her for a beat or two. Then, for a moment, ASIF turns away. As he does so, ROSA rises and heads towards her own vehicle. ASIF doesn't seem to observe her movements.

ROSA opens her car door and lowers herself in the driver's seat. She turns on the engine.

BLACKOUT.

By projection or other means, we watch as ROSA's car races off a cliff's edge. As it does so, ROSA quietly exits from the stage. ASIF closes the passenger door of his own car and races towards the cliff. He looks down at the wreckage of the vehicle, engulfed in flames. He takes out his radio.

ASIF

Responding to a call about a noise complaint on Beacon street at 5:10am, I found a totalled vehicle. It seems to have gone off the edge of the road. It's on fire. I'm going to investigate. We need fire and ambulance here immediately.

RADIO (O.S.)

Copy.

ASIF slides down to inspect the wrecked and burning car. He continues to speak into his radio throughout the rest of the scene.

RADIO (O.S.)

Fire will be there in 5. Ambulance in 7.

ASIF

It looks like there's one occupant in the driver's seat. There's not much left of her – or at least she appears to be a female. The car must of caught flame very quickly or the crash occurred longer ago than the caller indicated.

RADIO (O.S.)

Don't go in there yourself.

ASIF

Tell whoever is coming to hurry up.

RADIO (O.S.)

Any identifying information about the driver? Plates?

ASIF

Yes, I got plates. Am copying them down now.

RADIO (O.S.)

Great. Read them to me and I can run them.

ASIF

R.F.1.7.G.3.3.

(beat)

Gruesome way to go. Can't just let someone go that way.

RADIO (O.S.)

That's RF17G33?

ASIF

Correct.

RADIO (O.S.)

Great. Running them now. And they just heard a loud noise?

ASIF

That's right. Over the cliff, the vehicle wouldn't be visible from any home along here.

RADIO (O.S.)

Understood. Found the owner of the vehicle. It's registered to a male - Miguel Ramírez de Santillana.

ASIF

I think the driver's definitely a woman.

RADIO (O.S.)

Still could be. Don't be a hero. Fire is on its way.

ASIF puts his radio on his belt. He looks up and down the burning vehicle. He sighs.

ASIF

(to himself)

Who were you?

(beat.)

I know it's not easy to be surrounded by fire. It's something I've seen before. It's something I see again and again.

(beat.)

How can I help...

(as if he's unsure)

Renata?

BLACKOUT.

LIGHTS UP:

Scene Two

The sound of airplanes taking off. Suitcases rolling across tile, clicking against every groove. Metal detectors detecting metal.

A VOICE

If you're on the left side! Take off all belts and shoes! Drink or dispose of any and all liquids!
Remove all electronics from backpacks and carry-ons!

The voice begins to loop with the other sounds, completing the soundscape. LILLY enters. She drags behind her a carry-on roller case. She strides all over across stage until a door rolls on. There is a sign on it which reads "Lilly's Appointment". LILLY goes to open the door. It's locked. She struggles with the handle a few more times, then takes a step back. SANTA MUERTE, fashioned as herself as well as someone soon to catch a flight, enters with a suitcase behind her.

LILLY

That's. That's some bullshit.

SANTA MUERTE

Is something wrong, cariña?

LILLY

Oh, hi, didn't see you there. No, nothing's wrong. I just can't seem to get this door open. It's a little embarrassing.

(beat.)

Also, I found this carry-on in the bathroom and I haven't been able to find a front desk. Have you seen anything?

An airport Starbucks is rolled on behind the door. ASIF sits at a table, reading a book. SANTA MUERTE smiles.

SANTA MUERTE

There's no front desk around here. Maybe you found that bag for a reason.

LILLY

Yeah. Maybe. It's a whole day for me to go to a doctor's appointment. At some place I haven't gone to before. For an appointment. I'm fucked. Do you think you could help me with the door?

SANTA MUERTE

No. I'm sorry.

LILLY

No?

SANTA MUERTE

Now isn't yet the time for me to help you, cariña. I actually really need to get to my gate—

LILLY

No, I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to stop you.

SANTA MUERTE

No. Don't apologize.

LILLY

I think I should. I think... I think I'm being condemned. Or maybe I'm being saved. I can't tell. They feel the same. Or maybe I'm crazy. I was brought up to think in that binary. I still do obviously. There's a sense of order to it that I feel like isn't found in too many elsewhere.

