

MONOLOGUES FOR GIRLS

One Sunday Afternoon

by James Hagan

[This lovely, if somewhat sentimental play, written in 1930, is about young love in a small Midwestern town. Amy, a romantic young girl, has a crush on the town bully and she's describing it to her friend Virginia.]

AMY

I don't know. Maybe it was love, I don't know, but— Well, when I was very young— of course, that's a long time ago, you understand. It was in school. There was this boy. I don't know—he never looked at me and I never...Virginia, did you ever have a feeling in your heart—Something that you feel is going to happen and it doesn't— that's the way my heart was— *(she touches her heart)* It wasn't love, I know that— *(pause)* He never even noticed me. I could have been a stick in the mud as far as he was concerned. Virginia, this boy always seemed lonely somehow. Everybody had it in for him, even the teachers—they called him bully—but I know he wasn't. I saw him do a lot of good things—when the big boys picked on the smaller ones, he helped the little fellows out. I know he had a lot of good in him—good, that nobody else could see—that's why my heart longs for him.

Little Women

based on the Novel by Luisa May Alcott
adapted for the stage by Lorraine Cohen

[The story of the trials and tribulations of the March family. The lady like Meg, the tomboyish Jo, the vain Amy, and the gentle Beth, growing up in the nineteenth century poor but happy under the watchful eye of their mother. Their father is away fighting in the Civil War. The following monologue is taken from the first scene in the play. Jo, a spirited and tomboyish girl in her early- mid-teens, laments the fact that she cannot live the way she chooses because it is not proper for a girl. It is not that Jo wants to be a boy. It is more that she wants a different life than the one available to girls at this time. She feels trapped and useless. Meg has just said to Jo: "Remember that you are a young lady." Jo tries to convince Meg that it is not right to expect ladylike behavior from her.]

JO

I ain't a lady! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty. I hate to think I've got to grow up and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as China Aster. It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boys' games and work, and manners. I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy, and it's worse now than ever, for I'm dying to go and fight with Papa, and I can only stay at home and knit like a poky old woman.

Little Women

based on the Novel by Luisa May Alcott
adapted for the stage by John D. Ravold

BETH

You'll tell the others won't you Jo? I've heard that people who love us best are often blindest to such things. If they don't see it you can tell them for me. I don't want any secrets and it's kinder to prepare them. Meg has John to comfort her, Laurie will comfort Amy, but you must stand by Father and Mother. Won't you, Jo? I don't know how to express myself and shouldn't try to anyone but you, because I can't speak out to anyone but you. Jo, dear. Don't hope anymore. It won't do any good. I'm sure of it. We won't be miserable, but enjoy being together while we wait. We've had happy times together, haven't we, Jo? And I think the tide will go out easily, if you help me.

Taming of the Shrew

by William Shakespeare

KATHERINE

The more my wrong, the more his spite appears.
What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars that come unto my father's door
Upon entreaty have a present alms;
If not, elsewhere they meet with charity;
But I, who never knew how to entreat,
Nor never needed that I should entreat,
Am starv'd for meat, giddy for lack of sleep;
With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed;
And that which spites me more than all these wants-
He does it under name of perfect love;
As who should say, if I should sleep or eat,
'Twere deadly sickness or else present death.
I prithee go and get me some repast;
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.

An Ideal Husband

by Oscar Wilde

MABEL CHILTERN

Well, Tommy has proposed to me again. Tommy really does nothing but propose to me. He proposed to me last night in the music-room, when I was quite unprotected, as there was an elaborate trio going on. I didn't dare to make the smallest repartee, I need hardly tell you. If I had, it would have stopped the music at once. Musical people are so absurdly unreasonable. They always want one to be perfectly dumb at the very moment when one is longing to be absolutely deaf. Then he proposed to me in broad daylight this morning, in front of that dreadful statue of Achilles. Really, the things that go on in front of that work of art are quite appalling. The police should interfere. At luncheon I saw by the glare in his eye that he was going to propose again, and I just managed to check him in time by assuring him that I was a bimetallist. Fortunately I don't know what bimetallism means. And I don't believe anybody else does

