Iowa Research Online
The University of Iowa's Institutional Repository

University of Iowa
Iowa Research Online

Theses and Dissertations

2014

This is not a war play | This is a war play (A meditation)

Micah Ariel James
University of Iowa

Copyright 2014 Micah Ariel James

This dissertation is available at Iowa Research Online: http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/4652

Recommended Citation
James, Micah Ariel. "This is not a war play | This is a war play (A meditation)." MFA (Master of Fine Arts) thesis, University of Iowa, 2014.
http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/4652.

Follow this and additional works at: http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

THIS IS NOT A WAR PLAY | THIS IS A WAR PLAY (A MEDITATION)

by

Micah Ariel James

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts (Playwriting)
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2014

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Art Borreca

Copyright by

MICAH ARIEL JAMES

2014

All Rights Reserved

Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MFA THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Micah Ariel James

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts (Playwriting) at the May 2014 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____
Art Borreca, Thesis Supervisor

_____
Dare Clubb

_____
Kim Marra

To the mindful.

War is hell, but that's not the half of it, because war is also mystery and terror and adventure and courage and discovery and holiness and pity and despair and longing and love. War is nasty; war is fun. War is thrilling; war is drudgery. War makes you a man; war makes you dead.

— Tim O'Brien
The Things They Carried

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My classmates Emily Dendinger, Lisa Flora Meyers, Bella Poynton, Kristi Banker, and Sarah Johnson, and all of the other members of the Playwrights Workshop, 2011 - 2014. Sydne Mahone, Art Borreca, and Dare Clubb. Joshua Raheim and each and every collaborator who helped bring this meditation to life in the fall of 2013. Meredith Alexander, Megan Rivas, and Alan MacVey. Lisa Schlesinger, Ilene Fins, and Meg O'Connor. Mum, Dad, Brother, and Teagan. And Betty Benson.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE vi

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY viii

LIST OF CHARACTERS x

THIS IS NOT A WAR PLAY | THIS IS A WAR PLAY (A MEDITATION) 1

PREFACE

There was Chicago and the 22 bus and the shoe-shine man who got on in Lincoln Park, plopped down, pulled shoe-shine things from a duffel bag and set right to shining shoe after shoe. And after every pair: "A dollar?" And the people with their freshly-shined shoes: "I don't have any cash. Sorry." And the shoe-shine man: "That's okay, brother/sister. God bless you."

There were late night PBS specials. And Sweet Honey in the Rocks. And Peter, Paul, and Mary.

There was Joe Brainard and *I Remember*. And something like, "I remember feeling sorry for black people, not because of what they were going through but because they were ugly." And a question from the front of the room, a question for me and only me: "Any thoughts about that? That line in particular. How did that line make you feel?" And then a bit of waiting while I looked around for my wit.

There was summer and Virginia and the beach and the waves and almost drowning but Annie never let go.

There was Vietnam in books. And this war and that war. And is war just? And is justice fair? And is there poetry there? Anywhere? In pockets, around certain corners? On buses? In gardens? On Sundays? And there where? And there why? And says who? And—we should talk about it more. Why don't we talk about war?

There was fourth grade and a field trip and the Biltmore Estate. And the winery out back. But grape juice. Because fourth grade. And, "*Richie Rich* was filmed here." And, "Macaulay Culkin stood here, right here, and held this railing just so."

There was Betty, 93 years strong. And the church on Wellington Avenue. And an oral history interview for the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection. And ninety minutes in, the death penalty. And Betty had been writing letters to politicians for years. Because the politicians. Because mitigating circumstances. Because, "No pity." And,

Was I an activist? “Um—” And Betty: “Will you be when you get out of school and don’t have all the books and papers to do?” And me: “I think— I think I would love that.”[1]

[1] James, Micah Ariel, "Interview with Elizabeth Benson" (2010). Oral Histories. Paper 14. http://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cadc_caam_oralhistories/14

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

thisisnotaWarPlay | thisisaWarPlay received a production as a part of the 2013-2014 University of Iowa Theatre Department Gallery Series, and ran from October 24-27, 2013, in Theatre B.

ECHO	Ali Borchers
DELTA	Kylie Jansen
JULIETT	Alexandra Perez
KILO	Ariel Davis
CHARLIE	Connor Hanratty
WHISKEY	Alex Philoon
NOVEMBER	Frankie Rose

Director	*Joshua Raheim*
Dramaturg	*Sarah Johnson*
Stage Manager	*Ali Kochman*
Assistant Stage Manager	*Julia Killian*
Scenic Designer	*Alex Burbach*
Lighting Designer	*Matt Carney*
Sound Designer	*Hiram Orozco*

Prior, ***thisisnotaWarPlay | thisisaWarPlay*** received a staged reading as part of the Iowa New Play Festival in May of 2013.

ECHO	Allyson Malandra
DELTA	Breeyn Tighe
JULIETT	Molly Elizabeth Brown
KILO	John Whitney
CHARLIE	Kevin Argus
WHISKEY	RJ McGhee
NOVEMBER	Felipe Carrasco

Director	*Meredith Alexander*
Assistant Director	*Katie Wilson*
Dramaturg	*Kristi Banker*

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Women

Echo, 25 – a photographer

Delta, 21 – a soldier

Juliett, 17 – a student

Kilo, 23 – just passing through

Men

Charlie, 25 – a salesman

Whiskey, 21 – a poet

November, 19 – just making conversation

THIS IS NOT A WAR PLAY | THIS IS A WAR PLAY (A MEDITATION)

Prologue.

(Delta and Juliett wait for Echo to set up a camera. This will be a portrait of Delta, Juliett, and Echo. Recorded audio: *Echo, age 8, and her mother:*

ECHO, AGE 8

Mom? You look tired. Are you tired?
Mom, can we go to the desert?
Mom, you're far away again.

MOTHER

What's in the desert?

ECHO, AGE 8

Ants. Duh.

MOTHER

Ants?

ECHO, AGE 8

Not desert ants. The regular ones. They just crawled to the desert. They're visiting their cousins to say goodbye and stuff before they head off to the war.

MOTHER

What are regular ants?

ECHO, AGE 8

Like red ones.

MOTHER

Red ants are regular?

ECHO, AGE 8

Yes. No, I'm saying they can be red.

MOTHER

But they don't have to be?

ECHO, AGE 8

Mom.

MOTHER

I'm trying to understand.

ECHO, AGE 8
I'm saying any ant is regular. But some regular ants are red. Get it?

(Echo sets the timer and joins her sisters for the portrait. They arrange and rearrange themselves.)

MOTHER
We can go to the desert.
What do you want to do in the desert?

ECHO, AGE 8
We should take the girls. And we should take their pictures.
Because, you know why? They're not going to be babies forever.
Mom?

MOTHER
Go. Go get dressed.

ECHO, AGE 8
And wake the babies?

MOTHER
Gently. Be nice.

(They freeze. The camera flashes. Blackout.)

1. Charlie & November

(Door Museum.)

CHARLIE
And we're back where we started.

NOVEMBER
The red door. I remember.

CHARLIE
Good.

NOVEMBER
You know a lot about doors.

CHARLIE
You don't run a door museum for half of your life without picking up a few things.

This is the main door. Been here since the house was built. A while.
We paint it every year just for good measure. No creaking just yet. Not just yet.

NOVEMBER

Not just yet.

CHARLIE
(as a tour guide)

This—is a door. As you can see, it is a wooden door. I'll tell you something about this door. There's a man behind this door. He has a sword. A samurai sword to be exact. On his sword is a wooden sheath. It was his father's. By *it*, I refer of course to the sword. The sheath was his mother's. It was a gift from *her* mother who won it in a poker game. In the interest of full disclosure, I feel I must tell you—she cheated. In her defense, she had no idea how to play poker, and if she had any intention of winning, cheating was very nearly her only option. The gentleman who owned the sheath was a handsome young soldier from out of town. His wife's name was Elisabeth and sometimes they went hunting and the soldier thought of—accidentally—well— To be fair, she *was* terribly petty. And anyway, she was in love with a man named Charles. Charles was not a soldier, but he did save a woman's life once. Anyway, Charles grew up in a large house at the edge of the lake. It was his mother's house and she liked to paint pictures of animals with the heads of other animals. Take a moment, if you will, to imagine what a pig might look like with a horse's head. Yes? Or a turtle with the head of a sheep. Okay? Or a slug with the head of a penguin. Right? Imagine, if you will, a squid with the head of a duck. Hm? And you will have a fair idea of Charles' mother's portraits. Until Charles was born, his mother shared her home with an older woman who reminded her of her own dear old mother—with her dark hair and droopy eyes that would often fill to overflowing when sad songs played on the radio. The old woman was married once and her only daughter worked as a schoolteacher. Most of her students thought she smelled strange—like a man's cologne or grapes and onions or a tuna fish sandwich—but no one would ever tell her so.
Edward sat in the front row and most days he slept straight through the old woman's class—but he went on to become a lawyer anyway. I say this, of course, to say—

(Charlie knocks on the red door, looks at November.)

NOVEMBER
(suddenly a tour guide himself)

There's a man behind this door. He has a sword.

CHARLIE

Good. So. You know. The job is yours if you want it. You seem like a good kid.

NOVEMBER

I try to be.

CHARLIE

And a hard worker.

NOVEMBER

I am. I just—

CHARLIE

The main thing is this: On the other side of every door is a story and it matters; there are people and they matter. You see? Takes time is all. It's like— You learn.

2. Delta & Juliett

(Juliett's dorm room.)

DELTA

I thought you had a roommate.

JULIETT

She moved out.

DELTA

No wonder. This place used to be spotless.

JULIETT

Yeah it doesn't matter anymore.
Thanks for dinner. It was—good.

DELTA

I'm glad.

(A moment.)