SANTA MUERTE

Catholic?

LILLY

Yeah.

SANTA MUERTE

So am I. I think. Good luck. I have a flight to catch.

LILLY

Have a good flight!

(to herself)

What if I was brought here to board a plane? I could go anywhere.

SANTA MUERTE disappears with her suitcase.

MICHLANTECUTLI enters behind the door in his priest wear and sandals. He also could wear some elements of a blood splattered skull mask with eyes and a headdress of owl feathers modeled after the Aztec god of death. With the stride and confidence of a businessman, he walks over to the door.

MICHLANTECUTLI

Hi, I thought I left it unlocked, apologies. Adelante, adelante.

LILLY

Hi, sorry, before I do that, what is this for again?

MICHLANTECUTLI

We're scheduled to have a meeting. About death.

LILLY

And why me? For that meeting?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Oh, it has nothing to do with you, I just enjoy talking about myself. Though laughs aside--

LILLY

But you said we're talking about death.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Sweetheart, my head is a skull.

LILLY

Lots of people have skulls as heads, that doesn't necessarily mean anything.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Very true, but it always means something. Didn't your family tell you stories about how I tear in half every soul who passes my way and eat them?

LILLY

Um, what?

MICTLANTECUTLI

You haven't been well educated, querida.

LILLY

I mean, my mom made a point of teaching me my culture, but then my parents got divorced, and I don't see her as much so I forgot most of it. After Dad left, all she do is work. But that aside, the goddess for death is Santa Muerte. Who are you?

MICTLANTECUTLI looks at the carry-on.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Less popular. You have some place to be?

LILLY

You know, I was actually thinking I should be leaving town. I should actually be--

MICTLANTECUTLI

No, you're not going anywhere. You're not even here. You're... somewhere in between. So am I. You know I've been impersonating your priest.

LILLY

Father Díaz?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Yes. Father Díaz.

LILLY

I'm confused.

MICHLANTECUTLI

I split him in half.

LILLY

What does that mean?

MICHLANTECUTLI

Well, I guess he's me now too.

LILLY

Ok. So you've always been my priest? Or my priest has always been you?

MICHLANTECUTLI

Kinda. Actually not really at all.

LILLY

(studying him)

I mean, I can kind of see it. Your homilies have gone downhill.

MICHLANTECUTLI

I've been working hard on them! And they come up fast. One every single fucking week, preparing an hour of shit to do. Interrupted by all sorts of other concerns from various abuelas throughout the week. It's the worst job in the world. I don't have the time. So just quickly – will you get coffee with me? What's your order? I can get it for you and you get a table for us.

LILLY

Are you going to tear me in half?

MICHLANTECUTLI

Are you dying?

LILLY

No.

MICHLANTECUTLI

Then probably not.

LILLY pauses for a moment to think to herself, then cautiously follows MICHLANTECUTLI inside with the carry-on. He closes the door behind them.

LILLY

How long will this take?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Not long at all. What do you drink?

LILLY

Tall Americano Grande.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Great.

LILLY takes a seat. BARISTA, who could be played by LEO, appears behind the counter, takes MICTLANTECUTLI's order. He goes to make the coffee. MICTLANTECUTLI finds where LILLY's seated and sits across from her.

MICTLANTECUTLI

You owe me.

LILLY

How much?

MICTLANTECUTLI

What? – No, not for the coffee.

LILLY

What then?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Your friend.

LILLY

Renata?

MICTLANTECUTLI

So unless she accepts the journey to the underworld–

BARISTA

Tall Decaf Mocha spiked with rum for Adam!

BARISTA sets a cup on the counter. ASIF rises to retrieve his drink. LILLY notices him.

LILLY

That's the cop I saw earlier tonight..

MICTLANTECUTLI turns to see who LILLY is looking at.

LILLY

Is he real? Is that him?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Probably not. But you never know. Where was I?

ASIF returns to his seat with his drink.

LILLY

¿Mi amiga?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Right, your friend. So unless she accepts the journey to the underworld, her soul might very likely dissipate into agonizing—

BARISTA reenters with another drink.

BARISTA

I have two drinks here for Mictlantecutli, the God of Death! Two drinks the God of Death!

MICTLANTECUTLI sighs.

LILLY

Are you gonna get those?-- Or should I—

BARISTA

God of Death!!

