

LITERARY ALCHEMY – TURNING FACT INTO FICTION

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME – REVISED EDITION

IN DEFENCE OF LOVE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

My MFA portfolio consists of two scripts for performance and a research essay exploring the methods and process of writing these.

Songs My Mother Taught Me is a one-woman cabaret piece; set in 1972, it explores hippie culture in New Zealand and a young women's search for independence. This portfolio contains two versions of this script. Both versions of this piece have been performed.

In Defence of Love is a play for three actors, each of whom plays one aspect of an abused woman trying to find her way out of a destructive relationship.

“All artists are thieves. It is the artist’s responsibility to steal, but then to give back tenfold” (Griffiths 305).

“If writing is thinking and discovery and selection and order and meaning, it is also awe and reverence and mystery and magic” (Morrison 111).

The focus of my year’s work has been that of turning factual events into convincing, well-shaped and engaging dramas for the purpose of public performance. In David Lodge’s description of “the story of a novel” (xi) he divides the writing process into three stages;

The genesis ... is a moment of conception, when one of the myriad thoughts that continually stream through the consciousness of a writer penetrates his or her imagination and fertilises it ... the composition of a novel corresponds to parents’ nurturing and education of their offspring from birth until the time when the child ‘leaves home’ and becomes independent of parental control. ... ‘reception’ ... (x)

In this discussion of my process I have decided to use Lodge’s description as a structure.

1. *Songs My Mother Taught Me*

1.1 Genesis

The genealogy of this piece can directly be traced back to 2007. I was on holiday in the Hawkes Bay, listening to the CDs *The Best of Bob Dylan Vol. 1 & 2* and *Any Day Now (Songs of Bob Dylan)* by Joan Baez. This led to the development of a concert of folk music for the Christchurch Arts Festival 2007 which subsequently led to the performance of a programme entitled *Songs You Want to Hear Twice* as the opening act of the Christchurch Cabaret Festival. Afterwards I met with festival director, Guy Boyce. He praised both

programmes but said “It’s a concert. I want you to turn it into a show.” By this he meant that I should consider the way in which the musical material was linked to give the whole more structure and voice. Guy sent me away to come up with ideas telling me that he would then book a writer to work with me.

I felt very strongly that whatever I chose needed to be directed by the repertoire I was working with so the natural choice was to focus on the era of the 1970s. After considering a number of subjects, I started to think about using my mother who had been 15 in 1970 and had experienced the full gamut of what the 1970s had to offer before turning 25 in 1980 (by which stage I was five years old). I also could not overlook the opportunity to have a custom written piece to perform which allowed me to showcase my abilities as both a singer and actor.

1.2 Composition

During August in 2008 I met regularly with my mother and interviewed her about her experiences during the 1970s. The more I found out about her experiences the more I realised that during the year of 1972, and the summer proceeding, my mother had experienced more dramatic changes to her life than any other time of that decade. 1972 provided me with an angle into the story, that of my mother leaving home, and contained enough events and structure to create a narrative with shape, pace and drama. I also began to draw parallels between my mother’s life and my own; an intense desire for individuality and independence, distant fathers, and poor relationship choices. This began to spark some ideas for the piece I would work on next (covered below in *In Defence of Love – Genesis*).

Throughout September I began fleshing out the ideas from the notes of my interviews with my mother into prose and trying to divide it into what I considered logical sections. I

also made notes for possible songs which would be thematically compatible with each section. The initial writing read much more like a diary of someone recalling the events in present tense than the beginnings of a performance piece. I took some poetic license but remained close to the facts; however on reading it my mother was a little unhappy with the small changes I had made. I made the following note at the time: “I think it’s necessary and also I want to feel like I am writing her story rather than retelling it.” During this initial writing process I made two decisions that would affect the final piece. I would write in first person, and in present tense. These decisions stemmed from the way I saw myself performing this work: as a character based on my mother and in the year 1972.

In my next meeting with Guy (October 29), we talked about how the idea had developed and I read him some extracts. I was very surprised when the first words out of his mouth were “Who do you want to direct?” At this point I was still expecting that I would be paired up with a ‘professional’ writer and that my writing would be a starting point for collaboration. Guy’s comment made it apparent that we were skipping that step and that I would be writing the piece myself. This was exciting (and a little daunting) as I had always enjoyed writing, but apart from song lyrics, very seldom had the time or opportunity for it.

This led to my decision to enrol in the MFA Creative Writing programme. I saw it as a pathway for me to be able to write this piece but to have the advice and guidance of those more experienced and skilled in this field than I. I was allocated supervision with Stuart Hoar as my principal supervisor, and Christina Stachurski as my associate supervisor. At the beginning of 2009 I attended some Level 1 lectures on monologue writing given by Christina. During these I came to the conclusion I wanted to start again with my writing, as I realised that in my current draft there was an awful lot of ‘telling’, and nowhere near enough ‘showing’. I knew that I needed to make the other characters come alive by creating dialogue,

that the audience needed to be able to see the locations, and also discern for themselves the journey and emotional state of the protagonist. This would ultimately make it more rewarding for both the audience and myself as a performer.

My initial supervision meeting with Stuart confirmed this. His first directive was that it was time to lose the experience and character of my mother and write the story and character that I wanted to write, and that wanted to be written. As Baker states in *Life With Mother*, “although nobody’s life makes any sense, if you’re going to make a book out of it you might as well make it into a story” (47). Stuart was not convinced by “Phoebe Cartwright”, the nom-de-plume I had given the character of my mother, and was concerned that some of the characters seemed ancillary. He set me an exercise: compile a list of characters and a timeline of events. It became obvious that there were too many ‘bit’ parts and the list needed refining to better serve the story. The characters of Paul and Greg were amalgamated into one character: Paul, and three other characters were cut. That week my protagonist appeared to me in a dream. She told me that her name was Cilla, and that she was called Cilla because at 15 she had simply stopped responding to her given name of Priscilla. She didn’t like that it started with the word pris(s) and that it sounded so boring and safe.

Stuart was pleased with the decisions I was making regarding characters and plot and encouraged me that – once it “felt right” – I should start to write the narrative. “Writing ... could accurately be described as a process of continual problem-solving or decision making.” (Lodge 49) and having made decisions that more firmly established the characters and sequence of events, the piece began to feel a little like a children’s ‘dot-to-dot’ book. I could see the shape; I merely needed to join the action together with details, dialogue, experiences and relationships.

I started to write at the arc of the story, the Ngaruawahia Festival, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it “felt right”; I could imagine and feel it more so than some of the other scenes. Secondly, starting at the arc of the story seemed a sensible start place as it would give me an idea of what needed to precede and follow to give the story its shape. As I was writing about Ngaruawahia I started to think of a technique that I learned in a workshop with Pat Pattison, a songwriter. He talked about the importance of engaging the senses when writing as a way of pulling in the listener. I endeavoured to think of what my protagonist and narrator, Cilla, could see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This technique led to introduction of details like a guitar and tin whistle, samosas, a whisper in her ear. As I became more focussed on what the character was experiencing at a sensory level, it became more obvious what she was experiencing at an emotional level. It became much easier to show, rather than tell.

Starting in the middle of the story also helped me understand how the characters needed to have interacted before this point to contribute to the shape of the story and to the development of their relationships; for example, it was clear that Johnny should have been seeing another girl when he started seeing Cilla, and that Paul should have been single up until Ngaruawahia. I began to know what should and would happen. “The interesting thing about biography/autobiography and writing plays is that it is all, surely, autobiography. Because even as you take the breath, as the pen goes down on the yellow lined paper, you know what this character has to say” (Coghill 316).

Writing the character of Paul was an interesting and challenging experience. He is a creature of fiction. Although he is an amalgamation of a flatmate of my mother’s and a friend of her other flatmate with whom she had a brief tryst on the first night of the festival, his personality bears no resemblance to either of them. I wanted to make him entirely sympathetic to the audience and for it to be obvious to the audience (but not to Cilla) that he

was the ‘right guy’ for her. For this reason he has the least characterised speech and ‘voice’ of all the male characters. The night they spend together at Ngaruawahia is described in vivid detail and is as tender and romantic as possible so as to provide a stark contrast to her nights with Johnny which are lacking in detail, confused, fraught and befuddled. In each scene with Paul, his focus is always on Cilla, while Johnny’s focus is consistently himself.

Ultimately, characters have to be three-dimensional, and the more flesh they have on them, the more you can feel them breathing over your shoulder. The advantage with real people is that they begin as flesh and blood. ... I find writing about real people expands, instead of limits, my imagination. Of course this involves transgression. The truth is, most writers base their characters on someone real (Griffiths 303).

In my first drafts, I imagined my mother would have been like at 17 and this heavily influenced the way I worked when writing the character of Cilla. Once I let go of needing to be faithful to the facts, she began to take me where she wanted to go. What I saw first was the middle of the story and then more and more was revealed as I wrote. I can clearly remember the moment while I was writing a scene where Johnny takes Cilla to watch a band where I thought, “Oh, she’s going to take acid for the first time now.” It was like watching a film where it suddenly occurs to you what all the small, seemingly unconnected events have been leading up to.

There were also times where my experiences influenced hers. In the re-write of Ngaruawahia section Stuart asked me to make more of her feelings of disillusionment and isolation. I thought about what can make someone feel isolated when surrounded by people and remembered a ‘lonely in the crowd’ experience of my own at a music festival. The outcome was Cilla waiting at the tent for Johnny while he goes off and has fun without her

and then belittles her for waiting. A beautifully lyrical quote from an essay on writing by Toni Morrison made sense of this approach to me. She says “All water has perfect memory” (119), in reference to the fact that when a river has had its course altered for human purposes, it often floods areas it no longer flows.

Writers are like that: remembering where we were, what valley we ran through, what the banks were like, the light that was there and the route back to our original place. It is emotional memory – what the nerves and the skin remember as well as how it appeared. And a rush of imagination is our “flooding” ... like water I remember where I was before I was “straightened out” (119).

There came to be moments where my own experiences were more tightly bound up in the story than my mother’s. This led to further reflections on the subject for the next piece I would work on. This also informed my work as a performer, as there were moments in rehearsal and performance where the emotions I was accessing were very clear and familiar to me.

Having made several key decisions about the main character and central plot, it was time to consider the other characters. There were several smaller characters, as well as the pivotal character of Johnny, who each needed to have distinctive voices and personae. While I wrote I had an idea of who each of the characters was in comparison to someone I knew in real life. The character of Angela Martin reminded me of a girl I went to high school with. She was earnest and hardworking, a dyed-in-the-wool ‘nerd’. This made everything about Angela Martin easy to see and hear: the way she dressed, her facial expressions, her manner of speaking, her interests. She was the perfect foil to Cilla, and served to show the audience more of what Cilla valued. As I continued to write the characters became more distinct, and their involvement in and contribution to the development of the story became clearer.

The completed first draft of seven scenes was submitted to Stuart and Christina in early May. From the initial booking with the Arts Festival I had been allocated a performance time of 75-80 minutes. Thirty minutes of this would be taken up with songs/music so it was clear that the piece was too long. Stuart and Christina both made suggestions about the piece as a whole and the writing itself. Stuart had made suggestions for cuts but also some places in the script where more detail or development were needed, for example during the drug bust he suggested that Cilla “keep track” of Johnny. In rewriting, Johnny became as much a focus for Cilla in the scene as the police and their dog. This kept Cilla and Johnny connected to each other during the action and continued the development of their relationship in a way that the writing didn’t initially. Christina’s feedback mentioned “ponderous repetition” in some of the descriptive passages, where many of the sentences began with the same word, which I subsequently amended. She also suggested including more framing of the character’s emotional responses through her physical sensations. In the rewriting process I made sure Cilla was continually checking her senses to heighten the experiences for both her and the audience.

My second draft was submitted early June and in mid-June I gave the piece its first read-through. A staff member at the Arts Festival office suggested the title *Songs My Mother Taught Me* which seemed to contain all the necessary information. Guy and I then planned a rehearsal schedule for the lead up to the festival.

1.3 Reception

The biggest issue still unresolved for this work was that of performance length. Guy and I had both pin-pointed this as an issue that would need to be dealt with during the rehearsal period. I had already mentioned at some point to Guy the idea that I would like to turn this piece into a short story or novella, so our way through the sizeable cuts that needed

to be made was “This can be in the short story.” The biggest casualties in this process were characters and description. In my efforts to show not tell, I had included a lot of description of people and places. Guy’s input as a director was crucial here. He told me if I could clearly see locations and characters in my process as a performer then this would enable the audience to do so. This allowed useful cuts to be made.

In the second draft there was a character named David. He was Cilla’s first flatmate, the first person to get her stoned, and the first of many confusing and fruitless relationships for her. They lived in a delightfully run-down house in North Beach, with a bathroom underneath the kitchen accessed by a trapdoor in the floor. Although this was interesting writing and interaction casualties were inevitable and David and his flat were cut. The best of their interactions were transferred to Cilla’s subsequent flat with Iain and Paul at Strickland St.

Another casualty was an account of Iain’s behaviour after the drug bust. He had become increasingly volatile and erratic and taken up with a schoolgirl who had run away from home. They are involved in a car chase which ended with them running out of petrol, making out on the hood of the car, and both getting arrested. Although this entertaining event (which actually happened) was useful in terms of paralleling Cilla’s own situation, and highlighting her emotional state and growing disillusionment with the hippie scene, what the story gained in terms of fitting into the allocated time frame was greater than the loss of these elements. The other main time saving device was to turn some of the written descriptions of events into action. For instance Guy suggested that first time Cilla smokes pot would be more effectively and amusingly shown. As well as saving time this became a great moment for both myself as an actor and the audience.

Songs My Mother Taught Me premiered at the TelstraClear Club in Cathedral Square, Christchurch on August 5 2009 to very appreciative and receptive audience. I received feedback from a variety of sources: audience members, fellow performers, critics, my supervisors and director, and other festival and theatre programme directors. This highlighted four main changes I needed to make in the work:

- i. Despite the best efforts in the writing and rehearsal process to cut and edit as much extraneous material as possible, the piece was still ten to fifteen minutes too long. Taking into account feedback from the sources above, the amount of music and songs seemed to be ideal so there was a need to edit more of the text or to include an interval.
- ii. Repetition within the text especially in the passing of time was also an issue. Stuart felt that there could be some tidying and tightening with regard to the many scenes that began with, “The next day/morning”, “We/I woke up the next morning”.
- iii. Particular criticism was directed at Cilla’s eventual conversion to Christianity. Although audience members from the era could relate to the Cilla’s awakening spirituality (especially in light of experiences with hallucinogenic drug taking), others, in particular a reviewer, were ‘turned off’ by what they perceived was:

“the (surely naïve) embracing of an evangelical Christian-style renewal... Her experience of release from a bad year by entering the wah-wah of evangelical Christians may be true to the facts, but it doesn't develop her character much ...” (Elizabeth O’Connor www.theatreview.co.nz).

The negative press surrounding evangelical or fundamental Christianity made this a bitter pill for some to swallow and although it was true to the events, it needed to be

considered. Stuart, Guy and I were all in agreeance that without some form of epiphany there is no hope for Cilla, and that her conversion was still an essential element to the story. The question was how to make it more palatable for members of the audience who struggled to accept it on its own merit.

- iv. The final issue that I felt very strongly needed to be resolved was that of the relationship between Cilla and Johnny. Johnny provoked some very strong reactions in audience members, especially the scene with the goodbye note. One person told me by the end of the show they wanted to punch him. People who knew how biographical the story was asked me afterwards what had happened between them, most expressing the view that they hoped Cilla had broken off the relationship.

The first two of these issues were left in the capable hands of Stuart, who had from the outset identified his role as more of a dramaturge than supervisor. I felt the answer to resolving the issue with her conversion lay in making the ending more satisfying for a greater portion of the audience, which would also resolve the issue of the Cilla-Johnny relationship. In the first version of the piece, Cilla's conversion is the final event. Johnny has returned from his brief stint on a Yoga Ashram in Auckland and experiences this with her although not to the same degree. In the re-write, Cilla experiences her conversion while Johnny is still in Auckland and her final action is donating Johnny's boxes to the Salvation Army. Not only did this create a universally satisfying ending for the audience, it also made it clear for those audience members who found her conversion credible and interesting, that it was this event that gives her the strength and courage to live a life of her own, without Johnny in it. The re-written script was performed at the St James Theatre in Wellington on December 10 to a very receptive audience. As a performer and writer I felt that the piece was considerably stronger.

2. *In Defence of Love*

2.1 Genesis

From the outset of my MFA year, it was clear that not only I would have the time to write another piece, but that more work would be needed to fulfil the requirements of my course. Initially I had thought that I may re-work *Songs My Mother Taught Me* into a series of short stories or a novella; however, as the year progressed, more ideas came to me and decided that *Songs My Mother Taught Me* would benefit from some time before I tried to adapt it to another genre. Also there were ideas that were exciting and enticing me more as a writer.

In one of my earliest meetings with Stuart I mentioned my upcoming divorce in a somewhat joyful tone. Stuart remarked to me that this was obviously a whole other topic to write about. This sparked an intense desire to write about my experiences in a relationship as dysfunctional and destructive as the relationship between Cilla and Johnny. “You don’t start a story like this because you think “wow, this would be a great story to put on stage!” It’s too painful. You start it and end it because you don’t have an alternative” (Clements 330). At first the idea was focussed on the parallels between these two relationships, and also those with my grandparents’ relationship. Another theme I was considering at this stage was father-daughter relationships and how these had affected three generations of women in my family.

There were other ideas I was considering which also related to dysfunctional relationships. A repeated theme of conversation during the past few years had been how much a person’s way of thinking, and view on their own behaviour and values could become so distorted in a relationship that they are unable to believe in their own thoughts and feelings. This seems to be a common experience for both women and men who have been involved in dysfunctional and destructive relationships; as Douglas says “Naturally, if our perceptions of reality are invalidated repeatedly, we soon begin to feel confused” (34). I had

expressed it as becoming so caught up in the way the other person relates to you that you become completely inert. When I started to think more seriously about this as a project, I had the idea of a person being caught in a web of their own creation, and I started to ruminate on the word ‘entangled’ which then became the title for the work at this point. In my research I came across other references to the idea of a web. Kirkwood uses

... the concept of a ‘web’. This imagery conveys that emotional abuse, as a whole, is a network of interrelated behaviours and emotions. ... The concept of a ‘web’ also conveys the overriding sense arising from women’s descriptions that they were trapped and held within a relationship that threatened to destroy their emotional and physical safety. (58)

McMillan entitles a whole chapter of her book “Spinning His Web” (67) and Jane Drumm, director of Shine (formerly Preventing Violence in the Home) says “It’s like they are very gradually covered over with a spider’s web until they can’t get out any longer. They get absolutely entrapped.” (Barnett 25)

Another aspect worth noting in the genesis of this work is the spate of violent crimes against women concurrently reported on in the media. Of particular interest and repulsion to me was the very high profile trial of Clayton Weatherston¹, and in particular the defence of provocation. It became apparent that this type of relationship was common to many people and that hopefully a work exploring the nature of this type of relationship would resonate strongly with a wide audience. Heather Henare, the chief executive for Women’s Refuge says “We are still lacking in women’s voices and women’s stories” (Barnett 25).

¹ See “Murder of Sophie Elliott” – *wikipedia.com* for a brief explanation of the crime and trial.

While in the ‘percolation’ phase of this piece, I attended a number of performances in the Christchurch Arts Festival. Two pieces in particular influenced my process; *Winded* and *The Kreutzer*.

- i. *Winded* was a contemporary dance show in which dancers battled with wind. The image used to promote the show which was very exciting – a dancer wrapped/trapped in a large sheet. Overall the show seemed to be lacking a point of view and real depth of expression, and the possibilities created by their promotional image were not thoroughly explored and executed. However the visual image stayed with me and accentuated the idea of being trapped in a web.
- ii. *The Kreutzer* was based on a short story by Tolstoy and the production included a string quartet, dancer, pianist, multimedia aspects and one male actor. The play closely followed the structure of Tolstoy’s, a relatively simple retelling of the events from the point of view of the protagonist narrator. I found the integration of the different elements – especially the text and music – and the psychological nature of the story completely gripping and inspiring.

Having decided to work on what I hoped would be a more expressionistic piece I decided to use as models Eugene Ionesco’s *The Lesson* and a work by composer *Luciano Berio Recital I (for Cathy)*. I had seen a performance of *The Lesson* years ago at The Court Theatre and found its absurdist building of tension captivating. I also liked the way in which tension built in *Recital I*. Both of these works were strongly psychological in nature and also abstract in their expression of ideas and themes.

My initial ideas were to focus on two characters named Self and Other. The only character on the stage would be Self, and Other represented by a genderless voice over that

becomes louder, more insistent, and more ‘right’ than that of Self. I wanted to portray Self’s transition from movement to inertia, or confidence to being totally trapped by fear using as a motif a ball of string which the performer winds around nails in the two sides walls of the performance space as the piece is being performed. This ultimately becomes a large web in which the performer is trapped at the end of the piece, so that Self is ultimately betrayed by his/her own actions in the relationship, representing the adage that ‘We teach people how to treat us’. The action was to be highlighted with lyrically spare songs or small motifs/studies that intersperse the dialogue. Inspired by *The Kreutzer* I also experimented with the idea of involving a dancer who represents the subconscious of Self and is manipulated and abused by Self in an unwitting repetition of the abuse they are experiencing. I wanted to show the compromises a person has to make in order to stay in an abusive relationship: the soul or spirit begins to die either unwittingly or because “You shut down the parts of your personality that get you into trouble” (Barnett 27).

As I was working on these ideas I wanted to find some working names for the characters and started to look for female twins in mythology that may have been mistreated by a god. The provisional name in my notes for the character played by the dancer was Psyche, and although I had no luck finding any female twins I found mention of a platonic allegory in analysis of the myth of Cupid and Psyche. In Plato’s *Republic* he proposes a tripartite theory of the soul. He argues that the soul is composed of three distinctive elements: Reason, Spirit and Appetite (Ch. XIII). In *Phaedrus* he explains this using the analogy of a charioteer (Reason) driving two horses, the first an ugly black horse (Appetite) which must be kept in check by a beautiful white horse (Spirit) (Ch. XI). The charioteer must maintain the balance between these two. This theory had certain parallels with my own thinking about the nature

of the relationship I was trying to depict and became the names for my characters, Reason (Self), Appetite (Other), and Spirit (Psyche).

Christina had also recommended to me a book called *Invisible Wounds: A Self-Help Guide for New Zealand Women in Destructive Relationships* which I read along with another book I found at the same time, *Leaving Abusive Partners*. I compiled the list below, taking the typical behaviours of abusive partners as outlined by Douglas and Kirkwood and comparing them with their relationship antonyms taken from traditional wedding vows:

- | | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| i. | Have | - The need to possess, tyrannical rule |
| ii. | Hold | - Sexual domination and objectification |
| iii. | Love | - Subtle set-ups, mind games and manipulation, angry outbursts |
| iv. | Cherish | - Relentless demands, distortion of subjective reality |
| v. | Honour | - Words that wound, degradation |
| vi. | Give | - Increasing control, paybacks and punishments |
| vii. | Share | - Domestic domination, overburden of responsibility |
| viii. | Comfort | - Belittling and undermining, the silent treatment, fear |
| ix. | Keep | - Deprivation |

Using each of the negative behaviours as a heading I also wrote examples of the way these behaviours had been enacted in my relationship.

In late October, I began working on a first draft of the piece, still entitled *Entangled*. Although I was very committed to the representation of the web, and development of the three characters, I felt I was struggling with what to actually write. I was set on exploring a more expressionistic style and knew what I wanted to communicate; however, I felt what I had written would not sustain an audience's interest for five minutes let alone one or two

acts. This it seems is a common experience among writers, “There are other times when you don’t really feel “blocked” but you do feel stuck. ... You might know what you want to down the road a ways, but you can’t quite see what to do *next*. At times like this a little stimulation can go a long way” (Berg 126). My stimulation came in the form of a sheaf of on-line reviews of one woman shows Christina compiled for me, as she also had concerns about sustaining the interest of the audience and weaving some humour and experience into the writing. She asked me to read them and isolate any words or phrases that resonated with me in terms of the work I was looking at creating. She also gave me some works by expressionist playwrights to look at, which made it very clear to me that although I wanted my work to be abstract, I wasn’t looking at creating a truly expressionist work.

While ruminating on Plato’s tripartite theory of the soul I started making notes about three female characters all portraying one aspect of one person as per Plato’s description. I thought there was an exciting possibility that these three characters talk through the same relationship from different perspectives, appearing to be three different women talking about three different relationships. I felt I had found a way to create an abstract situation in which to discuss a real relationship: “...when the novelist focuses his lens on a problematic that is existential, the obligation to give the reader a plausible world no longer comes into play as rule or necessity. The author can be far more casual about that apparatus of data, descriptions, motivations meant to give his story the appearance of reality” (Kundera 73). This opened the possibility of exploring the relationship in its entirety rather than being locked into a more situational format.

2.2 Composition

Feeling that this was a breakthrough which would allow me to write the type of piece I wanted to I made some more notes on the subject, talked it over with both Stuart and

Christina and feeling encouraged by their responses decided to start writing. Although the piece now felt considerably different from my initial idea, the path that had led me to this point and the research I had undertaken along the way were invaluable. “In the creation of anything from something (or nothing), criteria emerge that govern choice and reflect the nature of the creator as well as certain principles of form or structure relating to the object being created ...” (Pollock 297). My first choices were based on characters and structure. Using Appetite, Spirit and Reason as character names I began with some short character sketches. I also decided that I would work in a chronological fashion, so that at the beginning the characters started with the moments of attraction and the origin of the relationship as a way of hooking the audience. I was excited about the prospect of power struggles between the characters particularly in terms of extricating themselves from the relationship.