JULIETT

Half the hall's cleared out actually. People are staying in their friend's rooms.
After mom died it was all, "You want to get dinner sometime?" All, "If you want to talk or something—" But, a couple hundred journalists write a couple thousand articles about your screwed up family and how your dad might or might not have killed a bunch of people a long time ago and all of a sudden, everybody's like— I mean, I get it, I guess.

DELTA

People suck.

JULIETT

They're sending me home at the end of the month. Until the end of the term. They're making me take a break.

DELTA

Why? What did you do?

JULIETT

Nothing. They're just like—

(as the dean)

"Just take some time. Lay low for a while. Come back when this whole thing with your father blows over. It's nothing personal."

DELTA

They can't do that.

JULIETT

(as the dean)

"It's nothing personal, but considering the trouble at your last school we can't really afford to have—"

DELTA

You're a good student. That is all that matters. Did you tell her that?

JULIETT

Yeah, I told her that.

DELTA

Do you want me to talk to her?

JULIETT

No.

(Pause.)

DELTA

I'm proud of you, Juliett. I don't ever tell you that, but I am. Even with all of this going on, you've been so— And I know I haven't been around much for you or Echo since mom died. We all deal with things differently but—

JULIETT

I got this letter yesterday. I think he meant it for you but they didn't know where to find you so they sent it here. Came in the mail.

DELTA

Who?

JULIETT

It's got dad's name on it.

DELTA

Let me see.

JULIETT

Is it true?

DELTA

Is what true?

JULIETT

The letter.

DELTA

I don't know what it says. —Did you—read my mail?

JULIETT

It came to *me*.

DELTA

But it had my name on it?

JULIETT

It's a lot of trouble to go through to mail a letter. Not a lot of people would go through all that trouble for something they just made up.

DELTA

But it wasn't *for* you.

JULIETT

It came to me.

DELTA

Did it have your name on it? Or did it have my name on it?

JULIETT

Yours.

DELTA

Who's it from? Is it from him or from the court or—? What's on the envelope?

JULIETT

It's from him.

DELTA

It does matter! You shouldn't have opened it. It does matter. It just— You can't just— Where is it? The letter. Let me see it.

JULIETT

I sent it back.

DELTA

Why?

JULIETT

Because—

DELTA

Why would you do that?

JULIETT

Because I'm a horrible person and I want to ruin your life.

DELTA

Juliett.

(Juliett starts to leave.)

DELTA

Juliett. No, wait. You read it? What did it say?
Wait, wait. No, wait. I'm not mad. I'm not upset. Okay? Please?

JULIETT

We used to tell each other everything I thought.

DELTA

I know.

JULIETT

I always tell you everything. You always said we could tell each other anything.

DELTA

Yes, but—

JULIETT

But not—everything. Anything but not everything.

DELTA

I didn't tell anybody that I wrote to him.
There's always been something I can't just forget about him. I can't just move on. I can't just pretend he didn't happen. He was so *good* once.

JULIETT

I know.

DELTA

No you don't.

JULIETT

You keep forgetting I was there.

DELTA

He was gone before you were born.

JULIETT

Well you were only four.

DELTA

I was a *mature* four.

(A moment.)

JULIETT

He said he misses you. He hopes you're happy.
Just you. He doesn't think about the rest of us, not even Mom. Does he know she died?

DELTA

He never even met—

JULIETT

But he knows about me. You told him about me—in your letters?
And he knew she was pregnant. I mean, could feel him. They would sing to each other every night before bed and they would put their hands on her stomach and it was so warm and I would kick and kick because I couldn't wait to get out / be free / breathe, because nobody told me. I could feel him, right?

(Delta is silent. After a moment, Juliett finds the letter, hands it to Delta. Delta reads.)

JULIETT

Is it true?

(Pause.)

DELTA

You're not mad anymore, are you?
You can't be mad at me when I go to war.

3. Whiskey & Delta

(Prison. Whiskey is in handcuffs. Visiting hours.)

WHISKEY
War, huh? Brave soul.

(Pause.)

WHISKEY
This is like that time my mom got that job and we left the coast.

DELTA
I asked my mom if I could go with you because that's the kind of thing you ask your mom when you're five.

WHISKEY
Oh, man. And I was across the street like, "Mom, please! I'll get a job! I'll sell my shoes!" I'm five. "We don't have to go! Please!" My folks kept babbling about a better life or some-such-whatever and the next thing I know—

DELTA
After that, I had my tear ducts surgically removed.

WHISKEY
And the next thing I know I'm twenty-one and I eat bologna sandwiches three times a day.

DELTA
Should've stayed away I guess.

WHISKEY
Maybe. I don't know. Word on the street is these things [handcuffs] match my eyes. Besides, it's good to see you.

(Delta pulls out the letter.)

DELTA
He wrote back.

WHISKEY
I told you.

DELTA
I told him I'm going to war and he said he hopes I don't die.

WHISKEY

That's something. Right?
Look, for what it's worth, I don't think your old man is the psycho-creature they make him out to be. He's got this picture of you guys when you were kids. And he stares at it every night. For hours. Like if he blinks or looks away you'll just disappear forever and he can't, for the life of him, let that happen.
It's nice, you know. I think about loving that much.

(Pause.)

WHISKEY

They let you get letters over there?

DELTA

You don't have to do that.

WHISKEY

No, it's only fair. It's only fair. You're always coming here—

DELTA

To see about my father.

WHISKEY

Maybe that's how it started, but he won't see you and yet, I can't help but notice, you keep coming back.

DELTA

Maybe I feel sorry for you.

WHISKEY

Maybe I'll take what I can get.
Besides, that's what we do here. Pass the time with words.
They can take our freedom, but they can't take our words.

DELTA

A poet named Whiskey.

WHISKEY

Don't make fun of my mother.

DELTA

No. I wasn't. It works.

WHISKEY

Yeah. My mother was a visionary.

(Pause.)

DELTA

The recruiter said we should make a moment of saying goodbye to the people we—care about. So people will have something to remember in case we don't come back.

WHISKEY

It's too early to talk like that.

DELTA

So I think you should try to remember this moment. In case I don't come back.

(Whiskey remembers the moment. Delta remembers it too.)

WHISKEY

I'm going to build you a house, okay? Something to come back to.
No I know some people who went over there. Some are still out there. And some are somewhere in the clouds I guess. But the ones who came back, every last one of them, you could see it in their eyes, they had a reason.

DELTA

Why'd you cut your hair?

WHISKEY

You have to look toward the future, you know.

DELTA

The future likes you better with shorter hair?

WHISKEY

That's the sense I was getting.

DELTA

I have a house.

WHISKEY

White picket fence? What do you want? A garden? A tree-house out back? A koi pond. Decorative rocks. That's a given.

DELTA

No doors.

WHISKEY

A house with no doors?

DELTA
That's what I want.

WHISKEY
Okay.

DELTA
Yeah?

WHISKEY
Mark my words.

4. Charlie & Kilo

(Living room. Kilo enters.)

CHARLIE
There she is.

KILO
You're awake.

CHARLIE
I was waiting.

KILO
I got caught up catching up.

CHARLIE
People can talk your ear off, can't they?

KILO
What are you wearing?

CHARLIE
You know I would've come—

KILO
I know.

CHARLIE
I just— I had a lot going on here.

KILO

It doesn't matter; I'm here now.

CHARLIE

I've got all these new ideas.

KILO

Good.

CHARLIE

This—is a kangaphin.
I'm glad you asked: A kangaphin is a kangaroo with the head of a dolphin.
It's just an idea. I was thinking I could maybe sell shirts and stuff for the door museum so I'm working up some ideas, some images, some slogans, like such as—

KILO

(reading)

There are wars in winter. There are wars in spring.
There are wars in summertime. But there are also doors.

CHARLIE

You know, so people won't forget so quickly. That they were here. At the door museum.
You know, they come around, *look* at a door, *see* the door, walk *out* of the door, forget there ever *was* a door. Forget there *is* a door *still*.
I was just thinking, you know—the way this war's headed— I don't know.
Well, you know, like your brother—
I just think we can't get too comfortable. You get comfortable and then like—

(A moment.)

KILO

Do you want to drive somewhere?

CHARLIE

Where?

KILO

It doesn't matter. The edge of the map. Drive until we fall off. Do you want to?

CHARLIE

It's dark out there.

KILO

Yes. That's the point.

CHARLIE

Let's stay in. Talk politics and whatnot.

KILO

Okay.

CHARLIE

Okay?

KILO

Tell me something. Politics.

CHARLIE

Or whatnot?

KILO

Or whatnot.

CHARLIE

Okay. Right. We got a new piece today. Blue.
Lady who brought it in said that her house flooded—whole thing was under water, floor to ceiling—and they lost everything except for the blue door. That's pretty crazy, right? So I'm thinking something like: "There's a lady behind this door. She has a boat." And at first I was going to say "gun" because I've been sort of on that weapon kick. You know sword, *sword*. *Gun*. But that's kind of like a buzz-word right now and I'm not really trying to trigger anything. But when it comes down to it, a boat makes more sense anyway. If we're talking about water, we're talking about boats, right? If we want to survive? If we're talking about boats, we're talking about recreation—what, swimming? If we're talking about swimming, we're talking about, like, drowning—that *potential*. Back to boats—boats for rescue. You see what I mean? How it all sort of runs together? So anyway, blue door.
Yes!

(Charlie jots down his ideas. Kilo takes a cigarette from Charlie's pocket and holds it in her mouth without lighting it.)

CHARLIE

There's food in the kitchen.

(Kilo kisses Charlie, exits.)

5. Delta & Echo

(Bread factory. Echo makes bread.)

DELTA

Do you remember that girl who lived next door when we were kids who couldn't touch anything unless she was wearing gloves?

ECHO

Who?

DELTA

That girl. When we were kids. She was allergic to like everything. Mom wouldn't let her come over to play because she didn't want her to touch something bad and die in our house. You remember— You guys would make up those ridiculous songs and try to make people pay a penny to listen to your "concerts". Only she could actually sing and you were like this off-key—

ECHO

I don't even think I could pick her out in a crowd.