either. But the observation crushed Tommy for ten minutes. He looked quite shocked. And then Tommy is so annoying in the way he proposes. If he proposed at the top of his voice, I should not mind so much. That might produce some effect on the public. But he does it in a horrid confidential way. When Tommy wants to be romantic he talks to one just like a doctor. I am very fond of Tommy, but his methods of proposing are quite out of date. I wish, Gertrude, you would speak to him, and tell him that once a week is quite often enough to propose to any one, and that it should always be done in a manner that attracts some attention.

Our Town

by Thornton Wilder

EMILY

(Defensive.) I'm not mad at you. *(Dreading to face the issue.)* But, since you ask me, I might as well say is right out, George – *(turns to him, catches sight of TEACHER, who has passed above to their right.)* Oh goodbye, Mrs. Corcoran. *(Faces down again. Then finding it hard to say)* I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. *(She glances at him.)* I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings; but I've just got to – tell the truth and shame the devil.

(Facing mostly out, on the verge of tears.) Well up to a year ago, I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you while you did everything – because we'd been friends so long. And then you began spending all your time at baseball. *(She bites the word.)* And you never stopped to speak to anyone anymore – not to really speak – not even to your own family, you didn't. And George, it's a fact – ever since you've been elected Captain, you've got awful stuck up and conceited, and all the girls say so. And it hurts me to hear 'em say it; but I got to agree with 'em a little, because it's true. I always expect a man to be perfect and I think he should be. *(All innocence, yet firm.)* Well, my father is. And as far as I can see, your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be too.

But you might as well know right now that I'm not perfect – It's not easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because, well, we girls are more – nervous. Now, I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it. *(Cries.)* Now I can see it's not true at all. And I suddenly feel that it's not important, anyway. *(Cries.)*

5th of July

by Lanford Wilson

SHIRLEY

(Quietly determined.) I'm going to be the greatest artist Missouri ahs ever produced. No – the entire Midwest. There have been very famous people – world famous people – Tennessee Williams grew up in Missouri. He grew up not three blocks from where I live now! All his formative years. And Mark Twain. And Dreiser! And Vincent Price and Harry Truman! And Betty Grable! But me! Oh God! Me! Me! Me! Me! I am going to be so great! Unqualified! The greatest single artist the Midwest has ever known!

A painter. Or a sculptor. Or a dancer! A writer! A conductor! A composer! An actress! One of the arts! People will die. Certain people will literally have cardiac arrests at the magnitude of my achievements. Doing something astonishing! Just astonishing!

I will have you know that I intend to study for ten years, and then burst forth on the world. And people will be abashed! Amazed! Astonished! At the magnitude. Oh, God! Look! Is that she? Is that she? Is it? IT IS! IT IS SHE! IT IS SHE! AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! *(She collapses on the floor. Slowly getting to a sitting position; with great dignity)* She died of cardiac arrest and astonishment at the

magnificence of my achievement in my chosen field. Only Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Beethoven, and Frank Lloyd Wright have raised to my heights before me!

Brighton Beach Memoirs

by Neil Simon

NORA

Oh, God, he was so handsome. Always dressed so dapper, his shoes always shined. I always thought he should have been a movie star...like Gary Cooper... only very short. Mostly, I remember his pockets.

When I was six or seven, he always brought me home a little surprise. Like a Hershey or a top. He'd tell me to go get it in his coat pocket. So I'd run to the closet and put my hand in and it felt as big as a tent. I wanted to crawl in there and go to sleep. And there were all these terrific things in there, like Juicy Fruit gum or Spearmint Life Savers and bits of cellophane and crumbled pieces of tobacco and movie stubs and nickels and pennies and rubber bands and paper clips and gray suede gloves that he wore in the wintertime.

Then I found his coat in Mom's closet and I put my hand in his pocket. And everything was gone. It was emptied and dry-cleaned and it felt cold...And that's when I knew he was really dead.