My two main concerns at this point were how to make it seem like a ‘girls’ night’ rather than a counselling session, and the issue of tense. I decided that the action would take place over one evening, the day after something momentous and traumatic had happened. This solved the problem of when ‘now’ was and also meant that the characters could discuss the past freely without confusing the audience. I also made lists of events that had occurred in my relationship and assigned them to the characters I felt would have been most affected.

Writing about something so intensely personal, and something that I had talked about so much over the last three years, after not talking about it at all for ten was surprisingly difficult. As Lorena Gale says “Writing about myself was strange. Scary really. As a writer and performer I am naked because the material is extremely personal” (310). I found myself either writing in a very sterile, detached way, or trying to get too ‘writer-y’ and clever for my own good. This led me to the next step in my process. “When I feel the writing is getting dead, or too writerly as opposed from coming from the gut, that’s when I get into a room, get

someone to watch, and start talking/improvising” (Griffiths 304). I made an appointment with one of my oldest friends, took a Dictaphone to her house and said “Ask me anything and everything you want to know.” We talked for two and a half hours and I spent the next week listening to the tapes and transcribing, extending and assigning dialogue to different characters. The nature of the writing that occurred as a result is more lively, humorous and real. Imagining the interaction between three very different women and strongly identifying with each of the Platonist parts of my own personality opened up more possibilities and allowed me to develop more of an individual voice for each character.

I submitted a first draft entitled *Love According to Plato* to Stuart on December 28. Stuart’s primary concern in his feedback was the lack of tension and drama in the lead up to the decision to leave the abusive husband. I shared this and was especially concerned that the decision to leave did not seem too easily come by. Stuart suggested beginning a second draft with the idea that the relationship is on trial with Reason as the Prosecution, Spirit as the Defence and Appetite as a key witness for the Defence who ultimately provides essential information to the Prosecution. Stuart also felt that I needed to control the revelation of the extent of the abuse: “Otherwise it’s obvious far too early what a complete arsehole he is and we, the audience, know too soon that there can only be one outcome.” He also suggested that for the audience, there needs to be the very real possibility that Spirit may never leave. Gale says “My plays are written with a very conscious awareness of the audience. They are, in many ways, another character for me. Collectively they are the witness” (311). Seeing the audience as a collective witness made me realise I needed to make sure that every audience member feels the tension.

The next two weeks were spent rewriting. It was obvious that the writing, characters, drama and tension of the whole were greatly improved in this second draft. Stuart had

reminded me in his feedback to “remember that you as writer control the reveal of key information”. Writing about something so personal in nature had distracted me from the fact that I was the writer, and the lesson I had learned in the process of writing *Songs My Mother Taught Me*; not to let the truth stand in the way of a good story. Using the ‘trial’ as a driving force, and focussing on building tension for the audience enabled me to write in a more judicious fashion. My second draft entitled *In Defence of Love* was submitted to Stuart at the end of January. Stuart felt that this work was stronger, tauter and more decisively shaped and suggested that with some editing of dialogue and the inclusion of a more coherent revelation of the allegory, the piece would be complete.

2.3 Reception

It is not possible to discuss the reception of this work in terms of public performance; however it is my intention that this work will be performed. I can only discuss the reception of this work in terms of the conversations I have had with people while writing it. Many people, especially women, have expressed a great desire to see this work performed. It is astounding how many women have found themselves in a similar relationship in their lives, and the research I have conducted while writing this work has made me realise how ‘textbook’ my marriage was. My hope for this piece is that it resonates with women (and men), who have found themselves in this situation. In deciding to write (and ultimately perform this piece) I also hope to shine a harsh light on this type of relationship pattern, the abusers who perpetuate it, and the darkness with which they shroud the relationship and their partner.

My MFA year has been exciting and challenging. It has taught me a lot about myself and given me the confidence to call myself a writer. It has been a privilege to have such experienced, dedicated and supportive supervisors and I know that my biggest challenge

upon leaving this programme will be trusting in my own opinions and ability without their verification. This will be my goal as a writer, "... "the work" is what the writer will approve in his own final assessment. For life is short, reading is long, and literature is in the process of killing itself off through an insane proliferation. Every writer, starting with his own work, should eliminate whatever is secondary, lay out for himself and for everyone else *the ethic of the essential*" (Kundera 96).

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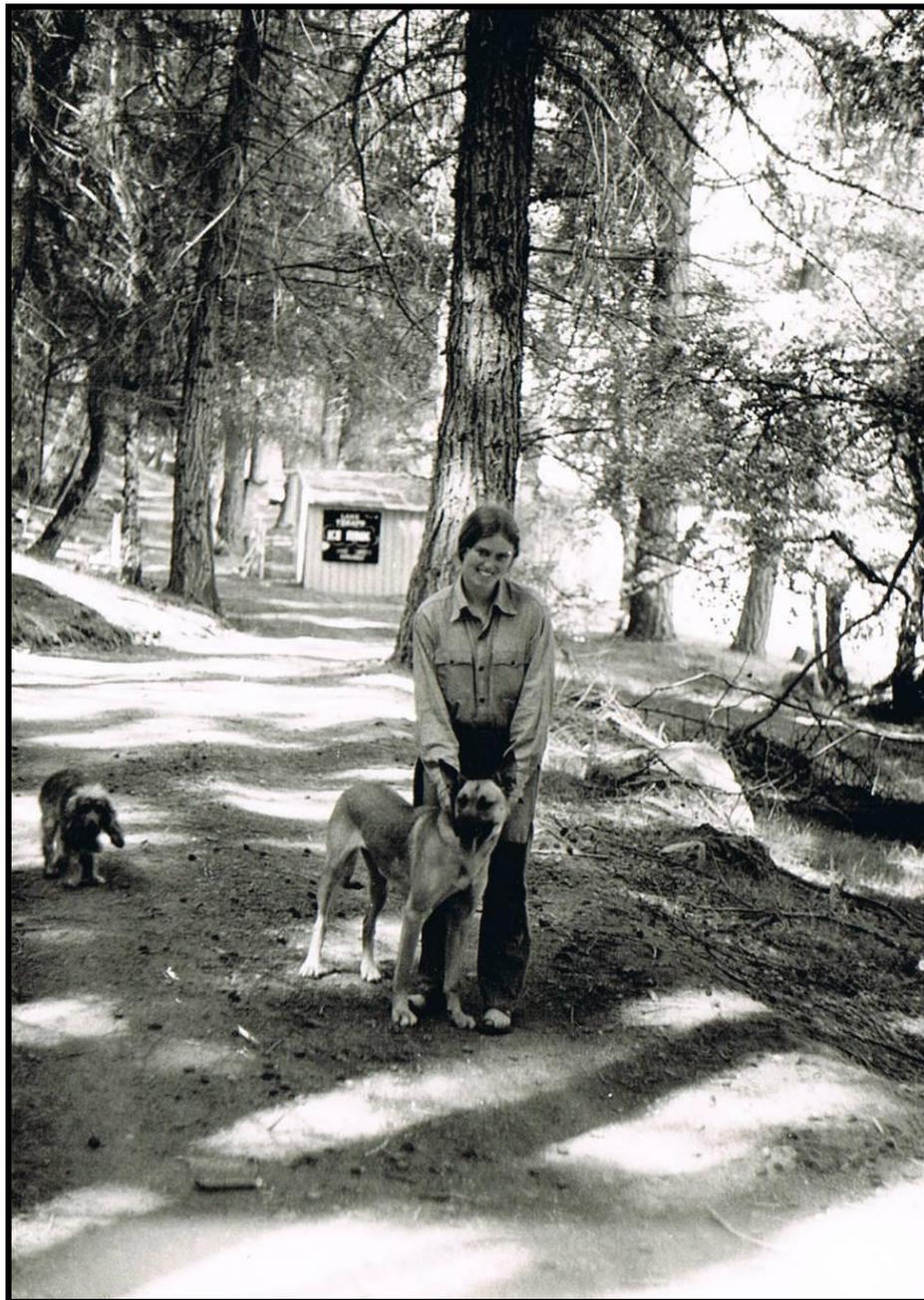
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Songs My Mother Taught Me



Characters

30

Cilla – a 17 year old university student from an upper class family

The following characters are all played by Cilla

Angela – a conservative 17 year old university student

Ruth – a confident, bohemian 18 year old university student

Iain – a 22 year old Australian, studying in New Zealand. A card carrying hippie

Paul – an 18 year old, well brought up university student studying Physics

Johnny – a 19 year old university student with a troubled background

Two musicians – piano and acoustic guitar, both of whom also sing

Set

No set or props are required for performance of this work

Time

1972 -1973 Christchurch, New Zealand

Songs My Mother Taught Me was first performed at the TelstraClear Club as part of the Christchurch Arts' Festival on Wednesday August 5 2009 with the following cast:

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Cilla – *Naomi Ferguson*

Piano – *Murray Wood*

Guitar – *Graham Wardrop*

Director – *Guy Boyce*

“...the story of Cilla's misspent year and a half, during which she slides uncritically and deliciously into free-thinking, moderate amounts of sex, drugs and alcohol, the Ngaruawahia Festival and some rather unrewarding relationships and missed opportunities.

There are seamless segues into songs which crystallise the moments Cilla is going through, or illustrate an aspect of them. [Ferguson is] a mature singer with a fine voice in great command of a wide range of music. Wardrop [Graham] and Wood [Murray] provide beautifully timed instrumental support. They do not ever take centre stage, but their expert ease with the range of music being performed adds to the comfort and elegance of the evening.

Ferguson's monologue is amusing and engaging. The show was very well-received with a lot of recognition hilarity.”

-Elizabeth O'Connor, www.theatreview.org.nz

Musicians enter, take their places on the stage and begin to play.

MUSIC – Where Have All The Flowers Gone

Cilla enters taking in the sights of her new surroundings. As she reaches the centre of the stage the music dies off, Cilla turns to audience.

Cilla:

Here I am. For the first time in my seventeen years, I, Cilla Cartwright, will be without my parents, my sisters, my cat, my dog, my books, my dolls. I will be on my own, and I can be – Whoever. I. Want! And where am I? Helen Connon Hall, a hostel for women students of Canterbury University and I am standing in the doorway of my room.

SONG – Ruby Tuesday – The Rolling Stones

She would never say where she came from
Yesterday don't matter if it's gone
While the sun is bright
Or in the darkest night
No one knows she comes and goes

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

Don't question why she needs to be so free
She'll tell you it's the only way to be
She just can't be chained
To a life where nothings gained
And nothings lost, at such a cost

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

There's no time to lose, I heard her say
Catch your dreams before they slip away
Dying all the time, lose your dreams
And you will lose your mind
Aint life unkind?

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you
There's no time to lose, I heard her say

I start to unpack and wait for my roommate to arrive. I'm a bit nervous, but also excited. The door is ajar, but there is a loud knock and I hear a voice say, "Can I come in?" She is wearing a knee length navy skirt, a white blouse, and a grey cardigan. Her hair is shoulder length and brown, which matches her spectacles, and Mary Jane shoes. She might as well be wearing a school uniform. "I'm Angela Martin. You must be Priscilla Cartwright." "Cilla. Cilla Cartwright. Nobody ever calls me Priscilla." She says, "Nice to meet you Cilla. Which bed is mine?"

A tiered floral skirt is the most exciting thing she unpacks. She doesn't even own a pair of jeans by the looks of it. There are a few pairs of what Mother would call "slacks" but even Mother wouldn't be caught dead in half the stuff Angela owns. My wardrobe consists of flared and embroidered jeans, full length A-line skirts, smock tops, and homespun woollen jerseys. I even tie-dyed my flannel pyjamas.

After putting my stuff away I say "Angie, I'm about to head down to the dining hall to make a cup of coffee. Want one?" She looks at me, purses her lips and says, "Actually I prefer to be

called Angela and I don't drink coffee. But I'd love a cup of tea." I walk downstairs to the rhythm of "I prefer Angela. I prefer Angela."

The next evening when she gets in from class I am playing a Rolling Stones record.

You can't always get what you want, you can't always get...

She stands at the door, looks at me very sadly, sighs, and says, "This just isn't going to work Cilla. I'm sorry, you're probably a very nice girl but I don't think I can be your roommate." "Yeah. I think you're right" I reply, with what I hope is a sad expression on my face. "We're just on different wavelengths." By the end of the week we've changed rooms.

LINK - Can't Always Get What You Want- The Rolling Stones

You can't always get what you want,
you can't always get what you want,
But if you try sometimes, You get what you need.

My new roommate Ruth is totally bohemian. Her family are nudists, which fascinates and terrifies me at the same time. I can't imagine Daddy coming home from his surgery of an evening and taking his clothes off before he makes himself and Mother a cocktail. And Mother. Well she'd sooner throw herself off a building. What would she do with all her matching bags and hats? Nudity would be very difficult to accessorise.

Ruth says that she's not planning on being nude in our room, that she'll save it for the holidays. I'm gratefully reassured and then a little disappointed at myself for being so un-hip. Her family are also completely vegetarian. "You're so lucky", I tell her. "I've been trying to be vegetarian for the last year but my parents just didn't understand. Mother kept forgetting and serving me up meat, or making dishes like stew where you can't even take the meat out of it. It must be so amazing to live in a vegetarian household." Ruth looks a little puzzled and then says, "I never even think about it really. It's just what we do."

She asks me about my background. "I don't really fit in. Daddy works really hard but is hardly ever home. Mother spends her time with young artists trying to help them out. Sometimes I would come home from school and she would be all dressed up to the nines

waiting for me with cake and tea and wanting to know how my day had been. I always felt this display of interest was for her sake, not mine. Nothing is real. Everyone that we know has lots of money and things, but no-one seems to be happy. I want to really know who I am.”

Initially it goes well with Ruth, but she can be quite square too. She has really strict rules about lights out time, when we can and can't play music in the room and once I offered her some wine gums and she looked like she was going to faint. “Cilla, that stuff is full of refined sugar. Aside from the fact that it will rot your teeth, it's really, really bad for your system. It will make it hard for you to concentrate, and I have noticed you seem to find it hard to focus.” One day I was having a cigarette, and made the mistake of asking if she smoked. “I may be a vegetarian, but I'm not an idiot, Cilla!”

Oh well. I console myself by saying, “It's only for a year.”

LINK – Ruby Tuesday

Don't question why she needs to be so free,
She's gonna tell ya it's the only way to be

I first see Iain at a Sociology lecture. He's impossible not to see. He's about 6'4", olive skinned with long brown hair, and a long beard. The lecturer is talking about indigenous peoples when Iain raises his hand and starts to question his argument. He says “All accepted historical views are taken from the point of white, colonising nations. How can we really have any understanding in a meaningful way of indigenous cultures without taking into account their version of the events?”

I find Iain after the lecture has finished and introduce myself and say “I really agreed with what you had to say today”. He suggests we go to the cafe for a cup of coffee. We spend a couple of hours talking about the Vietnam War, yoga and meditation, the upcoming protests against nuclear testing in Moruroa and what music we listen to.

He tells me about the flat he lives in. It sounds amazing. It's strictly vegetarian. They have a sheep, two goats, and three chickens in their back garden. Iain lowers his voice and says, “I have a garden of a few special plants growing in behind the next-door-neighbour's garage too, so we never have to go without”. He tells me they have a room free and would I be

interested in moving in. He seems like such an amazing guy and the place sounds so much better than the hostel that I immediately reply, “When?”

SONG – *Winter Lady* – Leonard Cohen

Travelling lady stay awhile
Until the night is over
I’m just a station on your way
I know I am not your lover

Well, I lived with a child of snow
When I was a soldier
And I fought every man for her
Until the nights grew colder

She used to wear her hair like you
Except when she was sleeping
And then she’d weave it on a loom
Of smoke and gold and breathing

And why are you so quiet now
Standing there in the doorway?
You chose your journey long before
You came upon this highway

Travelling lady stay awhile
Until the night is over
I’m just a station on your way
I know I am not your lover

I call Daddy collect from the hostel phone that night and tell him I am really unhappy at the hostel, that I have no friends, that none of the other girls talk to me, that I feel misunderstood, that my studies are being affected. Whatever I can to get him to feel sorry for me. Then I tell him that a friend who I met at Varsity has a room going in a flat and that I think I would be much happier there. I know the hostels cost about \$25 a week for me to stay in so I tell Daddy that if he paid me an allowance I could easily look after myself. He has reservations so I have to play my ace. I start to cry. "I don't want to live in the hostels anymore. If I have to then I'll quit Varsity, and just come home and get a job." I know how important it is to Daddy that I get a degree and I get good marks. He reluctantly agrees.

I call Iain and tell him I'll move in the next day.

After lectures I get my stuff from my room, and make my way to Strickland St. I get a mattress from a Salvation Army store and they bring it round to the house just before dinner time. The flat is a big old weather board house with lead light windows and a large veranda that wraps around the front. It has a big overgrown garden that the animals have free reign of. On the lounge wall there is a tea towel with a picture of the Mona Lisa on it. There is a hole cut in her mouth with a joint hanging out of it.

My room has a big bay window that looks out onto the garden and two of the chickens are roosting on the window sill. I don't have much in the way of stuff so it doesn't take me long to settle in. There is a huge sense of relief and excitement about not having anyone or anything to answer to. Finally I am the master of my own destiny.

LINK – Ruby Tuesday (continues under text)

Iain introduces me to our other flatmate, Paul. He is lean and angular to look at. His eyes are blue, the kind that look a little like fish eyes and he wears little round spectacles like John Lennon's. These magnify his eyes even more which makes you feel like he is looking at you very intently. He has fine, mousy brown hair which he wears in a pony tail.

[Music stops]

I offer to buy takeaways for dinner to celebrate. We get hot chips and jam donuts, a bottle of red wine and sit out in the garden. Iain pulls a joint out of his pocket, lights up, takes a drag

and passes it to me. Without looking obvious I pay very particular attention to how he does things, so I feel like I know what to do.

Mime sequence of Cilla confidently taking a big drag on the joint, looking alarmed and then coughing and spluttering violently.

“Wow. Strong stuff.” I can’t tell if they buy it or not. Iain passes me a mug of wine and says “This should help.” I take a swig of the wine and start in on the chips.

It’s a lovely clear autumn night. I lie on my back and look at the sky and wonder when I’m going to start feeling the effects of the pot. Iain is talking about some professor from one of his courses and his voice seems to sound further away and the words seem to be struggling to make it through to me. I notice that the first stars are starting to come out in the sky. It’s that beautiful blue it turns just before it’s actually night and tonight the colour makes me so happy I feel like I could look at it forever. I grab another handful of the chips and wolf them down. Suddenly I’m starving and they are the best chips I have ever tasted in my life. I say to the boys, “Aren’t these chips just too much. They’re... they’re...” I can’t think of a word to describe how good they taste and for some reason this makes me really amused. Paul says, “You are so stoned!” This just makes me laugh even harder. And I think this is what being really alive feels like.

SONG – *Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35 – Bob Dylan (musicians call, holler, sing, generally make party noises throughout.)*

Well, they'll stone ya when you're trying to be so good

They'll stone ya just a-like they said they would

They'll stone ya when you're tryin' to go home

Then they'll stone ya when you're there all alone

But I would not feel so all alone

Everybody must get stoned

They'll stone ya when you're at the breakfast table

They'll stone ya when you are young and able

They'll stone ya when you're tryin' to make a buck

They'll stone ya and then they'll say, "good luck"
Tell ya what, I would not feel so all alone
Everybody must get stoned

[Piano solo]

Well, they'll stone you and say that it's the end
Then they'll stone you and then they'll come back again
They'll stone you when you're riding in your car
They'll stone you when you're playing your guitar
Yes, but I would not feel so all alone
Everybody must get stoned

Paul is studying Physics at Varsity. He's the only person I know who isn't an Art's student. He starts trying to explain some relatively complex concepts to me which I'm pretty sure I wouldn't understand even if I wasn't stoned and tells me that for him, Physics is the mind's way tapping into the universal subconscious. Later on a girl called Anita turns up to see Iain. They disappear into his bedroom and that's the last we see of them for the night. I ask Paul if she's his girlfriend. He says, "Iain doesn't really believe in monogamy. He has a lot of love to share and he doesn't want it to be confined to just one person."

Then Paul says to me, "Did he tell you why he left Australia?" I shake my head. "He doesn't like to talk about it much, but apparently he was involved in a train robbery, and skipped the country before the trial to come here. If he returns at any point he will be thrown straight in jail. Crazy huh?" Shock must be written all over my face because Paul quickly says, "Don't worry he's a good guy. He was just in bad scene over there. He's not into anything like that here."

Paul takes me shopping for a motorbike. He has a Norton 750 and I've been thinking about getting a bike for a while. It's a drag to have to rely on the bus or someone else to get me from A to B. Paul takes me looking so I don't get ripped off cause I'm a girl. We find a nice little Suzuki 125 for me. I ring Daddy and tell him how useful it will be for me to have a motorbike, of course I tell him it's a scooter. He sends me a bank cheque for \$100 the next

week and I have my very own bike. Paul and I take a trip over to Taylor's Mistake the day I get it. I feel like I'm flying as I go over the crest of the hill. I feel totally free!

Paul also gives me a puppy. He gets two from the same litter; they are Great Dane Alsatian crosses. He keeps the male and calls it Jos. He gives me the bitch and I call her Mole, after Wind in the Willows.

Mole sleeps in my bed with me, sometimes under the covers. Occasionally she gets hot and stands up and gets off the bed with all the covers still on top of her and walks out of the room looking like a four legged ghost.

We have exams coming up. I enjoy being on study leave. I get up early, make myself a cup of coffee, toast a few slices of Iain's bread and get started. I sometimes forget to eat for hours, find myself about to crash and have to race down to the corner shop. I buy jet planes and chocolate milk, and sit out in the garden and load up a pipe of chicory tobacco. This usually gets me through another couple of hours at which point I stop and make a start on dinner if it's my turn to cook.

After exams are over I decide I will go home for the summer. Daddy will pay me to work at his rooms so I can earn some money. He pays better than any of the other jobs I could get and he pretty much lets me turn up whenever I want. I just have to find someone to take my room over the summer.

LINK – Make It With You

One night at the Student Cafe I am sitting at a table waiting for Iain and Paul, when someone asks if he can sit down. I look up into the most amazing blue eyes I have ever seen. He has this incredibly olive, almost golden skin, and long blond hair with a beard to match. It makes his eyes kind of jump out at you. Ordinarily I don't find guys with blond hair attractive, and he's smaller and slighter than the guys I go for. But there's something about him that makes me say, "Absolutely. Make yourself comfortable. My name's Cilla." "I'm Johnny" he says. We sit drinking our coffees and talk about our courses. Johnny is studying Philosophy and Anthropology. I ask him how his exam preparation is going. He says, "Exams are a crock. If I wanted to it would be so easy for me to do a bit of study and get A+'s for all my courses. But what's the point? I mean, what does that really say about me? I'm just going to sit the exams

and get easy C's with no study. For me Varsity is about opening your mind to new ideas, and thinking about how they can change your view on life and the world and the universe, not about some stupid letters at the end."

I feel pretty small when I think about how hard I am trying to get good marks. I've really missed the boat.

One of Johnny's friends is a drummer in a local band. They are playing a gig the next night and he asks me if I'd like to come along. He's living squatting style in a condemned house in Addington. I offer to pick him up on my bike at about 8pm.

[MUSIC underneath – Whiter Shade of Pale– builds to a crescendo and ends on four large chords. The first three are synchronised with the first three "Johnny's" and the last occurs before the last "Johnny" and sustains under it.]

The gig is really amazing. We hang out with the band in their breaks and I feel quite special. The band play these really psychedelic songs, with long, loud guitar solos. In the middle of the second bracket Johnny leans over and yells in my ear, "I've got something that will make this even cooler if you're interested?" I feel him put a small piece of paper in my hand. I look down and there are mini daisies printed like stickers on it. "What is it?" He replies, "The pathway to enlightenment!" "No really, what is it?" "LSD"

I've never taken LSD before but how much different can it be to smoking grass? "How do you take it?" He yells, "Stick out your tongue" and he presses one of the daisies on to it. At first nothing happens and I think that maybe Johnny got some bad stuff. I go back to watching the band. Then I notice that the guitar player has a stream of purple light coming out the end of his guitar. The music seems to have gotten slower and now I can see the sounds all the instruments are making. There are words and pictures coming out of the mouth of the lead singer and each time the drummer hits a drum it swells to twice the size and glows orange. When I look at my hands they are covered in stars and Johnny's long beard is made out of golden flowers. I lean over to tell Johnny how amazing this all is and I feel like I am on a swing, but the whole room is the swing and I am swinging towards Johnny. His whole face is shining and as I swing into him we start kissing and in the kiss I can feel my heart beating, "Johnny. Johnny. Johnny. Johnny."

[Music stops]

After the gig we go back to Strickland St and lie in the garden eating jam on toast and drinking coffee. The chickens are talking to each other in French. I can tell because I learned French at high school but it appears to be a regional dialect so I can't really follow the conversation. "Comment ca va poulets?" I ask. They stop talking briefly, but don't reply.