DELTA

Oh. Well she was in my dream last night. She was singing. You both were. This really dumb song.

ECHO

That was like a thousand years ago.

DELTA

That would break her heart I bet.

ECHO

You meet a billion people in a lifetime.

DELTA

Yeah.

ECHO

I don't suppose you ventured all the way out here to tell me about your dream?

DELTA

It was a good dream.
And don't act like I never visit you. We visit.

(Pause.)

DELTA

I guess you heard they set a date?

ECHO

I heard.

DELTA

Yeah, and it's sort of soon and this time seems pretty serious.

ECHO

Right.

DELTA

And I guess you heard some people still think he's innocent, maybe?

ECHO

We really don't have to keep doing this.

DELTA

People were camped out at the courthouse and—
Echo, good people don't just kill people.

ECHO

Keep your voice down.

DELTA

I'm just saying, if we talk to dad's lawyers—

ECHO

Why do you even care? He's been gone for seventeen years. Whatever man you think you knew, trust me, he isn't there anymore.

DELTA

But what if he really didn't do it?

ECHO

What if?

DELTA

Well then if he didn't kill anybody he doesn't deserve to die. Then we should try to help him. Right? I mean, I don't know. I just keep thinking—

ECHO

If only we could all just sit around thinking.

DELTA

Why can't you talk to me like I'm someone you'd miss if I wasn't around?

ECHO
Because you aren't around. You haven't been around.

DELTA
We all process things—

ECHO
Yeah, I get it: We're different.

(A long moment.)

ECHO
Ever since they announced the execution date I've had reporters calling for statements and yesterday one came here. They got to Juliett at school.

DELTA
Yeah, I know.

ECHO
Did they get to you?

DELTA
My address isn't listed.

ECHO
I've got some money saved up so I'm renting this house by the lake, figure Juliett and me, we'll camp out there until this whole thing passes. We'll give it some time: They'll put him down; everybody'll forget all about him; they'll forget about us; Juliett'll go right back to school. No harm done.
It'll be a vacation.

DELTA
A vacation. Meanwhile a maybe innocent man— You're happy about this, aren't you? They set a date and now you can finally get back to whatever life you've been meaning to lead all this time.

ECHO
No.

DELTA
This is the best news you've heard all—

ECHO
I'm *not* happy. I've never been happy a day in my life. I've been *busy*. I've been *responsible*. But you're the only one who's ever been able to think about "happy". I can count on one hand the number of times our mother smiled after he went away. Everything

that's happened to us in the last seventeen years has been because of who that man is. What he did.

DELTA

What they say he did.

ECHO

But you—you got lucky. I don't know how, but— I just wish I had the image of him that you have, then maybe—

DELTA

That's why we should keep trying. We can talk to him, get answers—

ECHO

You don't get it. I actually remember. You remember birthday cakes and impromptu dance parties. I remember everything. And I don't know if he did what they say he did, but—

DELTA

I read about other cases like this, where the governor or whoever, grants a stay of execution. People sign like petitions and if there's enough support from the right people—you, me, Juliett—

ECHO

Then what? We get our lives back? We get our childhoods back? Juliett and me, we get to be free, like you? Is that it? We get enough signatures on a petition and we get to fall in and out of love at the drop of a hat and decide to head off to war like we're picking ice-cream flavors too? Like you?
You're going to the war, right? That's what I heard.

DELTA

I asked her not to mention anything—

ECHO

Until what?

DELTA

Juliett told me you haven't been feeling well. I didn't want to upset—

ECHO

I'm fine.

DELTA

I went to the prison to see if he'd see me and he wouldn't. And he won't. And I've been trying to see him for weeks now but it's like we don't even exist to him and I don't know how somebody can pretend people don't exist, but I guess maybe nothing hurts when you

know you're going to die soon. You think about the future enough, you start to forget things. So a couple of weeks ago when I went to see him, there was this recruiter outside of the gates and I went up to her and I just—signed up. I just felt like I should. And I sent him a letter and I told him I was going and I thought he would care but he still wouldn't see me and I thought he didn't care but he sent a letter and he said he hopes I survive. And it wasn't as easy as picking an ice-cream flavor. I've thought about this. I've been thinking about this. And I know how it looks. But I swear this isn't about anything other than I want to do this. You know, I want to help people. I want my life to mean something.

ECHO

This isn't joke. You understand that?
People die in war. Actual people lose their actual lives.

DELTA

Look I don't need a lecture. It's a decision I've already made.
I just came to say goodbye.

(Pause.)

ECHO

Take care of yourself.

DELTA

You too.

6. November & Echo

(The porch. Echo struggles to unlock the red door. November appears.)

NOVEMBER

Trouble?

ECHO

It worked this morning.

NOVEMBER

Everybody has trouble with this one.

ECHO

You know this house?

NOVEMBER

I grew up here. —Can I?

(Echo hands him the key. He tries to unlock the door.)

NOVEMBER

I saw you move in here a few weeks ago.

ECHO

I've seen you around.

NOVEMBER

People come here when they want to start over. Or forget. Or hide out or something.
—You kill somebody in another life?

ECHO

No.

NOVEMBER

That was meant to be a joke. I'm sorry.
The story goes, my grandfolks stumbled across this place just as a terrible storm was rolling in and they tried to get somebody to let them in but nobody was home so my grandma threw a rock through the window and they climbed in and rode out the storm. Then they sort of stuck around and nobody ever came home, so they set up life.
Cool house, but a bit antique for my taste so we let a manager take care of it but he—well. I live out there now.

ECHO

The boat?

NOVEMBER

My pride and joy.

(She takes the key from him. She tries again.)

NOVEMBER

Yeah, well that's what you have to do sometimes. Start over.

(Echo turns the knob, pushes the door. It opens.)

NOVEMBER

Well there you go.

ECHO

Tenth time's a charm.

NOVEMBER
(offering his hand)
November.

ECHO
(shaking his hand)
Echo. Well goodnight.

NOVEMBER
Yeah— Hey, do you like boats?

ECHO
Not in particular. Why?

NOVEMBER
I was just, you know—if you ever want to see the sights—my boat is— I mean, it doesn't move, but it's got a pretty solid view right where it is.

ECHO
Yeah, maybe.

NOVEMBER
How long are you staying?

ECHO
As long as it takes.

NOVEMBER
Right on. Well I'm around. I'm always like around, you know, if you need—

ECHO
My sister will be here in a few days. She's about your age. I'd like to fix up the place before she gets here. I suppose I could use a hand.

NOVEMBER
I have two.

ECHO
And maybe you can show her around?

NOVEMBER
Yeah. I mean, there's not a whole lot to see.

ECHO
Oh.

NOVEMBER
No, but sure. Yeah.

ECHO
Thank you.

NOVEMBER
Well—goodnight.

ECHO
Goodnight.

NOVEMBER
Goodnight.

ECHO
Goodnight.

7. November & Juliett

(The woods.)

NOVEMBER
A lot of trees down this way. A couple of houses out there.

(Juliett looks at the trees and the houses.)

NOVEMBER
Your sister said you're in school? What do you—

JULIETT
History.

NOVEMBER
The war?

JULIETT
We talk about the war.
Were you a soldier?

NOVEMBER
No. Why?

JULIETT

Your bracelet.

(A moment.)

NOVEMBER

Oh. No.
But—the guy I work for, he's like obsessed with the thing. Yeah, he sees the war in everything. In every sunrise, in every color, in every doorway.

JULIETT

That's sad.

(They step onto November's boat.)

NOVEMBER

And—this is my boat. House. Or—whatever. It's old, but if you stand in the right place and you look long enough, you can see the war from here.

8. Charlie & Echo

(Bus stop. Echo and Charlie stare straight ahead. Charlie finds a cigarette.)

CHARLIE

Do you smoke?

(Nothing.)

CHARLIE

You don't smoke.

(Nothing.)

CHARLIE

Do you mind?

(Nothing. Charlie lights a cigarette.)

CHARLIE

So—what, no car?
I have a car. It's broken though. I screwed it up. Like the whole left fender. And half of the—one whole side is just—you know. I'm just— I'm not a very good driver, I guess. If we're being honest. Because I get distracted.

I'm easily distracted by shiny things.
You ever hear people say that about squirrels?
You think it's true? I don't know. Like—you think people went out and like tested that—to see? I don't know.
Some people have odd jobs.
Whatever pays the bills, you know.
I'm getting into sales myself. Nice, normal.
A bit dry at times, but, you know, whatever pays the—

ECHO

What kind of sales?

CHARLIE

What?

ECHO

What do you sell?

CHARLIE

Well that depends on the— Well like today, see, we got flowers.

(Pause.)

CHARLIE

—Good. Because I was wondering. Because I was thinking about, what if I was talking that whole time and you couldn't actually hear me. I got an uncle like that. My pa's brother.

ECHO

What kind of flowers?

CHARLIE

You want to see?

ECHO

Could I?

(Charlie pulls a handful of wilted flowers from a duffel bag.)

CHARLIE

Now these—might need some water. You might just want to spray them down with water. Or like—plant them out back overnight. They'll come right back. I guarantee. If you just—spritz. You just gotta spritz them down is all.

ECHO

How much?

CHARLIE

Five? Four.

ECHO

I'll think about it.

CHARLIE

What's that?

ECHO

I said I'm gonna think about it.

CHARLIE

Okay. That's fine. You think about it.
And that's fair, you know. Too many people rush into things. Just make decisions—don't even think. Got an uncle like that. My pa's brother.

(Charlie puts the flowers back in the duffel bag.)

ECHO

What's his name?

CHARLIE

My pa's brother? Henry. That's what everybody calls him. Good guy.
Fought in the war for a bit, you know, at the start.

ECHO

Right at the start?

CHARLIE

Thereabouts.

ECHO

You see him a lot?

CHARLIE

Not so much these days.