MICTLANTECUTLI rises to retrieve both drinks. Then, swiftly returns.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Work.

LILLY

Work?

MICTLANTECUTLI

For me. And I'm outsourcing.

LILLY

What do people like you drink?

MICTLANTECUTLI

This is a Salted Caramel Cream Cold Brew.

LILLY

Do you always get cold brews?

MICHLANTECUTLI

No?

LILLY

Cause you're Death. Cold?

MICHLANTECUTLI

Eso es simplemente vergonzoso.

LILLY

I know I'm embarrassing, me dicen mucho, but can we get back to Renata? Is she in trouble?

MICHLANTECUTLI

I need someone to cross the border. And it has to be someone close to her.

LILLY

Why?

MICHLANTECUTLI

She won't listen to anyone else. It would be mean el mundo para su familia.

LILLY

I don't know – Ah!

LILLY's ear begins ringing. If not other times, this time for sure, we all hear it. She grabs it. MICHLANTECUTLI tenses.

MICHLANTECUTLI

What are you doing?

LILLY

I'm not doing anything.

MICHLANTECUTLI

Who are you talking to?

LILLY

(under her breath.)

The carry-on.

LILLY jumps to the bag. She struggles to open it.

MICHLANTECUTLI

What are you doing? Do you not love your friend? Feel any type of responsibility to her!? Her soul will die if you leave her be. You can't just unpack now.

LILLY

I KNOW. I know. I keep getting this ringing in my ear. Is it her? I found this baggage. Something told me to take this baggage.

MICHTLANTECUTLI

Who?

LILLY

Just something. But it won't fucking open.

MICHTLANTECUTLI

You don't know what's inside.

LILLY

No.

(beat.)

Why did you take her away from me?

MICHTLANTECUTLI

Take...

LILLY

Renata. ... Dad. Anyone. Why did you...

MICHTLANTECUTLI

I don't know why. Aren't we much stranger than a god all knowing?

LILLY

The way we lost her. It wasn't right.

MICHTLANTECUTLI

I know.

LILLY

Then why take her?

MICHTLANTECUTLI

Because it was her time. You be careful or sooner than you think it'll be your time too. It's always sooner than you think it will be.

LILLY

You barely honored her. Your eulogy made me numb. I loved her.

MICHTLANTECUTLI

Sorry.

LILLY

No you're not. You see it as natural. Nothing about it is natural.

MICTLANTECUTLI

This world is unnatural. The priesthood is just how I survive. I could say it saved me. It did save me. But it's also how I found a way to keep living. It's how I make sure I got something in the fridge.

*After a bit more struggle, the bag pops open. She turns the bag towards
MICTLANTECUTLI. He looks through it, mostly knowingly.*

MICTLANTECUTLI

Dog bones. Maize. Arrows. Gold. Popcorn? You know these are things you're going to need when I tear you in half and swallow you. An "I Am" poem. "I am pretty. I am caring." Child drawings? Another poem. "Violets are red. Roses are violent."

LILLY

I think it's an offering. They're not mine.

MICTLANTECUTLI

I know they aren't yours. Maybe you didn't come here to help your friend. But it seems somebody decided to help you help your friend. Who's that ringing in your ear?

LILLY

It's just my tinnitus.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Maybe. Maybe not. But an offering isn't enough if the chica won't make the journey.

LILLY

You're not as nice as Santa Muerte—

MICTLANTECUTLI

SHUT UP. Look, I brought you here because I'm nice. I'm doing this because your friend's refusing to pick a side. This is for her benefit.

LILLY

Why does she need to choose anything?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Dying things need to go where dying things go.

LILLY

But how do you know it's really dying?

MICTLANTECUTLI

You can't just sit in the middle of these borders. They say strange things happen. People notice. So help me help her – or you'll get fucked over down the line too. We're just – how do I even say this? If you don't stake a claim over where you fit, they make you disappear.

LILLY

Who?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Who? All of us. The colonists. You, yourself. You make yourself disappear. Living in between, it breaks your back, your soul, your life. That's what's happening to Renata. That's what's gonna happen to you if you don't break the connection with her and go back to your real life. That's how these borders work.

LILLY

I'm Chicana. When did I ever give a fuck about a border?

MICTLANTECUTLI

Lilly. This is life and death. Not fence hopping. Not swimming across a river. Not walking miles and miles through the desert. Not your visa expiring. Not having a pending asylum case. It's life and death.