Then Johnny and I end up in my bed. He shuts Mole out in the garden and all I can remember of the night is him reciting mystic poetry while we make love, accompanied by Mole whining outside my window.

We wake up about 5 o'clock in the evening. I feel grumpy, tired and really hungry. Johnny is sitting on the edge of the bed with a photo of my family in his hands. "Wow, is this your family? They're so white bread. Are you rich or something?" I feel ashamed as I justify, "Well, I guess some people would think we are. But Daddy works really hard and is in a pretty select field." Johnny laughs, "Daddy. Man, you actually call him Daddy. How old are you? Twelve?" I blush, blink back the tears that are forming and say, "I feel like a coffee. Want one?" I throw on a shirt and go out to the kitchen to boil the jug.

While I'm stirring the coffee Johnny comes up behind me and wraps his arms round my waist. "You just have to understand it's really hard for me to understand families because mine is such a bad scene. My dad ran out when I was two, I never knew him. I have two half sisters, and a step-dad, but he's made it pretty clear that he doesn't think of me as his. It's hard growing up in a small town where everyone knows your business. I used to get called a bastard by the other kids at school." He has tears in his eyes as he says all this, and I feel so sorry for him. He's experienced the kind of pain I've only ever heard about. I wrap my arms around him and hold him close.

SONG – Make It With You – David Gates

Hey have you ever tried
Really reaching out for the other side?
I may be climbing on rainbows
But baby here goes

Dreams they're for those who sleep

Life is for us to keep
And if you're wondering
What this song is leading to

I want to make it with you
I really think that we can make it boy

No, you don't know me well
In ev'ry little thing only time will tell
If you believe the things that I do
And we'll see it through

Life can be short or long,
Love can be right or wrong
And if I choose the one
I'd like to help me through

I'd like to make it with you
I really think that we can make it boy
like to make it with you
I really think that we can make it boy

I'd

The next week exams start and I occasionally see Johnny around Varsity. We say Hi and make small talk. One day I see him in the cafe having a very intense discussion with a girl with long red hair. There are black mascara tears streaming down her face, and she shouts something at him, grabs her satchel and storms off. Thankfully Johnny doesn't notice me watching him and I make a hasty exit.

Later on that day I see him again. I've just finished my Sociology exam. He gives me a huge beaming smile and says, "Hey Cilla. I was just thinking about you! I've just finished my last exam. Feel like celebrating?" I still have study for my English exam the next day, but figure that I've probably done enough and knowing how Johnny feels about exams in general I

don't feel like I can bail on him with study as an excuse. We go to the pub that we saw the band at and have a few beers.

At some point we take my bike back to his place in Addington and have some rice and lentils and smoke some hash. We climb into bed fully dressed in his dingy room with the mattress on the floor. His room's cold even though it's been a warm spring day, and he pulls me to him and holds me tight for warmth. He starts to undress me and I say hesitantly, "Johnny, who was that girl I saw you with in the cafe today?" "What girl?" "She had long red hair, she seemed pretty upset. Is she your girlfriend or something?" He sighs and rolls away from me. "Man, why do women always have to spell everything out? Look, her name is Jenna OK. I guess we had a thing happening and she thought more of it than I did. I mean, you girls just need to relax. She thought we were exclusive or something and I didn't. She freaked out. It was too intense; I just wanted things to be cool. You happy now?"

I want to ask him if things are finished between them now but I'm not stupid. That is not how to play things with a guy like Johnny. So I just say, "Cool" and roll towards him and start stroking his chest.

LINK – Make It With You

I wake up the next morning feeling a bit groggy from the beer and the grass and try to remember where I am and what day of the week it is. Suddenly I remember my English exam. I make it with moments to spare and pray my foggy brain can remember what I've studied. Somehow I manage to get through, but I'm pretty sure it won't be my best result. I just hope I pass!

When I get home that afternoon Johnny is in my lounge drinking coffee with Paul. Paul asks how my exam was. I gloss over it; trying not to make a big deal of how worried I am in front of Johnny. "The most important thing is it was my last one!" Paul and Iain both finished the day before and we had planned to have a party at the flat tonight. I ask Johnny if he wants to stick around. He says, "Yeah. I guess. If I'm invited." "Of course you're invited. Everyone's invited. I meant to ask you this morning but I forgot because I was running late." He looks a little placated, but I know I'll have to tread carefully with Johnny. He has been so hurt before.

[MUSIC underneath – Where Have All The Flowers Gone]

The party is a great success. There's a lot of grass being smoked, and a few people look like they're on acid. At some point someone gets out a guitar and we start singing songs like *Blowing In The Wind* and *Where Have All The Flowers Gone*. Paul grabs me and dances me round the room until I'm so dizzy I fall on the ground laughing so hard I think I'll wet my pants.

I wander through the house in a drunken stoned haze looking for Johnny. I find him out in the garden talking to that red headed girl Jenna. I don't even know her so one of the boys must have invited her. I wrap my arms around Johnny from behind, smile up at him and say, "I'm tired. Shall we go to bed soon?" He looks at her and says, "Well, Jenna?" She looks like she's been slapped, yells, "Screw you!" and walks off. Johnny says, "I guess that's a yes to bed then. I'm pretty tired too." I feel the triumph of that moment in spite of how much I've had to drink and smoke, and wrap my arm through Johnny's, press up against him and walk with him to my room.

[Music stops]

The next morning I suggest to Johnny that he takes my room for the summer. "I leave next week. You wouldn't have to pay rent or anything." He looks at me and says, "I don't need charity Cilla. I am completely OK where I am. I realise it must seem like a utter dive to you with your perfect upbringing and everything." I hurriedly reply "No that's not what I meant. You'd be doing me a favour. I need someone to look after Mole and my bike and everything." "I'll think about it. I do have my own plans" I shrug, "Sure. It's no big deal."

Johnny turns up the next day with a couple of bags stuffed with clothes, records and books, and says, "I'll take the room. But I have to move in now. Our house is getting bulldozed tomorrow." The next day I decide not to go home for the holidays.

I get a job at a car yard washing cars in the morning when they open up. It's pretty ideal as I have the rest of the day off, and I can turn up to work barefoot in cut off jeans and no one seems to mind. My parents continue to send me a weekly allowance and it's more than enough for me and Johnny to live on. Johnny also has a part time job working at the fish markets. He hates it because he comes home stinking of fish, and they make him wear a hairnet. But it gives him money to buy books and records and acid when he wants it. I pay the rent and buy our food.

SONG – *Long About Now* – Scott Walker

Long about now
He's heading home
Back from the rain
Burned to the ground

His ashes will rise black butterflies
Tapping at my window pane
He'll want to rest within my design
All the way to the end
Lighting my skies all up inside again
Dimming summer

Long about now
He's heading home
Drowning the games
That steel a man
Long about now
He'll shrug and sigh and need me again

All the talk over the summer has been of Ngaruawahia. Everyone says it's going to be New Zealand's answer to Woodstock. We all decide we're going to go. I tell the car yard owners that Mother is sick, quit and hitchhike up to Napier with Paul and Iain to stay with Paul's parents for a few nights. Johnny has to work another week at the markets so we decide we'll meet him up there.

I have forgotten how warm the summer can be in the North Island and Paul and I spend a lot of time smoking pot and lying out under the stars. He makes me a daisy chain which I wear for most of our trip. It's nice to be at his home too. His mum makes us these really big dinners and everything is clean and quiet and comfortable. Iain discusses Vietnam with Paul's dad every night. Paul's dad puts up a good argument for the western world fighting against the spread of communism but I think he's secretly amused by us really. They keep

asking us about this “concert” we’re going to see. They don’t seem to understand the concept of Ngaruawahia being a festival in celebration of our total way of life. They’re lovely people, just out of touch.

We get to Ngaruawahia late Friday afternoon. We set up our tent and start to look for Johnny. There are so many people we know here and we seem to run into everyone except him. Everybody looks vibrant and colourful. We wander round casually smoking a J right out in the open like it’s no big deal. Some people have obviously had a head start, they are tripping already.

[MUSIC underneath - Suzanne]

We buy some samosas from one of the food stalls and head back to the tent. Some people in the tent next to us have a guitar and a tin whistle and they’re having a sing-along. Iain decides he’s going to sleep under the stars. Paul and I lie in the tent listening to the singing. He reaches over and takes my hand. We lie there for a while in the dark and neither of us say a word. I can hear that his breathing has gotten deep and kind of shuddery. He rolls over towards me in the dark and begins to kiss me. His skin feels soft and warm and he tastes of spices. He whispers in my ear “I’ve wanted to kiss you since the first day you moved into the flat. I think you are the most fascinating girl I’ve ever met. When you smile at me, I feel like there’s a rainbow inside me”. He touches me slowly and gently, his body just the right size against mine. We make love for most of the night, quietly, so as not to disturb the people in the next tent. We fall asleep just before dawn. My head resting on his chest, my hair spread across it like a blanket.

***SONG** – Suzanne – Leonard Cohen*

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river
You can hear the boats go by you can spend the night beside her
And you know that she’s half crazy but that’s why you want to be there
And she feeds you tea and oranges that come all the way from china
And just when you mean to tell her that you have no love to give her
Then she gets you on her wavelength and she lets the river answer
That you’ve always been her lover
And you want to travel with her

And you want to travel blind
And you know that she will trust you
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind

And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him
He said all men will be sailors then until the sea shall free them
But he himself was broken long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human he sank beneath your wisdom like a stone
And you want to travel with him
And you want to travel blind
And you think maybe you'll trust him
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind

Now Suzanne takes your hand and she leads you to the river
She is wearing rags and feathers from salvation army counters
And the sun pours down like honey on our lady of the harbour
And she shows you where to look among the garbage and the flowers
There are heroes in the seaweed there are children in the morning
They are leaning out for love and they will lean that way forever
While Suzanne holds the mirror
And you want to travel with her
And you want to travel blind
And you know that you can trust her
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind

This is how Johnny finds us in the morning. He completely freaks out. He calls me a slut and tells Paul he's going to do him in. Paul throws on his jeans, gives my hand a quick squeeze and takes off. Johnny sits down hard on floor of the tent. He keeps looking at me, and saying over and over "How could you do this to me? Why do you hate me so much?" His eyes fill with tears, and he puts his head in his hands and starts to silently weep. I put my hand on his

shoulder and gently rub his back, and tell him how sorry I am, that I wasn't thinking, that we were both a bit stoned, that it didn't mean anything. I say anything I can think of that might make it mean less. He eventually stops crying and says to me, "I just can't live without you Cilla. You're the only one who gets me. Promise me you won't ever leave me".

We set up camp a little way off from Iain and Paul. I mean everyone is being cool about the situation but it's still a little awkward. Paul seems fine, he did say very quietly when I told him, that he wished the situation could have turned out differently, but he understands.

[MUSIC underneath – Sound of Silence/Dance All Around the World/Leader of the Pack– changes take place from song to song to tie in with the text]

The festival is in full swing now. Corben Simpson was the opening act and he performed naked. For some reason this has made half the people here want to get naked. There are people swimming naked in the river, half the audience is naked. Johnny takes off his clothes after we make up and tells me he doesn't intend to put them back on at any point. I'm trying to get with it, but I just can't. I just find it all a bit ridiculous. There are people bending over, picking up rubbish with no clothes on. It's too much to see and it just makes me want to laugh.

The next morning Johnny goes for a swim in the river first thing. I'm only just waking up, and so I tell him I'll wait for him at the tent. He is gone for what seems like hours. I decide to take a wander down to the river and find him. There must be at least a hundred people in the river. I walk along the bank for a bit but I can't see him. I go back to the tent and sit outside waiting. Lots of people I know walk past and say hi, or ask me to join them, but no sign of Johnny. Just when I'm starting to get really worried that something has happened he turns up. When I ask him why he took so long he says, "I went to watch the bands. We're not joined at the hip Cilla, you can do things without me, remember."

While Black Sabbath play they burn a huge cross on the hill. At some point there's whole lot of Harley Davidsons on the stage and a band play a crazy version of Leader of the Pack. Everyone goes mad and is screaming and cheering. I look around at all these people, half of them naked and their faces distorted in ecstasy, jumping up and down. I try and throw myself into the spirit of it all but can't seem to find the energy. Maybe it's the situation with Johnny

and Paul but I just feel a little tired of it all. It's still fun and an experience I know I'm not likely to forget but I just don't seem to be as into it as much as the people around me.

[Music stops]

After the third day of the festival the food, the music, the drugs, the river, the bodies all seem to melt into one long, hot, pungent day. I'm exhausted, nauseous and ready to spend some time alone. Johnny and I decide to hitch up to Northland and camp for a few days.

When we get to the camp site in Kaitaia and we start to unpack our gear we realise that we have only packed the fly and managed to leave the tent and the poles at Ngaruawahia. It was Johnny's job to pack the tent but I think it's best not to remind him of that. It's better not to push my luck. Johnny is fuming about the whole thing and takes his machete up into some nearby bush and cuts down some small trees to act as makeshift poles. Then I get really sick and spend the whole night vomiting into our billy which Johnny has to ferry down to the toilet block in between to empty.

The next morning Johnny is still in a foul mood and complaining bitterly about being kept awake all night. I try and keep the peace, and tell Johnny he should go back to sleep.

I wash out the billy and boil some water in the kitchen and make myself some weak tea. It's about as much as I can stomach. While I'm gingerly sipping away, a woman about Mother's age comes over and introduces herself as Karen. She's in the site next to ours so she knows I've been sick all night. I start to apologise and she tells me not to worry about it and tells me she has some anti nausea tablets at their tent and would I like some. I burst into tears. It's the first nice thing that anyone has done for me since the first night at Ngaruawahia.

I take some pills and go back to our tent and quietly climb in next to Johnny and try to sleep. All I want is a comfortable bed and my Mother to rub my back and stroke my hair, but I remind myself that these are the things I have left behind and to stop feeling sorry for myself. At least Johnny is asleep. That's one relief. With any luck he'll be in a better mood when he wakes up.

SONG – One Too Many Mornings – Bob Dylan

Down the street the dogs are barkin'
And the day is a-gettin' dark
As the night comes in a-fallin'
The dogs 'll lose their bark
An' the silent night will shatter
From the sounds inside my mind
For I'm one too many mornings
And a thousand miles behind

From the crossroads of my doorstep
My eyes they start to fade
As I turn my head back to the room
Where my love and I have laid
An' I gaze back to the street
The sidewalk and the sign
And I'm one too many mornings
An' a thousand miles behind

It's a restless hungry feeling
That don't mean no one no good
When ev'rything I'm a-sayin'
You can say it just as good
You're right from your side
I'm right from mine
We're both just one too many mornings
An' a thousand miles behind

[MUSIC underneath – Nights in White Satin]

Back in Christchurch, one evening late in January we're all lazing around the house a bit wasted and listening to the Moody Blues. It's a warm, clear evening. The kind that makes you want to sit out on the porch all night talking about nothing and everything, except that our porch is rotten and Paul fell through it the last time he took a chair out there. We're

contemplating taking our bikes to Sumner beach for a swim when there's a violently loud knock at the door followed by a voice yelling...

[Music stops]

“Open up, it's the police!”

Johnny looks at me, says “Shit!” while we quickly try and stash the half smoked joint. Paul answers the door and Johnny starts for our room but there's not enough time. There are four cops with a big Alsatian dog and they burst through the door, immediately split up and start to search different rooms. The dog is straining at its lead practically dragging its handler down the hall towards our room barking and growling. Jos and Mole are barking and racing round the house in a frenzy. One of the cops yells, “Get those bloody dogs restrained!”

I grab Mole and Jos and shut them in the bathroom. The cop with the dog is in our room ripping through our stuff. The dog can obviously smell something and is yelping excitedly and trying to dig through our clothes and records and whatever else that's lying on the floor to get to it. Johnny is pacing up and down the hallway swearing under his breath.

In a matter of minutes the cops have found an ounce bag of pot, some hash, a pipe with some left over hash still in the bowl, some buds from Iain's plant drying on the window sill in his room, and three tabs of LSD in our room. One of the cops looks me up and down, smiles suggestively and says to one of the others, “You think they all share her?” I feel like I'm about to throw up.

They take us all down to the central police station to be fingerprinted and charged. Johnny insists that I had no idea he had the acid and that none of the drugs are mine. He keeps saying “You can't charge her. She didn't do anything. It's not her stuff”. I'm left in the waiting area while Johnny and Iain are charged. They didn't find anything in Paul's room either so he's only finger printed and given a warning. We sit there in total silence for a while then he puts his arm around me and I start to cry, quietly into his shoulder. I'm utterly terrified of what might happen to Johnny and Iain. He holds me tighter and says, “It's OK Cilla. It's just small time stuff to them. They'll just be trying to make a point.”

After what seems like an age Johnny walks through the door. He looks exhausted and very angry. I leave Paul to wait for Iain and go with Johnny. We spend the walk home in total

silence. We get in just after midnight. We can hear the dogs howling and scratching in the bathroom from the front door. They've made short work of the old bath mat and towel that were hanging off the edge of the bath.

Our room is a wreck. The mattress is upside down, and contents of our drawers and wardrobe lie scattered over the floor. We only have the energy to right the mattress, pull a sheet over us and try to go to sleep. I say to Johnny "Thank you", he rolls away from me and says "I don't want to talk about it. Go to sleep".

I sleep fitfully, wake early and leave Johnny sleeping in bed. Iain is in the kitchen making a cup of coffee. He's just the person I need to talk to, so I pull up a chair at the kitchen table and say "Paul said it's just small time stuff to the cops. He doesn't think they'll make a big deal of it".

Iain turns round to me with a look on his face I have never seen before and says "Well, it's all bloody well for you and Paul isn't it? Little Miss and Mr White Bread manage to get out with their hands totally clean. What a surprise it's me and Johnny that take the fall. Not that it's going to make much of a difference to him. Do you have any bloody idea what's going to happen to me if I get done for this? I'll be sent back to Australia that's what, and then it's all over for me. Who did you idiots tell about those plants? I can't believe how stupid and naive you guys are. This is the real world Cilla. Daddy can't save us here."

I just want to go home. But I can't leave Johnny after what he did for me. He wouldn't cope going through all this alone. And I can't face the thought of turning up on my parent's doorstep and telling them what happened.

The day of the court case is my 18th birthday. I get a card with a twenty dollar note in it from my parents wishing me a day full of excitement and surprises. Johnny gets dressed for court in the morning. He puts on the only nice shirt and tie he has with his jeans and sandals and puts his hair in a ponytail to at least try for some semblance of respectability. I don't remind him it's my birthday. He doesn't remember.

SONG – It's All Over Now Baby Blue – Bob Dylan

You must leave now, take what you need, you think will last
But whatever you wish to keep, you better grab it fast

Yonder stands your orphan with his gun
Crying like a fire in the sun
Look out the saints are comin' through
And it's all over now, Baby Blue

The highway is for gamblers, better use your sense
Take what you have gathered from coincidence
The empty-handed painter from your streets
Is drawing crazy patterns on your sheets
This sky, too, is folding under you
And it's all over now, Baby Blue

Leave your stepping stones behind, something calls for you
Forget the dead you've left, they will not follow you
The vagabond who's rapping at your door
Is standing in the clothes that you once wore
Strike another match, go start anew
And it's all over now, it's all over now, it's all over now

[Music stops]

Baby Blue

I'm putting on a really brave face for Johnny, trying to be positive. I keep saying things like "You're a first time offender, they'll go easy" and "They have very little evidence, nothing to hang a case on". I can tell he is terrified but he won't talk about it and he snaps at me "For crying out loud Cilla, if you can't do something useful, at least get out of my way!" I go and make him a cup of coffee and as I'm bringing it through to him, he opens the door of the bedroom suddenly and I spill it all down my front. I have to get changed and this makes Johnny even angrier. He's convinced I'm trying to make him late.

They call Johnny's name and he has to go and stand up the front with the lawyer the court gives to people that can't afford to hire one. He keeps his head high, and I can see the muscles in his jaw tightening as they read the charge against him. Where I spilt the coffee has

started to throb with a dull, hot pain but the rest of me is so cold I'm shivering. Johnny pleads guilty in a loud, defiant voice which seems to reverberate off all the walls in the court room. He gets a fine of \$100 and a month's community service.

[MUSIC underneath – Amazing Grace– musicians hum melody]

My neck and shoulders are in knots as we leave the court house, and I have a throbbing headache. I buy Johnny a coffee and say "You must be happy with how that turned out." He looks at me, rolls his eyes and says, "Sometimes you are so naive I want to scream Cilla. Don't you get it? I have a criminal record for the rest of my life now. Yeah, I'm so happy I could die laughing." We finish our coffees in silence and walk through the square. There are a group of people with a guitar singing Amazing Grace and giving away Bibles. They look so happy and peaceful and the sweetness of their singing spreads over me like a blanket. It's so enticing I wish I could just sit down and listen to them for the rest of the evening.

[Music stops]

But we have to get home.

Iain disappears. Paul decides to move back up North and study closer to home. It's just Johnny and me. Everything feels broken, like all the threads that hold us together are rotten. But I am trying to hold on to us, and to find a way to him. Johnny, Mole and I are staying in his friend's spare room. One morning I wake up and find Johnny fully dressed sitting on the edge of the bed with a packed duffle bag beside him. He doesn't look at me, "I'm moving to Auckland. I'm going to live on a Yoga Ashram. I don't know how long I'll be gone for. Would you look after my stuff?"

I'm still in that groggy state between sleep and waking and I can't quite understand what he's saying. "What? What about us Johnny? Are you breaking up with me?"

"For crying out loud Cilla, don't be so melodramatic. We haven't made any promises. It was fine while it was working but it's not anymore. I need to be somewhere I can clear my head. I can't think straight with you always here. I know it's hard to believe but this isn't about you. Man, your selfishness never ceases to amaze me." With this he stands, grabs his bag and walks out. I hear the sound of a car driving off and the realisation he must have been planning this for weeks hits me like a slap in the face.

I make myself a coffee, come back to the room and sit on the edge of the bed. What little we own is stacked in the corner of the room in boxes. I see that there is a note attached to one of Johnny's boxes. Of course, I should have known. Johnny would have said what he needed to say in writing.

SONG – *Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye* – Leonard Cohen

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm
Your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm
Yes, many loved before us, I know that we are not new
In city and in forest they smiled like me and you
But now it's come to distances and both of us must try
Your eyes are soft with sorrow
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I'm not looking for another as I wander in my time
Walk me to the corner, our steps will always rhyme
You know my love goes with you as your love stays with me
It's just the way it changes, like the shoreline and the sea
But let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie
Your eyes are soft with sorrow
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm
Your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm
Yes many loved before us, I know that we are not new
In city and in forest they smiled like me and you
But let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie
Your eyes are soft with sorrow
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I get the note, climb back into bed and read it. "Box 1 has records in it. Make sure it isn't stored on a damp floor and don't play them or let other people play them. I don't want them

getting scratched. Box 2 has books in it. Don't get them damp either. Make sure if you move or lift the box that the underside seam is supported so that it doesn't fall open. Again, don't read or loan these books. Box 3 has my clothes in it. At some point it would be good if you could air them out or preferably wash them so they don't get musty or mouldy. Thanks, Johnny."

I feel completely empty, like a piece of spooned out fruit. I wonder if I will cry but I don't. I just lie here with the curtains closed, staring at boxes 1, 2 and 3 for the rest of the day.

LINK – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye

Three weeks later, I get back to my room to find Johnny sitting on the edge of my bed. I feel like a part of me that was asleep just woke up. I start to weep. Johnny takes me in his arms. "Those people at the Ashram were about as enlightened as worms. It's just you and me now." I reply, "And Mole."

Johnny gets a job as a postie. Some nights he doesn't come home. I'm too smart to ask him where he's been and he never stays away for more than a day or two. When he's not there Mole sleeps in the bed with me like old times. I struggle on at Varsity but one day when a lecturer starts a discussion on the use of imagery in Keats' Odes, I think, I too would like to "fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget." Everything seems spoiled since the summer and I can't find the energy for it anymore. I don't go to my lectures the next day, and later that week I get a job working at a green grocer's.

[MUSIC underneath – Old Rugged Cross]

After work one day I am walking through the Square and I notice a big rally going on. There is a huge crowd, music and a buzz of excitement in the air. The songs are all about God and Jesus and peace and love. There are people crying and laughing and hugging one another, and other people with huge smiles on their faces handing out bibles. I feel like if I stay there for long enough and just breathe in the same air as them I'll catch a bit of their happiness.

[Music stops]

I tell Johnny about it all when he gets home. "There's another one tomorrow at a church in Latimer Square. Let's go. I'm telling you Johnny, it was amazing. It beats acid. I felt like I

was swimming in a sea of love.” Johnny replies, “I think love is a fantasy. I’ve never felt it.” “Don’t you love me Johnny? I love you. Surely you can feel that?” Johnny just shrugs, but says “I’ll go with you. Just to see what all the fuss is about.”

The next night we go down to St John’s in Latimer Square. It’s packed to the gunnels. We see a lot of people we know from Varsity and hippie circles.

[MUSIC underneath – Amazing Grace – intro then MUSICIANS sing first verse to link in with reference to lyric in text]

The rally starts with songs. Some of them I know from chapel services at school, although I’ve never heard Amazing Grace sung this way before. It sounds more like something Dylan might sing. I find myself really listening to the words for the first time. When it gets to the line “I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see” I start to cry.