ECHO

You should.

CHARLIE

Yeah. No, I know.
Yeah, because—like what if he dies in his sleep and I don't get to say goodbye.

ECHO
Or what if he lives another thirty years and you just keep staying away.

CHARLIE
I wouldn't do that. Not for thirty years.
I'd go today if I had my car, but I—like screwed the whole thing up.

ECHO
I'm still thinking.

CHARLIE
Yeah. You can take all the time you need.
I'm not trying to rush anybody. I can go as low as three.
Is it the price?

ECHO
No.

CHARLIE
I can go as low as two.

ECHO
Let me see them again?

CHARLIE
You want to see?

(Charlie pulls the wilted flowers from the duffel bag.)

CHARLIE
It's not a bad deal. If you think about it. You can put them all around the house. Or out back. Whatever. They work well on kitchen tables.

(Echo touches the flowers. She tilts them. She pulls a camera from her own bag. She takes a picture of the flowers.)

ECHO
Do you mind?

(She takes another picture.)

ECHO
The light's coming at them just right.

(Charlie looks up at the sun.)

CHARLIE

You can see that?

(She takes a third picture.)

ECHO

Thank you.

(She puts the camera back in her bag.)

CHARLIE

Sure.

(Pause.)

ECHO

I'm still thinking.

CHARLIE

Is that what you do? You—take pictures? What, for like a magazine?

ECHO

Just started a job at the jail actually.
You know, when you first come in and they make you stand against that wall—

CHARLIE

That's you?

ECHO

What can I say? It pays the bills.

CHARLIE

County. County jail. So you work for the jail. You've probably met my Uncle Henry then. Or you will soon. He's a good guy. Hard times, you know? He's always in and out of that place. We can't always stay on the path.

ECHO

But sometimes I take pictures just because.

CHARLIE

Paths are too narrow. That's what I always say. Right?

ECHO

I like to stop time.

CHARLIE
Make the path so small and we're all trying to stay on it, and we're all—like falling off.

ECHO
Hard times.

CHARLIE
Exactly. Yeah. You want to take a picture of me?

ECHO
What?

CHARLIE
For—when you write a book and you need a picture for the cover?

ECHO
Oh.

CHARLIE
Some people think I'm a good-looking guy.

(A moment.)

CHARLIE
Fair enough. Doesn't hurt, right? You get used to that in sales. Doesn't always just work the first time out. You get used to that. Some people are like—quick about it. Some people take their time. But it never hurts to ask.

ECHO
And sometimes for the newspaper. I freelance.

(Echo pulls a newspaper from her bag.)

CHARLIE
That's you?

ECHO
My first time in print. If we're being honest.
That's the lake where we're staying—my sister and me. And the trees.

CHARLIE
Wow.

ECHO
Sometimes the sun sets just right and you get lucky.

CHARLIE
You live on the lake—just right there?

ECHO
Sometimes the sun's setting and you have to be quick about it. Or you'll miss it.

CHARLIE
That's your boat?

ECHO
You can't tell because it's in black and white, but the sky was almost purple right then—because of how the sun was, you know, with the water—

CHARLIE
This is incredible.

ECHO
When the sun sets like that—

CHARLIE
It's like a painting. Perfect.

ECHO
You don't think it's too simple?

CHARLIE
Understated. Right? Simple is good, sometimes. If it's right. This is—right.

ECHO
You think so?

CHARLIE
Anybody can see that. With the lines— I mean—but— But what do I know, right?

(Echo takes the paper from Charlie and puts it back into her bag.)

ECHO
Thank you.

CHARLIE
I can go as low as one. That's barely anything at all, if you think about it.

ECHO
Maybe not today, but— My bus is—

CHARLIE

If you don't buy them, I'll die.

9. Juliett & Whiskey

(The woods. Whiskey uses a nail to attach two planks of wood. He begins to hammer—quietly at first, then louder and louder. Juliett enters through the red door.)

JULIETT

Hey. Guy! HEY!

(Whiskey stops hammering, looks up at Juliett.)

JULIETT

That's annoying.

WHISKEY

I'm sorry.

JULIETT

We're trying to sleep.

WHISKEY

I'll keep it down.

JULIETT

I feel like you're just saying that.

WHISKEY

I'll keep it down.

JULIETT

A lot of people say they'll keep it down and then they don't.

WHISKEY

Yeah, I'm sure life's been hard.

(He hammers.)

JULIETT

That isn't keeping it down.

WHISKEY

It's a hammer.

JULIETT

Then don't use a hammer.

WHISKEY

And just how do you propose I get the nail in the wood if I don't use a hammer?

JULIETT

Maybe you don't put the nail in the wood. Or maybe you wait until a decent hour.

WHISKEY

Can't. No time. War's ending soon.

JULIETT

You think so?

WHISKEY

Give me a hand, would you?

(Juliett holds the wood. Whiskey hammers.)

JULIETT

What are you building?

WHISKEY

A house. If you must know. This is the ninth spot I've tried. They keep making me move, but now there's no time. You understand. I'm sorry.

JULIETT

Why?

WHISKEY

Some people build houses.

JULIETT

With your own two hands?

WHISKEY

The war's ending soon so—

JULIETT

So—

WHISKEY

So we need a place to stay.

(He grabs a third piece of wood.)

WHISKEY

I know what you're thinking: "There are people whose job it is to build things." I should go to them, right? To the people who know better? To the great gods of architecture? Maybe. You know. After a while. After I give it a go and it doesn't work out. Maybe. —Because maybe some people deserve things, you know, sometimes, and so it works out. Right? That seems fair.

JULIETT

That seems fair.

WHISKEY

People with sad stories deserve a little sympathy. Right? Sometimes?

JULIETT

It's your party, bro.

(Pause.)

JULIETT

Are you hungry?

(Juliett uses a knife to cut an apple in half.)

JULIETT

They're good for you.

WHISKEY

You know, I'm actually familiar with apples.

(She tosses one half to Whiskey. He takes a bite, hands it back to her, resumes building.)

WHISKEY

Never turn down an earnest offering.

(Juliett bites the other half.)

JULIETT

No, actually I'm thinking: Unless, this is your "full moon body" and usually you're like a humming bird or something, I don't think you have enough wood.

WHISKEY

I got that.

JULIETT

It's just a shame it doesn't grow on trees.

(Whiskey laughs. He takes the apple from her again, takes another bite, hands it back to her, resumes building.)

WHISKEY

The body is a fickle machine. Do you know that? Life is impossible. And yet it's happening. It doesn't make any sense but it's happening. For now. Just now. And then, poof—these bodies just— If we were stones, we'd live forever—you, me, everybody—but in these bodies we have very little time.

JULIETT

So as far as your *body* is concerned, it isn't four o'clock in the morning?

WHISKEY

No, that's not the point. To know the time is to know beginning and end, is to know the end, is to know the end, the eventual end.

JULIETT

And to not know the time is to *pretend* there's no eventual end?
What's the point? Why build anything?

WHISKEY

Because the now—the now, the real / live / happening now.

(Whiskey hits the nail on the head. It breaks.)

10. November & Juliett

(November on his boat. He is in the early stages of a whittling project.)

NOVEMBER

(singing: *Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair*)

I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair
Borne like a vapor, on the summer's air
I see her tripping where the bright streams play
Happy as the daisies that dance on her way

(Juliett enters. November does not see her.)

NOVEMBER
(singing)
Many were the wild notes her merry voice would pour
Many were the blithe birds that warbled them o'er
I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair
Floating, like a vapor on the soft summer air

JULIETT
I like that.

NOVEMBER
It's old.

JULIETT
I can tell. It's got a soul.

NOVEMBER
That's one way to think of it.

JULIETT
That's how I think of it.

NOVEMBER
My dad used to sing that.

JULIETT
Is that your mom's name?

(A moment.)

JULIETT
What are you making?

NOVEMBER
Don't know yet.
Hey, how's your sister? Did she hear from the doctor?

JULIETT
I don't really want to talk about it.

NOVEMBER
Just making conversation.

JULIETT
Do you like it here?

NOVEMBER
What's not to like?

JULIETT
No, I mean, really like it.

NOVEMBER
It's quiet.

JULIETT
And sad, right?

NOVEMBER
You think everything's sad.

JULIETT
Lonely, I mean?

NOVEMBER
There's you guys. Those two down that way. That woman, lives a couple of miles down.

JULIETT
That guy who's trying to build a house.

NOVEMBER
Who?

JULIETT
Some guy. He was out here a couple of nights ago, literally trying to build a house.

NOVEMBER
Sure. That guy. That kid who lives up on the hill. And that's just on this side of the lake.

JULIETT
That's plenty.

NOVEMBER
For me.

JULIETT
Don't you miss your parents?

NOVEMBER
Don't have any. I was born in a cave and raised by wolves.

JULIETT

Guess you're all kinds of vicious.

NOVEMBER

All kinds of *self-preserving*.
—Is it lonely?

JULIETT

I think if the world ends—if the world ever ends—there's a good chance we won't know about it for days. We won't know about it until we drive into town at the end of the week and everybody's dead. Or gone. Or like—whatever happens to everybody at the end of the world.

(Juliett looks out over the water.)

JULIETT

My sisters and me, we grew up on the coast. Used to swim every night.

NOVEMBER

I never learned.

JULIETT

You live on a boat.

NOVEMBER

Yeah, I just never got around to it.

JULIETT

Scared?

NOVEMBER

No.

JULIETT

It isn't scary. It is at first but then it isn't.

NOVEMBER

One day.

JULIETT

Do you want to?

NOVEMBER

One day. Maybe. Maybe if the woman I love is on the other side of a lake or something, if I have to swim to get to her.

JULIETT

Why can't she swim to you?

NOVEMBER

She can.

JULIETT

Doesn't matter. You'll never fall in love anyway.
You spend twenty-three hours a day completely alone and you don't feel lonely. That means you don't need anybody else.