LILLY

You don't know how easily they take away life–

MICTLANTECUTLI

I know–

LILLY

No. I don't need to leave her. You're just being a fucking pig that nobody knows about. What you say means nothing. You're nothing. An Aztec god in priest robes?! Who are you? I actually know who I am. I–

MICTLANTECUTLI

You don't get to decide who you are, you spoiled shit, you solamente eres y actúas en consecuencia. So now – shut up, go talk to your friend, tell her she needs to finish dying and fucking deal with it instead of doing everything, incluso insultando a un dios, a very dangerous thing to do, to avoid the problems I'm helping you with.

LILLY

I–

MICTLANTECUTLI

You think I don't know the world you live in? I know the world you live in. I know it's cruel. It used to be crueler. How many days a week do people think you and your mom are your landlady's cleaner? How long until your friend Leo gets detained? He could've tonight. This is

the world we live in. So you keep your head down. You do what those with more experience tell you to. You just are and act accordingly.

LILLY

That's not a good way to live!

MICHLANTECUTLI

Who said anything about living? We're talking about survival—

LILLY

You're so warped.

MICHLANTECUTLI

You want to make everything harder for yourself. Do you even realize how much you have!? How much we've given you and her!?

LILLY

You act like living in America is like I'm some sort of valley girl!

MICHLANTECUTLI

Yes you are! You get Starbucks every day!

LILLY

Maybe I am. But I feel these eyes on me all the time. I feel them right now, so I shift my weight slightly. I want to feel like I belong with them, but instead I'm just something to look at.

MICHLANTECUTLI

I know.

LILLY

You feel them too?

MICHLANTECUTLI

Look at me now, mija.

LILLY

Sometimes I can drown them out. I have the tinnitus so, you know. My grandma does say that's my ancestors.

MICHLANTECUTLI

Pero es como nunca estuvimos aquí. Why do you think I cloak myself in robes? It's cover. These days I just float between airports and tear people apart. Honestly, I hate it. We'll always be terrified of what we've lost, but mija—

LILLY

But I have my people. They're all in my ear—

MICTLANTECUTLI

I don't remember what it was like anymore before us gods hid ourselves. Before we became ghosts. And neither do you. We can't worry ourselves with who we are anymore.

LILLY

Maybe. Or we can just say – Renata and me, if we live in the in between and dissipate, then we dissipate. But in the in between, we can also breathe into who we are. In that place, on the bridge, I was scared of it at first, but I swear I can feel all the parts of me that are missing. I can't give that up. And I shouldn't ask her to leave there.

MICLTLANTECUTLI

That's dangerous. For both of you. It's against the flow of life–

LILLY

No me importa un carajo.

LILLY begins to exit the room, suitcase with her. The airport's soundscape returns.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Know where you're going? Do you even know you're way back to her, stupid human?

LILLY

(tapping her ear)

I'll ask the people that do.

MICTLANTECUTLI

Don't come asking for my help.

LILLY

I won't need it.

LILLY exits.

MICTLANTECUTLI

(to himself)

No. You just won't want it.

(beat)

The desperation of a clever child with still so much to learn. Who doesn't want to grieve. Who doesn't want to die. Who only wishes to dream. If only I was nothing more than a figure she meets in her sleep. If only we were but dreams.

(beat)

But I am real. And I have suffered like you have suffered. I have been caged like you have been caged. I've felt and seen and tasted it all. She's already felt so much pain. I feel the weight of her bones in my hand.

MICTLANTECUTLI strokes his hand.

Scene Three

ROSA lays at the base of the bridge.

LILLY enters from upstage, with the suitcase. From there, she wanders down the same river LEO has waded through before.

LILLY

I was collecting myself, I guess you could call it meditating. Up the side of this hill.

LILLY passes by ROSA. She notices her laying motionless. She looks up. There is no one she can see. She looks back at ROSA.

LILLY

Do you ever think you're just reliving the same dream?

MALCOLM peeks his head out from over the edge of the bridge, where he seems to have been sitting or laying down. He observes LILLY, cautiously.

ASIF enters. He picks up ROSA's body and carries it offstage.

Then, ASIF reenters with a rose. He places it where ROSA's motionless body lay. Then, he exits.

LILLY

(gestures to the rose.)

Your body lays there and it's so beat it looks like nothing more than something to donate.