A man gets up to speak. He talks about love, and peace and feeling fulfilled and filled. I feel so empty, and so unsure that his words seem like a rope pulling me from the bottom of the sea. I want whatever it is he has got. I look at Johnny’s face. He is wearing his usual cynical mask, but underneath I can sense him cracking too.

By the time the preacher has finished I am desperate to know what to do to have all this. He says that all we have to do is to give our lives to Jesus, and if we want to do that we should come down the front to the altar and be prayed for. I don’t even ask Johnny, I just grab his arm and drag him from where we are standing and head down to the altar.

As we walk home I feel like everything around me has changed. I feel lighter and happier. I hold Johnny’s hand, and skip along beside him swinging his arm. Johnny half smiles at me and then says, “Grow up Cilla!” My heart sinks a little. I guess I was hoping that Johnny might have been able to let some of the love of the evening into him, or out of him to me. But Johnny and I have been through too much together not to keep trying. We are connected, inextricably.

The next afternoon we head out to Sumner on my bike. It’s not the warmest of autumn days and there’s a stiff breeze coming in off the sea. We see a group of people gathered under Cave Rock. People are being lowered backwards into the freezing water and lifted straight out again to prayers, clapping and singing. I realise more than anything I want to wash the

past year off me and make a fresh start, so fully clothed I walk into the water, and say goodbye to the old Cilla and hello to a brand new day. I feel the warmth and love of everyone around me, and finally, I feel part of something bigger and more important than myself.

SONG –*Restless Farewell* – *Bob Dylan*

Oh all the money that in my whole life I did spend
Be it mine right or wrongfully
I let it slip gladly past the hands of my friends
To tie up the time most forcefully
But the bottles are done
We've killed each one
And the table's full and overflowed
And the corner sign
Says it's closing time
So I'll bid farewell and be down the road

Oh ev'ry girl that ever I've touched
I did not do it harmfully
And ev'ry girl that ever I've hurt
I did not do it knowin'ly
But to remain as friends and make amends
You need the time and stay behind
And since my feet are now fast
And point away from the past
I'll bid farewell and be down the line

Oh a false clock tries to tick out my time
To disgrace, distract, and bother me
And the dirt of gossip blows into my face
And the dust of rumors covers me
But if the arrow is straight
And the point is slick

It can pierce through dust no matter how thick
So I'll make my stand
And remain as I am
And bid farewell and not give a damn

PLAYOFF – *Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35* – *Bob Dylan*

Cilla exits. Re-enters on end of applause. Players bow and exit.

MUSIC CUES

Musicians take stage.

1. OPENING MUSIC – Where Have All The Flowers Gone

Cilla takes stage..

Here I am. For the first time in my seventeen years, I, Cilla Cartwright, will be without my parents, my sisters, my cat, my dog, my books, my dolls. I will be on my own, and I can be – Whoever. I. Want! And where am I? **Helen Cannon Hall, a hostel for women students of Canterbury University and I am standing in the doorway of my room.**

2. SONG – Ruby Tuesday

(Three quarters of a page of text.) I walk downstairs to the rhythm of “I prefer Angela. I prefer Angela.” The next evening when she gets in from class I am playing a **Rolling Stones record.**

3. EXCERPT - Can't Always Get What You Want – chorus line twice, guitar and piano pull out abruptly

She stands at the door, looks at me very sadly, sighs, and says, “This just isn’t going to work Cilla. I’m sorry, you’re probably a very nice girl but I don’t think I can be your roommate.” “Yeah. I think you’re right” I reply, with what I hope is a sad expression on my face. “We’re just on different wavelengths.” **By the end of the week we’ve changed rooms.**

4. EXCERPT - Can't Always Get What You Want – chorus

(Page of text.) One day I was having a cigarette, and made the mistake of asking if she smoked. “I may be a vegetarian, but I’m not an idiot, Cilla!” **Oh well. I console myself by saying, “It’s only for a year.”**

5. LINK – Ruby Tuesday – first two lines

(Half page of text) He tells me they have a room free and would I be interested in moving in. He seems like such an amazing guy and the place sounds so much better than the hostel that **I immediately reply, “When?”**

6. **SONG** – Winter Lady – Leonard Cohen

(Half page of text) My room has a big bay window that looks out onto the garden and two of the chickens are roosting on the window sill. I don't have much in the way of stuff so it doesn't take me long to settle in. There is a huge sense of relief and excitement about not having anyone or anything to answer to. **Finally I am the master of my own destiny.**

7. **LINK** – Ruby Tuesday – first verse underneath text (STOP at "in a ponytail")

(Half page of text) "Aren't these chips just too much. They're... they're..." I can't think of a word to describe how good they taste and for some reason this makes me really amused. I start to giggle and Paul joins in and says, "You are so stoned!" **This just makes me laugh even harder. And I think this is what being really alive feels like.**

8. **SONG** – Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35 – Bob Dylan

(Three quarters of a page of text.) After exams are over I decide I will go home for the summer. Daddy will pay me to work at his rooms so I can earn some money. He pays better than any of the other jobs I could get and he pretty much lets me turn up whenever I want. **I just have to find someone to take my room over the summer.**

9. **LINK** – Make It With You – First line of chorus NO VOCAL

(Half page of text) One of Johnny's friends is a drummer in a local band. They are playing a gig the next night and he asks me if I'd like to come along. He's living squatting style in a condemned house in Addington. **I offer to pick him up on my bike at about 8pm.**

10. **MUSIC** – Whiter Shade of Pale style – PSYCHEDELIC - **underneath text,** builds to a crescendo and ends on four large chords. The first three are synchronised with the first three "Johnny's" and the last occurs before the last "Johnny" and sustains under it.

Listen for: At first nothing happens and I think that maybe Johnny got some bad stuff. I go back to listening and watching the band. Then I notice that the guitar player has a stream of purple light coming out the end of his guitar. **The music seems to have gotten slower**

Slow down

His whole face is shining and as I swing into him we start kissing and in the kiss I can feel my heart beating, “**Johnny. Johnny. Johnny. Johnny.**”

STOP here

(Half page of text) He has tears in his eyes as he says all this, and I feel so sorry for him. He’s experienced the kind of pain I’ve only ever heard about. **I wrap my arms around him and hold him close.**

11. **SONG** – Make It With You – David Gates

(Half page of text) I want to ask him if things are finished between them now but I’m not stupid. That is not how to play things with a guy like Johnny. So I just say, “Cool” and roll towards him and start stroking his chest.

12. **LINK** – Make It With You – First line of chorus NO VOCAL

(Quarter page of text) “Yeah. I guess. If I’m invited.” “Of course you’re invited. Everyone’s invited. I meant to ask you this morning but I forgot because I was running late.” **He looks a little placated, but I know I’ll have to tread carefully with Johnny. He has been so hurt before.**

13. **MUSIC** – Where Have All The Flowers Gone – FOLKY - **underneath text**

I feel the triumph of that moment in spite of how much I’ve had to drink and smoke, and wrap my arm through Johnny’s, **press up against him and walk with him to my room.**

STOP here

My parents continue to send me a weekly allowance and it’s more than enough for me and Johnny to live on. Johnny also has a part time job working at the fish markets. He hates it because he comes home stinking of fish, and they make him wear a hairnet. **But it gives him money to buy books and records and acid when he wants it. I pay the rent and buy our food.**

14. **SONG** – Long About Now – Scott Walker

(Three quarters of a page of text.) Everybody looks vibrant and colourful. We wander round casually smoking a J right out in the open like it's no big deal. **Some people have obviously had a head start, they are tripping already.**

15. **MUSIC** – Based on Suzanne – FOLKY - **underneath text** continues into song

We fall asleep just before dawn. **My head resting on his chest, my hair spread across it like a blanket.**

16. **SONG** – Suzanne – Leonard Cohen

(Quarter page of text) We set up camp a little way off from Iain and Paul. I mean everyone is being cool about the situation but it's still a little awkward. Paul seems fine, he did say very quietly when I told him, that he wished the situation could have turned out differently, but he understands.

17. **MUSIC** – Starts SOUND OF SILINCE, moves DANCE ALL AROUND THE WORLD, Leader of the Pack (cued in text) - **underneath text**

Maybe it's the situation with Johnny and Paul but I just feel a little tired of it all. It's still fun and an experience **I know I'm not likely to forget but I just don't seem to be as into it as much as the people around me.**

STOP here

(Three quarters of a page of text.) I remind myself that these are the things I have left behind and to stop feeling sorry for myself. At least Johnny is asleep. That's one relief. **With any luck he'll be in a better mood when he wakes up.**

18. **SONG** – One Too Many Mornings – Bob Dylan

19. **MUSIC** – Nights in White Satin - **underneath text**

Back in Christchurch, one evening late in January we're all lazing around the house a bit wasted and listening to some Moody Blues' records. It's a warm, clear evening. The kind that makes you want to sit out on the porch all night talking about nothing and everything, except the boards on our porch are rotting and Paul fell through it the last time he took a chair out

there. We're contemplating taking our bikes to Sumner beach for a swim when there's a **violently loud knock at the door followed by a voice yelling "Open up, it's the police!"**

STOP here

(Two pages of text.) He puts on the only nice shirt and tie he has with his jeans and sandals and puts his hair in a ponytail to at least try for some semblance of respectability. **I don't remind him it's my birthday. He doesn't remember.**

20. **SONG** – It's All Over Now Baby Blue – Bob Dylan

(Quarter page of text) Where I spilt the coffee has started to throb with a dull, hot pain but the rest of me is so cold I'm shivering. Johnny pleads guilty in a loud, defiant voice which seems to reverberate off all the walls in the court room. **He gets a fine of \$100 and a month's community service.**

21. **MUSIC** – Amazing Grace in 4/4 (Musicians hum melody) - **underneath text**

(Quarter page of text) It's so enticing I wish I could just sit down and listen to them for the rest of the evening. **But we have to get home.**

STOP here – abruptly if needed.

(Half page of text) What little we own is stacked in the corner of the room in boxes. I see that there is a note attached to one of Johnny's boxes. **Of course, I should have known. Johnny would have said what he needed to say in writing.**

22. **SONG** – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye – Leonard Cohen

(Quarter page of text) I feel completely empty, like a piece of spooned out fruit. I lie down on the bed and wonder if I will cry but I don't. I just lie here with the curtains closed, **staring at boxes 1, 2 and 3 for the rest of the day.**

23. **LINK** – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye NO VOCAL

(Quarter page of text) when a lecturer starts a discussion on the use of imagery in Keats' Odes, I think, I too would like to "fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget." Everything

seems spoiled since the summer and I can't find the energy for it anymore. **I don't go to my lectures the next day, and later that week I get a job working at a green grocer's.**

24. MUSIC Old Rugged Cross - **underneath text**

(Quarter page of text) I feel like if I stay there for long enough and just breathe in the same air as them I'll catch a bit of their happiness.

STOP here

(Paragraph of text) The next night we go down to St John's in Latimer Square. **It's packed to the gunnels. We see a lot of people we know from Varsity and hippie circles.**

25. MUSIC – Amazing Grace in 4/4 -intro then MUSICIANS sing first verse

AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND

THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME

I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW AM FOUND

WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE – instrumental continues underneath text

(3 Paragraphs of text) By the time the preacher has finished I am desperate to know what to do to have all this. He says that all we have to do is to give our lives to Jesus, and if we want to do that we should come down the front to the altar and be prayed for. I don't even ask Johnny, I just grab his arm and drag him from where we are standing and head down to the altar.

STOP here – resolve to suit music.

(Three quarters of a page of text.) I realise more than anything I want to wash the past year off me and make a fresh start, so fully clothed I walk into the water, and say goodbye to the old Cilla and hello to a brand new day. **I feel the warmth and love of everyone around me, and finally, I feel part of something bigger and more important than myself.**

26. **SONG** –Restless Farewell – Bob Dylan

27. PLAYOFF – Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35 – NO VOCAL from Cilla but
Musicians have a free for all – Cilla bow and exit, musicians remain seated.

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Cilla returns to stage. All bow and exit.



BASIC LIGHTING CUES/SUGGESTED STATES

Basic states:

1. For songs musicians as well as Cilla lit
2. For text light mainly focused on Cilla

Specific scenes:

1. LSD trip scene – this scene should be bright, colourful and fun – gobos, colour etc
2. Love scene at Ngaruawahia – intimate beautiful state – maybe some blues, tight spot round face
3. The drug bust and trial – very stark harsh light, white no yellow
4. Rally, church and beach scene – golden, early morning, beautiful, sunny

Other possibilities:

1. Night scenes – lower lighting
2. Scenes involving music – more light on musicians

Songs My Mother Taught Me

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Revised Edition

Characters

Cilla – a 17 year old university student from an upper class family

The following characters are all played by Cilla

Angela – a conservative 17 year old university student

Ruth – a confident, bohemian 18 year old university student

Iain – a 22 year old Australian, studying in New Zealand. A card carrying hippie

Paul – an 18 year old, well brought up university student studying Physics

Johnny – a 19 year old university student with a troubled background

Two musicians – piano and acoustic guitar, both of whom also sing

Set

No set or props are required for performance of this work

Time

1972 -1973 Wellington, New Zealand

This revised version of *Songs My Mother Taught Me* was first performed at the St James' Theatre Upstairs Balcony, Courtney Place, Wellington on Thursday 10 December 2009 with the following cast:

Cilla – *Naomi Ferguson*

Piano – *Murray Wood*

Guitar – *Graham Wardrop*

Director – *Guy Boyce*

“Ferguson is a superb musician with a gorgeous, golden voice. Every song is beautifully sung with complete assurance and stylistic control. She seems to have a real affinity with Leonard Cohen's songs and her performance of 'Suzanne' was a highlight for me. She rises to the challenge of representing multiple characters with some believable and often very funny characterisation, particularly that of Cilla and her boyfriend, the chauvinistic Johnnie. Wardrop and Wood are the consummate supporting duo: subtle, inventive, stylish and responsive

I enjoyed this show. It's a shame that this was a one-off performance and I hope there will be more opportunities for Ferguson, Wardrop and Wood to perform it in Wellington.”

-Vicki Thorpe, www.theatreview.org.nz

ACT I

Musicians enter, take their places on the stage and begin to play.

MUSIC – Where Have All The Flowers Gone

Cilla enters through audience taking in the sights of her new surroundings. As she reaches the stage the music dies off, Cilla turns to audience.

Cilla:

Here I am. For the first time in my seventeen years, I, Cilla Cartwright, will be without my parents, my sisters, my cat, my dog, my books, my dolls. I will be on my own, and I can be – Whoever. I. Want! And where am I? Helen Lowry Hall, a hostel for women students of Victoria University and I am standing in the doorway of my room.

SONG – Ruby Tuesday – The Rolling Stones

She would never say where she came from
Yesterday don't matter if it's gone
While the sun is bright
Or in the darkest night
No one knows she comes and goes

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you
Don't question why she needs to be so free
She'll tell you it's the only way to be
She just can't be chained
To a life where nothings gained
And nothings lost, at such a cost

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

There's no time to lose, I heard her say
Catch your dreams before they slip away
Dying all the time, lose your dreams
And you will lose your mind
Aint life unkind?

Goodbye, Ruby Tuesday
Who could hang a name on you?
When you change with every new day
Still I'm gonna miss you

There's no time to lose, I heard her say

The door is ajar, but there is a loud knock and I hear a voice say, "Can I come in?" She is wearing a knee length navy skirt, a white blouse, and a grey cardigan. Her hair is shoulder length and brown, which matches her spectacles, and Mary Jane shoes. "I'm Angela Martin. You must be Priscilla Cartwright." "Cilla. Cilla Cartwright. Nobody ever calls me Priscilla." She says, "Nice to meet you Cilla. Which bed is mine?"

A tiered floral skirt is the most exciting thing she unpacks. She doesn't even own a pair of jeans by the looks of it. There are a few pairs of what Mother would call "slacks" but even Mother wouldn't be caught dead in half the stuff Angela owns. My wardrobe consists of flared and embroidered jeans, full length A-line skirts, smock tops, and homespun woollen jerseys. I even tie-dyed my flannel pyjamas.

After putting my stuff away I say "Angie, I'm about to head down to the dining hall to make a cup of coffee. Want one?" She looks at me, purses her lips and says, "Actually I prefer to be

called Angela and I don't drink coffee. But I'd love a cup of tea." I walk downstairs to the rhythm of "I prefer Angela. I prefer Angela."

The next evening when she gets in from class I am playing a Rolling Stones record.

You can't always get what you want, You can't always get...

She stands at the door, looks at me very sadly, sighs, and says, "This just isn't going to work Cilla. I'm sorry, you're probably a very nice girl but I don't think I can be your roommate."

"Yeah. I think you're right" I reply, with what I hope is a sad expression on my face. "We're just on different wavelengths." By the end of the week we've changed rooms.

LINK - *Can't Always Get What You Want – The Rolling Stones*

You can't always get what you want,
You can't always get what you want,
But if you try sometimes, you get what you need.

My new roommate Ruth is totally bohemian. Her family are nudists, which fascinates and terrifies me at the same time. I can't imagine Daddy coming home from his surgery of an evening and taking his clothes off before he makes himself and Mother a cocktail. And Mother. Well she'd sooner throw herself off a building. What would she do with all her matching bags and hats? Nudity would be very difficult to accessorise.

Ruth says that she's not planning on being nude in our room, that she'll save it for the holidays. I'm gratefully reassured and then a little disappointed at myself for being so un-hip. Her family are also completely vegetarian. "You're so lucky", I tell her. "I've been trying to be vegetarian for the last year but my parents just didn't understand. Mother kept forgetting and serving me up meat, or making dishes like stew where you can't even take the meat out of it. It must be so amazing to live in a vegetarian household." Ruth looks a little puzzled and then says, "I never even think about it really. It's just what we do."

She asks me about my background. "I don't really fit in. Daddy works really hard but is hardly ever home. Mother spends her time with young artists trying to help them out. Sometimes I would come home from school and she would be all dressed up to the nines waiting for me with cake and tea and wanting to know how my day had been. I always felt

this display of interest was for her sake, not mine. Nothing is real. Everyone that we know has lots of money and things, but no-one seems to be happy. I want to really know who I am.”

Initially it goes well with Ruth, but she can be quite square too. She has really strict rules about lights out time, when we can and can't play music in the room and once I offered her some wine gums and she looked like she was going to faint. “Cilla, that stuff is full of refined sugar. Aside from the fact that it will rot your teeth, it's really, really bad for your system. It will make it hard for you to concentrate, and I have noticed you seem to find it hard to focus.” One day I was having a cigarette, and made the mistake of asking if she smoked. “I may be a vegetarian, but I'm not an idiot, Cilla!”

Oh well. I console myself by saying, “It's only for a year.”

LINK – Ruby Tuesday

Don't question why she needs to be so free,
She's gonna tell ya it's the only way to be

I first see Iain at a Sociology lecture. He's impossible not to see. He's about 6'4", olive skinned with long brown hair, and a beard. The lecturer is talking about indigenous peoples when Iain raises his hand and starts to question his argument. He says “All accepted historical views are taken from the point of white, colonising nations. How can we really have any understanding in a meaningful way of indigenous cultures without taking into account their version of the events?”

I find Iain after the lecture has finished and introduce myself and say “I really agreed with what you had to say today”. He suggests we go to the cafe for a cup of coffee. We spend a couple of hours talking about the Vietnam War, yoga and meditation, the upcoming protests against nuclear testing in Moruroa and what music we listen to.

He tells me about the flat he lives in. It sounds amazing. It's strictly vegetarian. They have a sheep, two goats, and three chickens in their back garden. Iain lowers his voice and says, “I have a garden of a few special plants growing in behind the next-door-neighbour's garage too, so we never have to go without”. He tells me they have a room free and would I be

interested in moving in. He seems like such an amazing guy and the place sounds so much better than the hostel that I immediately reply, “When?”

SONG – *Winter Lady* – Leonard Cohen

Travelling lady stay awhile
Until the night is over
I’m just a station on your way
I know I am not your lover

Well, I lived with a child of snow
When I was a soldier
And I fought every man for her
Until the nights grew colder

She used to wear her hair like you
Except when she was sleeping
And then she’d weave it on a loom
Of smoke and gold and breathing

And why are you so quiet now
Standing there in the doorway?
You chose your journey long before
You came upon this highway

Travelling lady stay awhile
Until the night is over
I’m just a station on your way
I know I am not your lover

I call Daddy collect from the hostel phone that night and tell him I am really unhappy at the hostel, that I have no friends, that none of the other girls talk to me, that I feel misunderstood, that my studies are being affected. Whatever I can to get him to feel sorry for me. Then I tell

him that a friend who I met at Varsity has a room going in a flat and that I think I would be much happier there. I know the hostels cost about \$25 a week for me to stay in so I tell Daddy that if he paid me an allowance I could easily look after myself. He has reservations so I have to play my ace. I start to cry. "I don't want to live in the hostels anymore. If I have to then I'll quit Varsity, and just come home and get a job." I know how important it is to Daddy that I get a degree and I get good marks. He reluctantly agrees.

I call Iain and tell him I'll move in the next day.

After lectures I get my stuff from my room, and make my way to Fairlie Terrace. I get a mattress from a Salvation Army store and they bring it round to the house just before dinner time. The flat is a big old weather board house with lead light windows and a large veranda that wraps around the front. It has a big overgrown garden that the animals have free reign of. On the lounge wall there is a tea towel with a picture of the Mona Lisa on it. There is a hole cut in her mouth with a joint hanging out of it.

My room has a big bay window that looks out onto the garden and two of the chickens are roosting on the window sill. There is a huge sense of relief and excitement about not having anyone or anything to answer to. Finally I am the master of my own destiny.

LINK – Ruby Tuesday (continues under text)

Iain introduces me to our other flatmate, Paul. He is lean and angular to look at. His eyes are blue, the kind that look a little like fish eyes and he wears little round spectacles like John Lennon's. These magnify his eyes even more which makes you feel like he is looking at you very intently. He has fine, mousy brown hair which he wears in a pony tail.

[Music stops]

I offer to buy takeaways for dinner to celebrate. We get hot chips and jam donuts, a bottle of red wine and sit out in the garden. Iain pulls a joint out of his pocket, lights up, takes a drag and passes it to me. Without looking obvious I pay very particular attention to how he does things, so I feel like I know what to do.

Mime sequence of Cilla confidently taking a big drag on the joint, looking alarmed and then coughing and spluttering violently.

“Wow. Strong stuff.” I can’t tell if they buy it or not. Iain passes me a mug of wine and says “This should help.” I take a swig of the wine and start in on the chips.

It’s a lovely clear autumn night. I lie on my back and look at the sky and wonder when I’m going to start feeling the effects of the pot. Iain is talking about some professor from one of his courses and his voice seems to sound further away and the words seem to be struggling to make it through to me. I notice that the first stars are starting to come out in the sky. It’s that beautiful blue it turns just before it’s actually night and tonight the colour makes me so happy I feel like I could look at it forever. I grab another handful of the chips and wolf them down. Suddenly I’m starving and they are the best chips I have ever tasted in my life. I say to the boys, “Aren’t these chips just too much. They’re... they’re...” Paul says, “You are so stoned!” This just makes me laugh even harder. And I think this is what being really alive feels like.

SONG – *Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35* – Bob Dylan (*musicians call, holler, sing, generally make party noises throughout.*)

Well, they'll stone ya when you're trying to be so good
 They'll stone ya just a-like they said they would
 They'll stone ya when you're tryin' to go home
 Then they'll stone ya when you're there all alone
 But I would not feel so all alone
 Everybody must get stoned

They'll stone ya when you're at the breakfast table
 They'll stone ya when you are young and able
 They'll stone ya when you're tryin' to make a buck
 They'll stone ya and then they'll say, "good luck"
 Tell ya what, I would not feel so all alone
 Everybody must get stoned

[Piano solo]

Well, they'll stone you and say that it's the end
 Then they'll stone you and then they'll come back again

They'll stone you when you're riding in your car
They'll stone you when you're playing your guitar
Yes, but I would not feel so all alone
Everybody must get stoned

Paul is studying Physics at Varsity. He's the only person I know who isn't an Art's student. He starts trying to explain some relatively complex concepts to me which I'm pretty sure I wouldn't understand even if I wasn't stoned and tells me that for him, Physics is the mind's way tapping into the universal subconscious. Later on a girl called Anita turns up to see Iain. They disappear into his bedroom and that's the last we see of them for the night. I ask Paul if she's his girlfriend. He says, "Iain doesn't really believe in monogamy. He has a lot of love to share and he doesn't want it to be confined to just one person."

Then Paul says to me, "Did he tell you why he left Australia?" I shake my head. "He doesn't like to talk about it much, but apparently he was involved in a train robbery, and skipped the country before the trial to come here. If he returns at any point he will be thrown straight in jail. Crazy huh?" Shock must be written all over my face because Paul quickly says, "Don't worry he's a good guy. He was just in bad scene over there. He's not into anything like that here."

Paul takes me shopping for a motorbike. He has a Norton 750 and I've been thinking about getting a bike for a while. It's a drag to have to rely on the bus or someone else to get me from A to B. Paul takes me looking so I don't get ripped off cause I'm a girl. We find a nice little Suzuki 125 for me. I ring Daddy and tell him how useful it will be for me to have a motorbike, of course I tell him it's a scooter. He sends me a bank cheque for \$100 the next week and I have my very own bike. Paul and I take a trip up to the top of Mt. Vic. the day I get it. I feel like I'm flying on the way back down. I feel totally free!