(Pause.)

NOVEMBER

—Hey, you want to see something?

(November pulls out an unfinished guitar.)

JULIETT

You made this?

NOVEMBER

Still working on it. It isn't finished yet.

JULIETT

Obviously.

NOVEMBER

I found this wood by the dock.

JULIETT

It's dirty.

NOVEMBER

I haven't finished it yet. I'm going to stain it. You can play it if you want.

(Juliett plucks the strings.)

JULIETT

This is actually decent.

NOVEMBER

Oh hey, I can die happy.

JULIETT

Sing something.

NOVEMBER

Play something.

JULIETT

Who says I know how?

NOVEMBER

Your sister.

(Juliett plays the guitar; November sings. / Delta and Kilo in the war. Delta opens a letter, reads it. Kilo goes through the letters. There are none for her. Delta finds a pen, starts writing. Kilo writes too. Kilo' pen dies.)

NOVEMBER
(singing – *Ain't We Got Fun*)

Every morning, every evening, ain't we got fun?
Not much money, oh, but honey, ain't we got fun?
The rent's unpaid dear; we haven't a bus,
But smiles were made dear for people like us.
In the winter, in the summer, don't we have fun?
Times are bum and getting bummer, still we have fun.
There's nothing surer: the rich get richer, and the poor get children.
In the meantime, in between time, ain't we got fun?

11. Kilo & Delta

(War. Delta writes a letter, drinks a soda. Kilo watches for a moment.)

KILO

There's enough acid in that can to put a hole in a diamond.
It's true. I read it somewhere.

(Delta drinks. Delta writes.)

KILO

Been here long?

DELTA

Got here just before you.

KILO

My brother left for the war a couple of years ago, never came home.

DELTA

Dead?

KILO

Never found his body, so I can't quite think of him in the past tense just yet.
He really believes in this thing. This war. So I felt this feeling like I should come out and—

(Delta's pen dies.)

DELTA

Let me use your pen?

KILO

Dead.

DELTA

Must be some kind of force-field.

KILO

Must be. —Yeah, I'm just passing through, myself.
I guess this is all it is. We just sit here and wait for something to happen.

DELTA

I guess.

KILO

What if nothing ever does?

DELTA

We go home.

KILO

I can't wait. I miss the water and the trees.

DELTA

You just got here.

KILO

I miss the houses. I miss my— Sometimes. In some moments.

DELTA

We're at war and you're worried about houses.

KILO

We're at war and you're worried about letters.

DELTA
I'm just saying—if you don't want to be here, why did you come?

KILO
When did you hear me say anything about I don't want to be here?

(Pause.)

DELTA
I never actually got your name.

KILO
"Soldier".

DELTA
Hey, mine too. John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.

KILO
What?

DELTA
You know. *His name is my name too…*

KILO
Good one.
It's not that I don't want to be here; I just have a lot of questions.

DELTA
Questions?

KILO
If you could, would you end the war? If you had some sort of lever? If you had some sort of lever that was like if you pulled it—peace. Would you pull it?

DELTA
That could never happen.

KILO
Peace?

DELTA
People are monsters. You'd pull that lever—peace—and then the next day somebody would say a wrong word and—

KILO
But what if no one did? What if that one day—peace—made everybody go, "Hey maybe this could be a thing."

DELTA
Life isn't that simple.

(Kilo finds another pen. She writes.)

DELTA
You had another pen all that time?

KILO
I just remembered.

(Kilo gives the pen to Delta. Delta writes.)

KILO
I would, I think.

DELTA
End the war?

KILO
Pull the lever. Just to see.
I don't know. Maybe.

12. Charlie & Juliett & November

(Door Museum.)

CHARLIE
(as a tour guide)
And we're back where we started.

NOVEMBER
(as a tour guide)
And we're back where we started.

CHARLIE
Good.

NOVEMBER
(as a tour guide)
As you can see, the door works just like any door.
Hinges and such. Swinging and such. No creaking just yet. Not just yet.
Just like any other door with hinges and such and swinging and such.
Except, of course—there's a man behind this door. He has a sword.
He has a— He has a *sword*. *Sword*.

CHARLIE
Right.

NOVEMBER
I come around this way?

CHARLIE
Not necessarily. Just whatever feels natural.
More tomorrow.

(Charlie grabs a can of paint.)

NOVEMBER
Hey, thanks. For the job and everything. I never said that.

CHARLIE
The second you get it down, I'm out of here, and this place is all yours.

(November laughs. Charlie paints the red door red. Juliett enters.)

JULIETT
So this is the infamous "door museum".

NOVEMBER
Oh hey.

JULIETT
I just came to see if you want to get lunch or something.

NOVEMBER
I can't today. Charlie has me on doorknobs.

JULIETT
Oh. Well do I at least get a tour?

NOVEMBER
Charlie, this is Juliett.

JULIETT

Hey, Charlie. I've heard a lot about—

(Charlie exits through the red door, shutting it behind him. He knocks on the red door. Juliett reaches to open it. November stops her. Another knock.)

JULIETT

What are you doing?

(A pounding at the door.)

NOVEMBER
(as a tour guide)

By now you must be wondering, "Why doesn't the man with the sword just come in?"

(Charlie opens the door, sticks his head inside.)

CHARLIE

"—*in*!" You have to—

NOVEMBER

"Why doesn't the man with the sword just come *in*!"

CHARLIE

Better.

(Charlie closes the door.)

NOVEMBER
(as a tour guide)

And that is an excellent question: Why *won't* the man with the sword come through the door? Well to answer that question, I think we need a bit more context. Is this *his* door? Does this door belong to a friend? a stranger? —an enemy? And, of course, more to the point—is this door *red*?

(Charlie enters, resumes painting.)

CHARLIE

Show her the hats.

NOVEMBER

Oh, right. Okay.

(November tosses Juliett a hat.)

JULIETT
(*reading*)
There are wars in winter. There are wars in spring.
There are wars in summertime. But there are also doors.

CHARLIE
That's so like, you won't forget we're here. You know, you'll look at that hat and be like, "Oh yeah, there's a war museum. There's a war."

JULIETT
You mean door museum?

CHARLIE
Sure, yeah. I lose my words.

JULIETT
How much?

CHARLIE
It's on the house.

NOVEMBER
Hey thanks, boss.

(Juliett puts the hat on. Charlie goes upstairs.)

JULIETT
This place is weird.

NOVEMBER
How's the guitar holding up? I found the perfect stain so if you bring it by the boat I can fix it up for you.

JULIETT
What are you going to do when I go back to school?

NOVEMBER
What do you mean?

JULIETT
Like when the term starts up. My sister'll go back to her old life. You'll be all alone again.

NOVEMBER
I'll get by.

JULIETT

You think so?

NOVEMBER

I think—that you look like a tool in that hat.

(Charlie re-enters, heads for the red door, stops.)

CHARLIE

Guy called about a grey door. Something to do with fire. Singed on all the edges I think.
He's bringing it by tomorrow. Grey door. See what you come up with.
I'm going to buy more paint. How's my hair?

NOVEMBER

Good.

JULIETT

You look good.

NOVEMBER

Sharp.

JULIETT

Super sharp.

NOVEMBER

Downright sword-like.

(Charlie exits.)

13. Echo & Charlie

(Bus stop.)

ECHO

So I guess you're not dead.
You know because you said—if I—

CHARLIE

Oh, right.

(Pause.)

ECHO
I met someone who looked like you.

CHARLIE
Today?

ECHO
Just—your shape I think. He came into the jail. Rough night.

CHARLIE
Uncle Henry. What'd I tell you? I should go see him.

ECHO
They tell us not to make friends with the inmates but some of them are just so kind.

CHARLIE
Those buildings are like—dilapidated.

ECHO
Which ones?

CHARLIE
It's like nobody takes care of them. They've got trees, you know, growing out of them. It's pathetic. It's embarrassing. Show a little respect, right?

(Charlie lights a cigarette.)

CHARLIE
Do you smoke?
You don't smoke.
Do you mind?

(Pause.)

CHARLIE
We got a house today. If you're in the market.

ECHO
It depends.

CHARLIE
No, I know. When I told my wife how close I got last time—

ECHO
Close to what?

CHARLIE

The deal. With you. How you almost said yes. When I told my wife how close I got, she said maybe it's time to hang it up.

ECHO

Really, why?

CHARLIE

Because I used to be—better. Do you remember yourself before? You gain ten-twenty years and you're like—a whole different person.

ECHO

That's how it feels sometimes.

(Pause.)

CHARLIE

I feel like we know each other well enough now that I can tell you something.

ECHO

Okay.

CHARLIE

My wife's— She's been gone for a while now.
I gave up. I didn't fight. I'm not a fighter.

ECHO

I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

What I said she said a second ago is what I think she would have said if she was still—here. I do that sometimes.

ECHO

You lie?

CHARLIE

I pretend.

ECHO

Does it help?

CHARLIE

Sometimes.

(A moment. Echo closes her eyes.)

ECHO

My blood is filled with crystals and when they scrape against my veins, the war forgets itself. …But there aren't any crystals and I'll live to be a hundred.

(Echo breathes. She opens her eyes.)

CHARLIE

Feels good. See?

ECHO

I don't know which one was the lie.

CHARLIE

That happens sometimes.

ECHO

The doctor says there's something the matter with my blood.
The kind of sick that rips straight through you.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry.

(Charlie takes off his glasses and cleans them with his shirt.)

ECHO

Wait.

(Echo pulls out her camera and takes two pictures of the glasses.)

ECHO

Thank you.

(Charlie puts his glasses back on and pulls a magazine from his duffel bag.)

CHARLIE

And like some days I think she'll come back and most days I'm not so sure and I get so tired of looking at all of her stuff.

ECHO

Maybe your Uncle Henry knew my father.

CHARLIE

From the jail, you mean?

ECHO

The war. My father was *the* soldier.

CHARLIE

What does that mean?