ROSA enters. She observes the bridge, then mounts it. As she walks, she spots MALCOLM. She looks at him perplexed. She keeps her gaze on him as she continues walking until she is just a little ways past him, beginning to descend down the bridge. At that point, her head turned, still watching him, she stops. MALCOLM continues looking out onto us or past us or wherever his eyes wander.

ROSA

What are you doing?

LILLY

It's dry and shriveled.

MALCOLM

Sorry, what?

ROSA

What are you looking at there?

MALCOLM

The moon. Um why are you talking to me?

ROSA

I don't really know. I was just walking and then you were just standing there doing nothing really. I'm not quite— Do I know you? Have we met before?

MALCOLM

I'm not sure.

ROSA

I don't think so. I don't usually—

MALCOLM

Forget a face.

ROSA

(as if remembering)

Yeah...

LILLY

There's no sense to it. You wilt and you die. You burn and explode, barely conscious, not even awake enough to struggle with the seatbelt.

(beat.)

Fuck.

MALCOLM

You should leave.

ROSA

W-why?

MALCOLM

I don't want you here.

ROSA

Well who says where I should be.

MALCOLM

This is my bridge and I don't want you on it.

ROSA

Who made it yours?

MALCOLM

It's just my spot to-to recollect myself... Cause do you know what I did today?

Beat.

ROSA

Well don't leave me in suspense.

MALCOLM

I killed someone.

ROSA

What?

MALCOLM

I knew they'd die the moment I did it. I didn't really mean it, but I'm not sure. They're somewhere else now I guess.

LILLY

And then you become dirt. Or ashes or-- and you rise up again as what you were. Dying over and over again. In my head, I can't see where there's any beauty in that.

ROSA

Who did you kill?

MALCOLM

... I can't remember.

ROSA

Oh.

ROSA

Is it, like, blocked out? When you killed someone? Um.

MALCOLM

Yeah, I guess... Did you follow me here? Not many people... just happen to wander into this place.

ROSA

No, I didn't even see you. I was just... walking.

(looking back from where she came)

I can't even remember when I started. How did you get here?

MALCOLM

I'm not sure.

ROSA

Where are we?

MALCOLM goes to check his fishing line. He rubs the pole, almost affectionately. Then, he turns, studying ROSA's face. LILLY studies the rose.

MALCOLM

You gave me this. Didn't you?

ROSA

Sorry?

MALCOLM

You gave me this pole. How did you do that?

ROSA

(panicked)

I'm gonna... I'm gonna keep going on my walk. It was nice meeting you.

MALCOLM

Don't leave. Please don't leave.

ROSA

Sorry I got someplace to be.

MALCOLM

Where are you going? This is your bridge!

ROSA

My bridge?

Silence. MALCOLM picks up one of the marigolds and hands it to ROSA. LILLY wanders further downstream, suitcase in tow. She exits into the audience and out the house doors.

MALCOLM

Yeah, you came across it, no one else seemed to claim it, so you made it yours.

ROSA

This is my first time here.

MALCOLM

No, it isn't.

ROSA

How's that?

MALCOLM studies ROSA for a long moment. LEO enters, looking about

LEO

Lilly?!?!?

MALCOLM

You're lying, aren't you?

ROSA

No.

MALCOLM

I couldn't place your face for a moment, it was bugging me, but I know who you are. We met at this exact place. I'm not sure how long ago. My name is Malcolm.

ROSA

Malcolm... this all is - yes I think I remember you – maybe. I'm not sure.

MALCOLM

I'm sure. Your name is Rosa.

ROSA

Is it? That might be right.

LEO

Lilly!!

LEO wanders further downstream, into the audience and out the house doors.

MALCOLM

You don't know?

ROSA

There's not a lot I'm sure of... that's bad isn't it.

MALCOLM

Maybe I can help you remember.

ROSA

No. I don't like that idea. I can't tell you I know why.... I'm going to look off the other side. Don't talk to me.

MALCOLM

Ok...

MALCOLM hangs his head for a bit, then continues to look out on us, past us, on the infant sunrise or wherever his gaze may wander. A long beat.

ROSA

You killed me at least once.

MALCOLM

I— ...

ROSA

No, I remember it was you.

MALCOLM

Rosa—

ROSA

I guess you didn't do a very good job. And don't call me that. I'm not sure—

MALCOLM

I was freaking out. I pushed you. I was losing my head not sure what was going on. I still don't know what's going on.