Our Town

by Thornton Wilder

EMILY

That's the town I knew as a little girl. And, look, there's the old white fence that used to be around our house. Oh, I'd forgotten that! I used to love it so! ... Oh! How young mama looks! I didn't know mama was ever that young. ... Why did they ever have to get old? Mama, I'm here. I'm grown up. ... Oh, mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, mama. I married George Gibbs, Mama. Wally's dead, too. His appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it—don't you remember? But just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's look at one another. *(pause)*... I can't. I can't go on. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. I didn't realize. So, all that was going on, and we never noticed. Take me back—up the hill—to my grave. But first: Wait! One more look. Goodbye world. Goodbye Grover's Corners...mama and papa. Goodbye to clocks ticking, and mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths, and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you.

The Sound of Music

MARIA

Your children are just unhappy little marching machines. Take Liesl for example. Liesel isn't a child anymore! And if you keep treating her as one, you're going to have a mutiny on your hands! And Friedrich – Friedrich is afraid to be himself – he's shy, he's aloof, he needs your confidence! And then there's Brigitta she notices things. She always tells the truth – especially when you don't want to hear it. Kurt – Kurt is sensitive, he's easily hurt, and you ignore him! You brush him aside just like you do all the others! I haven't finished yet! Louisa, Louisa wants to have a good time. Oh please Captain, let her have a good time! Marta – Marta I don't know about yet but someone has got to find out

about her! And Gretl, oh little Gretl just wants to be loved! Oh please captain, love them, love all of them, they need you!

The Effect of Gamma Rays On Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds

by Paul Zindel

[Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for drama, this play is the story of Mathilda (Tillie) Hunsdorfer, a bookish, shy, yet inwardly beautiful young high school student who overcomes abuse from a jealous and acid-tongued mother and the vengeance of a pretty but mean-spirited sister. Encouraged by a teacher, Tillie carries out a gamma ray experiment with marigold seeds that wins her a prize at the school Science Fair. Through Tillie's experiment we learn that beauty can flourish even in the most barren conditions. In the two monologues that follow Tillie is awakened to the beauty of science.]

TILLIE

He told me to look at my hand, for a part of it came from a star that exploded too long ago to imagine. This part of me was formed from a tongue of fire that screamed through the heavens until there was our sun. And this part of me—this tiny part of me was on the sun when it itself exploded and whirled in a great storm until the planets came to be. And he said this thing was so small—this part of me was so small it couldn't be seen—but it was there from the beginning of the world. And he called this bit of me an atom. And when he wrote the word, I fell I love with it.

Atom.

Atom.

What a beautiful word.

Miss Firecracker Contest

by Beth Henley

CARNELLE

Popeye's going to be using this red material to make my costume for the Miss Firecracker Contest. You see, I registered today. See, Elaine was Miss Firecracker way back when she was just eighteen. Anyway, it was way back that first year when I came to live with them. She was a vision of beauty riding on that float with a crown on her head waving to everyone. I thought I'd drop dead when she passed by me. Anyway, I just thought I'd give it a whirl. I'm twenty-four. Twenty-five's the age limit. I just thought I'd give it a whirl while I still could. Course, don't expect to win—that's crazy. I'm just in it for the experience—that's the main thing. That's actually why I dyed my hair red; I thought it would be more appropriate for the contest. Did you bring that dress along with you that I asked you about on the phone? You know, the beautiful red antebellum dress that you wore at the Natchez Pilgrimage the first year you got married. See, it's gonna be perfect for me to wear in the contest. I'm trying to make crimson red my thematic color. I'll just need them in the actual contest for the opening Parade of Firecrackers. Why do you think I should just wait until after the audition and see if I make the pageant? Don't you think I'll make it? I know they only pick five girls. I've thought about it, and I, frankly, can't think of five other girls in town that are prettier than me. I'm speaking honestly now. Course I know there's Caroline Jeffers, but she has those yellow teeth. I know why you're worried. You think I've ruined my chances, cause of my reputation. Well, everyone knew I used to go out with lots of men and all that. Different ones. It's been a constant thing with me since I was young and—I just mention it cause it's different now, since Aunt Ronelle died and since I got that—disease. Anyway, I go to church now and I'm signed up to where I take an orphan home to dinner once a week or to a movie; and I work on the cancer drive here just like you do in

Natchez. My life has meaning. People aren't calling me Miss Hot Tamale anymore like they used to. Everything's changed. And being in that contest--it would be such an honor to me...I can't explain the half of it. I'm not all that ugly. I wish you had about a drop of faith in me.