ECHO

The one they said killed all those other soldiers the night before they were supposed to head to the war? That was him. That was my father. I am his daughter.

(A moment.)

CHARLIE

Like see, today we got a house. If you're in the market. This here on the back.
This one's a four bedroom. Came up at the turn of the century. It's got its original flooring. All new appliances in the kitchen. Two-car garage. Original door. A museum sort of space in the downstairs. I mean, but you could use it for whatever.
—What would it take to get you in a new house today?

ECHO

Well. I'd need—to see it.

CHARLIE

Okay.

ECHO

I'd need to like it. And I'd want it to be a fair price.

CHARLIE

We can do that.

ECHO

My bus is coming.

CHARLIE

If you don't buy it, I'll—die.

ECHO

How will you die?

CHARLIE

I'll drown.

ECHO

In the lake?

CHARLIE

I'm afraid of water. I'll panic.

ECHO
Why would you get in the lake if you're afraid of water?

CHARLIE
To cool off. It's hot in the summer.

ECHO
It isn't summer.

CHARLIE
Then why are there so many people at the lake?

ECHO
Because it's beautiful. It's autumn.

CHARLIE
It's autumn. And the leaves are falling and it's beautiful.

ECHO
Into the water?

CHARLIE
All around it.

14. Juliett & Echo

(The porch. Juliett stains the guitar. Or else she plays a song. Echo enters.)

ECHO
Yes. I am late. And I am sorry.

JULIETT
Called the police. They didn't know where you were either.

ECHO
I should've called.

JULIETT
I could've fallen and you wouldn't have known for days.

ECHO
Well, if I was away for days.

JULIETT
That's what I meant.

ECHO
I brought take-out.

JULIETT
I'm not hungry.

ECHO
Did you eat?

JULIETT
I'm not hungry.

ECHO
Do you want to see what I brought at least?
Potatoes. You like potatoes.

(Echo sits.)

JULIETT
Where were you?

ECHO
Doctor's appointment. They ran late.

JULIETT
More tests?

ECHO
Yeah. Yep.

JULIETT
What's taking so long?

ECHO
Some things take time.

JULIETT
You know if they don't let me come back to school, I can always stick around here—

ECHO
What do you mean if they don't let you come back?

JULIETT

They sent me home because they're afraid of me. If I'm something to be afraid of, that's not going to change just because— I mean, I could take a semester— I could help you get better.

ECHO

I'm fine. Everybody's fine. You don't have anything to worry about.

(Pause.)

ECHO

What do you want to do tonight? We can watch a movie…

JULIETT

Nothing.

ECHO

"Nothing". Hm. I don't know that one.

JULIETT

Stop it.

ECHO

Nope, don't know that one either. You kids and your new-fangled—

JULIETT

I'm not a kid.

ECHO

I was joking.

JULIETT

It wasn't funny.

ECHO

I know that now. Did—something happen?

JULIETT

Our father's dead if that's what you mean.

(Echo picks up the newspaper.)

ECHO

(reading)

"Everything went exactly as planned."

" 'Maybe now we can start to put our lives back together,' says the youngest victim's oldest son."

JULIETT
"…pronounced dead at 11:08 PM." Just like that.

ECHO
And on and on it spins.

JULIETT
We should've been there.

ECHO
I didn't know you wanted to go. You never said you wanted to go.

JULIETT
I keep having these dreams about him. I'm ten or eleven and he picks me up from soccer practice and we get strawberry milkshakes and the waiter's name is Tom and mom is with us but she only gets water. And we just sit there—the three of us—until we realize we don't have a single thing to say to one another. So we all go our separate ways.
I don't even like soccer.
I'm really bad at it.

(Pause.)

JULIETT
Potatoes?

(Echo hands her the food. They eat.)

15. Delta & Whiskey

(The woods. Delta and Whiskey stop at a spot.)

DELTA
This is the place?

WHISKEY
It's under a tree in case it rains, far enough away from the water in case it floods.
I mean, it's only temporary. I mean, it's the best I could do—

DELTA
I like it.

WHISKEY

I mean, there are other—

DELTA

I said it's fine.

(Delta begins to unpack a bag, as if settling into a hotel. Whiskey joins her.)

DELTA

All right. So he's over there.

WHISKEY

Over there?

DELTA

And he's coming straight at me. And so my guy says to run.

WHISKEY

So you run?

DELTA

And so I'm trying to run and all of a sudden I feel this pressure.

WHISKEY

Like—pressure.

DELTA

Like I'm being sprayed with some sort of high-pressure water hose. It's pulsing.

WHISKEY

Inside?

DELTA

I'm trying to run and my whole body is like on fire and I get to the other side of the hill and there's this village. Town. Honest to god. There are people going about their morning routines, dropping the kids off at daycare, having breakfast at the café. Living. Meanwhile, my head is pounding and the next thing I know I'm on the ground. And the next thing I know I'm at the hospital and all the walls are white. And the next thing I know, I'm with my mother and she's singing a love song. And the next thing I know, I'm here. With you. Again.

WHISKEY

Again and for the first time.

DELTA
It's like we're kids again. Before everything went wrong.

WHISKEY
Every morning. Every morning I'm telling myself, you know, and then—

DELTA
It's funny but it isn't. How life repeats itself.

WHISKEY
And then the war was over.

DELTA
No.

WHISKEY
For my part at least. You were here, I mean.

(Pause.)

WHISKEY
Hey. Did you cry?

DELTA
What?

WHISKEY
When—

DELTA
Oh. I don't think so.

WHISKEY
Good.

DELTA
Because I knew you'd wait.

WHISKEY
I would.

DELTA
For a hundred years.

WHISKEY
More than that.

DELTA

How many years?

WHISKEY

Hundred and five, easy.

(They kiss.)

WHISKEY

No doors, at least?

(Delta laughs.)

DELTA

The last guy I fell in love with used to get these attacks after dark. If I left the door open for too long at night, he was like, it was like— Legitimate attacks. I mean—he couldn't breathe.

WHISKEY

Why?

DELTA

Because he was afraid.

WHISKEY

Of what?

DELTA

The weather. The war. The world. Everything.

WHISKEY

Well I'm not afraid of anything.

(Delta kisses him.)

WHISKEY

We used to make up poems. Remember? When we were babies.
All those words are gone now.

DELTA

We should've written them down.

WHISKEY

We were babies once, weren't we?

DELTA
I think so. I vaguely remember being carried.

WHISKEY
In the womb?

DELTA
Yes, Whiskey. I remember the womb.

WHISKEY
I didn't have enough wood for—

DELTA
I don't care.

WHISKEY
But I'm going to build it. This is only temporary.

(They kiss. They rest.)

WHISKEY
What was it like? The war.
Tell me everything.

(They regard each other for a long, long while.)

DELTA
You gotta get a job.

WHISKEY
Yeah.

DELTA
We gotta pay the bills.

WHISKEY
And it'll be good to eat out every-so-often.

DELTA
I guess the checks will only come for so long and then I'll get a job too.

(Pause.)

WHISKEY
You know, I sent that letter.

DELTA

What letter?

WHISKEY

Before you left for the war.
Your father wouldn't accept any letters, not from you or anybody. But the guards knew we were friends, you and me, and so they let me read your letter and I read it and I wrote back and I'm sorry. I just— I felt like— I knew you needed to hear something so you could do what you needed to do.

DELTA

You sent that to my sister.

WHISKEY

I didn't know your address. But you told me what school she went to—

DELTA

When?

WHISKEY

The first time you came to see me. If I could do it all over again—

DELTA

Why are you telling me this?

WHISKEY

Because it's been killing me. That whole time you were away. If anything happened to you—

DELTA

Something did happen.

WHISKEY

I feel like if we're going to be together for the rest of our lives, that's something you should know. I mean, you should know I'm sorry. Say something.

(Delta gets ready for bed. Whiskey gets ready for bed. Delta lies down. Whiskey lies beside her.)

WHISKEY

No wolves, at least.

DELTA

But that picture? The one you said he looked at every night before bed—

WHISKEY

Delta, I would never—

DELTA

Don't just say what you think I want to hear.

WHISKEY

I wouldn't lie about something like that.

(Delta grabs a jacket.)

DELTA

I'll be back. Don't follow me.

(Delta exits.)

16. Kilo & Juliett

(The woods. Juliett warms her hands over a small fire. Kilo enters holding a map.)

KILO

Is this North?

JULIETT

What?

KILO

North. Up. I'm trying to find my grandmother.

(Juliett looks at the map. She turns it upside down, then right side up again.)

JULIETT

It's that way, I think.

KILO

It has to be, right?

JULIETT

I'm pretty sure.

KILO

Thanks.

(Pause.)

JULIETT

Is that all?

KILO

Yeah, that's— I think that's all. So I guess I'll just— Just—taking in the night?

JULIETT

Trying to.

KILO

Just breathing?

JULIETT

Just being alone.

KILO

Absolutely.

JULIETT

Which can be hard to manage when there's someone else there.

KILO

Right. Yeah, I was just— Yeah, goodnight.

(Kilo starts to go.)

JULIETT

You can sit if you want.

(Kilo sits.)

JULIETT

Have you ever met a monster before?

KILO

No. —Are you a monster?

JULIETT

What do you think?

KILO

I don't think so. But I don't know.

JULIETT

And how does that make you feel?

KILO

Okay, I guess.

JULIETT

Are you cold?

(Kilo puts her hands over the fire.)

KILO

How do you know if someone's a monster?

JULIETT

Everybody says so I guess.

KILO

But—why would they say so?

JULIETT

Because it's true.

KILO

Do you have to kill somebody or something? Like—a lot of people. Right? On purpose. To be a proper monster?

JULIETT

When I was ten, I flushed my mother's flowers down the toilet because I didn't like the colors. Does that make me a monster?

KILO

I don't know.

JULIETT

When I was eight, I broke all of the plates in the house and blamed it on the dog. Does that make me a monster?