Paul also gives me a puppy. He gets two from the same litter; they are Great Dane Alsatian crosses. He keeps the male and calls it Jos. He gives me the bitch and I call her Mole, after Wind in the Willows.

Mole sleeps in my bed with me, sometimes under the covers. Occasionally she gets hot and stands up and gets off the bed with all the covers still on top of her and walks out of the room looking like a four legged ghost.

We have exams coming up. I enjoy being on study leave. I get up early, make myself a cup of coffee, toast a few slices of Iain's bread and get started. I sometimes forget to eat for hours, find myself about to crash and have to race down to the corner shop. I buy jet planes and chocolate milk, and sit out in the garden and load up a pipe of chicory tobacco. This usually gets me through another couple of hours at which point I stop and make a start on dinner if it's my turn to cook.

After exams are over I decide I will go home for the summer. Daddy will pay me to work at his rooms so I can earn some money. He pays better than any of the other jobs I could get and he pretty much lets me turn up whenever I want. I just have to find someone to take my room over the summer.

LINK – Make It With You

One night at the Student Cafe I am sitting at a table waiting for Iain and Paul, when someone asks if he can sit down. I look up into the most amazing blue eyes I have ever seen. He has this incredibly olive, almost golden skin, and long blond hair with a beard to match. It makes his eyes kind of jump out at you. Ordinarily I don't find guys with blond hair attractive, and he's smaller and slighter than the guys I go for. But there's something about him that makes me say, "Absolutely. Make yourself comfortable. My name's Cilla." "I'm Johnny" he says.

We sit drinking our coffees and talk about our courses. Johnny is studying Philosophy and Anthropology. I ask him how his exam preparation is going. He says, "Exams are a crock. If I wanted to it would be so easy for me to do a bit of study and get A+'s for all my courses. But what's the point? I mean, what does that really say about me? I'm just going to sit the exams and get easy C's with no study. For me Varsity is about opening your mind to new ideas, and thinking about how they can change your view on life and the world and the universe, not about some stupid letters at the end."

I feel pretty small when I think about how hard I am trying to get good marks. I've really missed the boat.

One of Johnny's friends is a drummer in a local band. They are playing a gig at The Duke the next night and he asks me if I'd like to come along. He's living squatting style in a condemned house in Newtown. I offer to pick him up on my bike at about 8pm.

[MUSIC underneath – Whiter Shade of Pale – builds to a crescendo and ends on four large chords. The first three are synchronised with the first three "Johnny's" and the last occurs before the last "Johnny" and sustains under it.]

The gig is amazing. We hang out with the band in their breaks and I feel quite special. The band play these really psychedelic songs, with long, loud guitar solos. In the middle of the second bracket Johnny leans over and yells in my ear, "I've got something that will make this even cooler if you're interested?" I feel him put a small piece of paper in my hand. I look down and there are mini daisies printed like stickers on it. "What is it?" He replies, "The pathway to enlightenment!" "No really, what is it?" "LSD"

I've never taken LSD before but how much different can it be to smoking grass? "How do you take it?" He yells, "Stick out your tongue" and he presses one of the daisies on to it. At first nothing happens and I think that maybe Johnny got some bad stuff. I go back to watching the band. Then I notice that the guitar player has a stream of purple light coming out the end of his guitar. The music seems to have gotten slower and now I can see the sounds all the instruments are making. There are words and pictures coming out of the mouth of the lead singer and each time the drummer hits a drum it swells to twice the size and glows orange. When I look at my hands they are covered in stars and Johnny's long beard is made out of golden flowers. I lean over to tell Johnny how amazing this all is and I feel like I am on a swing, but the whole room is the swing and I am swinging towards Johnny. His whole face is shining and as I swing into him we start kissing and in the kiss I can feel my heart beating, "Johnny. Johnny. Johnny. Johnny."

[Music stops]

After the gig we go back to my place and lie in the garden eating jam on toast and drinking coffee. The chickens are talking to each other in French. I can tell because I learned French at high school but it appears to be a regional dialect so I can't really follow the conversation. "Comment ca va poulets?" I ask. They don't reply.

Then Johnny and I end up in my bed. He shuts Mole out in the garden and all I can remember of the night is him reciting mystic poetry while we make love, accompanied by Mole whining outside my window.

We wake up about 5 o'clock in the evening. I feel grumpy, tired and really hungry. Johnny is sitting on the edge of the bed with a photo of my family in his hands. "Wow, is this your family? They're so white bread. Are you rich or something?" I feel ashamed as I justify, "Well, I guess some people would think we are. But Daddy works really hard and is in a pretty select field." Johnny laughs, "Daddy. Man, you actually call him Daddy. How old are you? Twelve?" I blush, blink back the tears that are forming and say, "I feel like a coffee. Want one?" I throw on a shirt and go out to the kitchen to boil the jug.

While I'm stirring the coffee Johnny comes up behind me and wraps his arms round my waist. "You just have to understand it's really hard for me to understand families because mine is such a bad scene. My dad ran out when I was two, I never knew him. I have two half sisters, and a step-dad, but he's made it pretty clear that he doesn't think of me as his. It's hard growing up in a small town where everyone knows your business. I used to get called a bastard by the other kids at school." He has tears in his eyes as he says all this, and I feel so sorry for him. He's experienced the kind of pain I've only ever heard about. I wrap my arms around him and hold him close.

SONG – Make It With You – David Gates

Hey have you ever tried
Really reaching out for the other side?
I may be climbing on rainbows
But baby here goes

Dreams they're for those who sleep
Life is for us to keep
And if you're wondering
What this song is leading to

I want to make it with you

I really think that we can make it boy

No, you don't know me well
In ev'ry little thing only time will tell
If you believe the things that I do
And we'll see it through

Life can be short or long,
Love can be right or wrong
And if I choose the one
I'd like to help me through

I'd like to make it with you
I really think that we can make it boy
I'd like to make it with you
I really think that we can make it boy

The next week exams start and I occasionally see Johnny around Varsity. We say Hi and make small talk. One day I see him in the cafe having a very intense discussion with a girl with long red hair. There are black mascara tears streaming down her face, and she shouts something at him, grabs her satchel and storms off. Thankfully Johnny doesn't notice me watching him and I make a hasty exit.

Later on that day I see him again. I've just finished my Sociology exam. He gives me a huge beaming smile and says, "Hey Cilla. I was just thinking about you! I've just finished my last exam. Feel like celebrating?" I still have study for my English exam the next day, but figure that I've probably done enough and knowing how Johnny feels about exams in general I don't feel like I can bail on him with study as an excuse. We go to the Duke and have a few beers.

At some point we take my bike back to his place in Newtown and have some rice and lentils and smoke some hash. We climb into bed fully dressed in his dingy room with the mattress on the floor. His room's cold even though it's been a warm spring day, and he pulls me to

him and holds me tight for warmth. He starts to undress me and I say hesitantly, “Johnny, who was that girl I saw you with in the cafe today?” “What girl?” “She had long red hair, she seemed pretty upset. Is she your girlfriend or something?” He sighs and rolls away from me. “Man, why do women always have to spell everything out? Look, her name is Jenna OK. I guess we had a thing happening and she thought more of it than I did. I mean, you girls just need to relax. She thought we were exclusive or something and I didn’t. She freaked out. It was too intense; I just wanted things to be cool. You happy now?”

I want to ask him if things are finished between them now but I’m not stupid. That is not how to play things with a guy like Johnny. So I just say, “Cool” and roll towards him and start stroking his chest.

LINK – Make It With You

I wake up the next morning feeling a bit groggy from the beer and the grass and try to remember where I am and what day of the week it is. Suddenly I remember my English exam. I make it with moments to spare and pray my foggy brain can remember what I’ve studied. Somehow I manage to get through, but I’m pretty sure it won’t be my best result. I just hope I pass!

When I get home that afternoon Johnny is in my lounge drinking coffee with Paul. Paul asks how my exam was. I gloss over it; trying not to make a big deal of how worried I am in front of Johnny. “The most important thing is it was my last one!” Paul and Iain both finished the day before and we had planned to have a party at the flat tonight. I ask Johnny if he wants to stick around. He says, “Yeah. I guess. If I’m invited.” “Of course you’re invited. Everyone’s invited. I meant to ask you this morning but I forgot because I was running late.” He looks a little placated, but I know I’ll have to tread carefully with Johnny. He has been so hurt before.

[MUSIC underneath – Where Have All The Flowers Gone]

The party is great. There’s a lot of grass being smoked, and a few people look like they’re on acid. Someone gets out a guitar and we start singing songs like Blowing In The Wind and Where Have All The Flowers Gone. Paul grabs me and dances me round the room until I’m so dizzy I fall on the ground laughing so hard I think I’ll wet my pants.

I wander through the house in a drunken stoned haze looking for Johnny. I find him out in the garden talking to that red headed girl Jenna. I don't even know her so one of the boys must have invited her. I wrap my arms around Johnny from behind, smile up at him and say, "I'm tired. Shall we go to bed soon?" He looks at her and says, "Well, Jenna?" She looks like she's been slapped, yells, "Screw you!" and walks off. Johnny says, "I guess that's a yes to bed then. I'm pretty tired too." I feel the triumph of that moment in spite of how much I've had to drink and smoke, and wrap my arm through Johnny's, press up against him and walk with him to my room.

[Music stops]

The next morning I suggest to Johnny that he takes my room for the summer. "I leave next week. You wouldn't have to pay rent or anything." He looks at me and says, "I don't need charity Cilla. I am completely OK where I am. I realise it must seem like an utter dive to you with your perfect upbringing and everything." I hurriedly reply "No that's not what I meant. You'd be doing me a favour. I need someone to look after Mole and my bike and everything." "I'll think about it. I do have my own plans" I shrug, "Sure. It's no big deal."

Johnny turns up the next day with a couple of bags stuffed with clothes, records and books, and says, "I'll take the room. But I have to move in now. Our house is getting bulldozed tomorrow." I decide not to go home for the holidays.

I get a job at a car yard washing cars in the morning when they open up. It's pretty ideal as I have the rest of the day off, and I can turn up to work barefoot in cut off jeans and no one seems to mind. My parents continue to send me a weekly allowance and it's more than enough for me and Johnny to live on. Johnny also has a part time job working at the fish markets. He hates it because he comes home stinking of fish, and they make him wear a hairnet. But it gives him money to buy books and records and acid when he wants it. I pay the rent and buy our food.

SONG – Long About Now – Scott Walker

Long about now

He's heading home

Back from the rain

Burned to the ground

His ashes will rise black butterflies
Tapping at my window pane
He'll want to rest within my design
All the way to the end
Lighting my skies all up inside again
Dimming summer

Long about now
He's heading home
Drowning the games
That steel a man
Long about now
He'll shrug and sigh and need me again

All the talk over the summer has been of Ngaruawahia. Everyone says it's going to be New Zealand's answer to Woodstock. We all decide we're going to go. I tell the car yard owners that Mother is sick, quit and hitchhike up to Napier with Paul and Iain to stay with Paul's parents for a few nights. Johnny has to work another week at the markets so we'll meet him up there.

It seems like the warmest summer in ages and Paul and I spend a lot of time smoking pot and lying out under the stars. He makes me a daisy chain which I wear for most of our trip. It's nice to be at his home too. His mum makes us these really big dinners and everything is clean and quiet and comfortable. Iain discusses Vietnam with Paul's dad every night. Paul's dad puts up a good argument for the western world fighting against the spread of communism but I think he's secretly amused by us really. They keep asking us about this "concert" we're going to see. They don't seem to understand the concept of Ngaruawahia being a festival in celebration of our total way of life. They're lovely people, just out of touch.

We get to Ngaruawahia late Friday afternoon. We set up our tent and start to look for Johnny. There are so many people we know here and we seem to run into everyone except him. We wander round casually smoking a J right out in the open like it's no big deal. Some people have obviously had a head start, they are tripping already.

[MUSIC underneath - Suzanne]

We buy some samosas from one of the food stalls and head back to the tent. Some people in the tent next to us have a guitar and a tin whistle and they're having a sing-along. Iain decides he's going to sleep under the stars. Paul and I lie in the tent listening to the singing. He reaches over and takes my hand. We lie there for a while in the dark and neither of us say a word. I can hear that his breathing has gotten deep and kind of shuddery. He rolls over towards me in the dark and begins to kiss me. His skin feels soft and warm and he tastes of spices. He whispers in my ear "I've wanted to kiss you since the first day you moved into the flat. I think you are the most fascinating girl I've ever met. When you smile at me, I feel like there's a rainbow inside me". He touches me slowly and gently, his body just the right size against mine. We make love for most of the night, quietly, so as not to disturb the people in the next tent. We fall asleep just before dawn. My head resting on his chest, my hair spread across it like a blanket.

***SONG** – Suzanne – Leonard Cohen*

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river
You can hear the boats go by you can spend the night beside her
And you know that she's half crazy but that's why you want to be there
And she feeds you tea and oranges that come all the way from china
And just when you mean to tell her that you have no love to give her
Then she gets you on her wavelength and she lets the river answer
That you've always been her lover
And you want to travel with her
And you want to travel blind
And you know that she will trust you
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind

And Jesus was a sailor when he walked upon the water
And he spent a long time watching from his lonely wooden tower
And when he knew for certain only drowning men could see him
He said all men will be sailors then until the sea shall free them

But he himself was broken long before the sky would open
Forsaken, almost human he sank beneath your wisdom like a stone
And you want to travel with him
And you want to travel blind
And you think maybe you'll trust him
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind

Now Suzanne takes your hand and she leads you to the river
She is wearing rags and feathers from salvation army counters
And the sun pours down like honey on our lady of the harbour
And she shows you where to look among the garbage and the flowers
There are heroes in the seaweed there are children in the morning
They are leaning out for love and they will lean that way forever
While Suzanne holds the mirror
And you want to travel with her
And you want to travel blind
And you know that you can trust her
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind

This is how Johnny finds us in the morning. He completely freaks out. He calls me a slut and tells Paul he's going to do him in. Paul throws on his jeans, gives my hand a quick squeeze and takes off. Johnny sits down hard on floor of the tent. He keeps looking at me, and saying over and over "How could you do this to me? Why do you hate me so much?" His eyes fill with tears, and he puts his head in his hands and starts to silently weep. I put my hand on his shoulder and gently rub his back, and tell him how sorry I am, that I wasn't thinking, that we were both a bit stoned, that it didn't mean anything. I say anything I can think of that might make it mean less. He eventually stops crying and says to me, "I just can't live without you Cilla. You're the only one who gets me. Promise me you won't ever leave me".

We set up camp a little way off from Iain and Paul. I mean everyone is being cool about the situation but it's still a little awkward. Paul seems fine, he did say very quietly when I told him, that he wished the situation could have turned out differently, but he understands.

[MUSIC underneath – Sound of Silence/Dance All Around the World/Leader of the Pack – changes take place from song to song to tie in with the text]

The festival is in full swing now. Corben Simpson was the opening act and he performed naked. For some reason this has made half the people here want to get naked. There are people swimming naked in the river, half the audience is naked. Johnny takes off his clothes after we make up and tells me he doesn't intend to put them back on at any point. I'm trying to get with it, but I just can't. I just find it all a bit ridiculous. There are people bending over, picking up rubbish with no clothes on. It's too much to see and it just makes me want to laugh.

The next morning Johnny goes for a swim in the river first thing. I'm only just waking up, and so I tell him I'll wait for him at the tent. He is gone for what seems like hours. I decide to take a wander down to the river and find him. There must be at least a hundred people in the river. I walk along the bank for a bit but I can't see him. I go back to the tent and sit outside waiting. Lots of people I know walk past and say hi, or ask me to join them, but no sign of Johnny. Just when I'm starting to get really worried that something has happened he turns up. When I ask him why he took so long he says, "I went to watch the bands. We're not joined at the hip Cilla, you can do things without me, remember."

While Black Sabbath play they burn a huge cross on the hill. At some point there's whole lot of Harley Davidsons on the stage and a band play a crazy version of Leader of the Pack. Everyone goes mad and is screaming and cheering. I look around at all these people, half of them naked and their faces distorted in ecstasy, jumping up and down. I try and throw myself into the spirit of it all but can't seem to find the energy. Maybe it's the situation with Johnny and Paul but I just feel a little tired of it all. It's still fun and an experience I know I'm not likely to forget but I just don't seem to be as into it as much as the people around me.

[Music stops]

After the third day of the festival the food, the music, the drugs, the river, the bodies all seem to melt into one long, hot, pungent day. I'm exhausted, nauseous and ready to spend some time alone. Johnny decides we should hitch up to Northland and camp for a few days.

When we get to the camp site in Kaitaia and we start to unpack our gear we realise that we have only packed the fly and managed to leave the tent and the poles at Ngaruawahia. It was Johnny's job to pack the tent but I think it's best not to remind him of that. It's better not to push my luck. Johnny is fuming about the whole thing and takes his machete up into some nearby bush and cuts down two small trees to act as makeshift poles. Then I get really sick and spend the whole night vomiting into our billy which Johnny has to ferry down to the toilet block in between to empty.

In the morning Johnny is still in a foul mood and complaining bitterly about being kept awake all night. I try and keep the peace, and tell Johnny he should go back to sleep.

I wash out the billy and boil some water in the kitchen and make myself some weak tea. It's about as much as I can stomach. While I'm gingerly sipping away, a woman about Mother's age comes over and introduces herself as Karen. She's in the site next to ours so she knows I've been sick all night. I start to apologise and she tells me not to worry about it and tells me she has some anti nausea tablets at their tent and would I like some. I burst into tears. It's the nicest thing that anyone has done for me since the first night at Ngaruawahia.

I take some pills and go back to our tent and quietly climb in next to Johnny and try to sleep. All I want is a comfortable bed and my Mother to rub my back and stroke my hair, but I remind myself that these are the things I have left behind and to stop feeling sorry for myself. At least Johnny is asleep. That's one relief. With any luck he'll be in a better mood when he wakes up.

SONG – One Too Many Mornings – Bob Dylan

Down the street the dogs are barkin'
And the day is a-gettin' dark
As the night comes in a-fallin'
The dogs 'll lose their bark
An' the silent night will shatter
From the sounds inside my mind
For I'm one too many mornings
And a thousand miles behind

From the crossroads of my doorstep
My eyes they start to fade
As I turn my head back to the room
Where my love and I have laid
An' I gaze back to the street
The sidewalk and the sign
And I'm one too many mornings
An' a thousand miles behind

It's a restless hungry feeling
That don't mean no one no good
When ev'rything I'm a-sayin'
You can say it just as good
You're right from your side
I'm right from mine
We're both just one too many mornings
An' a thousand miles behind

Cilla exits. Musicians exit.

INTERVAL

ACT II

Musicians enter and take their places and begin playing.

MUSIC underneath – Nights in White Satin

Cilla enters through audience.

Cilla:

Back in Wellington, one evening late in January we're all lazing around the house a bit wasted and listening to the Moody Blues. It's a warm, clear evening. The kind that makes you want to sit out on the porch all night talking about nothing and everything, except that our porch is rotten and Paul fell through it the last time he took a chair out there. We're contemplating taking our bikes to Lyall Bay for a swim when there's a violently loud knock at the door followed by a voice yelling...

[Music stops]

“Open up, it's the police!”

Johnny looks at me, says “Shit!” while we quickly try and stash the half smoked joint. Paul answers the door and Johnny starts for our room but there's not enough time. There are four cops with a big Alsatian dog and they burst through the door, immediately split up and start to search different rooms. The dog is straining at its lead practically dragging it's handler down the hall towards our room barking and growling. Jos and Mole are barking and racing round the house in a frenzy. One of the cops yells, “Get those bloody dogs restrained!”

I grab Mole and Jos and shut them in the bathroom. The cop with the dog is in our room ripping through our stuff. The dog can obviously smell something and is yelping excitedly and trying to dig through our clothes and records and whatever else that's lying on the floor to get to it. Johnny is pacing up and down the hallway swearing under his breath.

In a matter of minutes the cops have found an ounce bag of pot, some hash, a pipe with some left over hash still in the bowl, some buds from Iain's plant drying on the window sill in his room, and three tabs of LSD in our room. One of the cops looks me up and down, smiles

suggestively and says to one of the others, “You think they all share her?” I feel like I’m about to throw up.

They take us all down to the central police station to be fingerprinted and charged. Johnny insists that I had no idea he had the acid and that none of the drugs are mine. He keeps saying “You can’t charge her. She didn’t do anything. It’s not her stuff.” Finally they believe him. I’m left in the waiting area while Johnny and Iain are charged. They didn’t find anything in Paul’s room either so he’s only finger printed and given a warning. We sit there in total silence for a while then he puts his arm around me and I start to cry, quietly into his shoulder. I’m utterly terrified of what might happen to Johnny and Iain. He holds me tighter and says, “It’s OK Cilla. It’s just small time stuff to them. They’ll just be trying to make a point.”

After what seems like an age Johnny walks through the door. He looks exhausted and very angry. I leave Paul to wait for Iain and go with Johnny. We spend the walk home in total silence. We get in just after midnight. We can hear the dogs howling and scratching in the bathroom from the front door. They’ve made short work of the old bath mat and towel that were hanging off the edge of the bath.

Our room is a wreck. The mattress is upside down, and contents of our drawers and wardrobe lie scattered over the floor. We only have the energy to right the mattress, pull a sheet over us and try to go to sleep. I say to Johnny “Thank you”, he rolls away from me and says “I don’t want to talk about it. Go to sleep”.

I sleep fitfully, wake early and leave Johnny sleeping in bed. Iain is in the kitchen making a cup of coffee. He’s just the person I need to talk to, so I pull up a chair at the kitchen table and say “Paul said it’s just small time stuff to the cops. He doesn’t think they’ll make a big deal of it”.

Iain turns round to me with a look on his face I have never seen before and says “Well, it’s all bloody well for you and Paul isn’t it? Little Miss and Mr White Bread manage to get out with their hands totally clean. What a surprise it’s me and Johnny that take the fall. Not that it’s going to make much of a difference to him. Do you have any bloody idea what’s going to happen to me if I get done for this? I’ll be sent back to Australia that’s what, and then it’s all over for me. Who did you idiots tell about those plants? I can’t believe how stupid and naive you guys are. This is the real world Cilla. Daddy can’t save us here.”

I just want to go home. But I can't leave Johnny after what he did for me. He wouldn't cope going through all this alone. And I can't face the thought of turning up on my parent's doorstep and telling them what happened.

The day of the court case is my 18th birthday. I get a card with a twenty dollar note in it from my parents wishing me a day full of excitement and surprises. Johnny gets dressed for court in the morning. He puts on the only nice shirt and tie he has with his jeans and sandals and puts his hair in a ponytail to at least try for some semblance of respectability. I don't remind him it's my birthday. He doesn't remember.

SONG – It's All Over Now Baby Blue – Bob Dylan

You must leave now, take what you need, you think will last
But whatever you wish to keep, you better grab it fast
Yonder stands your orphan with his gun
Crying like a fire in the sun
Look out the saints are comin' through
And it's all over now, Baby Blue

The highway is for gamblers, better use your sense
Take what you have gathered from coincidence
The empty-handed painter from your streets
Is drawing crazy patterns on your sheets
This sky, too, is folding under you
And it's all over now, Baby Blue

Leave your stepping stones behind, something calls for you
Forget the dead you've left, they will not follow you
The vagabond who's rapping at your door
Is standing in the clothes that you once wore
Strike another match, go start anew
And it's all over now, it's all over now, it's all over now

[Music stops]

Baby Blue

I'm putting on a really brave face for Johnny, trying to be positive. I keep saying things like "You're a first time offender, they'll go easy" and "They have very little evidence, nothing to hang a case on". I can tell he is terrified but he won't talk about it and he snaps at me "For crying out loud Cilla, if you can't do something useful, at least get out of my way!" I go and make him a cup of coffee and as I'm bringing it through to him, he opens the door of the bedroom suddenly and I spill it all down my front. I have to get changed and this makes Johnny even angrier. He's convinced I'm trying to make him late.

They call Johnny's name and he has to go and stand up the front with the lawyer the court gives to people that can't afford to hire one. He keeps his head high, and I can see the muscles in his jaw tightening as they read the charge against him. Where I spilt the coffee has started to throb with a dull, hot pain but the rest of me is so cold I'm shivering. Johnny pleads guilty in a loud, defiant voice which seems to reverberate off all the walls in the court room. He gets a fine of \$100 and a month's community service.

[MUSIC underneath – Amazing Grace – musicians hum melody]

My neck and shoulders are in knots as we leave the court house, and I have a throbbing headache. I buy Johnny a coffee and say "You must be happy with how that turned out." He looks at me, rolls his eyes and says, "Sometimes you are so naive I want to scream Cilla. Don't you get it? I have a criminal record for the rest of my life now. Yeah, I'm so happy I could die laughing." We finish our coffees in silence and walk home. There are a group of people in Cuba St with a guitar singing Amazing Grace and giving away Bibles. They look so happy and peaceful and the sweetness of their singing spreads over me like a blanket. It's so enticing I wish I could just sit down and listen to them for the rest of the evening.

[Music stops]

But we have to get home.

Iain disappears. Paul decides to move back home to Napier. It's just Johnny and me. Everything feels broken, like all the threads that hold us together are rotten. But I am trying to hold on to us, and to find a way to him. Johnny, Mole and I are staying in his friend's spare

room. One morning I wake up and find Johnny fully dressed sitting on the edge of the bed with a packed duffle bag beside him. He doesn't look at me, "I'm moving to Auckland. I'm going to live on a Yoga Ashram. I don't know how long I'll be gone for. Would you look after my stuff?"