'DENTITY CRISIS

by Christopher Durang

JANE

When I was eight years old, someone brought me to a theatre with lots of other children. We had come to see a production of Peter Pan. And I remember something seemed wrong with whole production, odd things kept happening. Like when the children would fly, the ropes breaking and the actors would come thumping to ground and they'd have to be carried off by the stagehands. There seemed to be an unlimited supply of understudies to take the children's places, and then they'd fall to the ground. And then the crocodile that chases Captain Hook seemed to be a real crocodile, it wasn't an actor, and at one point it fell off the stage, crushing several children in the front row. Several understudies came and took their places in the audience. And from scene to scene Wendy seemed to get fatter and fatter until finally by the second act she was immobile and had to be moved with a cart. The voice belonged to the actress playing Peter Pan. You remember how in the second act Tinkerbell drinks some poison that Peter's about to drink, in order to save him? And then Peter turns to the audience and he says that Tinkerbell's going to die because not enough people believe in fairies, but that if everybody in the audience claps real hard to show that they do believe in fairies, then maybe Tinkerbell won't die. and so then all the children started to clap. we clapped very hard and very long. my palms hurt and even started to bleed I clapped so hard. then suddenly the actress playing Peter Pan turned to the audience and she said, " that wasn't enough. You didn't clap hard enough. Tinkerbell's dead. " uh..well, and..and then everyone started to cry. The actress stalked offstage and refused to continue with the play, and they finally had to bring down the curtain. No one could see anything through all the tears, and the ushers had to come help the children up the aisles and out into the street. I don't think any of us were ever the same after that experience.

DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

ANNE

Look, Peter, the sky. *(she looks up through the skylight)* What a lovely, lovely day! Aren't the clouds beautiful? You know what I do when it seems as if I couldn't stand being cooped up for one more minute? I think myself out. I think myself on a walk in the park where I used to go with Pim. Where the jonquils and the crocus and the violets grow down the slopes. You know the most wonderful part about thinking yourself out? You can have it any way you like. You can have roses and violets and chrysanthemums all blooming at the same time? It's funny. I used to take it all for granted. And now I've gone crazy about everything to do with nature. Haven't you? *(softly)* I wish you had a religion, Peter. Oh, I don't mean you have to be Orthodox, or believe in heaven and hell and purgatory and things. I just mean some religion. It doesn't matter what. Just to believe in something! When I think of all that's out there. The trees. And flowers. And seagulls. When I think of the dearness of you, Peter. And the goodness of people we know. Mr. Kraler, Miep, Dirk, the vegetable man, all risking their lives for us everyday. When I think of these good things, I'm not afraid any more. I find myself, and God, and I... We're not the only people that've had to suffer. There've always been people that've had to. Sometimes one race, sometimes another, and yet...I know it's terrible, trying to have any faith when people are doing such horrible things, but you know what I sometimes think? I think the world may be going through a phase, the way I was with Mother. It'll pass, maybe not for hundreds of years, but some day I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart. Peter, if you'd only look at it as part of a great pattern? That we're just a little minute in the life? *(she breaks off)* Listen to us, going at each other like a couple of stupid grownups! Look at the sky now. Isn't it lovely?

THE DIVINERS

by Jim Leonard

Darlene

Ick! Don't let those worms near me. I'm not about to let them touch me. How come? Cause I don't like worms. That's how come. If it was me, I'd make that preacher dig em up himself and put em in the can. Who ever heard of a man askin you out to go fishin and then makin you do all the work? Worms wouldn't bother me so much, see? But they used to be able to walk. It*s true, Jennie Mae. Don*t you guys read the Bible? (*Not too happy about the fact.*) Yeah, I gotta learn the whole thing. Like, say I*m sittin at the table and I want seconds on dessert, Aunt Norma says, "Give me a verse first, Darlene." If I didn*t know the Bible I*d starve to death, see? But I been learnin who Adam and Eve are. You heard a them, ain*t you? The first people. And they*re livin in this great big old garden in Europe. And the thing about Eve is she*s walkin around pickin berries and junk with no clothes on. Listen, Jennie Mae, they were like doin it all the time. All the time, Jennie Mae. That kind a stuff happens in Europe. But like I*m sayin, this snake comes strollin up, see? And he tells her how she*s sittin there jaybird stark naked. Oh, there*s lots crazier stuff*n that in the Bible. Like there*s people turnin to stone. One minute they*re sittin there just shootin the breeze—and the next thing you know they*re all rocks! Lots a wierd stuff. So anyway, this business a bein naked really sets God off at the snake, see? Cause with Eve bein so dumb she didn*t get in any trouble, but now it*s like a whole not her ball game. And God wasn*t just mad at this one snake either—he was mad at all a the snakes and all a the worms in the world. So he tells em "From now on you guys*re gonna crawl around in the dirt!" God says, "From now on nobody likes you." God really said that. Right in the Bible. Later on he gets really mad and floods the whole world out. He kills em wth water. Floods em right under. He makes it keep rainin, see? It*s in the Bible—it*s true.

DOLL'S HOUSE

by Henik Ibsen

Nora

Sit down there, Torvald. I have a lot to talk about. Sit down. It*s going to take a long time. I*ve a lot to say to you. You don*t understand me. *And* I*ve never understood you - until this evening. No, don*t interrupt me Just listen to what I have to say. You and I have got to face facts, Torvald. Doesn*t anything strike you about the way we*re sitting here? We*ve been married for eight years. Does *it* occur to you this is the first time we, two,, you and I, man and wife, have ever had a serious talk together? In eight whole years - no, longer - ever since we first met — we have never exchanged a serious word on a serious subject. You have never understood me. A great wrong has been done to me~ Torvald. First by papa..And then by you. You have never loved me. You just thought it was fun to be in love with me. It*s the truth, Torvald. When I lived with papa, he used to tell me what he thought about everything, so that I never had any opinions but his. And if I did have any of my own, I kept than quiet, because he wouldn*t have liked them. He called me his little doll, and he played with me just the way I played with my dolls. Then I came here to live in your house I mean, I passed from papa*s hands into yours. You arranged everything the way you wanted it, so that I simply took over your taste in everything — or pretended I did it*s as if I*ve been living here like a pauper, from hand to mouth. I performed tricks for you, and you gave me food and drink. But that was how you wanted it You and papa have done me a great wrong. It*s your fault that I have done nothing with my life. Have I been happy here? No; never. I used to think I was. But I haven*t ever been I*ve just had fun. You*ve always been very kind to me. But our home has never been anything but a playroom. I*ve been your doll-wife, just as I used to be papa's doll-child. *And* the children have been my dolls. I used to think it was fun when you came in and played with me, just as they think it*s fun when I go in and play games with them. That*s all our marriage has been. Oh, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being the right wife for you. And now what about me? Am I to educate the children? Didn*t you say yourself a few minutes ago that you dare to leave them in my charge? You were perfectly right. I am not fitted to educate them. There*s something else I must do first. I must educate myself And you can*t help me with that. It*s

something I must do by myself That*s why I*m leaving you. I must stand on my own feet if I am to find out the truth about myself and about life. So I can*t go on living here with you any longer. I*m leaving you now, at once. It*s use your trying to forbid me anymore. I shall take with me nothing but what is mine. I don*t want anything from you, now or ever. I must think things out for myself; and try to find my own answer. I don*t know where lam in these matters. I only know that these things mean something quite different to me from what they do to you. No, I don't understand how society works, but I intend to learn. I*ve never felt so sane and sure in my life. Oh, Torvald, it hurts me terribly to have to say it, because you*ve always been so kind to me. But I can*t help it. I don*t love you any longer. That*s why I can*t go on living here any longer. It happened this evening, when the miracle failed to happen. It was then that I realized you weren*t the man I*d thought you to be. I*ve waited so patiently, for eight whole years - well, good heavens, I*m not such a fool as to suppose that miracles occur every day. Then this dreadful thing happened to me, and then I *knew* 'Now the miracle will take place!* When Krogstad*s letter was lying out there, it never occurred to me for a moment that you would let that man trample over you. I knew that you would say to him: "Publish the facts to the world!" And when he had done this, then I was certain that you would step forward and take all the blame on yourself and say "I am the one who is guilty!" You*re thinking I wouldn*t have accepted such a sacrifice from you? No, of course I wouldn*t! But what would my word have counted for against yours? That was the miracle I was hoping for, and dreading. And it was to prevent it happening that I wanted to end my life. But you neither think or talk like the man I could share my life with. Once you*d got over your fright -and you weren*t frightened of what might threaten me, but only of what threatened you - Now the danger was past, then as far as you were concerned it was exactly as though nothing had happened. I was your little songbird just as before - your doll whom henceforth you would take particular care to protect from the world because she was so weak and fragile. Torvald, in that moment I realized that for eight years I had been living here with a complete stranger, and had born him three children Oh, I can*t bear to think of it! I could tear myself to pieces! I can*t spend the night in a strange man*s house. When a wife leaves her husband*s house, as I*m doing now, I*m told that according to the law he is freed of any obligations towards her. In any case, I release you from any such obligations. You mustn*t feel bound to me in any way however small, just as I shall not feel bound to you. We must both be quite free. Here is your ring back. Give me mine. Torvald, for me to come back, you and I would have to change so much that—life together between us would have to become a *marriage*. it would be the miracle of miracles. And I do not believe in miracle any longer. Goodbye, Torvald.

INVISIBLE FRIENDS

By Alan Ayckbourn

LUCY

Come with me if you will. Upstairs. If you listen very carefully you can just hear the distant sound of the greater spotted Grisly Gary, my unbelievably talkative brother. Here we go, I'll just have a quite word with him, you might want to cover your ears. (*Talking loudly, and quickly*) Hallo, Grisly. It's your loving sister, Lucy. Just wanted to tell you that I have been picked for the school swimming team. Thought you'd like to know. Bye, Grisly. I enjoyed that chat. He didn't hear a thing. This is my room. No one is allowed in here except for me. I'm a very tidy sort of person. Which is a bit extraordinary in this house. I think I must be a freak. I actually like to know where I have put my things. This is my bed. And this is my desk. And up there on the shelf are my special, most favorite books. Actually one of the reasons that I keep it tidy is because my very, very special friend, Zara, also likes things tidy. Oh yah, I ought to explain to you about Zara shouldn't I? You may have heard my mum talking about my invisible friend? Do you remember? Well, that's my invisible friend, Zara. This is Zara. I want you to say hallo to her. Zara, say hallo to my friends. And won't you say hallo to Zara, she did say hallo to you. I invented Zara, oh years ago, when I was seven or eight. Just for fun. I think I was ill at the time and wasn't allowed to play with any of my real friends, so I made up Zara. She's my special friend that no one else can see, except me. Of course, I can't really see her either. Not really. Although sometimes I? It's almost as if I could see her, sometimes. If I concentrate vary hard it's like I can just glimpse her out of the corner of my eye. Still. Anyway. I've kept Zara for years and years, its been almost 10 years now actually. Until they all started saying I was much too old for that sort of thing and got worried and started talking

about sending for a doctor. So then I didn't take her round with me quite so much after that. But she's still here. And when I feel really sad and depressed, I sit and talk to Zara. Zara always understands. Zara always listens. She's special. Aren't you, Zara? What? Yes, I wish he'd turn his music down, too. I've asked him, haven't I? (mimicking) but he just says, 'how can I hear the music then if I turn it down. I can't hear the bass then!' I used to have pictures up on the walls of this room, but every time he put a CD on, they would all fall down off the walls. I wish he would listen to quiet music, just once, like some Bach or Mozart. Of course, if he did that he wouldn't be Grisly Gary now would he be? Oh Zara, I almost forgot to tell you. I got picked for the school swimming team today. I know, I'm really excited too. I did the breast stroke and freestyle just like you told me to do and I got in. No.. no they didn't come..i mean its not like I? no? why should they have? (*yelling*) If anyone cares at all, I was picked for the school swimming team today. How about that folks? Mom? Dad? Anybody that cares? Great, thanks everyone. God dammit, they could have?. They could? But no, no of course not, they don't? of course not, what was I expecting, some one to actually? Yah, yah Zara. I know you're always here. Its just that sometimes? I get so lonely.

QUILTERS 1

Annie

My ambition is to become a doctor like my father. I'm my father's girl. My greatest accomplishment was when I was ten years old and was successful in chopping off a chicken's head and then dressing it for a chicken dinner. My mother tries to make me do quilts all the time, but I don't want nothing to do with it. I told her, 'Never in my life will I stick my fingers 'till they bleed!. Very definitely. My sister Florry is a real good quilter, I guess. Mother says so all the time. Florry's favorite pattern is the Sunbonnet sue. Mother taught her how to do applique blocks and since then she's made prob'ly a dozen Sunbonnet Sue quilts. You seen 'em, they're like little dolls turned sideways with big big sunbonnets on. Florry makes each one different. In one her little foot is turned this way or that, or she'll give her a parasol or turn the hat a little bit. People think they're soo cute. She made one for everyone in the family, so now there are little Sunbonnet Sue quilts all over the house. She made a couple of 'em for her friends, and last spring when we all got promoted at school, she presented one to our teacher. I nearly died. And she's still at it! Let me tell you, she's driving me crazy with her Sunbonnet Sues. So I decided to make one quilt and give it to Florry. Like I said, I'm not such a good quilter as her, but I knew just what I wanted to do with this one. It's real small, twin bed size. I finished it and put it on her bed this morning, but I don't think she's seen it yet. I guess I do some new things with Sunbonnet Sue. I call it the Demise of Sunbonnet Sue. Each little block is different, just like Florry does it. I've got a block of her hanging, another one with a knife in her chest, eaten by a snake, eaten by a frog, struck by lightning, and burned up! I'm sorta proud of it. You should see it ...it turned out real good!

ELEEMOSYNARY

by Lee Blessing

Echo:

Uncle Bill hardly remembers you, you know that? I asked him what you were like as a little girl, and he couldn't even say. He remembers Grandma even less. He didn't have one interesting thing to say about her – about *Grandma*. They don't have a single picture of her, either. Not even in their minds. To them, she's just a woman who lived a big, embarrassing life. They all think they've saved me just in time. Not just from Grandma – from you, too. (A beat.)

So I started wondering if they weren't right. Maybe the smartest thing would be to forget you completely. And Grandma. After all, what did I ever get from the two of you, except a good education? You especially – what were you ever to me, except a voice on the phone now and then? And I looked around the new room where I was staying, and it was real nice and... blank, the way a thing is before you put any time into it. I

thought, I could live a whole new life here. I could invent a whole new me. I could even flourish. Like you have.

But I kept hearing your voice. That voice on the other end of the phone, hiding behind spelling words, making excuses – or so energetic sometimes, so... wishing. I don't even remember what you said, just the sound of it. Just a sound that said, "I love you, and I failed you." I hate that sound. And I will never settle for it, because no one failed me. No one ever failed me. Not Grandma and not you. I am a prize among women. I'm your daughter. That's what I choose to be. Someone who loves you. Someone who can make you love me. Nearly all the time. I'm going to stay with you. I'm going to prepare you for me. I'm going to cultivate you. I'm going to tend you.