KILO

No. I don't think so, no.

JULIETT

When I was nine, I set my bed on fire and went for a swim and half the house burned down. Does that make me a monster?

(Pause.)

JULIETT

When I was seven, I taped my sisters' windows shut so that their allergies would flare.
Their noses would bleed when their allergies flared.
When I was six, I threw my desk-mate's crayons into the dumpster at recess.
When I was nine, I beat the car with a golf club and told my mother there had been a terrible hailstorm.
When I was twelve, I ran away and stayed away for six days just because I wanted to see if anyone would worry.
When I was fifteen—

KILO

Stop.

JULIETT

When I was fifteen, I made a kid stop breathing for seventy-eight seconds.
He wouldn't breathe but then he did.

KILO

There's no one here with clean hands.

JULIETT

You're a monster too?

KILO

All of that stuff was a long time ago.

JULIETT

Not to me. To me, it feels like yesterday. Or this morning.
Sometimes I feel like I'm doing it right now.

KILO

You're not. Trust me: I can see you. You're—freezing.

JULIETT

I'm fine.

KILO

You're shaking.

JULIETT

It's cold.

(Pause.)

KILO

There's no one here with clean hands.

JULIETT

Are you a monster too?

KILO

I'm just saying: Life is long.

17. November & Whiskey

(Boat. November builds a small wooden airplane.)

NOVEMBER

(singing – *Waltz Me Around Again, Willie*)

Willie Fitzgibbons,
Who used to sell ribbons,
And stood up all day on his feet,
Grew very spoony
On Madelaine Mooney,
Who'd rather be dancing than eat.
Each evening she'd tag him,
To some dance hall drag him,
And when the band started to play—

(November blows the dust off the top of the plane. Whiskey enters. November does not see him.)

NOVEMBER

(singing)

She'd up like a silly,
And grab tired Willie,
Steer him on the floor and she'd say:
"Waltz me around again, Willie,
Around, around, around!
The music is dreamy,
It's peaches and creamy,
O don't let my feet touch the ground!
I feel like a ship on an ocean of joy --
I just want to holler out loud, 'Ship Ahoy!'
Waltz me around again, Willie,
Around, around, around!"

(Whiskey applauds.)

NOVEMBER

Thanks.

WHISKEY
I like that.

NOVEMBER
It's old.

WHISKEY
I can tell. It's got a soul.

NOVEMBER
My mom used to sing that to my dad.

WHISKEY
Is that his name?

NOVEMBER
No.

WHISKEY
This your boat?

NOVEMBER
Who's asking?

WHISKEY
Just looking for work, man.

NOVEMBER
Gotta pay the bills.

WHISKEY
You understand.

NOVEMBER
Wish I could help.

WHISKEY
I'm a good worker. I'm sure you could use a hand with the fish.

NOVEMBER
Boat's broken. She hasn't been out in years.

WHISKEY
I'm dying, man.

NOVEMBER
I wish I could help.

WHISKEY
I'm not from around here.

NOVEMBER
I know.

WHISKEY
Just trying to make a better life for my family.

NOVEMBER
Where you from?

WHISKEY
All over, man. Up North.

NOVEMBER
Cold winters.

WHISKEY
It's not so bad. You get used to it.

NOVEMBER
Not me. I'm cold-blooded already.

WHISKEY
Know anybody looking for help?

NOVEMBER
Not right off.

WHISKEY
There aren't too many people around here anyway.

NOVEMBER
Not anymore.

WHISKEY
What do you do?

NOVEMBER
Little of this; little of that.

(November pulls out two model airplanes.)

WHISKEY

Airplanes?

NOVEMBER

Made these last night.

WHISKEY

You sell models?

NOVEMBER

Nope. Just make them.

(Whiskey reaches out to touch one but November snatches them away.)

NOVEMBER

Got pieces made of every tree on this planet. That's what makes them so special.

(November tosses one of the airplanes to Whiskey.)

NOVEMBER

Good luck.

WHISKEY

Hey, wait.

NOVEMBER

Now's not really a good time.

WHISKEY

For what?

NOVEMBER

Small talk.

WHISKEY

I don't want to small talk. I want a job.

NOVEMBER

And I told you I can't help you.

WHISKEY

Look, I'm not a greedy person.

NOVEMBER
Nobody said anything about greed. I just don't have anything for you. You're going to have to go into town and see what the county's got.

WHISKEY
How much do you want for your shirt?

NOVEMBER
Which shirt?

WHISKEY
The one you're wearing.

NOVEMBER
It's not for sale. Why?

WHISKEY
If I make you an offer—

NOVEMBER
It's not for sale. They sell clothes in town.

WHISKEY
I need a shirt so I can get a job in town.

NOVEMBER
What's wrong with your shirt?

WHISKEY
It's old.

NOVEMBER
I can't tell.

WHISKEY
I don't have any money, but I can pay you in trade. I have fruit. Apples. We just went shopping.

NOVEMBER
Forget about it.

WHISKEY
Please.

NOVEMBER
I wish I could help.

(Whiskey grabs November by the sleeve.)

WHISKEY
I'm asking you to be a good person!

(November pushes Whiskey away.)

NOVEMBER
It's the only shirt I have.

(Pause.)

NOVEMBER
Okay? You can look. Look if you don't believe me!

WHISKEY
Okay.

NOVEMBER
Okay?

WHISKEY
I didn't realize that.

(November walks away. Whiskey follows him.)

WHISKEY
I didn't mean anything by that. I get a little carried away. Hey, man—

(Whiskey puts his hand on November's shoulder. November punches him in the jaw. Whiskey falls to the ground.)

NOVEMBER
Don't touch me.

(Whiskey jumps up and shoves November. They fight and fight. November grabs his knife, the one he uses to make things.)

18. Echo & Charlie

(Door museum.)

CHARLIE
And we're back where we started.

ECHO

The red door. I remember.

CHARLIE

We—I—paint it every year for good measure. No creaking just yet.

ECHO

Do people actually come here?

CHARLIE

You're here.

ECHO

It's quite a place.

CHARLIE

It's an idea really.
My Uncle Henry likes to say, you can shut the door, but that doesn't mean you get to forget what's on the other side.
Do you want like some tea or something? I guess I don't really know if I have—

ECHO

No. Thank you.

CHARLIE

You should hear the kid who's taking over. He tells the best stories. I was hoping he would be here—

ECHO

Maybe I'll come back. If—you know, if you—don't die.

CHARLIE

Right.

ECHO

Couldn't jump in the lake?

CHARLIE

Falling is hard.
I thought about it. I really did, for a second. But then—

ECHO

Then?

CHARLIE

I like—realized. I thought about it and realized there's more to be done. Work.

ECHO

Right. Life goes on.

CHARLIE

We're going into new territory now.

ECHO

How do you mean?

CHARLIE

Expanding. Used to just focus on little things—flowers and houses. We're bigger than that now.

ECHO

Bigger than what?

CHARLIE

You almost said yes, didn't you, last time?

ECHO

I almost did.

CHARLIE

And that's what I thought. I was replaying it in my head—and the way you looked at me. And the way you sat and you were quiet and you were like—thinking.

ECHO

I thought about it, yes. But a house is—

CHARLIE

Not good enough. I know. I had to start small. It was nothing personal.

ECHO

Okay.

CHARLIE

But see, today we got a heart.

ECHO

Heart?

CHARLIE

Broken.

ECHO

I don't—

CHARLIE
I mean—a heart. You know, if you're in the market.

ECHO
I didn't realize there was money in that.

CHARLIE
Oh, yeah, there's a market. Huge. Huge market. People don't see what they're not looking for. You think back now—just think how many hearts, broken, you saw in the last year—the last month even. A lot, right?

ECHO
I mean, I don't—

CHARLIE
Yeah, there's a huge market.

ECHO
For broken hearts.

CHARLIE
Times are hard.

ECHO
How much?

CHARLIE
That's what I'm saying—we'll talk. If you're interested.

ECHO
And if I don't—?

CHARLIE
I'll die.

ECHO
Except you won't. Because you never do.

CHARLIE
—haven't. yet.

(A moment. Echo takes a newspaper out of her bag.)

ECHO
I know I should've asked you—

(Charlie cleans his glasses and holds the paper closer to his face.)

ECHO

They only gave me fifty dollars. I don't have the money anymore.
If you want something, I can give it to you the next time—

CHARLIE

That's me?

ECHO

Those are your flowers.

CHARLIE

Those are my hands?

ECHO

The other day when you were holding—

CHARLIE

It looks like we meant it. Doesn't it? Like our timing was just—and the light—right?

ECHO

It does.

CHARLIE

And the way my hands are like—at an angle. And the way the petals are there—and the leaves. You saw this?

ECHO

It's not a big deal. You can keep it. It was like a dollar.

(Charlie carefully tears the picture out of the paper, folds it and puts it into his shirt pocket. A moment.)

CHARLIE

How's your blood?

ECHO

When it happened to my mother, it came and she went all in one breath.
But I'm still here.

CHARLIE

Do you ever listen to like rock and roll?

ECHO

Not ever.

CHARLIE

You should. You'd like it, I think. There's this song about freedom. I think you'd like that one. It was around from when I was a kid but it didn't mean as much back then, you know?

(Charlie hands Echo a hand-carved picture frame.)

CHARLIE

For your pictures.

ECHO

How much?

CHARLIE

No, no, it's just— You can start a collection or whatever.

ECHO

(reading the border of the frame)

There are wars in winter. There are wars in spring.
There are wars in summertime. But there are also doors.

CHARLIE

See, it's got your first one in there already. The boat with the almost-purple sky that you can't see because it's in black and white.
I feel like we've known each other long enough that I can tell you something.

ECHO

Okay.

CHARLIE

I've never sold anything a day in my life. I keep things. That's what I do.

(Charlie lights a cigarette.)

CHARLIE

Do you smoke?
You don't smoke.
Do you mind?