I'm still in that groggy state between sleep and waking and I can't quite understand what he's saying. "What? What about us Johnny? Are you breaking up with me?"

"For crying out loud Cilla, don't be so melodramatic. We haven't made any promises. It was fine while it was working but it's not anymore. I need to be somewhere I can clear my head. I can't think straight with you always here. I know it's hard to believe but this isn't about you. Man, your selfishness never ceases to amaze me." With this he stands, grabs his bag and walks out. I hear the sound of a car driving off and the realisation he must have been planning this for weeks hits me like a slap in the face.

I make myself a coffee, come back to the room and sit on the edge of the bed. What little we own is stacked in the corner of the room in boxes. I see that there is a note attached to one of Johnny's boxes. Of course, I should have known. Johnny would have said what he needed to say in writing.

SONG – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye – Leonard Cohen

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm
Your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm
Yes, many loved before us, I know that we are not new
In city and in forest they smiled like me and you
But now it's come to distances and both of us must try
Your eyes are soft with sorrow
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I'm not looking for another as I wander in my time
Walk me to the corner, our steps will always rhyme
You know my love goes with you as your love stays with me
It's just the way it changes, like the shoreline and the sea
But let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie

Your eyes are soft with sorrow
 Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I loved you in the morning, our kisses deep and warm
 Your hair upon the pillow like a sleepy golden storm
 Yes many loved before us, I know that we are not new
 In city and in forest they smiled like me and you
 But let's not talk of love or chains and things we can't untie
 Your eyes are soft with sorrow
 Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I get the note, climb back into bed and read it. “Box 1 has records in it. Make sure it isn’t stored on a damp floor and don’t play them or let other people play them. I don’t want them getting scratched. Box 2 has books in it. Don’t get them damp either. Make sure if you move or lift the box that the underside seam is supported so that it doesn’t fall open. Again, don’t read or loan these books. Box 3 has my clothes in it. At some point it would be good if you could air them out or preferably wash them so they don’t get musty or mouldy. Thanks, Johnny.”

I feel completely empty, like a piece of spooned out fruit. I wonder if I will cry but I don’t. I just lie here for the rest of the day with the curtains closed, staring at boxes 1, 2 and 3.

LINK – Hey That’s No Way To Say Goodbye

I struggle on at Varsity but one day when a lecturer starts a discussion on the use of imagery in Keats’ Odes, I think, I too would like to “fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget.” Everything seems spoiled since the summer and I can’t find the energy for it anymore.

[MUSIC underneath – Amazing Grace – 3x intro then MUSICIANS sing first verse to link in with reference to lyric in text]

After lectures one day I am walking past Parliament and I notice a big rally going on. There is a huge crowd, music and a buzz of excitement in the air. The songs are all about God and Jesus and peace and love. Some of them I know from chapel services at school, although I’ve never heard Amazing Grace sung this way before. It sounds more like something Dylan

might sing. I find myself really listening to the words for the first time. When it gets to the line “I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see” I start to cry.

A man gets up to speak. He talks about love, and peace and feeling fulfilled and filled. I feel so empty, and so unsure that his words seem like a rope pulling me from the bottom of the sea.

Everyone around me looks so happy and I stay sitting there for hours afterwards. I feel like if I stay there for long enough and just breathe in the same air as them I’ll catch a bit of their happiness.

[Music stops]

The next afternoon I take Mole for a walk along the beach at Lyall Bay. It’s not the warmest of autumn days and there’s a stiff breeze coming in off the sea. I keep thinking of the happiness I felt yesterday. It seems like the first time I’ve felt happy in ages. Then I realise more than anything I want to wash the past year off me and make a fresh start, so I tie Mole up to a park bench and walk fully clothed into the water. The sea is cold and murky but I keep walking till the water is up to my waist. Then I dive under and as I do I say goodbye to the old Cilla and hello to a brand new day. I lift my head out of the freezing water and feel new and clean and somehow part of something bigger and more important than myself.

SONG –*Restless Farewell – Bob Dylan*

Oh all the money that in my whole life I did spend
Be it mine right or wrongfully
I let it slip gladly past the hands of my friends
To tie up the time most forcefully
But the bottles are done
We've killed each one
And the table's full and overflowed
And the corner sign
Says it's closing time
So I'll bid farewell and be down the road

The feeling stays with me as Mole and I make our way home. I'm cold and damp, but happier than I've been in months.

The first thing I see when we get in is Johnny's boxes.

I wash the clothes and hang them out on the line. Johnny and I were always about the same size and there was one pair of jeans of his I rather liked. I decide to keep them. I probably bought them for him anyway.

I move the boxes containing the records and books carefully to the hallway, remembering to support the underneath seam. I open the box with the books in it. The first thing I see is my book of TS Eliot poems! There are a few other books of poetry I want to look at but Johnny and I had very different taste in literature. I sort through the records. I leave a few Dylan and Cohen albums out to listen to before closing the boxes.

Oh ev'ry boy that ever I've touched
I did not do it harmfully
And ev'ry boy that ever I've hurt
I did not do it knowin'ly
But to remain as friends and make amends
You need the time and stay behind
And since my feet are now fast
And point away from the past
I'll bid farewell and be down the line

Then I make two phone calls: the first to the local second hand dealers telling them I have two boxes of books and records in excellent condition that I'd like to sell; and the second to the Salvation Army and ask them if they could come and pick up a box of men's clothes I no longer need.

I make myself a cup of tea and while I'm waiting in the driveway with the boxes the postie comes past. There is a postcard from Paul. He's coming to Wellington in three weeks and would really like to see me.

Oh a false clock tries to tick out my time
To disgrace, distract, and bother me
And the dirt of gossip blows into my face
And the dust of rumors covers me
But if the arrow is straight
And the point is slick
It can pierce through dust no matter how thick
So I'll make my stand
And remain as I am
And bid farewell and not give a damn

PLAYOFF – *Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35* – Bob Dylan

Cilla exits. Re-enters on end of applause for encore.

ENCORE – *I Am Woman* – Helen Reddy

I am woman, hear me roar
In numbers too big to ignore
And I know too much to go back and pretend
'Cause I've heard it all before
And I've been down there on the floor
No one's ever gonna keep me down again

Oh yes I am wise, but it's wisdom born of pain
Yes, I've paid the price, but look how much I gained
If I have to, I can do anything
I am strong - strong
I am invincible - invincible
I am woman

You can bend but never break me

'Cause it only serves to make me
More determined to achieve my final goal
And I come back even stronger
Not a novice any longer
'Cause you've deepened the conviction in my soul

Oh yes I am wise, but it's wisdom born of pain
Yes, I've paid the price, but look how much I gained
If I have to, I can do anything
I am strong - strong
I am invincible - invincible
I am woman

I am woman watch me grow
See me standing toe to toe
As I spread my lovin' arms across the land
But I'm still an embryo
With a long, long way to go
Until I make my brother understand

Oh yes I am wise, but it's wisdom born of pain
Yes, I've paid the price, but look how much I gained
If I have to, I can face anything
I am strong - strong
I am invincible - invincible
I am woman

Players bow and exit.



MUSIC CUES**ACT I**

Musicians take stage.

1. OPENING MUSIC – Where Have All The Flowers Gone

Cilla takes stage.

Here I am. For the first time in my seventeen years, I, Cilla Cartwright, will be without my parents, my sisters, my cat, my dog, my books, my dolls. I will be on my own, and I can be – Whoever. I. Want! And where am I? **Helen Lowry Hall, a hostel for women students of Victoria University and I am standing in the doorway of my room.**

2. SONG – Ruby Tuesday

(Three quarters of a page of text.) I walk downstairs to the rhythm of “I prefer Angela. I prefer Angela.” The next evening when she gets in from class I am playing a **Rolling Stones record.**

3. EXCERPT - Can't Always Get What You Want – chorus line twice, guitar and piano pull out abruptly

She stands at the door, looks at me very sadly, sighs, and says, “This just isn’t going to work Cilla. I’m sorry, you’re probably a very nice girl but I don’t think I can be your roommate.” “Yeah. I think you’re right” I reply, with what I hope is a sad expression on my face. “We’re just on different wavelengths.” **By the end of the week we’ve changed rooms.**

4. EXCERPT - Can't Always Get What You Want – chorus

(Page of text.) One day I was having a cigarette, and made the mistake of asking if she smoked. “I may be a vegetarian, but I’m not an idiot, Cilla!” **Oh well. I console myself by saying, “It’s only for a year.”**

5. LINK – Ruby Tuesday – first two lines

(Half page of text) He tells me they have a room free and would I be interested in moving in. He seems like such an amazing guy and the place sounds so much better than the hostel that I **immediately reply, “When?”**

6. **SONG** – Winter Lady – Leonard Cohen

(Half page of text) My room has a big bay window that looks out onto the garden and two of the chickens are roosting on the window sill. There is a huge sense of relief and excitement about not having anyone or anything to answer to. **Finally I am the master of my own destiny.**

7. **LINK** – Ruby Tuesday – first verse underneath text (STOP at “in a ponytail”)

(Half page of text) “Aren’t these chips just too much. They’re... they’re...” Paul says, “You are so stoned!” **This just makes me laugh even harder. And I think this is what being really alive feels like.**

8. **SONG** – Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35 – Bob Dylan

(Three quarters of a page of text.) After exams are over I decide I will go home for the summer. Daddy will pay me to work at his rooms so I can earn some money. He pays better than any of the other jobs I could get and he pretty much lets me turn up whenever I want. **I just have to find someone to take my room over the summer.**

9. **LINK** – Make It With You – First line of chorus NO VOCAL

(Half page of text) One of Johnny’s friends is a drummer in a local band. They are playing a gig at The Duke the next night and he asks me if I’d like to come along. He’s living squatting style in a condemned house in Newtown. **I offer to pick him up on my bike at about 8pm.**

10. **MUSIC** – Whiter Shade of Pale style – PSYCHEDELIC - **underneath text,** builds to a crescendo and ends on four large chords. The first three are synchronised with the first three “Johnny’s” and the last occurs before the last “Johnny” and sustains under it.

Listen for: At first nothing happens and I think that maybe Johnny got some bad stuff. I go back to listening and watching the band. Then I notice that the guitar player has a stream of purple light coming out the end of his guitar. **The music seems to have gotten slower**

Slow down

His whole face is shining and as I swing into him we start kissing and in the kiss I can feel my heart beating, **“Johnny. Johnny. Johnny. Johnny.”**

STOP here

(Half page of text) He has tears in his eyes as he says all this, and I feel so sorry for him. He’s experienced the kind of pain I’ve only ever heard about. **I wrap my arms around him and hold him close.**

11. **SONG** – Make It With You – David Gates

(Half page of text) I want to ask him if things are finished between them now but I’m not stupid. That is not how to play things with a guy like Johnny. So I just say, “Cool” and roll towards him and start stroking his chest.

12. **LINK** – Make It With You – First line of chorus NO VOCAL

(Quarter page of text) “Yeah. I guess. If I’m invited.” “Of course you’re invited. Everyone’s invited. I meant to ask you this morning but I forgot because I was running late.” **He looks a little placated, but I know I’ll have to tread carefully with Johnny. He has been so hurt before.**

13. **MUSIC** – Where Have All The Flowers Gone – FOLKY - **underneath text**

I feel the triumph of that moment in spite of how much I’ve had to drink and smoke, and wrap my arm through Johnny’s, **press up against him and walk with him to my room.**

STOP here

My parents continue to send me a weekly allowance and it’s more than enough for me and Johnny to live on. Johnny also has a part time job working at the fish markets. He hates it because he comes home stinking of fish, and they make him wear a hairnet. **But it gives him**

money to buy books and records and acid when he wants it. I pay the rent and buy our food.

14. **SONG** – Long About Now – Scott Walker

(Three quarters of a page of text.) Everybody looks vibrant and colourful. We wander round casually smoking a J right out in the open like it's no big deal. **Some people have obviously had a head start, they are tripping already.**

15. **MUSIC** – Based on Suzanne – FOLKY - **underneath text** continues into song

We fall asleep just before dawn. **My head resting on his chest, my hair spread across it like a blanket.**

16. **SONG** – Suzanne – Leonard Cohen

(Quarter page of text) We set up camp a little way off from Iain and Paul. I mean everyone is being cool about the situation but it's still a little awkward. Paul seems fine, he did say very quietly when I told him, that he wished the situation could have turned out differently, but he understands.

17. **MUSIC** – Starts SOUND OF SILENCE, moves DANCE ALL AROUND THE WORLD, LEADER OF THE PACK (cued in text) - **underneath text**

Maybe it's the situation with Johnny and Paul but I just feel a little tired of it all. It's still fun and an experience **I know I'm not likely to forget but I just don't seem to be as into it as much as the people around me.**

STOP here

(Three quarters of a page of text.) I remind myself that these are the things I have left behind and to stop feeling sorry for myself. At least Johnny is asleep. That's one relief. **With any luck he'll be in a better mood when he wakes up.**

18. **SONG** – One Too Many Mornings – Bob Dylan

INTERVAL

ACT II

Musicians take stage

19. **MUSIC** – Nights in White Satin - **underneath text**

Cilla takes stage

Back in Wellington, one evening late in January we're all lazing around the house a bit wasted and listening to some Moody Blues' records. It's a warm, clear evening. The kind that makes you want to sit out on the porch all night talking about nothing and everything, except the boards on our porch are rotting and Paul fell through it the last time he took a chair out there. We're contemplating taking our bikes to Lyall Bay for a swim when there's a **violently loud knock at the door followed by a voice yelling "Open up, it's the police!"**

STOP here

(Two pages of text.) He puts on the only nice shirt and tie he has with his jeans and sandals and puts his hair in a ponytail to at least try for some semblance of respectability. **I don't remind him it's my birthday. He doesn't remember.**

20. **SONG** – It's All Over Now Baby Blue – Bob Dylan – music drops out before end of song to leave last "Baby blue" a cappella.

21. *(Quarter page of text)* Where I spilt the coffee has started to throb with a dull, hot pain but the rest of me is so cold I'm shivering. Johnny pleads guilty in a loud, defiant voice which seems to reverberate off all the walls in the court room. **He gets a fine of \$100 and a month's community service.**

22. **MUSIC** – Amazing Grace in 4/4(Musicians hum melody) - **underneath text**

(Quarter page of text) It's so enticing I wish I could just sit down and listen to them for the rest of the evening. **But we have to get home.**

STOP here – abruptly if needed.

(Half page of text) What little we own is stacked in the corner of the room in boxes. I see that there is a note attached to one of Johnny's boxes. **Of course, I should have known. Johnny would have said what he needed to say in writing.**

23. **SONG** – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye – Leonard Cohen

(Quarter page of text) I feel completely empty, like a piece of spooned out fruit. I lie down on the bed and wonder if I will cry but I don't. I just lie here for the rest of the day with the curtains closed, **staring at boxes 1, 2 and 3.**

24. **LINK** – Hey That's No Way To Say Goodbye NO VOCAL

I struggle on at Varsity but one day when a lecturer starts a discussion on the use of imagery in Keats' Odes, I think, I too would like to "fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget." **Everything seems spoiled since the summer and I can't find the energy for it anymore.**

25. **MUSIC** – Amazing Grace in 4/4 - 3x intro then MUSICIANS sing first verse

AMAZING GRACE HOW SWEET THE SOUND

THAT SAVED A WRETCH LIKE ME

I ONCE WAS LOST BUT NOW AM FOUND

WAS BLIND BUT NOW I SEE – instrumental continues underneath text

(Quarter page of text) I feel like if I stay there for long enough and just breathe in the same air as them I'll catch a bit of their happiness.

STOP here – resolve to suit music.

Then I dive under and as I do I say goodbye to the old Cilla and hello to a brand new day. I lift my head out of the freezing water and feel new and clean and **somehow part of something bigger and more important than myself.**

26. **SONG** – Restless Farewell – Bob Dylan **VERSE ONE** – music continues under text – guitar only

The feeling stays with me as Mole and I make our way home. I'm cold and damp, but happier than I've been in months. The first thing I see when we get in is Johnny's boxes.

I wash the clothes and hang them out on the line. Johnny and I were always about the same size and there was one pair of jeans of his I rather liked. I decide to keep them. I probably bought them for him anyway.

I move the boxes containing the records and books carefully to the hallway, remembering to support the underneath seam. I open the box with the books in it. The first thing I see is my book of TS Eliot poems! There are a few other books of poetry I want to look at but Johnny and I had very different taste in literature. I sort through the records. **I leave a few Dylan and Cohen albums out to listen to before closing the boxes.**

27. SONG – Restless Farewell – Bob Dylan VERSE **TWO** – music continues under text – piano only

Then I make two phone calls: the first to the local second hand dealers telling them I have two boxes of books and records in excellent condition that I'd like to sell; and the second to the Salvation Army and ask them if they could come and pick up a box of men's clothes I no longer need.

I make myself a cup of tea and while I'm waiting in the driveway with the boxes the postie comes past. There is a postcard from Paul. **He's coming to Wellington in three weeks and would really like to see me.**

28. SONG – Restless Farewell – Bob Dylan VERSE **THREE**

29. **PLAYOFF** – Rainy Day Women # 12 and 35 – NO VOCAL from Cilla but Musicians have a free for all – Cilla bow and exit, musicians remain seated.

Cilla returns to stage

30. **SONG** – I AM WOMAN – Helen Reddy

All bow and exit.

BASIC LIGHTING CUES/SUGGESTED STATES

110

Basic states:

1. For songs musicians as well as Cilla lit
2. For text light mainly focused on Cilla

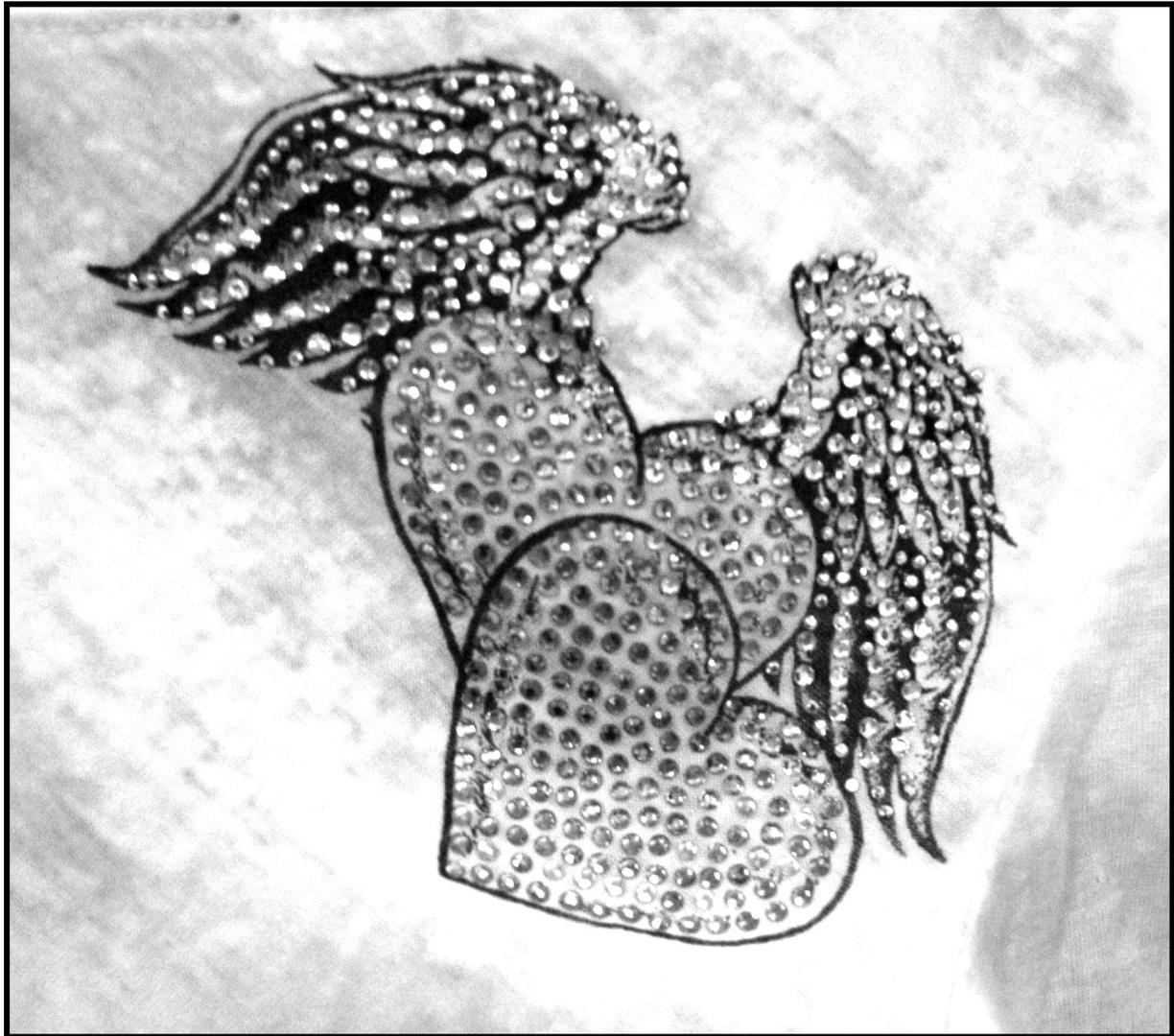
Specific scenes:

3. LSD trip scene – pull out the stops and have some fun – gobos, colour etc
4. Love scene at Ngaruawahia – intimate beautiful state – maybe some blues, tight spot round face
5. The drug bust and trial – very stark harsh light, white no yellow
6. Rally, and beach scene – golden, early morning, beautiful, sunny

Other possibilities:

7. Night scenes – lower lighting
8. Scenes involving music under/in the action – more light on musicians

In Defence of Love



Characters

Spirit – an attractive woman, about 30, feminine and somewhat fragile in appearance

Reason – a confident, stylish woman, about 30

Appetite – a sensual woman, curvaceous and appealing in appearance, about 30

Set

A table with three chairs at it, and the settings that would be appropriate to a contemporary cafe or wine bar

Time

The present, any city, any country

The lights come up on what appears to be a restaurant or a small area of one. There is a table in the centre of the stage with three chairs around it. The table is dressed with a table cloth, cutlery, plates etc., three wine glasses, an open bottle of wine, and a large plate of food – perhaps an antipasti platter of some kind. Two of the glasses have wine in them. One is nearly empty, the other quite full. There is a large carafe of water, and three water glasses also.

As the lights come up we see a woman sitting at the chair SR of the table. She is attractive, stylish and appears quite contained. She takes a sip of her wine (the fuller glass) and checks her watch. Another woman enters. Also attractive, she is fuller figured and dressed in a very sensual manner. She energetically flops into the SL chair.

APPETITE: God, that feels better. I was about to burst. Isn't she here yet?

She takes a large gulp of her wine. She should continue to drink and fill her glass at will throughout the play.

REASON: No. It's not like her to be late either.

APPETITE: Maybe she got stuck in traffic. Did you bring wine too? Should I text her to get another bottle?

REASON: I take it you're not driving then.

She sips her wine. She should sip her wine at regular intervals throughout the play but space them far apart. We should only see her refill her wine glass once.

APPETITE: Hell no! Actually, I was hoping I could get a ride home with you. That cool?

REASON: Fine. I must have saved you a small fortune in cab fares over the years!

APPETITE: Don't worry; I'll do my stint as the sober driver as some point.

REASON: *[Affectionately]* I'll believe that when I see it!

APPETITE: I might get pregnant at some point or train for a sporting event or something.

REASON: *[Laughs]* I don't think there are any sports involving competitive shopping!
[Beat] Are you thinking about babies?

APPETITE: God no! But you never know, one day I might want one.

REASON: Well don't wait forever. I saw this episode of Oprah once. The good eggs go first.

APPETITE: Gross. I wish she'd hurry up and get here, I'm starving. I could eat a horse and chase the jockey.

REASON: I'm just saying, if it's something you want, don't leave it up to chance.

APPETITE: Yes Mum. But I don't even know if I want to have ...

REASON: Ok, Ok. Look before she gets here, I think we should talk to her, seriously, about it all tonight.

APPETITE: About what?

REASON: Don't play dumb. You know exactly what I ... Hey honey!

Another woman enters. She is beautiful in a haunted sort of way. She is dressed in a very feminine manner wearing a small heart shaped necklace on a chain, and a very plain wedding ring. She looks harried and rushed. She should absentmindedly play with the necklace on and off throughout the play.

SPIRIT: I'm so sorry ladies. You should have started without me. I was running late, and then of course there was no petrol in the car and I couldn't find a park, and I'd left my stupid phone at home so I couldn't call. What time is it? *[Looks at her watch.]* Twenty past eight – terrible.

APPETITE: Don't worry about it. I was quite excited not to be the last one here, for once!

REASON: It's fine. We ordered, just our usual. *[Indicates food.]* We did open the wine though. Shall I pour you a glass?

SPIRIT: Yes please. Just a half though, driving. How long has it been? Months?

REASON: Almost half a year. It seems like we never get to see you anymore.

SPIRIT: I know. I've just been so busy with work and everything.

Reason pours Spirit a glass of wine and looks at her with concern.

APPETITE: Long overdue. You brought wine too, right? This one's almost finished.