ROSA

What the fuck are you talking about?

MALCOLM

How you... you know...

ROSA

How I died?

MALCOLM

Kind of. And about our predicament. On the bridge, in this place, however long we been here.
(beat.)

How was the funeral?

ROSA

So you know about that.

MALCOLM

You told me about it.

ROSA

I hated it.

MALCOLM

Yeah.

ROSA turns to stand next to MALCOLM on his side of the bridge, now facing the audience.

ROSA

How was yours?

MALCOLM

I didn't get one. Or I don't remember one.

ROSA

Oh. Was that hard?

MALCOLM

I don't know what would've been better.

ROSA

It's hard to know what would've been better when what's happened has already happened.

MALCOLM

Hm. Either way, it's a new day. Look at the sunrise—

ROSA

Don't look at the sun.

MALCOLM

What?

ROSA

(subtly teasingly)

Bad for your eyes.

MALCOLM

Of course. When you came by this bridge, where were you going?

ROSA

I was on a walk.

MALCOLM

Where to?

ROSA

Nowhere in particular. Otherwise, I wouldn't have stopped.

MALCOLM

Why did you stop?

LILLY reenters, wading upstream, without the suitcase.

LILLY

(mumbling to herself)

What's with the man?

ROSA

When someone is doing nothing but leaning on a bridge railing, looking at the sunrise and looking somber, isn't there a part of you that always wants to stop?

MALCOLM

I don't think so.

ROSA

There's nothing romantic to that moment?

MALCOLM

No, it's not that it's not romantic, it's more I think everything we do, we do on impulse. Sometimes the biggest changes in our lives come from 5 second decisions, in fact, I'd go so far as to say we do so much more instinctively than we'd like to admit. That's why whenever you hear about that person you lost touch with, you're always surprised by what they're doing.

ROSA

So say I decided to talk to you on this bridge by impulse. Did I just change my life?

MALCOLM

Whatever's left of it. At least a little bit.

ROSA

What do you mean?

MALCOLM

You're here instead of wherever else.

ROSA

Do I know you? Have we met before?

MALCOLM

Um, didn't we just—

ROSA

Not on this bridge, like, before the bridge.

MALCOLM

I'm pretty sure I'd remember it.

ROSA

Oh.

MALCOLM

Maybe in another life.

ROSA

Or another world.

MALCOLM

I didn't mean for you to actually die. Really.

ROSA

Shut it.

MALCOLM

I'm still sorry.

ROSA

I think I believe the entire universe reincarnates. So it's nothing if one bitch decides to off herself and then somehow, somehow, she ends up dead. How shocking.

MALCOLM

The entire universe?

ROSA

We're on like our sixth or seventh one now.

MALCOLM

Wow. That's a theory.

MALCOLM goes to check his fishing line again, but this time gives it a good tug.

ROSA

Had any luck with that?

MALCOLM

No, but there's that kid down there.

ROSA looks over the bridge with MALCOLM.

ROSA

Oh fuck. That's me.

MALCOLM

The girl there?

ROSA
No.
(pointing at the rose)
No, my body.

MALCOLM
Where?

ROSA
To the left of her!

MALCOLM
There's nothing there.

LILLY
Hello?

ROSA
No my body. It's literally right there. Fuck.

LILLY
Hello!?

ROSA
Who are you? What are you doing with my body?

LILLY
Wait, you're... Renata—

ROSA
... How do you know me?

LILLY
We were childhood friends. You died.

ROSA
I know that.

LILLY
In a car accident.

ROSA
I know that.

LILLY
My family's friends with your family. We went to the funeral.

ROSA

I recognize your face, but it's fuzzy. I guess, uh, thank you?

LILLY

I stepped out early.

ROSA

Oh well fuck you then.

LILLY

Hey. You just said you don't even recognize me. What's it to you? I thought our friendship meant a lot more than that.

ROSA

Literally everything's fuzzy – I'm sorry. You're dead too?

LILLY

Not sure, but I really need to figure that out. I followed my friend Leo here.

ROSA

We might've met a Leo.

MALCOLM

He's probably somewhere around here.

ROSA

(to Malcolm)

That's my body. I'm dead.