19. Delta & Kilo

(Delta is asleep on the pile of clothes. Kilo enters with her map out in front of her. She sees Delta. She kneels beside her.)

KILO

You used to sleep with both eyes open.

(Delta wakes. She sees Kilo. She throws her arms around her. She breaks away. She looks at her.)

DELTA

What are you—

KILO

Hey.

DELTA

What are you doing here?

KILO

Just passing through.

(They hold each other for a moment.)

DELTA

Are you hungry? Do you want something to eat?

KILO

What do you have?

DELTA

What do you like? We went shopping last night.

(Kilo rifles through Delta's things, finds a bit of bread, eats.)

DELTA

You look the same.

KILO

It hasn't been that long.

DELTA

No?

KILO

I haven't eaten in days.

DELTA

You have to travel light.

KILO

I'm shriveling. They say the fingers are the first to go. They don't feel anything anymore.

DELTA

Are you hurt?

KILO

No. Are you?

DELTA

They got my leg.

(Delta pulls up her pant leg to reveal a wooden leg. Kilo touches the wood.)

DELTA

It happened so fast.

KILO

They say that's how it happens.
You were brave.

(Pause.)

KILO

So?

DELTA

What?

KILO

Where's the old boy?

DELTA

Oh. He went out to look for a job.

KILO

Gotta pay the bills.

(Delta hands Kilo a bowl of apple-sauce.)

KILO

I'm in the woods—everything's exploding, people are screaming, everything's getting louder, everything's getting closer, and I'm all alone.

DELTA

What do you mean you're all alone?

KILO

I'm all alone, and I think I'm about to die. I'm confessing all my sins, making peace with the clouds and I look up, out, and I see this boat. Far away, but close enough that I can tell it's a boat. And if there's a boat, there's water. And if I can just get to the water, I can swim across it, get to the other side. And I'm telling myself, That's ridiculous; that's stupid; this is what you signed up for: Fight. But then there's a guy and he's coming straight at me and all I have is my gun and I could shoot him. And I could shoot him or, there's this boat. And so I just— I don't know what happened. I just—I started just swimming. Toward this boat. And the whole time I'm thinking I'm this animal, that I have to go back, just take whatever punishment they give me, and get back in there. But I'm so far in. I'm halfway across. I'm almost there. I'm here. And then I'm here and I see you. And it's like a sign. —What is this?

DELTA

It's just a sauce we make.

KILO

And *you're* like this sign that I'm heading in the right direction. I mean, right?

DELTA

You just left?

KILO

Do you remember those people on the other side of the hill?
I can't forget them. Every time I close my eyes—
Your whole leg, huh?

DELTA

You can't go home.

KILO

My grandmother has a place up North. A whole farm with chickens and goats. And a horse, I think?

(indicating on her map)

I figure if I stay on this path here, follow the lake straight through here maybe—I should run right into it one day.

DELTA

Why don't you stay here? With us. It's safe—

KILO

I miss my grandmother.

DELTA

Right.

KILO

Do you have a grandmother?

DELTA

Used to.

KILO

They're special.

DELTA

They are special.

KILO

And when winter comes, she'll need me. To help. She's got all this land. I guess she thinks I can make something of it.

DELTA

You can.

KILO

Maybe. There's blood on my hands, remember?

(Kilo makes another sandwich.)

KILO

What about you? Been home yet?

DELTA

I'm not ready. It used to be you could get in, get out, boom. bah. bam. and be done with it. Not everything was a parade. You know? These days, everybody wants to stay, feel. Take up time, space. Be. Tell. Like they've got something to prove. I did all my proving the day I was born. I came out: "See, I made it! I showed you!"

KILO

Now you're *all* proved out.

DELTA

War is war, you know? I don't want to talk about it.

(Kilo laughs, then falls silent.)

20. Juliett & November

(The porch. Juliett enters with a badly-injured November. His fists and arms are bloody and bruised. They are silent for a moment as Juliett tends to him. He folds and unfolds his pocket-knife which is also bloody.)

NOVEMBER

You want to know why I live on a broken boat when I have a perfectly good house two feet away? Because it smells like my parents and my brothers and my sisters and I walk into that house and I feel them and I forget. I forget about the war. And I forget that they're not here. And then I remember—and it kills.
And I've tried to be a good person. For them, you know? Tried to be who they would've been if they'd had the time, but I made a mistake.

JULIETT

Where does it hurt?

NOVEMBER

God. Please. Say you believe me.

JULIETT

What's bleeding?

NOVEMBER

Everything.

JULIETT

I'm going to take off your shirt. Is that okay?

NOVEMBER

Go crazy.

(Juliett removes his shirt.)

JULIETT

It's bad, I think. We should go to the hospital.

NOVEMBER

No.

JULIETT

Don't be stupid.

(November works to pull a flask from his back pocket.)

NOVEMBER

No. Use this.

JULIETT

I'm not a doctor.

NOVEMBER

Come on!

(Juliett pours the contents of the flask onto the balled up shirt and presses it against a gaping wound. November screams, then breathes.)

NOVEMBER
(singing – *Ain't We Got Fun*)

Every morning,
Every evening,
Ain't we got fun?

(He breathes.)

NOVEMBER
(singing)

Not much money,
Oh, but honey,
Ain't we got fun?

(He breathes.)

NOVEMBER
(singing)

The rent's unpaid dear,
We haven't a bus.

(He breathes.)

NOVEMBER
(singing)

But smiles were made, dear,
For people like us.

(November screams.)

JULIETT

I don't know what I'm doing!

NOVEMBER

You're helping.

(November puts his hand over Juliett's, helps her press the shirt against his side. He breathes.)

NOVEMBER

You're the best friend I've ever had, do you know that?

JULIETT

You have to turn yourself in.

NOVEMBER

It was a fight. Square. If we were standing six inches to the left, it could've been me. If the weather was different or the time, it could've been me. If the wind was coming from the east instead of the west— It's just the way the— It could've happened to anyone. I swear to god. You believe me, don't you? You have to believe me. You're the best friend I've ever had.

(He hugs her.)

NOVEMBER

Let's run away. I'm serious. I'm serious.

JULIETT

I'm still in school.

NOVEMBER

You don't want to go back and you know it. Those people don't understand you. Their lives are perfect. You and me, we're screwed up. Let's—join the circus. You can be a clown. We can be elephant tamers! Just the two of us.

(Juliett kisses him.)

NOVEMBER

—Do you believe me? My story?
You have to believe me! You're all I have left.

(Juliett is silent.)

NOVEMBER

You don't believe me.

JULIETT

I believe you.

NOVEMBER

No, see— You're just—

JULIETT

It was an accident.

NOVEMBER

I slipped up. I lost my head. I thought you of all people would understand.

JULIETT

You have to turn yourself in.

NOVEMBER

Stop saying that! And what—spend the last seventeen years of my life in some four by eight like your father?

JULIETT

You don't know anything about my father.

NOVEMBER

I read the papers. I know who you are. I know what he did.
Say you believe me. Please.

(Pause.)

NOVEMBER

When a soldier gets killed in the line of duty, they take her bracelet off and send it to the family with a condolence letter. I have seven.
I'm screwed up—same as you.

JULIETT

You're screwed up—same as me.

(November throws the knife into the woods.)

NOVEMBER

The sky is bright tonight, Juliett.
I'm a sucker for a bright star.

Epilogue.

(The coast. Juliett and Delta and Echo with their mother's ashes.
They are still and silent for a moment.)

JULIETT

What should we say?

ECHO

What was her favorite song?

DELTA

You should've brought your guitar.

JULIETT

I don't play anymore.

ECHO

She broke it.

DELTA

Another one?

JULIETT

It was an accident.

ECHO

What song would she play?

JULIETT

Whatever song. She liked them all.

DELTA

That's true.

ECHO

She liked slow songs.

DELTA

Ballads.

JULIETT

She liked love songs.

ECHO

And hot tea.

DELTA

And warm breezes.

JULIETT

And dancing.

ECHO

And apple trees.

JULIETT

And—what songs do they sing in war?

DELTA

War songs.

JULIETT

Right. Yeah. She liked those.

(Pause.)

DELTA

She married a man, had three beautiful daughters, and lived a good life.

JULIETT

She married a monster, had three beautiful daughters, and lived a life.

ECHO

She married a monster, had three daughters, and lived until she died.

DELTA

She was a good mother.

JULIETT

The best.

ECHO

That's true.

JULIETT

And now all that's left of her is dust.

(They each scatter a bit of their mother's ashes into the ocean. Delta sets up a camera. While Echo pours: *a recording of Echo, age 8, and her mother*:

ECHO, AGE 8

Mom? You look tired. Are you tired?
Mom, can we go to the desert?
Mom, you're far away again.

MOTHER

What's in the desert?

ECHO, AGE 8

Ants. Duh.

MOTHER

Ants?

ECHO, AGE 8

Not desert ants. The regular ones. They just crawled to the desert. They're visiting their cousins to say goodbye and stuff before they head off to the war.

(Juliett adjusts the camera. While Delta pours:

MOTHER

What are regular ants?

ECHO, AGE 8

Like red ones.

MOTHER

Red ants are regular?

ECHO, AGE 8

Yes. No, I'm saying they can be red.

MOTHER

But they don't have to be?

ECHO, AGE 8

Mom.

MOTHER

I'm trying to understand.

ECHO, AGE 8

I'm saying any ant is regular. But some regular ants are red. Get it?

MOTHER

We can go to the desert.
What do you want to do in the desert?

(Echo sets the timer. While Juliett pours:

ECHO, AGE 8

We should take the girls. And we should take their pictures.
Because, you know why? They're not going to be babies forever.
Mom?

MOTHER

Go. Go get dressed.

ECHO, AGE 8

And wake the babies?

MOTHER

Gently. Be nice.

(The sisters stand together. They arrange and rearrange themselves. The camera flashes. Blackout.)

(End of play.)