SPIRIT: Shit! I think I left it in the car... *[Pulls out a shopping bag]* Oh no, here it is. God, I'd lose my head if it wasn't screwed on at the moment. We didn't have any in the house.

APPETITE: Lord, I always have at least a bottle stashed somewhere at least. *[In a radio announcer style voice]* In the event of emergency, break glass!

Spirit laughs, sighs, then takes a sip of her wine.

REASON: You OK? You look exhausted.

SPIRIT: *[Feigning offence]* Thanks! *[Beat]* Actually I am shattered. I'm not sleeping that well at the moment. I've been looking forward to tonight like you wouldn't believe.

REASON: *[With concern]* Why aren't you sleeping? Are you worried or stressed about something?

SPIRIT: *[Brushing it off]* It's no big deal. You know me, everyone's favourite insomniac! The nice thing about having dealt with insomnia for most of my adult life is that I know I can survive on no sleep at all. Maybe I should join the SAS!

REASON: Well, if you decide to have kids it will be an asset from what I hear.

SPIRIT: Well that's not really a consideration for us.

REASON: Don't you want kids?

APPETITE: What are you, the pope? Why are you so interested in everyone's reproductive decisions all of a sudden?

REASON: Just curious.

SPIRIT: I don't think it would work for us.

REASON: Really? Why not? You'd be a great mum.

APPETITE: Not on the cards for us. But, I've always had this feeling that there would be children in my life, just maybe not my own, biologically I mean. I'll just be one of those super cool aunts.

APPETITE: Yeah, you can teach them swear words in foreign languages and how to make water bombs and tell them embarrassing stories from when their parents were younger. I would have loved that when I was a kid!

SPIRIT: [*Wistfully*] Well, I was thinking more that I would teach them how to make cool things like kites and stuffed toys, and let them feel like they're as important as the grownups, like they're part of the action.

APPETITE: Whoa, hard core. You might scar them for life there lady.

REASON: Why wouldn't it work for you guys to have kids? You're both healthy, and you've been together for ages.

SPIRIT: Like I said, I just don't think it would work for us. He's under a lot of pressure with his work; he doesn't cope well with added stress. I worry it would push him over the edge.

REASON: What edge? The edge where he has to care more about someone else more than himself?

SPIRIT: [*Defensively*] That's not what I meant. I just think that it would be harder on him than on most people.

REASON: I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that. But I just think it sounds like you're giving up a lot.

SPIRIT: I'm not really. Like I said, I have no doubt there will be children in my life.

APPETITE: What would you do if you got knocked up?

REASON: Charming!

SPIRIT: I couldn't terminate, I just couldn't. But that's why I'm very, very careful. [*Beat*] Anyway, how did we get onto babies before food? Shall we start? All this not sleeping makes me ravenous.

APPETITE: I thought you'd never ask!

She takes a plate and begins loading it with food. She should continue to eat and take food throughout the play and as long as it doesn't interfere with the coherence of her lines, some of them may be delivered while eating, even with a mouth full.

REASON: Slow down woman! Didn't you have dinner?

APPETITE: What's that got to do with anything? And you know how I feel about bread. I'm just like Jesus. My idea of a perfect meal is bread and wine!

REASON: You are such a shocker. *[To Spirit]* You'd better get stuck in before she eats everything that isn't stapled down!

Spirit and Appetite laugh. Spirit takes a few slices of bread which she will toy with and occasionally eat as the play progresses. Reason should cut her food up in to ordered pieces eating small bits at time.

APPETITE: *[To Spirit]* Anything else we want? The waitress said: *[Imitates waitress]* I'm just over here if you need anything at all, 'hun'.

REASON: I can't stand it when a woman ten years younger than me calls me 'hun'.

SPIRIT: It's funny how they always say that. What do you think she'd do if someone said: Well actually I could really use a shoulder to cry on right now?

REASON: *[To Appetite]* Maybe we should call her over and say: We've thought of something we need, and then you could ask her for a ride home! *[They all laugh]* Do you really need a shoulder to cry on?

SPIRIT: I was just being silly. You know me, always a penchant for melodrama.

REASON: Seriously? You're one of the most level headed, resilient people I know. Why would you say that?

SPIRIT: Come on, I am a bit emo sometimes, always making mountains out of molehills.

REASON: Who told you that? *[Beat]* Oh, right.

SPIRIT: *[Somewhat defensively]* He calls me Miss Melodrama, but as a term of endearment. And if the shoe fits ... I mean do either of you two cry at TV ads?

APPETITE: Well your heart is pretty firmly attached to your sleeve.

REASON: Yeah, but there's a big difference between being soft hearted and being melodramatic in my books. That implies selfishness and you don't have a selfish bone in your body.

SPIRIT: *[Wearily]* Can we not start? I just really want to hang out with you guys and have some fun. I don't want to get into all this again.

APPETITE: I second that. Live and let live I say.

REASON: OK, OK. *[Puts her hand on Spirit's arm.]* I just want you to be happy.

SPIRIT: I am happy. Different things make different people happy. Life isn't the movies you know.

REASON: I'm sorry OK. Let's just have a good night.

APPETITE: Have some more wine ladies.

SPIRIT: Sorry. See I am melodramatic. I turn up late, whinge about how tired I am and then snap at you guys. Can I propose a toast?

REASON: Nice idea.

SPIRIT: *[She lifts her glass]* May friendship, like wine, improve as time advances. And may we always have old wine, old friends, and young cares. *[Beat]* Cheers girls.

REASON/APPETITE: Cheers.

REASON: What a lovely toast. Who said that?

SPIRIT: I've no idea. Some dead guy no doubt! *[She laughs.]*

Appetite refills her glass, emptying the bottle.

APPETITE: Good thing we brought reinforcements! Let's go dancing after dinner. I can't remember the last time I went dancing.

SPIRIT: I'd love to, but not tonight. I said I wouldn't be late.

REASON: *[Raises an eyebrow pointedly at Appetite]* Early start tomorrow. Another time?

APPETITE: You guys are so boring. I'm keeping you to that you know. God this dip is mind blowing. Have you guys tried this one?

SPIRIT: Yeah, it is good.

REASON: So another bout of insomnia huh? Rough.

SPIRIT: I'm pretty used to it now. I used to get really stressed out and clock watch, you know like: Oh God, now it's 4am. If I get to sleep now I'll only be having three hours sleep. I've realised now if I just go with it, I'm OK and I can handle it the next day.

REASON: So what do you do, just lie there?

SPIRIT: No. I get up. There's no point both of us losing sleep with me tossing and turning so I just think at least if I get out of bed I'm not disturbing him. I watch TV or read a book. Or sometimes I do housework. It just depends what kind of night it is. Sometimes I'm totally shattered but just can't sleep so that's a TV night, other times I'm wide awake and adrenalized to the hilt. That's a housework night. Actually that's quite useful because the house looks like a bomb site at the mo.

APPETITE: Just let it go to rack and ruin. My philosophy is tidy house, boring life!

SPIRIT: *[Laughs weakly]* That would just creates stress at our place, much easier to keep it clean.

REASON: *[Goes to challenge this but changes her mind.]* I didn't realise it was so frequent, the insomnia I mean.

SPIRIT: It's been off and on for the last ten years or so. I had touches of it when I was at high school but mainly round exams and things you know. Now I get it pretty often.

APPETITE: Didn't you have that really bad patch when you were doing your post grad?

SPIRIT: *[Reluctantly]* That was more to do with couple stuff than insomnia. *[To Reason]* You know how it is.

REASON: What do you mean?

SPIRIT: We were just working through some stuff together, getting to the next level of our relationship. I was studying full time; I was also working two jobs at that point as well. But relationships take work too, and you can't just pick and choose when suits, you have to prioritise.

APPETITE: Wasn't that to do with all that shit about Jeff?

Spirit shoots her a look to silence her. She takes the hint and hoes into the food again.

REASON: What shit about Jeff? Who's Jeff?

SPIRIT: The last guy I'd been with before we got married. It's no big deal. Jeff was this guy in our social circle and he just hated him. Thought he was a jerk and he really struggled for a while to understand why I had gone out with him in the first place.

REASON: But this all happened before you guys were together right? What's that got do with him?

SPIRIT: That's a pretty simplistic view isn't it? Imagine if your man had been out with your arch nemesis. How would that make you feel?

REASON: *[Stridently]* Um, like his character judgement had severely improved! *[Beat]* But seriously, who has an arch nemesis? It sounds like a cartoon or something.

APPETITE: Give her a break. You know he's a pretty sensitive guy. *[Affectionately]* We don't all have your balls of steel you know. Some of us use our hearts as well as our heads!

REASON: OK, OK. But really, wouldn't it be one of those things you just want to forget?

SPIRIT: For him it's: Better the devil you know. He felt that if he knew exactly what had gone on he would be able to understand and forgive me.

REASON: Forgive you?! It's not like you cheated on him.

SPIRIT: Well that's how it feels to him, like a betrayal. So that's why we had these big discussions about the whole thing, and I just let him ask anything. I had to show him that he could trust me completely. That I could be totally open and honest with him.

REASON: So you were staying up till all hours of the night talking about this stuff?

SPIRIT: I guess.

REASON: What sort of things did he ask you?

SPIRIT: Where we went, what he said to me, what we did together... It's really not that important.

REASON: Did he forgive you?

SPIRIT: *[Can't bring herself to lie and say yes, but can't say no either]* It still comes up occasionally, but nowhere near as often now. He really tries to understand. You know his mum cheated on his dad so he has real trust issues.

REASON: Does he keep her up till all hours of the morning quizzing her about the why, where and what of all that?

APPETITE: You have met his mum right? She wouldn't stand for that! *[Sarcastically]* And anyway, his dad wasn't paying attention to her.

REASON: Well that's an adult way of responding isn't it.

APPETITE: *[Damsel in distress style]* It was a cry for help!

REASON: It was an attention ploy more like.

SPIRIT: Anyway, it's made it hard for him to trust that I won't hurt or betray him. And the Jeff stuff just exacerbates that. He's totally intolerant of adultery of any kind. I got him Finding Neverland on DVD for Christmas one year and he threw it out.

REASON: Isn't that a children's movie?

SPIRIT: Not really. It's that story about the guy who wrote Peter Pan. I thought it was charming. But the main character has an emotional affair with a married woman so it went in the rubbish.

REASON: Please, an emotional affair? It's a movie for God's sake.

APPETITE: Did he really throw out something you gave him for Christmas?

SPIRIT: I should have been more careful. It was stupid of me really. It gets him paranoid that I have a guilty conscience.

REASON: You've never so much as looked at another man.

SPIRIT: I know that, but like I said he has real trust issues. Once I lost an earring, I was pretty sure it had fallen out at a bar we'd had a drink at one night but I called and the staff couldn't find it anywhere. We went to the movies that week with his family and in the opening scene a woman is having an affair with a man and she leaves her earring at his house. He got really upset, poor thing, and it was all I could do to reassure him so he wouldn't walk out.

REASON: You should have let him. It's his problem, not yours!

APPETITE: *[Jumping in over the top]* Speaking of jewellery, didn't he get you that really beautiful necklace after that?

SPIRIT: *[Pointedly to Reason.]* Yes he did. After we worked through all the Jeff stuff he bought me this necklace. He said it was so I know that I have his heart completely and I should look after it. Isn't that sweet?

REASON: *[Acidly]* Very.

SPIRIT: Anyway, I think relationships are like gardening. Sometimes it's digging the dirt, and pulling out weeds, but you have to do that so you can pick the flowers.

APPETITE: And sometimes it's being up to your elbows in chicken shit!

All laugh, but Spirit's laugh is somewhat forced.

REASON: Did your insomnia get worse after that?

SPIRIT: *[Breezily]* Oh I don't think they're connected at all really. Anyway, I've got to tell you the sweetest thing he did recently. You know he doesn't believe in Valentine's Day?

REASON: Wow. That is sweet.

APPETITE: Guys are so crap like that. Don't they get that the sole reason Valentine's Day exists is to make women feel good? They just can't be assed with making an effort. Lazy buggers.

SPIRIT: Haha, let me finish. Anyway, so he doesn't believe in Valentine's Day. He thinks it's commercial American schmaltz. So I got home from work the day after Valentine's Day and he had covered the coffee table with all of my favourite junk food, some candles, a bunch of flowers and a DVD.

APPETITE: That's so cool. For no reason?

SPIRIT: No reason at all. Just because he loves me.

REASON: I take it the DVD wasn't Dangerous Liaisons then?!

APPETITE: Or An Affair to Remember?!

SPIRIT: Haha. No actually it was Ratatouille. *[Both the others look totally blank.]* You know, that movie about the mouse who dreams of being a chef?

APPETITE: What?!

SPIRIT: It's an animated movie. *[Defensively]* It's really witty and cute.

REASON: *[Slightly sarcastically]* And obviously safe.

SPIRIT: Be fair. It's a lovely thing to do. I don't know any girl that wouldn't want to be showered with gifts.

REASON: You're right, that is sweet.

SPIRIT: He has a real romantic streak, always has. You know how it old fashioned novels they say the man woos the woman? Well that's how it was when we got together. I was wooed!

APPETITE: I remember. He really pulled out all the stops didn't he?

SPIRIT: He told me he'd been in love with me for months and just thought I was incredible. *[Sighs]* My ex boyfriend had broken up with me and started seeing someone else four days later. I couldn't get out of bed for weeks. I felt so expendable. When a man has made you feel

like that, it's so nice to have the next one tell you they can't live without you! *[Beat]* I felt like I was coming back to life, like his love was bringing me back to life.

REASON: That good huh, Cinderella?! Could he walk on water?!

APPETITE: You guys were so sappy! Remember he took her to all those arty farty films? And to dinner at a Japanese restaurant. Or was it Greek?

REASON: That's right you kept saying: It's like being in a movie!

APPETITE: *[Mimicking her]* I'm so entranced by him! And they actually went for a long moonlit walk around the park. What a cliché!

SPIRIT: *[Shoots her a look and continues with a faraway look in her eyes.]* It was a real whirlwind romance. *[Beat]* Falling in love with him was like diving into the ocean.

[APPETITE makes vomiting sounds]

SPIRIT: I was terrified, exhilarated and it felt utterly and completely bottomless.

REASON: God I'd get motion sick.

SPIRIT: *[Ignoring her.]* You wouldn't understand. We were the ones who got it, we understood each other. It was us against the world. An astrologist once told him that he would be with a woman who was like a bird with a wounded wing. I definitely fit the bill.

APPETITE: Pun intended?

SPIRIT: Haha. I remember so clearly him asking me to marry him. It was under the apple tree at his old flat. We were lying on the ground looking at the sky through the leaves. I can't remember what we were talking about, but he suddenly just got up on his knees and said: Will you marry me? He went down on both knees; we always told people that, and there wasn't a moment's hesitation in me when he asked, I said: Yes. Immediately.

APPETITE: I thought he cooked his way into your pants.

SPIRIT: *[Laughs]* That's right, I'd forgotten that.

REASON: *[To Appetite]* You're so crass. I'm afraid to ask what he cooked!

APPETITE: Something with a big European sausage!

The others roll their eyes and laugh good humouredly.

SPIRIT: Actually the first meal he ever cooked for me was Cajun fish, with fresh pasta and asparagus – fresh too. We'd never had that kind of food growing up. The only times I'd eaten fresh fish growing up was cooked over a fire on a canoeing trip or the odd pipi camping at summer time.

APPETITE: Nothing wrong with that!

SPIRIT: I know, but fresh fish seemed so sophisticated and urbane, especially when he paired it with a wine - in a bottle - and it tasted so good. *[Beat]* He told me much later he didn't really know what wine to choose so he just picked something he'd drunk once, that was kind of expensive. I didn't even know that you drank white wine with fish so I was very impressed!

REASON: Didn't you know how to cook?

SPIRIT: Yes, but I wasn't passionate about it the way he was. He watched a lot of cooking programmes and started cooking for his family at quite a young age. He was always aiming for a certain level of artistry. I would just try and cook something that tasted OK. I tried extra hard for him though. The first thing I made him was a mussel marinara.

APPETITE: Yum. Did he like it?

SPIRIT: Um, I guess so. A friend of mine had cooked it for me once and I just did what I had seen her do. He stood over me while I was cooking and gave me advice: You shouldn't put the tomato paste in now, it will catch. It really helped.

REASON: Ah yes, nothing says I love you, like unsolicited advice.

APPETITE: *[Jumping in]* Well the mussels on here are delicious. Have some before I eat them all. You aren't dieting or any bullshit like that are you?

REASON: No way. Dieting is really unhealthy. Quite aside from the fact that it's a multimillion dollar industry that plays on women's insecurities. I just listen to my body and it knows when I'm not hungry any more.

APPETITE: God, you really are relentlessly sensible aren't you? *[To Spirit]* You dieting?

SPIRIT: Well, I would like to get back to the weight I was when we got married. I just feel a bit frumpy at the moment.

APPETITE: *[Deadpan]* Well to be honest with you, I don't even know how you can leave the house looking the way you do. You make me sick! *[Laughs raucously.]* But seriously, what weight is there to lose? You look perfect.

SPIRIT: You have to say that. But I know I can stand to lose a couple of KGs.

REASON: Why do you care what you weighed when you got married? Your husband doesn't weigh the same, does he. I'll bet he still thinks you're just as beautiful now, right?

SPIRIT: Men usually gain weight at this age. He always says how slim I look in our wedding photos though.

REASON: Well personally I think you look slim, and stunning, now. Tell him he married you not the wedding photo!

APPETITE: Anyway, isn't one of the bonuses of getting married that you've got your man, now you can let yourself go?! That, and sex on tap! Why else do people get married? *[She laughs.]*

REASON: Well there is also everlasting love, children, sharing of resources and labour. I mean obviously those reasons pale in comparison to the aforementioned letting go of oneself and sex on tap!

APPETITE: Personally, I think marriage mainly benefits the man. He gets a cook, a cleaner, a lover, someone to bear his children. What does the woman get? *[To Spirit]* I mean your man didn't even pay the rent for the first few years, did he?

REASON: What!? Why the hell not?

SPIRIT: She's making it sound worse than it is. He really needed a new car...

APPETITE: A really, really nice car.

SPIRIT: Men like cars, it's their equivalent of jewellery. He needed one, so for the first few years we were married I took care of the household expenses out of my income and he saved his.

APPETITE: Some, not all. I notice he still had a nice stash of top shelf whiskey on the go.

REASON: Let me get this straight, you paid not only the rent, but the bills too?

SPIRIT: Just for a bit. It's not that big of a deal.

REASON: Well it sounds like a big deal to me. He doesn't even let you drive his car does he?

SPIRIT: It's too flash for me. I'm scared I'll have a crash.

REASON: Did he return the favour?

SPIRIT: There's nothing I really want. Anyway, if I wanted something that much, then it should be up to me to ask him and up to him to say yes if he thinks it's worth it. And I haven't asked.

REASON: *[Loaded with sarcasm]* He should bloody well offer. He's totally taking advantage of your good nature, and preying on the assumption that you won't ask for anything in return. Which of course you haven't.

SPIRIT: All I want is for us to have our own place. So that's what we're saving for at the moment. Other than that, I have everything I want.

REASON: You're such a doormat sometimes.

SPIRIT: *[With quiet intensity]* I am NOT a doormat. Don't you dare say that! Just because I haven't made financial demands, don't assume I haven't made other demands of him. I asked him to go to anger management and counselling quite early on in our relationship and told him that I wouldn't stay unless he did.

REASON: *[Surprised]* Good for you. Why the ultimatum?

SPIRIT: *[Reluctantly]* Just a few times he really lost it, and I wasn't prepared to live that way.

APPETITE: Was that the time he threw you out of bed?

REASON: WHAT THE... *[Realises she's spoken too loudly and abruptly stops.]*

SPIRIT: It sounds much worse than it was. *[To Appetite]* Are you trying to stir?

APPETITE: Sorry. It just popped out.

REASON: *[Deliberately]* Please explain so I can hear how it's nowhere near as bad as it sounds. *[Takes a breath]* Which is pretty horrific just so you know.

SPIRIT: OK, but just try and keep things in perspective please. *[Beat]* One morning I woke up, rolled in to cuddle him and he yelled and pushed me out of the bed. When I climbed back into bed he sort of freaked out and pushed me out again.

APPETITE: Didn't he scream: Fuck off! Or something like that, in your face too?!

SPIRIT: Will you stop?! I couldn't work out what I could possibly have done. I'd literally just woken up.

REASON: What you could have done?! Oh my God! There's nothing that you could do that would make that OK.

SPIRIT: Well, I certainly didn't help the situation at all. I totally overreacted. It was about 7am and I got dressed went out to the bus stop across the road and bussed into town, and then to my friend Phoebe's house. I was almost hysterical by the time I got there. When I got home he was pretty upset. Especially when he found out I'd been at Phoebe's. He felt like it was pretty unfair that I'd been badmouthing him when he hadn't even had a chance to tell me his side of the story.

REASON: *[Loaded with sarcasm]* And what pray tell, was his side of this charming tale?

SPIRIT: He'd been having a nightmare. I don't think he was even properly awake the whole time.

REASON: That's no excuse! It's totally unacceptable! What did Phoebe have to say about it?

SPIRIT: She didn't really understand, but she wasn't there. Anyway, we don't see much of each other anymore.

REASON: So you're not even allowed support from other people when he's an asshole?

SPIRIT: He's not an asshole. He was asleep! It's not his fault.

REASON: Well whose fault is it then?

SPIRIT: *[Hesitantly]* I don't know – no ones I guess.

REASON: Oh my God! Did he try and blame it on you?

SPIRIT: No! But you know, I didn't exactly help the situation by running to Phoebe.

REASON: Oh God. Can't you see how ridiculous you sound?

APPETITE: *[Trying to change the subject]* But if I remember correctly, the makeup sex was pretty spectacular?!

SPIRIT: As his way of saying sorry he took me out to a really nice hotel for the weekend, and yeah, it was lovely.

REASON: Did he actually say sorry at any point?

SPIRIT: Not exactly. But from his actions I could tell. And for a couple of months he went to some anger management meetings and he saw a counsellor a couple of times too.

REASON: Wow. He really pushed the boat out didn't he!

SPIRIT: He felt he had gotten a lot out of it anyway.

REASON: Did you see evidence of that?

SPIRIT: He was a lot more controlled after that. He would do things like leave the room, or go for a walk if he felt himself getting too wound up.

REASON: Did it change the way he treats you? Has he ever hit you again?

SPIRIT: Yes it did change the way he treats me. And he didn't hit me!

APPETITE: God I'm busting. I'm going to take a piss you guys. *[They ignore her.]*

REASON: Whatever. He got physically violent with you. Has it happened again?

At this point we see that in the process of pushing her chair out from the table Appetite has spilled half a glass of wine over and has jumped up to avoid it getting on her clothes.

APPETITE: Oh fuck it all!

REASON: Here use my napkin.

They mop it up.

APPETITE: You know I'm not one to cry over spilt milk, but spilled wine ... *[She laughs]*
Thank goodness there's some left.

REASON: Maybe you should slow down a bit.

She pours her some water.

APPETITE: I'm fine. I could drink most men under the table. Play nice until I get back.

There is an uncomfortable pause as Spirit tries to avoid Reason's gaze.

SPIRIT: *[Still without making eye contact]* I know it sounds bad but I can handle this.

REASON: That's exactly what I'm afraid of. You handling this, putting up with all this instead of reading him the riot act.

SPIRIT: I think you see me as some feeble, weak woman who can't stand up for herself. But I can.

REASON: That's not how I see you at all. I know that your heart's too big for your own good, and that you'll happily put all your needs on the back burner to make everyone else happy. I don't think that's weak or feeble. But I do think it's entirely misguided.

Appetite re-enters.

REASON: And I'm really sad that you've kept all this to yourself.

APPETITE: What'd I miss?

REASON: Have you finished already?

SPIRIT: *[Glad of the distraction]* This woman can pee faster than anyone I've ever met, men included! If it was an Olympic sport she'd be a gold medallist!

APPETITE: Well there's nothing to do in there all by yourself, well not in a public bathroom anyway. I'm no George Michael. *[Laughs.]* And it's just wasting valuable drinking time!

SPIRIT: And here I thought you were racing out so you could spend more time with us!

APPETITE: Oh yeah, that too! *[Eyeing up the food.]* Are either of you guys planning on having the last of the blue cheese?

REASON: Uh-uh.

SPIRIT: It's all yours lady.

REASON: Back to my question: Has he hit you since?

SPIRIT: Please can we just leave off. He's my husband. He's not perfect and neither am I. Love is a verb you know, it's not about what you feel, it's about what you do.

REASON: Well I can see that you live by that ethos, but does the same follow for him?

SPIRIT: He tries. But some people just have it easier in life than others. He's very sensitive.

REASON: Well all the more reason for him to treat you with sensitivity then.

APPETITE: He does sometimes. You should see him when he's got a few wines in him: *[Imitating him, directed to Spirit]* I love you my Angel. I thank God you're in my life. What did I do to deserve someone like you?

Spirit smiles wanly.

REASON: It's all very well to say it when you're drunk. *[To Appetite]* I've seen you tell the waiter you love them when you're drunk.

APPETITE: Not when he's drunk, I said when he's got a few wines in him. God when he's totally boozed it's another story entirely.

Spirit shoots her a warning look.

REASON: What do you mean by that?

APPETITE: It's anyone's guess with him. *[To Spirit]* Remember that time we were having a few drinks and I tried to tell him he'd had enough? He could barely stand up. Didn't he call

you a bitch or something? [*Spirit has her head in her hands*] He kept trying to grab the bottle out of my hand. I thought: Fuck it! And I looked him square in the eyes and slowly tipped the entire bottle out onto the carpet. It stopped him dead in his tracks.

REASON: Oh my God! [*To Spirit*] What happened?

SPIRIT: I poured about half a KG of salt onto it but the damage was done by that time. We had to get the carpets professionally cleaned when we moved out. He was so shocked he didn't know what to do.

APPETITE: He didn't expect me to do anything like that, but I'm not going to put up with that shit. I just wish I could have thought of something to do that didn't involve wasting perfectly good wine!

REASON: Do you think he has a drinking problem?

SPIRIT: No. Well, not really, he can keep it under control sometimes. When we first got married we used to go out for dinner to really nice restaurants. It was like our hobby. We would buy lovely wine and have a really sumptuous evening, feeling like real gourmands. And for a while he had all these top shelf whiskeys at home.

REASON: Right, when he was meant to be saving for the car.

APPETITE: Mmmm, a whiskey would go down a treat right now.

SPIRIT: Anyway, we had this 50s drinks trolley and each night he would have a snifter or so of one or two of them. He could sit on one for hours, and never even get tiddly.

REASON: When did it change?

SPIRIT: I don't know. He was pretty unhappy at work and his drinking changed from quality to quantity.

APPETITE: [*Wryly*] He's become a connoisseur of the under \$10 bottle of red.

SPIRIT: He's better now. I told him that I thought he had a drinking problem and so he didn't drink for a month to show me that he can go without.

REASON: One month, wow.

SPIRIT: It's something. And that's important to me.

REASON: Did he make it to a month?

SPIRIT: [*Proudly*] Yes he did. The only thing he had to drink in an entire month was a sip of red wine at his mum's place when they were having a family dinner.

REASON: [*Begrudgingly*] Good for him. Did it change his habits at all?

SPIRIT: I think he's more responsible now. I mean he enjoys drinking, it's not a crime. But he's more careful now. I was really proud of him.

APPETITE: And he was proud of himself too! Yes sir. So proud he celebrated by buying a couple of bottles of whisky and drinking one in an afternoon.

REASON: A bottle in an afternoon? By himself?

APPETITE: Hey, the Lord counts as a person!

SPIRIT: Well he felt he deserved a treat. And I've never gone for a month without drinking, who am I to argue?

APPETITE: Yeah, but it wasn't cool of him to come and pick you up from work afterwards.

REASON: Afterwards? You mean with a bottle of whisky on board?

APPETITE: And his mum in the car!

REASON: Are you kidding me here? That is not on. I don't care how you can rationalise all the other stuff but drink driving is just Russian Roulette with a car instead of a gun.

APPETITE: And with a car there're passengers, other cars, pedestrians. She's right.
[*Gesturing to Reason*] It's not on.

SPIRIT: I know, I know. It really upset me too. I was really shocked that he would disrespect his mum like that.

REASON: To hell with his mum, what about you? Don't you count? Isn't your safety and well being just as important? For God's sake, you're his wife. You would never put him at

risk that way. I mean, it's like pulling teeth to get you to say a bad word about him, and he does this to you?

SPIRIT: Did. Did this. You make it sound like it's ongoing. It's not. It was an isolated event. He apologised. He thought he was OK to drive.

REASON: Thought he was OK? He must have been struggling to stay upright, and he thought he was OK to drive. That's bullshit!

SPIRIT: He has got quite a high tolerance for alcohol.

APPETITE: Well you know what they say, practise makes perfect. If you want to become a seasoned drinker you need to put in the hours. Just ask Dean Martin.

SPIRIT: Look, I know it's bad OK. He knows it's bad. He's never done it since and he was really, really sorry. He even went to a few AA meetings afterwards because I was so upset. But really, you're blowing this out of proportion. In lots of ways he's a really good husband.

REASON: How?

SPIRIT: Well, he's never cheated on me. He's always been 100% faithful. *[Beat]* He tells me he loves me all the time. *[Beat]* He cooks really nice food for me.

REASON: Does he want a medal, or a chest to pin it on?

APPETITE: It's not exactly a long list honey.

SPIRIT: There's more, I just can't think of things right now with you guys interrogating me like this. And I know you'll twist this all out of proportion, but it's nice to be with someone who needs me as much as he does.

REASON: Oh for God's sake, if that's all you're looking for in a relationship, get a dog! He should be contributing and as far as I can work out, all he does is make messes for you to clean up.

APPETITE: A dog would do that too. And, if you want to go on holiday without them, you can just put them in a kennel.

SPIRIT: Look guys, I appreciate the fact that you're on my side, but this is my husband we're talking about. He's the man I fell in love with, and the man I married. Yes he's flawed, but he's human. And all I can do is try and be the best wife I can to him, and trust that he's trying to do the same for me. And maybe sometimes I have to accept that my version of best and his version aren't quite the same, but that's life, that's marriage, that's commitment. And I don't get to quit just because things get rough sometimes. It not how it works.

A pause.

REASON: OK. I respect that. And believe me, no one could question that you are a good wife. I just worry that you're throwing your pearls before the swine. And no, I'm not calling him a pig *[Beat]* I'm just saying that I don't know that he's ever going to appreciate how hard you work at this. I'm sure he loves you but I don't know that he will ever be able to put that into action the way you do. I think you're worth more...

She gets interrupted by a cell phone ringing. Reason and Appetite check their pockets, bags and Spirit realises it's her phone.

SPIRIT: What an idiot I am. It's in the side pocket. I've been looking for it all day. *Looks at the phone* It's him. I'd better take this. Sorry, I'll be quick. *[In a very stiff, formal voice]* Hi. *[Beat]* I told you I was going out tonight. *[Beat]* Well you were in bed when I left. *[Beat]* About 10.30, 11'o' clock. It's on the calendar. *[Beat. Lowers her voice]* Look, I really don't want to talk about this right now. *[Beat]* I said not now. We'll talk about it when I get home. *[Beat]* Bye.

She hangs up, takes a deep breath as if to steady herself and puts the phone back in her bag, all the time avoiding eye contact with the others who have been watching her intently during the call.

APPETITE: *[Lightly mocking]* How is he? Got a few mates over? Watching the game?

REASON: That didn't sound like it was much fun. Are you OK?

SPIRIT: Look, I really don't want to talk about it OK. It's been a hard week. Things have been pretty bad for him at work. I realise I can't expect you guys to be sympathetic so why don't we just change the subject.

REASON: OK, your decision. But you should be able to rely on us more than anyone. I promise I'll try not to judge if you want to talk about it.

APPETITE: Me too, seriously.

Spirit sits looking at her lap, absentmindedly playing with her necklace.

SPIRIT: I'm not sure that talking about it will do any good.

REASON: If nothing else won't it make you feel better? A burden shared is a burden halved.

SPIRIT: I know. But I just feel disloyal, talking about him when he's not here to defend himself.

APPETITE: Who are we going to tell?

SPIRIT: You're right, but sometimes the hardest thing is saying it out loud.

APPETITE: Just think of it like a sticking plaster, rip it off in one swift movement!

SPIRIT: OK, but please try not to overreact. *[The others nod, make reassuring gestures of some kind]*. He had the day off today, and when I got home he'd obviously been drinking, and was just in one of those moods where there's nothing I can say to him that won't get him angry. If I try and be nice he tells me to stop patronising him, and if I tell him to snap out of it, he calls me a callous bitch. So I thought: I'll just go for a walk and give him some space. Maybe he thought I'd stormed out or something because when I got home he was obviously upset with me and had shut up the house and locked all the doors. I knocked and knocked but he wouldn't let me in. I ended up climbing through the bathroom window. He was a bit drunk by this stage and when I told him I was going out he got really angry *[She is struggling to hold back the tears by this stage]* and *[Beat]* hit me.

She starts to silently cry. The other two move their chairs in closer to hers so they are sitting very close together.

REASON: Oh, honey.

APPETITE: Come here, you poor thing. *[Embraces her.]*

REASON: It feels better to say it doesn't it? Now why don't you tell us exactly what happened.

SPIRIT: *[Reluctantly]* No, I don't want to, please. *[Beat]* He was really drunk by that stage so it didn't hurt.

APPETITE: It's not about whether it hurts. It's about owning up.

REASON: They say the truth will set you free.

SPIRIT: Please, no. Don't make me. If I say it out loud, it makes it real.

REASON: I'll help. When I told him I was going out he blocked the front door, threw me on the ground... come on you can do it...

APPETITE: I'll help too. He threw me on the ground and started punching and kicking me...
[She waits.]

SPIRIT: OK, OK. *[She starts to speak, gulping back her tears. Reason and Appetite mouth the following speech along with Spirit.]* When I told him I was going out he blocked the front door, threw me on the ground and started punching and kicking me. Then he sat on top of me with his hands around my throat trying throttling me. His face was white with rage he was saying: I hate you! I want you to die! Over and over again.

She puts her head in her hands and lets out a single, choking sob.

SPIRIT: And then he said: Are you going to go and cry to your friends now so you can get some sympathy? You just love sympathy don't you? You love it when I'm mean to you, don't you; it means you can get some sympathy.

Pause.

REASON: See, doesn't it feel better, getting it off your chest?

SPIRIT: No, it hurts even more. Why does he do this?

APPETITE: *[Beat]* Because he can.

REASON: *[Beat]* Because we let him.

APPETITE: *[Beat]* And because he's a fuckwit!

REASON: Come on, you're not finished yet. What about the other times?

SPIRIT: Isn't that enough? Can't one of you?

REASON: No, you have to. You've denied this for so long. It's time to come clean.

SPIRIT: I can't remember all of them.

REASON: Well just say the one's you can.

SPIRIT: *[Takes a deep breath, speaking like an automaton]* When he threw me down on the couch and tried to force me to have sex with him. I slapped him as hard as I could round the face. He yelled: You fucken bitch; that hurt! It was right on my ear. So he held me down and bit me on the arm.

APPETITE: He left a bruise the size of a tennis ball.

REASON: There's more, come on, you can do this.

SPIRIT: The time when he came and picked me up at work, stood in the door of my office and mouthed: FUCK YOU! Then on the way home he was yelling at me, and we pulled over outside a shopping mall and I got out of the car and started to walk away from him.

REASON: And he followed me and punched me in the kidneys.

APPETITE: Keep going, it's like lancing a boil.

SPIRIT: That time we were invited to a really classy party and he got really drunk and I told him that he was embarrassing me and I wanted him to leave. He took two bottles of wine from the bar on the way out. I said: Please just leave. These people have been really hospitable and it's just tacky to take drinks from a party. He looked at me with the meanest look on his face and said: If I can't take the wine, I'll make a scene! When I got home he'd locked all the doors and closed all the curtains so I couldn't get in.

APPETITE: It was about 2'o'clock in the morning and he left me sitting outside in the dark for about an hour before he would let me inside.

REASON: What about what he says when no one is around to hear it?

SPIRIT: He says: You're such a bitch to me. No-one in my life has ever treated me like you do. Why don't you make a priority of me? You never put me first in your life. I hate you, you cunt! You're such a slut. I bet you're out there sleeping with every man you meet, you whore.

APPETITE: You're a frigid cold bitch and I want you to die and go to hell.

REASON: And how often does he say it?

SPIRIT: Not all the time. Maybe about once a week.

REASON: Good girl. Tell the worst one, the one that hurts most of all.

SPIRIT: Isn't that enough? It's just about all of it.

REASON: You know this is for your own good.

SPIRIT: OK. I'll say it, but this is that last thing. No more after this. I just can't, it's too hard.

APPETITE: We're only trying to help.

SPIRIT: I had said I would save myself for marriage and I was a virgin when I started seeing him. But I had been with other guys, I had experimented. Because of that he says it didn't count that I was technically a virgin because in his eyes I wasn't. It was like I had been spoiled.

APPETITE: I wasn't completely pure.

REASON: But he wasn't pure either, was he? He'd had one night stands, even been to massage parlours hadn't he?

SPIRIT: Yes. But his justification is: He had no standards; therefore he had nothing to hold himself accountable to, so no blame or judgment. I, on the other hand, had held myself up to be a pure, principled person. And as I did not live up to those standards completely, I was and am a whore!

Pause.

REASON: Why did you fight this for so long? Doesn't it feel better having that out in the open?

SPIRIT: Nothing feels good right now; I don't even know who I am anymore.

REASON: Yes you do. You are our Spirit. You are everything that is good and kind and loving about us. Do you have any idea how hard it's been for us to deal with this situation when you wouldn't admit the truth about it?

SPIRIT: You already know anyway. Why put me through that?

REASON: It's all very well me knowing what's happening, but you are the one who controls how we feel. We can't do this without you. It's hard enough controlling Appetite, trying to guide or justify her choices [*Gestures to Appetite*] without being left to think of a plan all by myself.

SPIRIT: But that's your job, you're Reason. You're the one we look to for the answers.

REASON: I can't provide the answers when you won't even admit what's going on. No matter how bad it gets, you just say: Try harder, love more, make it work. I can only act on the information I'm given. [*Beat*] You have to face up to this Spirit.

APPETITE: [*By this stage she is starting to appear more than a little tiddly.*] Well I hate to be the one who says it, but ladies [*Raises her glass*] MEN ARE FUCKED! I say we get stinking, rotten drunk and go out dancing! Even better: let's go out dancing and kiss boys! We're damned if we do and damned if we don't, so I say we DO!

REASON: You see what I've been dealing with while you've been burying your head in the sand?

SPIRIT: He'd know, he'd find out. Then we'd really be in trouble.

REASON: It isn't actually dealing with the issue Appetite, and I'll be damned if we give him the satisfaction of proving him right by cheating. We have more class than that!

APPETITE: [*Sighs*] I guess it wouldn't exactly be an original way to deal with it, would it?

SPIRIT: Maybe this is our cross to bear, our Achilles heel.

APPETITE: I bet there're a lot of people living in the Third World that would happily trade places right now.

REASON: Can you both please just think about this clearly for a moment?

APPETITE: That's why you're here Reason. I just do what I'm told.

REASON: *[Laughs in disbelief.]* No more drinks for you tonight then. *[Trying to take Appetite's glass from her.]*

APPETITE: *[Appetite whips it out of the way before she can and takes another swig.]* I'm more useful to you when I'm drunk.

REASON: You're more use to both of us when you're a rational participant.

APPETITE: God you speak like a dictionary sometimes. You know that Spirit's going to want me to side with her. And when I'm boozed all I can remember is I have to side with one of you, but never which one!

SPIRIT: I don't expect you to side with me Appetite. You're allowed your own opinion.

APPETITE: What a load of crap! I've been helping you keep silent for years.

SPIRIT: I don't know what you mean.

APPETITE: Bullshit! If I keep being outrageous, and saying the wrong things, drinking too much and being inappropriate every now and again, then you can justify being treated the way he treats us, because we're kind of *[Beat]*asking for it. I'm the loose cannon here, and you need me. Face it. *[Beat]*Touched a nerve, haven't I?

REASON: Can both of you stop avoiding the real issue here. *[To Appetite]*You, just try and be reasonable, please. *[To Spirit]* And you need to stop trying to change the subject. You know this has been coming for a long time. It's been almost ten years, we're 30 years old. You know that I can't rationalise this anymore, and why do you think she acts out all the time? Is that a sign of happiness? How much longer are you going to pretend everything is OK?

SPIRIT: I'm not pretending everything is OK. I'm just trying to make it better.

REASON: And what if there isn't a way? What if this is as good as it gets?

SPIRIT: Then I have to try and be better, then hopefully he'll want to be a better person too.

APPETITE: Do I detect the faint smell of burning martyr in the air...?

REASON: *[Shoots her a filthy look.]* Not helping!

SPIRIT: I'm not a saint OK. *[Beat]* Sometimes I wonder if I've got it completely wrong.

REASON: How?

SPIRIT: I think I've done my best and he's still not happy. He tells me over and over again how to make him happy and it doesn't seem to work. Maybe I'm horrible. Maybe subconsciously I'm doing everything I can to make him unhappy even when I think I'm not. Maybe I am just a nasty, cold bitch. *[Beat]* I feel like I'm going crazy.

APPETITE: Me too. You know sometimes I have this dream where he's died. In the dream I feel so happy, and then I wake up and see him there next to me. And I feel so guilty because I feel so disappointed.

SPIRIT: Sometimes I dream that I'm with someone else and I'm so happy, and then I think, I can't do this, I'm married. *[Beat]* Maybe deep down I don't want to be happy.

REASON: He's just twisting the way you think, trying to make everything your fault. You have loved him enough, you have tried hard enough, you are a good person, you're not crazy Spirit. *[Beat]* And we deserve to be happy.

SPIRIT: But we can't rely on another person to make us happy.

REASON: Imagine what life would be like without him. Imagine wanting to come home from work, and not being scared of what you might find. Imagine being able to invite people over without worrying what he'll say or do. Imagine the phone ringing and not expecting to hear something has gone wrong.

APPETITE: Imagine being with someone who treats you right. Imagine being able to be upset and have someone comfort you. Imagine sharing the load, being part of a team. Imagine being with someone that doesn't belittle, insult and mistreat you. Imagine being with someone who actually loves you.

SPIRIT: He loves me. He tells me that all the time.

REASON: Do you really believe that Spirit?

SPIRIT: Yes. Of course.

REASON: Think about this seriously. If you love someone, do you hit them?

SPIRIT: No, but he doesn't mean to. He just loses control. You remember once he filled his glove box with lollies to say sorry.

APPETITE: When you love someone, do you insult them?

SPIRIT: No, but he doesn't really mean it. He says beautiful things to me too. He tells me he can't live without me.

REASON: You don't think he means what he says when he calls you a bitch or a slut?

SPIRIT: No, it's just words. You know, sticks and stones...

REASON: Have you considered it's just words when he says: I love you?

SPIRIT: No, he really means that.

REASON: That doesn't make sense and you know it. He either means everything or nothing. And if he really loved you, he would never say those other things to you. Love is a verb, remember.

APPETITE: Talk is cheap honey.

SPIRIT: He tries, he really does. He tries to love me. He has the potential to love.

REASON: You can't build a relationship on potential; you need to see some proof!

APPETITE: Yeah, watch out. Potential will bite you in the ass every time!

SPIRIT: There have been moments of proof, glimpses.

REASON: How often do you see those now? At the beginning you saw all this potential all the time, right?

SPIRIT: It seemed like the relationship of my dreams.

APPETITE: And then there was that first shocking disappointment, maybe the time he pushed you out of bed, maybe another time.

REASON: And he was so sorry wasn't he, even if he didn't say it? He was so sweet and kind after that, really trying to make it up to you.

SPIRIT: It was like it brought us closer together.

REASON: And then it happened again.

SPIRIT: Yes.

REASON: And this time he didn't try quite as hard afterwards. And the time between where he was nice and sweet was just imperceptibly shorter. And then there was another incident, and another. And before you know it, the ratio has totally flipped on itself. So now instead of there being a long period of good times in between isolated incidents of anger, there are now isolated periods of niceness between regular periods of abuse.

APPETITE: And all the while you keep thinking, what changed? How can I get it back to how it was at the start?

SPIRIT: What am I doing wrong?

REASON: Deluding yourself and us into thinking that this relationship can get better. Why don't you just admit it?

SPIRIT: I don't know what you want me to say.

REASON: I want you to say [*Deliberately*] I don't want to be with him anymore.

SPIRIT: That's not what I want.

APPETITE: It's OK to say it Spirit. It doesn't make you a bad person.

SPIRIT: But I do want to be with him. I just want our marriage to be a happy, like it was at the start.

APPETITE: It wasn't good at the start. He just kept enough bait on the hook to keep us thinking we were happy. He convinced us it was passionate, when really it was just unstable and unpredictable.

SPIRIT: Then we just have to think about what can make it better.

REASON: Why are you avoiding looking the truth in the face? We've tried Counselling, AA. We've stood beside him through job after job, loved, supported and cared for him. We even tried religion. But he didn't find God.

APPETITE: Although to be fair does God want to be found by him? I mean the guy already has quite a lot on his plate with world hunger, wars, global warming. Give him a break!

SPIRIT: He was a Buddhist for a while.

APPETITE: I don't think reading one library book on the subject makes you a Buddhist. I wouldn't really describe him as Zen, would you?

REASON: There is nothing more we can do Spirit. Nothing.

SPIRIT: *[Slightly panicked]* What do you mean? There's always something to do.

APPETITE: Do you even love him anymore?

SPIRIT: Of course I love him Appetite. He's my husband. I promised to love him till death when I married him.

REASON: Let me rephrase the question. When was the last time you felt love towards him, or between you?

SPIRIT: I love my husband, or at least I try to. I definitely feel sympathy, tenderness for him...

APPETITE: Well they say: Pity is akin to love. But it isn't actually love is it?

SPIRIT: I don't pity him!

REASON: Come on! Admit it, that's all there is left to feel. Sorry and sad for him that he can't manage to live a life that is worth living.

APPETITE: When was the last time you jumped his bones then?

SPIRIT: I don't want to answer that.

REASON: You can't hide from us honey. We're in this too, remember.

SPIRIT: OK, OK. You know what the answer is, so why make me say it.

REASON: Because you can't keep hiding from the truth forever.

APPETITE: When are you going to pull your head out of the sand?

SPIRIT: *[In a small voice.]* OK, it was about a month ago, I think. And it had been so long since the time before, that I knew I couldn't fob him off with a headache or tiredness.

APPETITE: If it didn't make you feel so bad, wouldn't you admit that you don't really love him anymore either?

SPIRIT: I try to love him, I try so hard.

APPETITE: It shouldn't be that hard to love your husband.

REASON: It's not working.

APPETITE: Even I know that.

REASON: It's time to admit that it's over.

APPETITE: It's time to leave honey.

SPIRIT: I just don't think I can.

REASON: If you're waiting for him to leave it's never going to happen, just so you know.

SPIRIT: *[In a small voice.]* It might. He tells me all the time that I make him miserable.

APPETITE: Never gonna happen.

SPIRIT: Why not?

REASON: He's happy with things the way they are.

SPIRIT: Happy? How can you say that?

APPETITE: He likes it that way. He feels most comfortable when life is letting him down.

REASON: Think about it for a moment, you spend all your energy keeping his life functioning no matter what he does to us, or anyone else. You keep believing in him regardless of how inappropriately he behaves, you keep scrabbling round for scraps of his affection like a dog for crumbs on the floor.

APPETITE: Why on earth would he give up a situation where he is so obviously told that he can do what he wants, when he wants, to whomever he wants?

REASON: It's turned him into a megalomaniac.

SPIRIT: But this is the only way I know how to love, with everything I am.

REASON: It's not your fault. If we were with a good man he would respond by treating us like a queen.

APPETITE: I could handle someone prostrate at my feet worshipping me for a change!

SPIRIT: But we made a vow. Till death do us part.

APPETITE: What a load of shit! Our wedding vows should have read more like: For worse, or worse; for poor and poorer; in sickness and sicker-ness. If this was a business deal we'd be able to sue for breach of contract!

REASON: If you weren't married right now, would you leave?

A pause.

SPIRIT: Yes, I guess I would leave. It wouldn't be easy, but I would.

APPETITE: Aha, a small glimmer of backbone starting to appear.

REASON: And why would you leave, if you weren't married I mean?

A pause.

SPIRIT: *[In a small voice.]* Because I'm not happy.

APPETITE: And why aren't you happy?

SPIRIT: Because... because he treats me badly.

REASON: But it's more than that isn't it?

SPIRIT: Yes, it's more. *[Beat]* I would leave because love is dead. Because love can't possibly stay alive in an environment like this marriage.

APPETITE: God that was like getting blood from a stone! Finally she admits it.

REASON: Appetite is right, the marriage contract was never upheld. We never did get the better from better or worse did we?

A pause. Spirit begins to cry.

REASON: What do you want?

APPETITE: You can say it Spirit.

REASON: You already know the answer and so do we.

A pause. They wait. Spirit eventually wipes her eyes, looks at them both, takes a large breath in and steadies herself.

SPIRIT: *[Slowly and deliberately.]* I want not to be married anymore.

REASON: I want not to be married anymore.

APPETITE: I want not to be married anymore.

SPIRIT: Why does it feel this good to say something so terrifying and awful?

REASON: Because it's the right thing to do. We all know that.

APPETITE: Because you're saying what you really want for the first time I can remember.

SPIRIT: So what happens now?

REASON: You know.

Spirit reaches into her bag for her phone and makes a call.

REASON: Yes, strike while the iron is hot.

APPETITE: Give the bastard his marching orders.

SPIRIT: Hi, it's me. *[Beat]* I'm just calling to tell you I'm not coming home tonight. *[Beat]* I mean it's finished. I'm leaving you. *[Beat]* No, I don't love you anymore, and you don't love me, otherwise you wouldn't treat me this way. *[Beat]* It's not enough anymore. *[Beat]* Sorry, I tried my hardest, I really did.

She hangs up and exhales deeply.

SPIRIT: What now?

APPETITE: Whatever we want.

REASON: Life, honesty, happiness...

They stand to leave. Spirit fiddles with the pendant on her necklace, then looks down and it, reaches behind her neck, unclasps it and leaves it on the table. She does the same with her wedding ring.

APPETITE: That saves us leaving a tip for the waitress!

REASON: I think a better tip for the waitress would be: Be careful who you love.

SPIRIT: And be careful how you love.

They exit together as the lights fade.