LILLY

I know that. I walked by you and I almost didn't see you – like then I looked over my shoulder and I thought I saw somebody crouching down and I thought it might be my Dad. When I look over my shoulder, I usually think it's my Dad, or I don't actually think it's my Dad, I just think of him– that sounds crazier out loud, but–

ROSA

Not your Dad.

LILLY

(laughs)

No.

ROSA

But Malcolm tells me I'm the man of this house. Or at least this bridge.

LILLY

Oh well that's nice.

ROSA

It's awesome actually.

(beat)

Except I don't know what's happening to me.

LILLY

Oh, nena, no one ever knows what's happening to them.

ROSA

That doesn't make me feel better!

LILLY

Maybe it's not supposed to. We just try our best to live.

ROSA

But I'm not alive.

LILLY

How can that be? I'm talking to you so plainly. Some part of you has to be here. Has to be present.

ROSA

How do I seem to you?

LILLY

Older.

ROSA

Thanks. I think.

(beat.)

Why are you sweating so much?

LILLY

It's hot!

ROSA

Not that hot.

LILLY

I been rushing around.

ROSA

(realizing)

... I don't feel any temperature at all.

(looking at Malcolm)

I'm not real.

LILLY

Hey. I don't feel real anymore either. It's just... it's been one of those nights.

ROSA

I never did feel real anyway.

LILLY

I know... Or at least I think I kind of knew that. You looked at me differently—

ROSA

How so?

LILLY

Differently than anyone else looked at me. But it's not about me. You looked at everybody that way. Like we were all aliens to you.

ROSA

Oh. That's nice.

LILLY

No, I loved that about you. But maybe that was a hard way to be. I don't know. Well you did yourself in... I mean— Sorry. I didn't mean to put it like that—

ROSA turns pale, but quickly recovers.

ROSA

No, it's ok. Yeah I did. I just don't remember much anymore. It's just... bits and pieces.

LILLY

Did you used to remember more? Or is it just coming back to you?

ROSA

It comes and goes, like a wave. But it's receding, my whole life slowly getting farther and farther away. Like I'm that alien.

LILLY

You're dissipating... like he said.

ROSA

There's something beautiful about it. It probably means it's really time to go.

(beat.)

Thank you for finding me.

MALCOLM

What do you mean by time to go?

ROSA

I need to cross. I need to go. I'm sorry, Mac.

MALCOLM

Rosa, wait—

Before he can do anything more, ROSA quickly descends the bridge and exits.

LILLY

She's just gone. She just...

MALCOLM

Is gone... that's good.

LILLY

That's what you wanted.

MALCOLM

(sad about it)

Yes.

(with a small smile)

But you've forgotten something.

LILLY

You'll get your payment.

MALCOLM

Then where is it?

LILLY

On its way.

LILLY look at us, almost squinting as if trying to make us out.

LILLY

(Spoken or Thought.)

Wherever could you be, my love.

*Saying nothing more. LILLY enters into the audience. She exits through the house doors.
A few moments pass, then—*

LEO mounts the bridge with Lilly's suitcase. He walks to the top. MALCOLM turns towards him. Suspension.

MALCOLM

What are you doing here?

LEO

I missed her, haven't I?

MALCOLM

You just did.

(snarkily)

Is that a suitcase? What are you - on vacation?

LEO kneels down to open the suitcase. From it, he removes the bag of popcorn. All other items in the suitcase can be seen underneath. He gives the popcorn to MALCOLM.

LEO

Here. So you have something to eat.

MALCOLM

I - thank you?

LEO

De nada.

LEO zips back up his suitcase and stands it back up.

LEO

I hope you do well.

LEO walks down the bridge, leaving the suitcase behind.

MALCOLM

Where are you going?

LEO

I don't know. Wherever she's going.

(long beat, then calling out)

Lilly!!

LEO exits. ASIF enters and begins to mount the bridge, looking very lost. MALCOLM turns towards him. Both men study one another for a moment, then—

ASIF

You're the lifejacket.

MALCOLM

You were a little boy.

ASIF

I'm remembering conversations I've never had. Where am I?

MALCOLM

I don't know. I don't know what I am just as much as you don't seem to remember yourself. You forget you're a little boy.

ASIF

Where did you get popcorn?

MALCOLM

Do you want some?

ASIF

Sure.

The gentlemen share the medium sized bag.

MALCOLM

Your name is Asif, right?

ASIF

Y-yes.

MALCOLM

(gesturing to his fishing line)

Watch my line. Let me know if I catch any dolphins.

ASIF

Will do.

(beat.)

What brings you back into my life this early morning?

MALCOLM

"Why? How? Where did you get the popcorn?" Just enjoy the sunrise. But don't look directly at the sun. Bad for your eyes. My name's Malcolm, by the way.

ASIF

Nice to meet you... I don't remember your name being Malcolm on the boat. Or you being American.

MALCOLM

Multiple personality disorder. Schizophrenia. I got issues, man. Sorry about that. Forget who I'm talking with half the time. Makes for some... tumultuous relationships. But here's the thing. That doesn't mean I don't know what people need. Some people need a shove in the right direction. Some people need help remembering how they got to where they are. Some people need a reminder of who they are, on the inside. Some people... need to watch the sunrise and then return to their family. You think you can do that for me, Asif?

ASIF

Ye-yes.

MALCOLM

Because I see you looking at the sun right now. I told you not to.

ASIF

How is this relevant—

MALCOLM

You're looking at the sun there like there's a girl in there that you need to save. And that girl is already gone. I just talked with her actually. Spirited young lady. I'd take her out if I wasn't a schizophrenic and she was alive.

ASIF

I got an uncle that has schizophrenia. I'd rather you not joke like that— unless you actually have—

MALCOLM

I'm sorry. You're right. I'm just... trying my best to explain my situation.

ASIF

I understand.

MALCOLM

Now go home. Back down this bridge. Back the way you came. C'mon.

ASIF

Thanks... I—

MALCOLM

No. Just go. Like you did when you were a boy. You left your village. It was the right thing to do.

ASIF

You say that...

MALCOLM

I say a lot of things.

ASIF

It's never... felt like the right thing— I felt like I betrayed everyone I knew.

MALCOLM

Welcome to America. The land of the immigrant traitors.

ASIF laughs softly.

MALCOLM

Now go home.

ASIF

Ok. You are right.

MALCOLM

But I'm keeping the popcorn.

ASIF

That's ok. Somewhere in my imagination I think that dead girl called me fat and I can tell it's already going to mess with my whole morning. It was funny in the moment, but... that hurt.

MALCOLM

Life hurts. Death does too.

ASIF

That's great.

MALCOLM

Go home.

ASIF

I'm glad I ran into you, again, lifejacket. Good seeing you.

ASIF descends down the bridge, the way he came. LILLY enters, on a jog, LEO in pursuit, behind her.

LILLY

You're going to have to catch me!

LEO

You think I won't?

LILLY

I don't know. Let's see.

MALCOLM

You're on someone else's property! Go home!

(under his breath)

What's with these people?

LEO

(calling)

What are you going to do about it?!

*MALCOLM shakes his head. LEO and LILLY race off to another exit.
Then, they reenter, LEO still in pursuit, grabs LILLY.*

LILLY

(out of breath)

Ahh, let me go!

LEO

(out of breath)

You said I had to catch you.

LILLY

Ok so you caught me. Now let me go.

LEO lets LILLY go.

LILLY

C'mon. This is... childish.

LEO

Yeah... it's fun to have fun.

LILLY

Is it?

LEO

It was your idea.

LILLY

I haven't run like that in a long time.

LEO

You should run more.

LILLY

I got asthma.

LEO
Boo-hoo.

LILLY
It is fun to have fun.
(beat)
Thanks for delivering the suitcase for me.

LEO
No problem.

LILLY
I just couldn't do it myself, you know? You know... it's her stuff. From when we were kids. Her memories... I...

LEO
Yeah, I got you. No problem.

LILLY
I feel a little lighter now.

LEO
That don't sound like a bad thing?

LILLY
It's neither good or bad.

(beat)
Maybe it means I'm going to have a total model bod for summer. You won't be able to keep your hands off me.

LEO
Sorry, what did you say?

LILLY
I mean— I— you or anyone — just you or anyone really— Cus I'll be so—

LEO leans in and kisses LILLY on the lips.

LILLY
Oh...

LEO
(scared)
What?

I'm really glad you did that.

LILLY

You were asking for it.

LEO

Maybe a little.

LILLY

Let's go find our shoes?

LEO

Ok.

LILLY

*LEO and LILLY exit the house again, holding hands.
Leaving MALCOLM center, on the bridge. He watches the teenagers go and then he looks
at us, studying us.*

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY.