

A Dark September Rain

A Play in Two Acts

By

Geoffrey L. Breedon

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Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

It is the secret of the world that all things subsist and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again. Nothing is dead; men feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries, and there they stand looking out of the window, sound and well, in some new strange disguise. Jesus is not dead; he is very well alive; nor John, nor Paul, nor Mahomet, nor Aristotle; at times we believe we have seen them all, and could easily tell the names under which they go.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

Great Zeus, Father of men, you would deliver them all from the evils that oppress them, if you would show them what is the Daimon of whom they make use.

Pythagoras

Setting: September. A farmhouse in the country.

Characters:

First Daimon	A Woman
Second Daimon	A Man
Ben	Ghostly great grandfather to Gabriel
Harriet	Ghostly great grandmother to Gabriel
Gabriel	Great grandson of Ben and Harriet and inheritor of their farm
Sara	Gabriel's girlfriend and fellow farmer
Nick	Gabriel's best friend and fellow farmer.
Jean	Gabriel's friend and fellow farmer.
Margaret	Friend of the farmers from the city.
Harry	Jean's boyfriend and local writer.

Notes on the Setting: The play is set in no particular time on the day of a tragic event. The specifics of the event are never mentioned and it can be imagined to be something like September 11, 2001, or a day when two nuclear-power countries have declared war, or a day when some feat of human political engineering has failed. The important thing is not the event, but the reactions to it, and what these reactions suggest for our future choices.

Notes on Ideas: The ideas expressed in this play are the result of two years spent researching and writing a book about spirituality and globalization and the intersection between personal and global transformation. The book is titled *The Chrysalis Age: A Handbook for Personal and Global Transformation in the New Millennium* and the majority of it was written in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This play is an attempt to take the ideas of that book and present them in a dramatic form that indirectly comments on those events and all subsequent events of a similar nature. For this reason the play occasionally lapses into didacticism, but hopefully not at the expense of the story. Those interested in the ideas of the play can find the book online at www.thechrysalisage.com as well as the essays that follow the play.

Notes on the Text: There are a large number of quotations in the text of the play, some of them real (and public domain) and most of them fictional. Because plays in general, and this one in particular, are more likely to be read than seen, the quotations in the text are presented in their entirety for the reader of the play, but it is certainly possible to trim or remove some of them for a performance. This decision and process, along with all other possible excisions, is at the discretion of the director. Feel free to cut the text to suit the needs of your production.

Notes on Sequels: This play returns to the setting and characters of a play and ultra-low budget film I wrote and directed called *Harvest Moon*. Returning to these characters has been an interesting experiment to see not only how they have changed with the passing of a decade, but also how I have changed. Those interested in the antecedents of this play can read the script for *Harvest Moon* at www.thechrysalisage.com in the scripts section.

A Dark September Rain

ACT I

The lights come up...

On the FIRST DAIMON and the SECOND DAIMON standing center stage. The DAIMONS appear to be male and female, though they may be young or old, of any racial or ethnic background. The First Daimon carries a book that will be read from throughout the play. During the play the Daimons will quietly echo the lines of the other characters as well as subtly imitate their actions on stage. They may also occasionally pick up one another's lines in mid-sentence and continue speaking for each other. They are dressed all in black and their makeup is expressionistic suggesting the woodcuts of William Blake. They appear as though they have just stepped out of an old black and white photograph, or the paintings of Edward Munch. The sounds that follow them are reminiscent of those heard in a forest on a late November afternoon; gray and indistinct. They are always present somewhere on stage. The First Daimon reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "The end was predicted long before its arrival and its continued delay led many to believe that their fondest wishes had been fulfilled while their darkest fears had been allayed. But all beginnings come to an end, regardless of how many twists and turns occur in between these two cosmic poles. Alpha and Omega can only be separated for so long. It is their nature to desire union. The door is closing. The lights are dimming. And even the air smells stale and insufficient to sustain the hope that creeps in against the inevitable. The end is no longer coming, no longer on the horizon, no longer at a distance, it has arrived and it is demanding to be admitted. Once we have let it in, into our country, into our homes, into our consciousness, and into our hearts, what hope can there be for us? What comes after the end?" William Halfpence, *Three Days of Autumn Night: A Journey Into the End of Days*, The Oxford Press

The lights come up on the rest of the stage and set as the Second Daimon speaks. The farmhouse has many rooms, but the one being lit at the moment would be best described as a gathering room, because it here that the family routinely comes together. The room has two couches and several chairs placed among bookshelves and antique farming implements. In one corner of the room there is an old Franklin stove and at the other end is a small table used for sewing. Although there are a number of candles and oil lamps around the room, at night the room is illuminated by three lamps dating back to the early twenties. At the moment the room is lit by the morning sunlight streaming through the lead laden windowpanes. The only truly modern aspect of the room is an old television set, facing away from the audience.

The Second Daimon speaks, but does not read from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: The farm is nestled in the bosom of two near-mountain-hills, its fields rolling along the valley bottom, cloaked in spring-planted, spring-fed wheat grown to a pale rust beneath the early Autumn sun. The town is not far away, just over the tree-topped hills and past a small crystal river that runs so swift not even the dead of winter can freeze its course. The wheat runs the length of the valley, racing neck and neck with the sweet-corn

and slender barley, collapsing together at the fence that squarely encircles the barn. Behind the fence, behind the chickens and their coop, behind the sows and their wallow, behind even the grazing cow and the garden of green vegetables, sits the house. The farmhouse has stood beneath these lumbering hills since before the birth of the last century, its oaken frame weathered, but not yet bent against the ravages of wind and rain and time and memories of summers gone by. Behind its solid doors, past its slim, sun-warped windows, within its thin, plaster and horsehair walls, upon its cracked marble hearth, lies the heart of every farm and the soul of every farmer. Within the house are all the things one expects to find in a structure that has survived the greatest century still standing upright. There is pain and loss, joy and sorrow, solace and wonderment, faded memories, silent dreams, and time-bleached desires. There is also a family. One not born, but inherited and made, like most families, from tenuous bargains, compromises of will, mutual affection, hard earned respect, and the stain of sweat and love and labor beneath the wide open sky. Those that bequeathed the farm to this new family remember it well. So well that it seems to them like only yesterday they walked its narrow halls, plowed the tender soil, and lived.

The lights come up on BEN and HARRIET. They are in their late seventies, dressed in farm clothes; the same clothes they wore year after year while they were alive. They are perfectly at home in the farmhouse, though they no longer live there, or anywhere else for that matter. They inhabit the house, but not in the material sense. They seem weary yet resolved. Their presence evokes images not so much of a shadowed and faded Norman Rockwell painting as of the sepia tones that dominate the photos of Edward Curtis, and this somehow infected with the sorrowful sensibility of Pieter Bruegel's rural paintings such as A Gloomy Day. The music and sounds that accompany them possess reminiscent strains of Aaron Copeland sifted through the tones of Hank Williams, Arlo Guthrie, and the rural blues of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters: The frozen sounds of a lifetime suspended in eternity.

HARRIET: The day I first set eyes on the house was the day that Ben got out of the Army. The Great War had just ended and I was on my way to the train to greet him. The river had flooded the main road and so my father took the wagon down a path we seldom traveled, running as it did through the valley, and not straight into town. The dirt trail, hardly a road, ran alongside the fields. It was corn I think they had planted. Maybe wheat. It was so long ago. But I do remember the house. It must have been forty years old at the time, and it hadn't seen a coat of paint since the day it was built. The wood looked parched and brittle beneath the high summer sun, but I could tell that the house was sturdy. I knew it would hold up, and I knew it would hold a family.

BEN: I was born the same day the Wright Brothers lifted off the ground at Kitty Hawk. Their first twelve minutes in the air were my first twelve minutes breathing the air. Something about that connection marked me, because I was forever fascinated with flight. It was all I dreamed of as a boy. Riding with the clouds. When we entered the war, I lied to the government about my age and schemed and plotted to get into the air. I never got my wish. I only ever saw the war from the ground. When I came back, Harriet told me about the farm. It was for sale. The woman who owned it had lost her husband and both her sons to the war. We knew we wanted a family, and we knew a farm was a good place to raise one. I had never planned to be a farmer, but I really didn't know anything else. So, I hired a pilot for a biplane ride from a traveling circus and took Harriet up for both of our maiden

voyages aloft. That was the first time I saw the farm: from the air. Even before I landed, I knew I would die in that house.

HARRIET: Living through two world wars and two families makes you appreciate that the end is never what you think it will be.

BEN: Especially when it's your own end.

HARRIET: And the end is never what it seems at its beginning.

The First Daimon reads from the book. As the First Daimon speaks, GABRIEL, SARA, NICK, and JEAN enter the room and take their places before the television set. They are all dressed in the sort of work clothes one finds on any farm; functional, comfortable, and well worn. They are all in their mid-thirties and there is a bond between them that is clear and distinct. Their collective company manifests an impression suggestive of the warm tones of Pierre Renoir pressed against the discordant cubism of Pablo Picasso and the shimmering hues of Gustav Klimt. The auditory gestures that accompany their presence intimate fields of dry wheat swaying in the wind, the creaking of a hundred year old house constantly settling into the ground, the branches of a wooded glade smacking one another in leafless applause, and the call of a crow in the dim light of a late summer sky where storm clouds gather in the distance.

FIRST DAIMON: "What we saw that day changed us, changed us all, on some fundamental level. We were suddenly stung in a part of our being that most of us didn't even know existed. If we did know of its existence it was in a vague and hazy way, the way we imagine we know our true natures, the way we envision our souls. If no other good comes of that day, at least we will know this place where we have been lanced, and we will learn to protect and nurture it for the sake of our future." Lawrence Jansen, *The New York Daily Times*

The First Daimon puts down the book. As the Second Daimon speaks the four stare in horror at the images they are witnessing on the TV.

SECOND DAIMON: "That is all the information we have at this time. As we said, details are sketchy and reports are conflicting. We do not know what the death toll will be, but it is safe to assume the loss of life is extensive. Again, these are the images that tell the story best..."

The lights fade on the Second Daimon.

SARA: Turn it off.

Nick turns off the television.

JEAN: I want to see this.

SARA: I can't watch it again. They're showing the same thing over and over. How many times can you see that?

JEAN: What if they show something new?

SARA: They'll show it again. It's all they're going to show. Like last time. Like every time.

NICK: Sara's right. We can check again later.

GABRIEL: Or we can check on line.

JEAN: If you don't want to watch it, why don't you leave the room?

SARA: There's a TV upstairs.

JEAN: So I'm getting kicked out?

GABRIEL: Nobody's kicking you out.

NICK: Look, we'll turn it back on in a while. Not all of us can handle watching that again and again.

JEAN: Fine. We'll check it in an hour.

SARA: Fine.

They are all silent for a few moments.

GABRIEL: I wonder if Margaret is okay?

JEAN: We should call her.

SARA: I'll call. I want to call my parents anyway.

Sara kisses Gabriel and steps into the kitchen.

NICK: We should all call our families.

JEAN: Why should I call my parents? They're not going to call me.

GABRIEL: It'd be a nice gesture in a time of crisis.

JEAN: To hell with gestures. It's their turn to make a gesture.

NICK: We should probably get some supplies. This could go on for a few days.

JEAN: I went shopping last night. We've got enough stuff for a month if we need it.

GABRIEL: Do we have toilet paper?

JEAN: Yes, Gabe, we have plenty of toilet paper.

GABRIEL: I was just asking. It's important.

JEAN: The world is going to hell in a hand basket and all you can think about is wiping your ass. Typical.

GABRIEL: The world is going to hell and you want to start a fight. That's typical.

NICK: Will the two of you shut up?

Sara reenters.

SARA: The lines are all busy. I can't get through to anyone.

NICK: Everybody in the whole world is trying to call home.

GABRIEL: We should just bomb them into the fucking Stone Age.

NICK: Who?

GABRIEL: All of them.

JEAN: Talk about typical.

SARA: He's got a point. We can't just sit on our hands doing nothing.

JEAN: We haven't been sitting on our hands doing nothing. We've been doing a lot of things and this is just one reaction to the things we've done.

GABRIEL: You've been sleeping with Harry so long you're starting to sound like him.

JEAN: Thank God I never sounded like you when we were together.

NICK: Did you talk to Harry?

JEAN: He called me from the paper this morning, but we haven't talked since.

NICK: Do you want drive into town? I mean since the phones don't work.

JEAN: He was supposed to come here after work. I'm sure he'll be here soon.

Silence.

NICK: I'm gonna finish feeding the animals.

SARA: That can wait can't it?

NICK: We can't leave them unfed.

JEAN: They'll be fine for a few hours.

NICK: I need something to do. I can't just sit here and wait to see what happens.

GABRIEL: Nick's right. I don't want to sit here either. I should get the hay under the tarp in case it rains.

SARA: It's not going to rain.

GABRIEL: Maybe.

NICK: It's something to do.

JEAN: To avoid reality.

NICK: To keep busy.

JEAN: Aren't you the one always saying we need to be present with reality as it is?

NICK: Yeah.

JEAN: Well?

NICK: I don't know if I have the strength to be that present for something like this.

GABRIEL: I know I don't.

JEAN: Since when are you present?

SARA: Lay off, Jean.

GABRIEL: Who needs enemies bent on our destruction when we have each other?

JEAN: All I'm saying is that the two of you don't have to run away.

GABRIEL: What else is there to do?

SARA: Stay here.

GABRIEL: And do what?

SARA: Be with me.

Silence.

GABRIEL: Okay.

JEAN: How about you, Nick?

NICK: The animals can wait a while.

Silence.

The lights fade on the four farmers and come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "All humans move through a number of developmental stages from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. Interestingly, and sometimes alarmingly, when a crisis arises for an individual he or she can temporarily regress to the operational perspective of an earlier developmental level. Thus, in a crisis situation, an adult may react from a purely survival motivated perspective dominant at earlier levels. While this is not surprising, in the light of recent events it should be obvious that the consequences of such a regression could be considerable when extended to the population of an entire country." Dr. Heinz Herzog, Ph.D, *The Effects of Catastrophe Upon Individuals and Societies*, Freiburg University Press.

The lights fade on the First Daimon and come up on Harriet.

HARRIET: All three of my children were born in this house. Of course at the time it wasn't as though there was an option. There was no hospital nearby. Ben would run into town when my water broke and fetch the doctor and pick up my mother on the way home. This all worked fine for Emily and James, but when little Darien came along everyone showed up just in time to see me wiping the blood from his face. I held him close. Kissed him while he slept in my arms. The smell of him reminded me of fresh tilled earth. I thought he'd make a fine farmer. And he would have. I think Ben was glad Darien was our last child. He was afraid it was getting too easy. But it wasn't really easy. It never is. The pregnancy is the easiest part. When you hold that child in your arms for the first time and feel its breath against your skin, that's when your heart opens up. That's when things get difficult. Not difficult in the sense that you have to raise them. Changing diapers and chasing screaming kids is the simplest thing in the world. No the hard part is letting them go. Letting them out into the world to get knocked down, bruised, and lost. We lost both our sons on the beaches of Normandy. That takes a large heart-- To really let your children go.

The lights fade on Harriet as they come up on the Second Daimon reading from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "As the twentieth century ended the world was populated with more than six billion people. One third of these terrestrial residents lived in just two countries; China and India. While predictions at the time suggested that many so-called developed nations were undergoing a drop in fertility and were likely to experience a stabilization of their population, if not an actual decline, many of the so-called developing nations would continue to see increasing population numbers. United Nations median estimates indicated that the world population would be seven and a half billion people by the year 2025 and nearly nine billion by the year 2050." Panjit Nair, *The Paradoxes of Population and Power*, The Bangladesh New Press.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they come up on Sara in the kitchen.

SARA: It's so hard to understand men sometimes. They have this restless desire to fix everything. Even things that can't be fixed. And if they don't know how to fix it, then they try run away from it. From how it makes them feel. Not that women are any better. Sometimes we get too caught up in our feelings and can't get past them. I know I do sometimes. I keep thinking about this fight that Gabriel and I have every six months. I want to have children. That's the fight. Not that Gabriel doesn't, but that he doesn't know.

Gabriel appears in the dim half-light of flashback, trying to physically dodge Sara's words.

GABRIEL: I'm not ready.

SARA: No one is ever ready.

GABRIEL: They can be more or less ready, and I'm less ready.

SARA: With so many people having children how difficult can it be?

GABRIEL: Having them isn't difficult; it's raising them that's difficult.

SARA: You'll make a great father.

GABRIEL: My father thought he was a great father and he was a fool.

SARA: You're not your father.

GABRIEL: We don't have enough money.

SARA: We have more money than we've ever had.

GABRIEL: And it's still not enough.

SARA: Children don't need money, they need love.

Gabriel recedes into darkness and Sara is alone again.

SARA: So, we fight and then we forget about it for a few months. I remember being about five years old and standing next to my mother in the kitchen while she was washing dishes. I would wrap myself in the folds of her dress and wait for her to finish. She never yelled at me, or tried to push me away, she just kept scrubbing the dishes. Until she was done. And then she would say "towel" and I would run to the refrigerator and grab the towel and bring it to her so she could dry her hands. And then she would kiss me and pick me up in her arms and I know this sounds absurd, but I remember thinking, even then, that one day I would have a daughter to help me with the dishes: To pick up off the floor and kiss and swing through the air as she giggled. But now, this nagging fear is whispering in the back of my mind. This fear of bringing a child into the world, into this miserable, insane, screwed up world. My fear is that maybe I'm beginning to fear this world so much that I may end up afraid to have a child. Because, how do you not be afraid for your child in a world like this?

The lights fade on Sara as they come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "At the turn of the third millennium there were six hundred million children living in poverty around the world. Twelve million children under the age of five were dying from preventable diseases each year. Two hundred-fifty million children between the ages of five and fifteen were working in sometimes dangerous and unhealthy conditions instead of attending school. Over half a million children were dying each year in wars. An additional thirteen million children became orphans because of AIDS by the end of the millennium. Even in the United States of America, the wealthiest and most powerful country that has ever existed, 11 million children were living in poverty, without access to proper nutrition or healthcare."

The lights come up on Sara and Jean in the Kitchen.

SARA: I don't see how you can say that.

JEAN: Because it's true.

FIRST DAIMON: "One of the most significant questions facing the children of the world as we entered the new millennium was not what sort of world they would create as adults, but whether they would live long enough to see that world." Zola Suleman, *The Pregnant Pause: A Moment of Truth About Our Children*, Johannesburg Free Press Publications."

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

SARA: What about adopting from a Third World country?

JEAN: The last thing a kid in a developing nation needs is to be exposed to the lifestyle of this country.

SARA: What the hell are you talking about, kids are starving all over the world.

JEAN: Better to be a little hungry with a family that cares for you than to be dropped into the last circle of Dante's *Inferno*. Although even Dante wasn't perverse enough to imagine a hell as deadly as twenty-four hour a day shopping networks, MTV, and mega malls. It's no wonder our kids kill each other, we've sterilized their entire lives and turned them into commercial events for consumption.

SARA: God, not this speech again.

JEAN: It's true. Our country has the highest rates of depression, teen suicide, and obesity. What the hell kind of world is that to knowingly bring a kid into.

SARA: But what if the child is already here? Today, just today, because of what's happened, because of what's still happening even as we speak, there are more orphans in this country, more kids without parents. Right here. Today. What do you want to do, leave them on their own? Ship them off to some Third World country where they can find peace and happiness in poverty?

JEAN: That might not be such a bad idea.

SARA: Christ. I just can't talk to you anymore. What the hell has happened to you? You've always been bitter and pissed at the world, but you were never like this.

JEAN: Maybe I just woke up and saw that it's all a sham.

SARA: What's a sham? Life?

JEAN: The way we live it, yes.

SARA: What do you mean the way we live it? We live on a farm? We turn the TV on once a week. We live the crunchy granola life in 3-D Technicolor. What more do you want?

JEAN: I don't know. I just know that the rest of the world is fucked beyond repair and part of the reason it's fucked is because we fucked it. Us. Our great nation. Our shining beacon of wealth, power, and democracy. We fucked it up.

SARA: Yeah, well now it's fucking us.

JEAN: Exactly. It's coming back to haunt us. We're responsible for what befalls us because we've been responsible for what has befallen most of the rest of the world.

SARA: I don't buy that.

JEAN: That's because you won't open your eyes and admit what the world is.

SARA: Fine. Enlighten me. Open my eyes. What is the world?

JEAN: It's a reflection of our own evil.

SARA: Our evil. Today we're evil?

JEAN: Yes. We're consumed with an all-powerful lust for money, and power, and personal gain at any cost. And today is just part of the eventual cost. Part of the payment we've been putting off.

The lights come up on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "At the time of the new century over a billion people lived on a dollar a day, and nearly half of the world's population, just under three billion people, lived on less than two dollars a day."

SARA: So we deserve this? The world deserves this?

JEAN: Yes. The only bitch of it is that the wrong people got killed today, not the ones who really deserve it. Not the ones who benefited from fucking it up.

SECOND DAIMON: "In contrast, the wealthiest four hundred human beings had a combined wealth equal to slightly more than a third of the population of the entire world."

SARA: I can't talk to you about this anymore.

SECOND DAIMON: "Somehow, in spite of the predictions by the few remaining Marxists of the time, this vast inequality of power and wealth between individuals and nations did not inspire a revolution of egalitarian economics." Karla Kristall, *A Short History of Money, Power, and Revolution*, Icarus Press.

JEAN: Suit yourself. But this is the world you bring a child into if you have one. And it's not a world that'll last long. Just turn on the TV. Or look out the window.

The lights fade on Sara and Jean as they come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed." Dwight D. Eisenhower, Speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, April 16, 1953.

The lights come up on Nick on the porch.

NICK: How does a pacifist face the violence of the world without feeling like a coward? I've thought about that a great deal since this all began. And today I can't think of anything else. How do you reconcile a spiritual desire to have love and compassion for all living beings with the knowledge that there are people trying to kill you?

SECOND DAIMON: "Heroism at command, senseless brutality, deplorable love-of-country stance, how violently I hate all this, how despicable and ignoble war is; I would rather be torn to shreds than be a part of so base an action! It is my conviction that killing under the cloak of war is nothing but an act of murder." Albert Einstein

The lights fade on the Daimons.

NICK: I mean, I have endless compassion for those who died, for those who are dying, and for those who love them, but I can't find any compassion for those who have caused this death and destruction. I know this great compassion exists within me, exists within all of us, but I don't know how to reach its depths. And that makes me think about the world everyday, not just on days like today when it falls apart. How do you cultivate a spiritual life in a world that is filled with so much pain and suffering?

The lights come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "We have to face the fact that either all of us are going to die together or we are going to learn to live together and if we are to live together we have to talk." *Eleanor Roosevelt*

NICK: I witnessed a man dying once. A car ran a red light while we were crossing the street. His lungs were crushed. He couldn't breath. I held his hand while he died.

The lights come up on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf." George Orwell

NICK: He was right behind me. Just a half a step. I didn't hear anything until the woman next to me screamed. That's what it's like everyday. People are dying every second, just a half step behind us, but we hardly ever notice.

The lights fade on Nick.

FIRST DAIMON: "Excepting a small minority of mercenary or sadistic disposition, wars are not fought for personal gain, but out of loyalty and devotion to king, country or cause. Homicide committed for personal reasons is a statistical rarity in all cultures, including our own. Homicide for unselfish reasons, at the risk of one's own life, is the dominant phenomenon of history." Arthur Koestler.

The lights fade on the Daimons and come up on Ben.

BEN: The war, the Great War, the First World War, was a war that those who fought in it, those who survived it, all assumed would teach the world that the horrors of war were too great to inflict upon humanity, upon ourselves and our children, ever again. When I was in the trenches, I remembered Woodrow Wilson's speech to congress. He said. "Right is more precious than peace. We will fight for the things that we carry nearest our heart. For a universal dominion of rights, by a concert of free people, that is going to bring peace and safety to all this world." I tried to remember these words as I saw my friends and fellow soldiers cut in half by bombs, or their heads shorn away by shrapnel or bullets. I tried to believe in these words when the stench of the dead rose up from the rotting depths of the trenches and overwhelmed me. I tried to believe in them when the fear crept in and infected my mind. When we would go over the top, crawling through the mud, over the dead bodies of those we had abandoned in the days before, over the barbed wire, around the land mines and into the face of death. I tried to remember these words, but it didn't help. I knew that these words would not change the world anymore than the war we were fighting would. It is too much in our nature to kill one another and it is too little in our nature to realize the futility of it until we ourselves are dead.

The lights fade on the Ben as they come up on the Second Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON: The overwhelming response to the events of the day in cities around the country, and indeed around the world, has been one of panic. In this city the panic has given way to full-blown hysteria. Although the national, state, and local government officials are steadfastly declaring that there is no cause for panic, and that people should remain in their homes, thousands and thousands of citizens of this metropolis are fleeing the city by any means at their disposal. Officials say that this flight may only increase the risk of harm to people as the result of an unplanned and unauthorized evacuation. The Mayor's office is reporting that certain parts of town have experienced looting and vandalism. Stay tuned for more breaking headlines from Lead Line news.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they come up on Nick and Gabriel on the porch.

GABRIEL: Then what are we talking about?

NICK: I don't know. I'm just trying to come to terms with my ideals in the face of something so horrible I can barely comprehend it.

GABRIEL: Well, you know Jean would say that ideals are only one step from ideology, so get rid of them both.

NICK: Jean's an ideologue.

GABRIEL: You tell her that. And remember to turn the other cheek while she's kicking your ass.

NICK: Yeah, that's the problem. How do you live up to your ideals? Sometimes our ideals are just beyond our ability to accomplish them.

GABRIEL: And yet we're confronted with people who have no trouble living up to their ideals because their ideals tell them to kill us.

NICK: So how do you open our heart and mind to the world in a way that makes you strong enough to live up to your ideals?

GABRIEL: Maybe you need to change your ideals. If you're not happy with the results, change your expectations.

NICK: These are the right ideals.

GABRIEL: But how can you make them work? How can compassion and pacifism stand up to hatred and violence?

NICK: That's what turning the other cheek means. It's saying that the greater strength is to be found within one's self, rather in the fist or the sword. That the weak are the ones who turn to violence, because that path is easy. The truly difficult path is the path of love.

GABRIEL: Well, I'll be honest. Right now I don't feel like being compassionate for anyone. I want to be compassionate for the people who are dead, for the ones who are still dying and for their families, but I'm just numb. How can I feel compassion for the people who did this when I can't grasp the level of compassion required for all the people who deserve it?

Anger. Now that's another story. When my sister was killed, I lived on anger because that was something that made sense. One minute she's getting in her car and the next minute she's lying dead with a bullet in her chest because she didn't get out of the car fast enough for the guy who was stealing it. How could I have compassion for the man who did that? I couldn't. But I could hate him. And you can't last like that, I know, but for a while at least, it helps. Maybe that's the only way to get through this. Just ride out the anger.

NICK: But what if you act out of that anger. What if you had killed the guy who caused your sister's death? Would that have helped?

GABRIEL: I don't know. But I know it would have made me feel better. I know that.

NICK: Look, I understand what you're saying. Hell, I wanted the guy dead too. But I don't think that's the right response. It's difficult. It's so difficult. I want to believe these things, I want to feel them, but I can't quite get there. This morning when we were watching it happen, something occurred to me. I was feeling this wave of compassion, like you said, for all the people dying, for all the people who were losing a loved one. And then it dawned on me that this was happening in one way or another every day. Every minute. That children were dying in pain from starvation and war. That mothers were watching their children die in their arms. That men and women were being driven from their homes or killed in armed conflicts, or were dying of AIDS or malaria or some other disease. But the point was, this was happening every day and I was oblivious to it.

GABRIEL: You're more aware of it than anyone I know.

NICK: Look at whom you know.

GABRIEL: True.

NICK: But it's not so much that I didn't know it was happening, but that I wasn't able to conceive of having compassion for each of these people, each of these precious human lives that were suffering every moment. I'd never made a connection with the compassion that they deserve.

GABRIEL: I can't even envision that much compassion.

NICK: Neither can I. If we could, we wouldn't be able to stand it. We wouldn't be able to let it happen so easily.

The lights fade on Nick and Gabriel as they come up on the First Daimon who is reading from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "I was born in the silken under-pocket of my mother's dreams, wedged there between her regrets of the past, her fears of the present, and her hopes for the future. It was a nurturing place where both succor and solace could be found in equal measure. But it was not a place where I could remain, where I could rest. There would be no rest, only the endless search for a shelter as safe and embracing as my mother's arms. But there is no such shelter, no house that cannot be blown down, no tree that will not fall, no cave that will not crush us. There are no places for hiding when the world falls apart. There are only pieces to walk among."

The lights come up on the kitchen. Gabriel, Sara, Nick and Jean are all present. They are listening intently to HARRY, a man a bit younger than themselves. He is infused with an arrogance that can easily be confused for passion.

HARRY: It was surreal at first. I can see Main Street out my office window and usually it would have a steady stream of people passing by. But there was no one. It was like a ghost town. Nothing but the trees swaying in the wind. That's how I noticed.

FIRST DAIMON: "The world is only ruins in the making, waiting for entropy to work its endless magic. There is no safe harbor. No truly still water. The world is ever-collapsing like the earth above a subterranean nuclear test. And today the world has fallen at my feet like some mythic beast felled from the heavens by the arrow of time's archer."

HARRY: I had been trying to write an article for this week's paper. A piece on disappearing farmland and urban sprawl. You know, my usual thing: How we're getting fucked by the developers and the government. But then I looked up and glanced out the window and it just struck me. There was nobody there.

FIRST DAIMON: "And looking at it, I see this creature's face resembles my own in more ways than there are stars. And like the stars in their distant fury, I see the truth. There is no shelter beneath this sky." Harry Carson, *Poems of the Fallen Phoenix*, Catskill Community Press.

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

HARRY: Everyone was glued to their TV or just in shock, I guess. I was as soon as I turned it on. I wonder how many times it can happen before I won't feel the shock of it. I don't know how much time passed, but I looked out the window and it was like a switch had been turned on for some insane Rube Goldberg experiment. There were people everywhere, running down the street, jamming into stores, buying... everything. Stocking up for the worst. It was bedlam. The streets were so packed, I just decided to walk here. I cut

through Wilson's farm, and this was the strangest thing, because I've done that a hundred times, but walking through that field, looking up at the sky, I would never have known that anything was wrong, that anything had happened. I felt for a moment that when I got here and opened the door, that I'd discover it was all a mirage, some figment of my imagination. But it's real.

Jean takes Harry's hand. The lights fade out and fade up on the Second Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON: The devastation is horrible. I can't even begin to put it into words. It was so swift and so sudden that there was literally no time for people to react. The number of dead is far greater than officials first believed, and it seems only likely to rise in the coming days as the aftershocks of today play out. At this point I've only been able to speak to one survivor who was being rushed to the hospital. She just kept asking, why, why? This is the question that is likely to haunt us in the coming weeks and months. We can only hope that at some point there is an answer. For Lead Line news, this is Bob Hardy reporting.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon and come up on Nick, Jean, Harry, Gabriel and Sara as they set the kitchen table and prepare for lunch.

SARA: That's insane.

JEAN: No, it's not.

SARA: But how can you even say that?

HARRY: She's right. It's the truth.

GABRIEL: Bullshit. How can you say we deserve this?

SARA: How can you say the people who are dying deserve this?

HARRY: I don't like it anymore than you, but we do.

NICK: Why? Why do we deserve this? Why does anybody deserve this?

HARRY: You believe in karma don't you?

GABRIEL: Fuck karma, nobody deserves what's happening today

HARRY: Yeah, they do. It's cause and effect.

NICK: Karma is a little more complicate than cause and effect.

JEAN: He means we have been taking actions in the world that have been sowing the seeds of karma, isn't that what you call it?

NICK: Individuals sow seeds of karma, not countries. Individuals reap their karma, not whole nations.

HARRY: So you say, but today is the proof isn't it.

SARA: I don't understand what the hell you're talking about. What have we done to deserve this?

JEAN: Toppling legitimate governments to secure our financial interests.

HARRY: Supporting illegitimate governments to get what we want.

JEAN: Like oil. And oil. And more oil.

HARRY: And supporting governments that crush their people so we can make a buck or two.

JEAN: Or so that we can have cheap t-shirts.

HARRY: And undermining democracy when we claim to support it.

JEAN: There are hundreds of reasons.

HARRY: The surprise is that we haven't seen this more often. The surprise is that we don't suffer the consequences of our actions every day.

SARA: I still don't know what the hell you're talking about.

JEAN: That's because you refuse to open your eyes and really look at the world. You keep your blinders on about what really happens outside the hundred some odd acres of this farm.

GABRIEL: Maybe she just doesn't read the mindless shit that you read.

HARRY: Look, you can't deny that this country has been involved in one act after another that is despicable.

GABRIEL: What country hasn't been? That's an impossible ideal to force on a country. History is full of countries and leaders that act for their own interest.

JEAN: But that doesn't make it right.

HARRY: What about the common interest?

SARA: I think we have been acting in the common interest.

JEAN: Oh, my God, you are so naïve.

SARA: Maybe I am naïve. I'll admit that we've made huge mistakes, that we've done things that I wouldn't possibly defend, but I honestly believe that we have tried to do good in the world.

HARRY: No, don't fool yourself. That is naïve.

GABRIEL: Sara has a point. There is a reason that half of the world is no longer living under communist dictators, and that's because of the things we have done. The actions we have taken.

JEAN: We weren't trying to save the world from communism. We were trying to keep the ruling elite in power.

GABRIEL: So, it's the rich who are to blame. At least I can get behind that.

SARA: So you're saying that because our foreign policy pissed a few people off they have the right to kill us.

HARRY: When they pissed us off, we bomb the hell out of them.

GABRIEL: There I agree with you. That's exactly what we should do. Bomb the hell out them.

JEAN: Back to that again. Bombing people will just make it worse. Just kill more people.

SARA: I agree with Gabriel. They brought this on themselves.

HARRY: Then you're making the same point we are.

SARA: How?

HARRY: Because either way, so-called innocent people die.

GABRIEL: So, what, it's okay for them to kill innocent people, but it's not okay for us to kill innocent people?

JEAN: Who says we're innocent? We have the right to vote, to put people in office who do our bidding. The people you want to bomb live in exactly the countries we've worked hard to keep from being democratic.

HARRY: She's right. And I know this sounds harsh, but in some way this is justice. We've been stomping around the planet for the last fifty years like we owned the place, crushing people left and right and now somebody is fighting back.

SARA: So that makes it right?

Nick, who has been silent, finally speaks up.

NICK: No, it doesn't make it right. I've been thinking about what you said about karma, Harry, and I don't think you're right. Karma is about actions in past lives affecting this life and actions in this life affecting future lives.

HARRY: Spare me the religious mumbo jumbo.

SARA: I don't know if I believe in karma, but I do believe in God, and I don't know how God lets things like this happen.

JEAN: They happen every day. Just not here. Not where we can see them.

SARA: I don't understand that either.

HENRY: That's because you believe in a just and benevolent God, and if there is a God, he's neither just nor benevolent.

NICK: Look, here's what I'm trying to say. Violence is easy to justify, but that doesn't make it right. If it's not in self-defense, it's probably not right. And yes, that means we have taken a lot of actions as a nation that are wrong. Hell, we've taken a lot of actions against our own people that were wrong. But that doesn't mean that violence taken against us is right. And it doesn't mean that the violence we commit in response to what's happened today will be justice. Jean and Harry are right, if we know that the people we put in power are doing bad things, then we have a responsibility to act. If we don't know, then how can we be responsible? Or maybe we are. I don't know. Maybe it doesn't even fucking matter. I mean, if the five of us can't get along what the hell hope does the world have?!

They are all silent for a moment.

HARRY: None.

The lights slowly fade on the five and come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "Their life on the farm was far from idyllic. To begin with, they knew nothing about farming. When they first moved into the old farmhouse they understood as much about the cycles of planting, nurturing, and harvesting as they did about nuclear physics and molecular biology, which is to say, less than they really knew about themselves. What would inspire four people in their early twenties to quit their jobs, leave their promising if empty careers, and settle into the life of farmers? Whim and fancy."

The lights come up on Gabriel in a small sitting room that acts as an office. As the First Daimon reads, Gabriel slowly takes over and finishes the passage.

FIRST DAIMON and GABRIEL: "Tom had inherited the farm from his great grandparents, because, apparently they felt he needed some responsibility in his life to give him direction. And they weren't so mistaken in this. He knew he needed direction. His life was not so much directionless as motionless."

GABRIEL: "And his friends fared little better. Outwardly they seemed upwardly mobile, but inwardly they felt as stagnate and listless as he did. Surprisingly the challenge of tilling the earth to put food on their plates would change some of that."

FIRST DAIMON: From the novel *Harvest Moon*, by Gabriel Masters.

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

GABRIEL: I haven't been able to write, really write, in years. It began when my sister died. Standing beside her coffin, kissing her forehead, the powdery taste of the makeup clinging to my lips, I thought about all the times she had been there for me, supported me, given me the confidence I often lacked. Even when we were kids, playing in the woods behind the house, pretending to be on some jungle adventure in a far off land, she would always make me lead, push me to the front of the trail, not because she was afraid, not because she didn't know the way, but because she sensed on some essential level that I needed this. She always seemed to know me better than I knew myself. After her death I tried to write about it. About what she meant to me. But the words seemed weak and insubstantial. And now it's the same for everything. What words can I use to describe my love for Sara?

The come up on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest."

GABRIEL: What phrases can I conjure up to express my ambivalence and fear about having children? Where are the similes and metaphors to describe the love I feel for this strange little family I've created and the dread I have of it breaking apart?

SECOND DAIMON: "You ask me to dig for stones! Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again. You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it, and be rich like white men, but how dare I cut my mother's hair?"

The lights come up on Ben.

BEN: My father and my grandfather were both farmers. And they were proud of being farmers. I remember the first time I was old enough to help my father in the fields. Barely bigger than the seed bag I was carrying.

GABRIEL: Are there verbs and adjectives to describe the emptiness I feel?

The lights fade on Gabriel.

BEN: I could feel his pride in me that day like the heat of the sun beating down on my neck. It was the same sense of pride I felt radiating from my grandfather when we would walk the fields in the fall, him telling me what the land was like before he came to it.

SECOND DAIMON: "I want my people to stay with me here. All the dead men will come to life again. Their spirits will come to their bodies again. We must wait here in the homes of our fathers and be ready to meet them in the bosom of our mother." Spoken by Wavoka, Paiute Indian medicine man and bringer of the Ghost Dance.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon

BEN: My grandfather was half Cherokee and he never forgot that the land he farmed had once belonged to the ancestors of his ancestors and that they had cared for it for thousands of years before him. He would tell me, walking through the rows of corn and wheat, that it was our duty to see that the land was just as fertile and bountiful a thousand years after our bones were ashes as it was while we tilled it. You put your whole soul into the land if you're really a farmer. You recognize it as part of yourself. You don't see it as just a means to an end, you see it as a continual beginning, constantly renewing itself with your help. Like

anything in life, you give to the world, and it gives back. What you sow, you eventually reap. And when you sow deformed seeds, you can harvest a sickly crop. I think about that when I look back upon my life and those I loved. My wife, my children, my friends. The bitter harvests were often sown by my own hand. In some ways, not all ways, I think that holds true for the whole wide world.

The lights come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "Oracles and soothsayers may claim to see beyond the ever-present horizon that separates the known from the potential, but their vision is astigmatic at best."

BEN: And I have to wonder sometimes what fruits my great grandson's generation will pluck from their labors, and whether there will be any bounty left for their children.

The lights fade on Ben.

FIRST DAIMON: "We cannot see the future with any clarity, but this will not deter us from questioning its possibilities. In fortunate days this can breed unrestrained optimism that will inevitably be tempered by the ensuing realities that erupt, but in tragic times, like those that have gripped us these many months, it can instill a rabid apprehension of the present as the sole progenitor of tomorrow."

The lights come up on Sara and Gabriel in the bedroom.

GABRIEL: I'm not saying that. I'm saying... I'm not done thinking yet.

SARA: How long do you think you'll need to think about it?

GABRIEL: I don't know.

FIRST DAIMON: "To be trapped in the question of tomorrow, when today seems uncertain and ill grounded, is to cast ourselves into a hell of our own making. Unfortunately it may be a hell that we are poorly prepared to unmake." Elaine Duran, Editor for *The Journal of Future Affairs*, Brazil Edition.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon

SARA: Not that I'm trying to pressure you.

GABRIEL: Not that I'm feeling pressured.

SARA: It's important to me, Gabriel.

GABRIEL: I know. It's important to me too. That's why I want to think about until it I'm sure.

SARA: You don't have to think about it all together. You can think about us, and then about kids.

GABRIEL: But they're not separate. You want kids. Not that I don't, but when and how and all that is important. What Jean said is crazy in a lot of ways, but I still have to wonder how you have kids in a world like this. How do you raise your kids up and then send them off into the world outside our door? We can't just keep them here on the farm. They have to go out into the world and when you look at it, when you look at the world, you have to wonder if they'll come back.

SARA: I know. I've been thinking the same thing. How many mothers are hearing that their children are dead today? How many mothers hear that everyday. And yet the world goes on. It has to go on.

GABRIEL: We assume that it'll go on, but who knows. Maybe it won't. Maybe today is just a prelude to all the days to follow.

SARA: And what if it is? Does that mean that there aren't children out there who need love?

GABRIEL: No, but maybe it means that we shouldn't be adding to all those children. Does that make sense? For us to have our own kids just so we can know that they have our genes when we could care for a child who is already born and needing love. I don't know.

SARA: I don't know either. I feel the need in my bones, in my body for a child of my own, a child from my flesh, but I don't know if that makes sense. How can I know? How can anybody know?

GABRIEL: Maybe it just doesn't matter.

SARA: What do you mean?

GABRIEL: The world is going to hell and we're all going along for the ride, so maybe it doesn't matter whether we have some kids to bring along and watch it all fall apart.

SARA: That's pretty cynical.

GABRIEL: Maybe. But maybe the only way you get through life is by pretending the world won't fall apart, even when it looks like it is.

SARA: Denial?

GABRIEL: It worked for our parents, why shouldn't it work for us. They spent years denying a nuclear holocaust was right around the corner. And look how fine we turned out.

The lights fade on Gabriel and Sara as they rise on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "The food ran out at the end of my first week adrift. I had learned the first night to use a piece of the torn mainsail to collect dew and rainfall in a bucket, but the prospect of starving to death had not really occurred to me. I had assumed that even though the radio was broken someone would have reported me missing and I would be picked up at any moment. It was only in the absence of anything to eat that I realized the reason no one would come for me was because I had not told anyone where I was going. I had become so accustomed to self-reliance that the prospect of being stranded in the ocean in a damaged skiff had not crossed my mind."

The lights rise on MARGARET. As the Second Daimon reads, Margaret will slowly begin to take over the passage until she finishes alone.

SECOND DAIMON and MARGARET: "It began to sink in that I might be adrift for quite some time. That I might in fact die. Or worse. In a moment of mild panic I remembered that Italian scientist who had placed herself alone in a cave for months on end to study the effects of isolation. Alone with nothing but the silent stone walls she had slowly gone mad. Shortly after emerging from the cave she killed herself."

MARGERET: "I began to wonder how long it would take me to be found and whether I would be sane or dead when I was. At that moment a seabird landed not three feet from me. I smiled for a long time before moving. I used the broken mast to roast the bird for dinner. I lived like that for three weeks. I don't know if I was any less sane when I was found."

SECOND DAIMON: Margaret Mendelson, *Confessions of a Travel Junky*.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon leaving Margaret alone in the gathering room.

MARGARET: Overturned cars, broken windows, buildings on fire, people running down the middle of streets. All the roads and highways were jammed. People were fleeing on foot. Walking across bridges and along freeways. It's the one time I think my mother will be happy that I ride a motorcycle. It was a hard ride, dodging traffic and people and trash and everything else. But I was riding in some strange Zen-like state where my mind seemed removed from the actions of steering around the obstacles. When I finally got off the highway and cut down a country road, a shortcut I found a few years back, my mind really opened up for a moment. Before, I had always thought of this connectedness of the world I preached about as some three dimensional game of connect the dots. But this epiphany transcended that. I don't know how exactly to explain it. It wasn't only that people on the other side of the world could affect me, but that I am these people. That I am the world. The sky above me. The washboard dirt road beneath me. The trees I was passing in a blur. And the fields that rolled through the valley behind me. Where before my mind saw these separate entities bouncing against each other like a giant pinball machine, now it appeared as though they were all of one wave, one ocean. And it didn't help me make any sense right away of what had happened or why, but it did make the fear vanish.

The lights fade on Margaret as they rise on the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: Estimates at this time are unreliable, but city officials say that at least two million people, and possibly twice that many, have fled the metropolitan area. As egress routes are limited the result has been massive traffic jams. The effect throughout the state, and around the rest of the country as well, has been to make travel of any significant sort virtually impossible. Now instead of being stranded in their homes many people are stranded at the roadside. As a temporary crisis this is bad enough, but the governor's office has just released a statement indicating that if this crisis is not alleviated in some fashion within the next ten to twelve hours that it could become a catastrophe in itself, as trapped motorists are forced to cope with the lack of food and water, and the possibility of inclement weather. For more on this story and other breaking news stay tuned to Lead Line News.

The lights fade on the First Daimon as they rise on Gabriel, Sara, Nick, Jean, and Harry in the gathering room.

SARA: Of course you can stay.

JEAN: That's not even a question.

NICK: Stay as long as you like.

MARGARET: It seemed polite to ask.

GABRIEL: Since when is anybody polite around here?

MARGARET: Are the phones still busy?

SARA: I haven't tried for a nearly an hour, but they've been busy all day.
HARRY: You can still send email.
MARGARET: My parents have been postponing entering the twenty-first century.
GABRIEL: If the rest of the century is going to be anything like today, I think we should all postpone joining it.
MARGARET: It was probably insane to run like that.
JEAN: You're lucky you didn't get stranded.
MARGARET: Looking at the news it seems crazy to have tried to get out at all, but I do feel safer now that I'm here.
GABRIEL: That would be the radiant power of my manly presence enveloping you.
JEAN: I don't know if your manly presence is strong enough to envelope you much less someone else.
GABRIEL: Well, it may not be as strong as your manly presence, but I do the best I can.
HARRY: Where were you when it happened?
MARGARET: I was asleep in bed. I was dreaming that I was on the lower west side and that all hell was breaking loose and I was running along with everyone else, trying to get away from something. I woke up to the phone ringing. It was a friend of mine telling me to turn on my TV.
NICK: We're lucky to be together.
HARRY: We'll be lucky if tomorrow isn't worse.
SARA: We're already lucky. We're not the ones who are dead.
GABRIEL: I don't think we'll be lucky enough not to know someone who died today.
MARGARET: I already do.
NICK: Who?
MARGARET: My friend who called me. We knew each other from college. We took an English class together. We would have lunch sometimes when I was in town. I hadn't heard from her in a while. I don't know why she called me. I guess she couldn't get through to anyone else. She was so... scared. I tried to talk to her, to calm her down. She couldn't focus. Couldn't really talk. She wanted to try and call her mother again. She told me she didn't want to die. And then she hung up. I hadn't thought about her in months, and when I did, I postponed calling her because I thought I was too busy and I didn't know if we really had enough in common anymore. And now, I can't really believe that was the last time I'll ever speak to her.
SARA: I'm sorry.
MARGARET: The one's who should be sorry never will be.
HARRY: How often are we sorry when we should be?
SARA: What does that mean?
NICK: I don't care what it means.
HARRY: Maybe this is a stupid question, but then what do you mean?
NICK: I mean I'm not interested in another discussion of what's happening while it still happening. Not right now. We can debate the rights and wrongs and guilt and innocence later. But right now, yelling at each other isn't going to make anyone feel better.
JEAN: That sounds fair enough.
SARA: I agree.
HARRY: I'm a guest, so I'll try to curb my natural inclinations.
GABRIEL: So, now that arguing and exchanging insults is off our agenda, what are we going to do with ourselves?
SARA: Let's try not to watch the news anymore than necessary.

NICK: That sounds good to me.
JEAN: We could eat.
GABRIEL: That sounds good to me.
SARA: Food always sounds good to you.
HARRY: My mother always said that the best thing for tragedy was a full stomach.
NICK: I'll make something to eat.
MARGARET: I'll give you a hand.

The lights fade on the six as they rise on the Second Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON: "Ms. Jean Kallester's work shows a great deal of insight into the minutia of farm life and at the same time manages not to fall prey to saccharine sentimentality or misplaced nostalgia for a rural existence that never truly existed. One can presume that this measured artistry is grounded in the fact the artist herself is a farmer, although not in the traditional fashion. Her documentary series of photos and paintings chronicles the private lives and passions of herself and her fellow farmers, three college friends who have apparently tossed away their vaunted educational backgrounds to pursue a career in pigs, chickens, cows, and several organic grain and vegetable crops."

The lights come up on Jean who slowly begins to complete the passage.

SECOND DAIMON and JEAN: "Surprisingly this documentary effort does not seem pathologically narcissistic in the manner that so afflicts the reality based media programming we seem to be awash in."

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they rise on Jean on the porch.

JEAN: "Her examination of life with her commune-like companions, its physical and emotional complexities, is a subtle, yet affecting revelation of a journey of discovery in a place few these days would have the sense or the courage to look: a family farm."

SECOND DAIMON: "Oscar Elders, *The Metropolitan Art Review*."

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they rise on Jean on the porch.

JEAN: When I was about twelve my mother and father called me into the kitchen to reveal their dark secret. They sat together at the other end of the table from me, separated by more than merely the distance between us. Their faces were drawn tight, with what I thought at the time was concern, but I later realized was more likely a long burning anger. You see I was adopted. This was their secret. But that wasn't the real secret. The real secret, the one they feared to speak aloud, was that they had come to realize they really didn't want to have a child. That it didn't, that I didn't, bring them what they were looking for. I didn't know that at the time of course. I just stared at them, with their pinched features mouthing words I barely heard, my mind drifting to the smell of the pot roast slowly simmering on the stove, because it at least was something that seemed real. From that moment on it's always been difficult to think of myself as their child. Maybe that's why neither of us will pick up the phone. And maybe it explains a lot of other things.

The lights fade on Jean as they come up on the Daimons as they read from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "I should be a refuge for all sentient beings..."

SECOND DAIMON: "...to free them from all painful things."

FIRST DAIMON: "I should be a protector of all sentient beings..."

SECOND DAIMON: "... to liberate them from all burdens."

FIRST DAIMON: "I should be a sanctuary for all sentient beings..."

SECOND DAIMON: "...to release them from all fears."

The lights come up on Nick and Margaret in the kitchen.

MARGARET: Look, I understand what you're saying, I feel that same longing sometimes, hell I feel it most of the time. That's why I think I've spent so much time traveling. I've been searching for something.

NICK: And maybe that something is inside.

FIRST DAIMON: "I should shoulder all sufferings for the sake of sentient beings, and help them to escape from the cycle of birth and death."

MARGARET: It's not that I disagree, it's that I've never been able to get behind any religion. I remember sitting in church with my parents when I was about thirteen and wondering how all the different religions could all be wrong or right at the same time.

SECOND DAIMON: "I should take upon myself all suffering in all forms for the sake of sentient beings in all places, for all time, and always cultivate love and compassion for the sake of all beings."

MARGARET: How could there be only one true path to God when that would mean the others were dead ends. And if they were all right, then how did you explain the differences?

FIRST DAIMON: "Why? I would rather accept all sufferings than allow a single sentient being to fall into the hell realm."

MARGARET: And on top of that, how could you justify all the pain and suffering and downright evil committed in the name of religion?

SECOND DAIMON: "I should ransom myself to those perilous places: hells and animal realms—to save all sentient beings in misery and liberate them from samsara."

SECOND DAIMON: Garland Sutra 23, The Bodhisattva vows

The lights fade on the Daimons.

NICK: I'm not talking about religion; I'm talking about spirituality: About a direct experience of the Divine.

MARGARET: And what do you mean by an experience of the Divine, exactly?

NICK: Well, there are couple of different stages of the experience, each one deeper and more subtle, but in general it means a widening of the individual's perspective to step beyond the isolated sense of self we usually cling to and instead embrace the whole of the cosmos as the ground of all being.

MARGARET: So, you become one with the universe.

NICK: In a sense, yes. You don't really become one with the universe, you realize that there is only universe. There's not the universe and us, there aren't separate any-things. The kosmos simply is. There's only suchness, onliness, Thatness, Emptiness, One without a Second, All. Which doesn't mean that things don't exist, but that they don't exist in the way we normally believe they do.

MARGARET: It sounds nice, but I don't see how it fits with reality as I know it.
NICK: You're the one who is always talking about different worldviews, different stages of consciousness. Well, these are the spiritual stages that are beyond the conventional stages and worldviews. The mystic consciousness is the spiritual worldview. Like you say, each worldview is wider and the spiritual worldviews are wider still.
MARGARET: Okay, maybe I can buy that, but what's the point? What does it get me, having an experience of the Divine?
NICK: What does any wider worldview get you? A deeper sense of reality.
MARGARET: Maybe. But how does that help me?
NICK: You're always saying that if enough of us don't obtain a wider worldview we won't be able to deal with the problems of the coming century. Well, I believe that. But I think the worldview we need is the widest one possible, and that's a spiritual worldview.
MARGARET: I'd like to believe that. I really would.
NICK: But you can't see it in your own life?
MARGARET: I can see that I need something, but I'm not so sure that something is spirituality.
NICK: Maybe it's not something, but someone you need.
MARGARET: I've considered that possibility as well.
NICK: It can't be easy trying to have a relationship when you're traveling all the time.
MARGARET: I think that's part of the reason I travel so much.
NICK: You like to make relationships difficult?
MARGARET: No, I think I like to make them impossible.
NICK: You can't fail at something that you never really start.
MARGARET: Exactly.
NICK: I know that sentiment all too well.
MARGARET: I always told myself I wanted to meet somebody, but every time someone popped up in my life I found some excuse to get back on the road. Some reason not to stay.
NICK: Like last summer?
MARGARET: I don't know. Maybe. Maybe that was why I left town again. End it before it got serious.
NICK: Because serious is bad?
MARGARET: Better to end things before they get serious sometimes.
NICK: Who's to say that serious things necessarily have to end?
MARGARET: In my experience, they always do.

The lights fade on Nick and Margaret as they come upon the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: In breaking news, the White House has announced that the President will address the nation sometime this evening. The President earlier today made a brief statement offering sympathy for the victims of today's tragedy and their families. As stated earlier, the President has declared a state of national emergency and is urging people to stay in their homes until further notice. However, with the spontaneous mass evacuations of cities around the country, it seems few people are listening to the request of the White House. This widespread panic is not confined to the United States. Across the world people have begun to flee from large cities and metropolitan centers. Government officials were unable to say whether the flight of citizens from their homes would make the situation more dangerous in the coming days. For more of the latest updates stay tuned to Lead Line News.

The lights fade on the First Daimon as they come up on Harriet.

HARRIET: The doors of this house have always been open to family, friends, and strangers. There is something about the way the house itself welcomes people that makes them seem at home. I know I felt that way the first time I stepped through the door. The house made me feel more comfortable in my own skin. Like it was some second body, and it's heart was within me as much as within the walls. We never locked the doors of this house in all the years we lived here. There was a sense that the house would not only protect us, but that it was sometimes meant to protect others. People would stop by when we weren't home, make themselves comfortable, and yet somehow never manage to give the impression of being uninvited, because the house had welcomed them. One time during the Great Depression we came home during a rainstorm to find a whole family at the kitchen table. I think they were more surprised to see us come through the door than we were to find them sitting in our chairs. The house had welcomed them in, and so, we did the same; little Emily and I making them sandwiches and stew. It's like that with our hearts as well, I think. When we open our hearts to someone, we can't just confine them to the foyer or the basement, we need to give them free reign of all the rooms. It's a hard hospitality to master even when the guest is your own husband or child or best friend. And it gets more and more difficult the wider you open your heart to the world.

The lights fade on Harriet as they come up on the Daimons who read from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "*Contemplation on the Suffering of the World*, from the book *Contemplating Transformation*, by Nancy Wu. Slowly begin to imagine all of the people in the world who are suffering. Start with the people you know. Is there someone you know who is sick? Someone who just lost a loved one? Is there someone who is depressed? Someone in physical pain?"

FIRST DAIMON: "How many people are suffering in the country you live in? How many do not have enough to eat, or are sick and cannot afford treatment?"

SECOND DAIMON: "Hold these people in your mind and slowly begin to contemplate the whole of the world. How many people are trapped in war zones right now? How many have been injured through violence in war? How many are suffering from AIDS? How many are starving?"

FIRST DAIMON: "How many are forced into prostitution? How many are addicted to drugs? How many are living in slavery? Hold these people in your mind."

The lights come up on Sara in the kitchen.

SARA: Jean and I have been friends since the first time we met. We were at a party in college and some girl passed out on the sidewalk outside.

SECOND DAIMON: "Contemplate how their lives are connected to yours. Allow yourself to feel, in your heart, their individual worth."

SARA: Jean and I were the only two people to stop and help her. We walked the girl back to her dorm and then went to a diner.

FIRST DAIMON: "Continue holding these thoughts, these connections, in your mind for as long as you can."

The lights fade on the Daimons.

SARA: We were best friends after that. Now it doesn't seem that we agree on anything. It feels like her whole way of seeing the world has changed.

The dim lights of flashback come up on Jean who picks up the thread of an old conversation.

JEAN: My God, you are so provincial.

SARA: Well, we do live on a farm.

JEAN: And that seems to be all you care about; what happens on this farm.

SARA: I do think about the world, but it's not my job to fix it.

JEAN: Then whose job is it?

SARA: I don't know.

JEAN: I swear, between Nick's navel gazing and you and Gabe sticking your heads in the sand, I'm surprised I haven't lost my mind.

SARA: And with your constant preaching, I'm surprised you haven't lost your friends.

The lights fade on Jean.

SARA: I used to feel like I understood myself, but now, right this minute, I'm not so sure. Yesterday I wanted to marry Gabriel and have a child and live the rest of my life on this farm. And today... today, I have to ask myself what I really want. And I'm not sure it's the same things.

The lights fade on Sara as they come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "Assuming that we can eliminate, or isolate our anger while making the judgments necessary to obtain justice, what mind must we then replace it with? Of all the available possibilities only the minds of love, compassion, and wisdom seem to be reasonable candidates. But any of these minds alone appears equally inadequate, for even wisdom, if not motivated by some superior intention, can be perverted toward ends that are as dissimilar from justice as those promoted by anger."

The lights come upon Nick and Sara in the kitchen.

SARA: I don't know.

NICK: Neither do I.

FIRST DAIMON: "It would appear that the only reasonable course of action is to adjudicate our responses to create a mind mixed as equally as possible of love, compassion, and wisdom. Or so it would seem to this judge." His Honor, Francois K. Renoir, *The French National Comment*.

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

SARA: Isn't there some catchy Buddhist phrase to explain it?

NICK: Suffering is the nature of existence? I don't know. I know that Christians often ask themselves what Christ would do, and Buddhists ask what Buddha would do, but I can't imagine what either would do today.

SARA: Maybe we just lack the necessary imagination.

NICK: Maybe. Maybe that's why their teachings don't disappear. Because they provide us with something we can't find alone.

SARA: What I really have trouble imagining is the future. How can you imagine your future when the future of the world seems so uncertain?

NICK: I don't know that I was able to imagine my future any better yesterday.

SARA: I was. I've always been able to imagine my future. But I've never been able to imagine the future of the world. And I think that's what we need to do. Imagine the world as we want it to be. If we don't imagine a better world, how can we create one?

NICK: But that's the problem isn't it. The people who have been creating the world had a vision for it, and look how it's turning out.

SARA: Maybe we left it to a handful of people for too long.

NICK: You're starting to sound like Jean.

SARA: She's not always wrong.

NICK: I'm going to tell her you said that.

SARA: Don't you dare. She's bad enough without any encouragement.

NICK: Do the two of you do anything but fight?

SARA: When was the last time any of us had just a regular conversation?

NICK: I don't know. After today we probably never will.

SARA: It's tiring.

NICK: I'm tired of talking to you already.

They smile and Sara playfully slaps Nick's arm. They are silent a moment.

SARA: Shut up. Do you think the world will ever be a better place?

NICK: I don't know. But you're right, it won't just happen by itself. We have to imagine it.

SARA: And if we lack the imagination?

NICK: We're fucked.

SARA: Great.

The lights fade on Nick and Sara as they come up on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON:

“these dogs of war are indiscriminate
once unleashed
they will strike at their master
as easily as their prey
as likely lick your boots
as the blood from your face
they are not men
cannot be turned back
by fear
or by will
or recalled
by men in white houses
and white worlds

once upon the field
they are the campaign
they are the war
and the wages of war
are sin
and these dogs of war
care nothing for who they kill
and care nothing
for who unchains them
we have built these mercenaries
to do our bidding
yet how can we
command such strength
when we know so little
of our own depths
that we hesitate to examine
for fear of finding
something we have not
in good conscience
considered possible
the hubris of humanity
seeking to be gods
when gods have fallen
forgetting the myths
and the lessons they gave us
instead we have purchased
at what unknown cost
the future of our race
in exchange for a few
mindless moments
as masters of a species
that will eat us for supper”

Frieda Hernandez, *Poems of Mass Destruction*, World Passion Publishers, Mexico City

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they come up on Ben.

BEN: A long life conveys a certain necessary perspective. If you are lucky enough to live through a long swath of history, like I was, you can begin to see how to bear the pain of the nightmares that occur again and again. Having witnessed most of the twentieth century I saw horrors first hand, and at a distance, that I could not have imagined in my most tormented dreams. But the events that befell the world, my fellow human beings, my friends and family, weren't dreams. I remember standing in the trenches when a stray shell took my best friend's head clean off. Just a moment before he had convinced me to taste my first cigarette. And then there was his bloody body, standing there before me, falling into the mud. Somehow I managed to carry that with me in a way that didn't eat me from the inside out. Mostly it was Harriet. Her love. Her patience. And eventually I was able to see that individual men and women did make a difference to the general course and flow of history, and that while our past may have been carved with the lathe of time by a few great men,

there were countless lesser people, man, woman, and child alike, who each in their own small way took hold of the chisels of history and guided it away from catastrophe.

The lights fade on Ben as they come up on the Daimons reading the book.

FIRST DAIMON: “*Contemplation on Your Connection to the World*, from the book *Contemplating Transformation*, by Nancy Wu. Start at the dinner table. First begin with the food on your plate. Where did it come from? How did it all get to you? Where were the vegetables grown? Who grew them?”

SECOND DAIMON: “Take a moment and picture in your mind these vegetables being grown by someone; being planted in the ground as seeds or seedlings and watered and nurtured and finally harvested.”

FIRST DAIMON: “Are these vegetables harvested by hand, or by machine? How did the food you eat get to your table?”

SECOND DAIMON: “Trace back as far as you can the origins of each thing, even to the sunlight that nourished the plants that finally supplied the tomatoes you place in your salad.”

The lights fade on the Daimons as they come up on Harry on the porch.

HARRY: When I was a kid I used to go deer hunting with my dad each autumn. I never really wanted to go, because I was never all that interested in killing something. But he insisted that it would make a man out of me. He was right in some ways, but not the ways he probably meant. I’m sure he thought that the act of killing another creature would teach me the meaning and importance of life. But looking back on it now, I realize that in order to pull the trigger I had to disconnect part of my mind. And to slit the deer’s throat and hang it from a tree I had to disconnect not just my mind but my emotions. And these emotions were severed again as I cut the carcass open and gutted it. That disconnection was the thing I learned.

The dim light of flashback comes up on Jean who speaks to Harry.

JEAN: Are you listening?

HARRY: What?

JEAN: Are you listening?

HARRY: Of course I am.

JEAN: What was I saying?

HARRY: You were talking about fighting with Sara.

JEAN: And what about that?

HARRY: I don’t know what you mean?

JEAN: I’m trying to tell you how upset I am. That I’m hurt because I feel like my best friend hates me and you can’t even manage to pay attention long enough to act like you care. What the hell is the matter with you?

HARRY: I don’t know.

The dim light of flashback fades on Jean.

HARRY: Today is a perfect example of disconnecting. Today is the first time that I have cried in twenty years. And even then I couldn't really let myself feel the tears run down my cheeks. As soon as I felt them on my face, I bottled them up. I disconnected. The irony of this is, I moved away from the city to find connection, to escape the deadly forces of Westernism, only to find that cities are the only places where people will agree with me. Most people can't see the damage that the Western way of life creates in the world. The pollution, the greed, the poverty, the wars. Talk about a disconnection from reality.

The lights come up on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "The notion that the human species is experiencing a significant period of change that is affecting not only its various cultures and societies but also the very Earth we inhabit is not new. Many writers have compared this change to the one that swept through Western Europe in the fifteenth century."

HARRY: We call for democracy and equality and then we prop up tyrants so we can have cheap oil, or cheap clothes, or cheap TVs. As long as we have plenty of salt, fat, and sugar to stuff ourselves into obesity with, we're happy to watch the world burn from the air conditioned comfort of our SUVs.

SECOND DAIMON: "Although the comparison between the Renaissance and the world we are rapidly creating is illuminating, it is not entirely accurate. The Renaissance was truly a rebirth. We are not rebirthing some world we have seen before. We are producing something entirely different, but yet not separate from the world of our past."

HARRY: I may be disconnected from my emotions, but our whole society is disconnected from its emotions, and from the planet it lives off of. I know that my disconnection is unhealthy, but how can no one else see that the Western disconnection from the Earth isn't just as detrimental?

The lights fade on Harry.

SECOND DAIMON: "We are immersed in the initial phases of a new age: a Chrysalis Age, a period of transformation that by the end of this century will leave much of our world unrecognizably different. However, there is no guarantee that we will manage a metamorphosis into a global civilization resembling the metaphoric butterfly. Unlike the caterpillar, we cannot afford to rely upon nature's hand to guide us toward the more perfect form. Without conscious guidance, personally and collectively, we are just as likely to emerge from the chrysalis a deformed maggot-like creature as a brilliantly tinted monarch." Loren Jefferies, *Last Words at Last Light*, Buenos Aries, Righteous Publications

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they come up on Jean and Nick in the parlor.

NICK: What will they do if you leave?

JEAN: They'll manage.

NICK: It won't be easy.

JEAN: They'll enjoy the space. They can have a couple of kids. Sara would love to be a little farmhand factory.

NICK: What do you think you'll do?

JEAN: Figure out how to change the world.

NICK: You can't do that here?

JEAN: Can you?

NICK: I'm having enough trouble figuring out how to change myself.

JEAN: Why do you always think you need changing?

NICK: Why do you always think you don't?

JEAN: I like the person I am.

NICK: I like you too. Doesn't mean I don't think you could be a better person. Doesn't mean I don't think I could be a better person.

JEAN: Let me guess, it takes better people to make a better world.

NICK: Something like that.

JEAN: Look at the world Nick, it's not full of better people. Most people don't want to change themselves or the world.

NICK: And they won't change unless they first see the world differently.

JEAN: But they have no incentive to. You have to change the world before they'll see that it can work for everyone.

NICK: So you just ram the changes down their throats?

JEAN: If you have to, yes. Look at Civil Rights in the South. It's the chicken and the egg, Nick.

NICK: But the chicken was a reptile long before it was a chicken.

JEAN: Okay, Buddha Boy, what the hell does that mean?

NICK: Evolution. We're evolving as a species internally and externally. Both at the same time. If we can't make ourselves better people, we can't make a better world.

JEAN: I don't see it happening that way, but for the sake of the world, I hope you're right.

NICK: And for my sake, I hope you don't leave.

He takes her hand. The lights come up on the First Daimon.

FIRST AND SECOND DAIMON: Twilight is a half-world where the dreams of day and mares of night coalesce and dance behind a coterie of dimly birthing stars and their collective constellations.

JEAN: You're such a sap.

NICK: It's what I'm good at.

FIRST AND SECCOND DAIMON: In this half-lit light the shadows of the farm crawl slowly through the rows of corn loping toward the eastern edge of the world even as the last rays of the sun are leached from the sky in the opposite horizon.

JEAN: It feels like I need to leave.

NICK: Maybe you're not the only one.

The lights fade on Nick and Jean.

FIRST DAIMON: And as the sun drifts behind the edge of tomorrow, a cosmos, infinite and unfathomable, gradually unveils itself like a young lover inviting the gaze of a suitor who has been waiting since the beginning of day for this vision. Beneath a sea of stars and nestled in a sea of wheat, the farm stands like the lighthouse of some celestial ocean, its lights and the sounds of its inhabitants chasing away the fears of such a contradictory universe. Within the weathered walls of the farmhouse six frail humans contemplate the frailty of a lonely blue planet while above and beyond them the distant whirling suns, that burned before even their most remote ancestor was born, regard them with the irony of time. Their human lives are cosmically insignificant in a chronological sense, but the very

fact that they are aware of this makes them rare and precious among the many massive suns that make up galaxy after galaxy in the night sky. Because, while the universe will not notice another sunrise, they hang their hearts upon its coming. And as they open their hearts, so too opens the sky. The clouds that once lingered at the periphery of the night, hiding behind the southern woods, standing shoulder to shoulder in shadow, now gather beneath the open heavens. And as they gather they release their pent up store of the world's tears.

It begins to rain. The lights fade on the First Daimon.

Gabriel enters the kitchen where Jean and Sara are seated. He is sopping wet from the rain. The lights come up on the Second Daimon.

JEAN: Where have you been?

SECOND DAIMON(O.S.): To repeat, this is the emergency alert that we are receiving from city and state officials: Do not go out in the rain unless it is absolutely necessary. Stay in doors and keep your windows closed.

GABRIEL: I was getting the animals in the barn and making sure that the hay was covered.

SARA: You're drenched.

Sara hands Gabriel a towel.

GABRIEL: Thanks.

SARA: Do you want some tea?

GABRIEL: That'd be nice.

Sara gets up and grabs a towel and takes it to Gabriel who dries his head.

SECOND DAIMON: If you have been in the rain, bathe yourself immediately and place your damp clothes in a plastic bag and place this bag outside of your home. If you must go out in the rain, make sure that you are wearing waterproof clothing.

JEAN: Don't track mud in the house, I just mopped the floor yesterday.

SECOND DAIMON: If you begin to experience nausea, dizziness, loss of vision, or irritation of the skin, contact your physician without delay.

GABRIEL: I'll take my shoes off.

Sara kisses Gabriel as he hands her the damp towel.

The lights fade on the stage.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

The lights come up on the Daimons dressed in all white and reading from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: “The nine principles for spiritual and global transformation are as follows: One; Transforming Worldviews. There are a number of wider and deeper worldviews available to each of us and we can obtain these worldviews through sustained conscious effort.

SECOND DAIMON: Two; Investigation of Self and World. To transform either our world or ourselves, we must first know them. This requires investigation.

FIRST DAIMON: Three; Contemplation of Self and World. Knowledge is useless without understanding and this can only be accomplished, for self or world, through contemplation.

SECOND DAIMON: Four; Meditation on Self and World. The one mental activity consistently proven to facilitate the transformation of worldviews is a regular meditative practice.

FIRST DAIMON: Five; Structure and Chaos. Without a significantly stable structure, socially or psychologically, transformation is impossible. So too is transformation in the presence of too much stability. This balance between structure and chaos can allow novel new systems to emerge in the course of transformation.

The lights come up on Harriet.

HARRIET: When we’re children we all dream of what our life will be like. My childhood was filled with simple dreams. I didn’t want to be a wealthy princess or travel the world, or have fine clothes and a castle. I just wanted to marry a good man I could love and raise a family here on the land I grew up on. It was a simple dream and for a while it seemed that dream was my life. But life can twist and turn and shift beneath your feet. My dreams never envisioned a Great Depression and another Great War, but these came to pass with a reality that crushes dreams. In my dreams I died long before my children, yet all my children passed before me. When the world shatters your dreams and casts darkness upon your life you have to learn to look beyond the world and back into your own heart.

The lights rise on Ben who appears with a letter in his hand.

BEN: They were so young. Wasn’t it just a few days ago that they were riding on the tractor with me as I plowed the backfield. Weren’t we throwing bales of hay into the wagon just this morning? Weren’t we all sitting on the kitchen tablecloth eating supper under the elm tree just this night?

HARRIET: How could they be gone?

BEN: How could I have survived and not them?

Harriet hands Ben back the letter as she turns away from the door.

HARRIET: If the world takes your two sons in a war, you can let this bleed the life out of you, or you can turn this into the fertile soil from which a new life will bloom. And if the world takes your only daughter in an accident, you can rage against fate, or you can cultivate and nurture a heart of love that does not fear death. When the world lashes out at you like the heavy waves of an ocean, you can run from it, seeking the safety of dry land, or you can wade in deeper and deeper, until your fear of drowning has itself been drowned and you are

floating free on the open water. It's only there, once those fears have been suffocated, that you can see the shore well enough to help yourself and those poor souls who are still trapped there.

The lights fade on Harriet.

SECOND DAIMON: Six; Differentiation, Integration and Transcendence. Each level of worldview transformation takes place in three distinct stages; *Differentiation*, or separation from the existing worldview, *Integration* as the perspectives of the new worldview solidify, and *Transcendence*, as the shift is finally made between worldviews.

FIRST DAIMON: Seven: Challenges and Transformation. Transformation requires a constant level of challenge to facilitate the investigation, contemplation, and meditation of new perspectives.

SECOND DAIMON: Eight; Progress, Growth and Development. An understanding of these three processes is essential. Progress is defined as a leap within a system to a new level of complexity or novelty, while growth is the physical or psychological expansion of that system, and development is an increase in efficiency of that system.

The lights come up on Nick and Gabriel on the porch.

NICK: How are you feeling?

GABRIEL: Okay so far.

FIRST DAIMON: Nine; Engaging Transformation of Self and World. Nothing is accomplished by passivity. Transformation is accomplished through agency in active communion with others and through consistent self-actualization. Norris Baker, *Nine Principles for Transforming the Self and World*, Ancient Circles Press.”

The lights fade on the Daimons.

NICK: No symptoms?

GABRIEL: Maybe I wasn't outside long enough. Maybe it hadn't reached us yet.

NICK: You should get some rest. Just in case.

GABRIEL: Yeah. I will.

Silence.

GABRIEL: I hope you don't leave.

NICK: I didn't say I was leaving for sure. I feel like I'm at a crossroads. And everything that's happened today makes it seem even more important that I make a choice.

GABRIEL: Well, I don't know how much it counts, but I don't want to see you leave the farm. I don't want either of you to leave the farm.

NICK: I don't know that I will leave. But I need to make a clear decision about it. I need to know why I'm here.

GABRIEL: Couldn't it just be because you don't have the skills to be employed at anything else.

NICK: I could go back to acting.

GABRIEL: I was talking about a career you could make money in.

NICK: Oh, money. That. I could... Hell, I don't know. I've thought about joining an order.

GABRIEL: You're thinking about being a monk?

NICK: Yeah.

GABRIEL: You. A monk?

NICK: Yeah.

GABRIEL: You do realize there's a celibacy requirement?

NICK: That wouldn't be hard to live up to these days.

GABRIEL: So, that's what's bothering you.

NICK: I don't know. I think in part, I'm lonely.

GABRIEL: I think in part, you need to get laid.

NICK: Well, I wouldn't deny that.

GABRIEL: It's been what, a year since you were with Dave.

NICK: No, he and I never did anything. He was too much in the closet.

GABRIEL: So, then who, Tamara?

NICK: Margaret.

GABRIEL: Really? I didn't know that. Why didn't you tell me?

NICK: It was just one time. Or a couple of times. We didn't want everybody to be weird and she was leaving town again, so we figured it was nothing to get worked up about.

GABRIEL: Was she good?

NICK: Not as good as you, but she was alright.

GABRIEL: Now why do you have to bring that up? We were having a perfectly hetero moment here.

NICK: You brought it up.

GABRIEL: I was curious. (Beat) I was really better than Margaret?

NICK: Oh, hell no. She was amazing. She puts you and Jean and Sara all to shame.

GABRIEL: Well. You really have slept with all of our friends.

NICK: I think I've slept with everybody I know.

GABRIEL: Thank God you don't get out more.

NICK: Says you. Actually though, that's something I've been thinking about as well.

GABRIEL: Getting out more?

NICK: No, who and when and where I choose to sleep with someone. I've been thinking that a lot of my choices weren't very ethical.

GABRIEL: At least you're surrounded by people who have all made the same mistakes.

NICK: With the same people no less.

GABRIEL: So we're all immoral. At least we're together.

NICK: I don't think we're immoral. And I don't know how long we'll all be together.

Gabriel coughs lightly. Then again. And is then caught in a fit of coughing as Nick looks on, stricken. The lights fade on Nick and Gabriel as they come up on the Daimons reading from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "Contemplation on Real vs. Manufactured Desires, from the book *Contemplating Transformation* by Nancy Wu. Take a few moments and think about your needs. What are your physical needs? What about your emotional needs? What are your intellectual needs?"

FIRST DAIMON: “What are your spiritual needs? Are these needs being fulfilled? To what extent?”

SECOND DAIMON: “Do you have a large house and a beautiful car, but no one to share them with? Do you have plenty of entertainment, but little time to contemplate?”

FIRST DAIMON: “What needs do you feel are really yours and what needs are being pressed upon you?”

The lights come up on Jean in the kitchen.

JEAN: If you’ve never wondered if something is wrong with you, does that mean that there is probably something seriously wrong with you?

The lights fade on the Daimons.

SECOND DAIMON: “What are your real needs and what needs are manufactured for you?”

JEAN: And if you’ve always wondered what’s wrong with you, does that leave open the possibility that there’s never been anything wrong with you?

FIRST DAIMON: “Which needs come from your TV and which needs come from your heart?”

JEAN: Lately, I’ve been feeling that I need... Something. And whatever it is, I’m not getting it here on the farm. And I’m not getting it from Harry. I can see that today more clearly than ever.

The dim lights of flashback come up on Harry who speaks to Jean.

HARRY: So, what’s your point?

JEAN: My point is that if we’re too much alike then we we’re not really compatible.

HARRY: I would think the fact that we’re alike would help us in a relationship.

JEAN: If we were both loving and caring people, sure, but we’re both fucked up people.

HARRY: Who says I’m fucked up?

JEAN: I do. And so am I.

HARRY: Then we should be perfect for each other.

JEAN: Don’t you see, we can’t be good for anyone until we’re good for ourselves?

HARRY: And why does that have to happen apart? Why can’t that happen together?

JEAN: Because I don’t have the strength to change both of us.

The lights fade on Harry.

JEAN: I’m watching the news today and I just can’t get my mind and heart around it all. There are so many dead and dying and the newscasters and politicians want to tell me that there is a simple two step chain of cause and effect that has led to this I know in my gut that it’s more complicated than that. It’s more a web of causes and effects playing out over years and years that has led to this moment, but I can’t grasp that, can’t hold that image in my mind, and so it seems like a dense fog of actions and effects, gray and impenetrable. And my life seems like this as well. And it makes it hard to know what to do.

The lights fade on Jean as they come up on the First Daimon reading from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: “A quick look at the different worldviews described by the four systems thus far explored, from Robert Kegan’s *In Over Our Heads* to Ray and Anderson’s *Cultural Creatives*, to Gebser’s *Everpresent Origin*, to the work of Graves as described by Beck and Cowen in *Spiral Dynamics*, elicits some striking similarities.”

The lights come up on Margaret.

MARGARET: Something that was hiding in the back of my thoughts the last few years has stepped into clear view today. I think I have been spending the last ten years traveling the world, trying to know the world, so that I could avoid really knowing myself.

SECOND DAIMON: “These similarities provide a general framework from which we can conclude that while there may be a small amount of disagreement as to the specifics of the different worldview stages available to individuals and societies as they grow and mature, there is nonetheless, a broad consensus that these stages of perception and conception are real.”

MARGARET: I’ve been following some unseen path through a string of jobs and countries in hopes of finding that elusive pot of gold, and now I am beginning to suspect that the greatest treasures are to be found by looking inward rather than outward.

SECOND DAIMON: “Again, the importance of recognizing that societies move through stages of cultural development lies in the fact that the world, particularly the modern world, can best solve the problems it is creating by transcending its current worldviews for one that is Integral and eventually Spiritual.”

MARGARET: I’ve slept in the open deserts of Africa and the jungles of Thailand and the Amazon. I’ve seen the mountains of Nepal and Peru. I’ve shared meals in huts from Ecuador and Ghana to Alaska.

SECOND DAIMON: “Only by embracing the need for, and the desire to acquire, a wider more Integral worldview will we be able to solve the problems that we have created with our Traditional, Modern, and dysfunctional postmodern perspectives.” Nadia Tartofsky, *A Few Words on Worldviews*, The Free Moscow Press

The lights fade on the Daimons.

MARGARET: I’ve witnessed the pyramids and the Coliseum, the Great Wall and the Mayan temples. I’ve been a journalist and a fry cook, I’ve sailed with private yachts, I’ve worked in a circus, I’ve been an aid worker in countries that had no aid, I’ve done any job that seemed to come along. I was trying to eat up as much of the experience of being alive in the world as I could stomach. And suddenly, today, I feel full. Or, I guess, not truly full, but now there is a different hunger. One that I know I can’t really satiate by seeing and doing. I think I glimpsed that today in some small way on that country road. And I think the key to seeing it more and more is to change my life from pursuing the world outside to pursuing the world inside as well. And to do that, I think it would help to be someplace like here, on the farm, with people I love. To be someplace where you can trust yourself to truly be yourself.

The lights fade on Margaret and come up on the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: “Integral Philosopher Ken Wilber has defined four areas of human experience, what he calls the Four Quadrants of Being. These encompass the interior and exterior aspects of the individual and the collective. We then have the Individual Interior, or the psychological; the Interior Collective, or the cultural; The Exterior Individual, or the physical body; and the Exterior Collective, or the physical universe and our human social structures. An Integral worldview seeks to take into account each of these interdependent realms at every level of existence; personally, locally, regionally, nationally, globally, and as a universal whole.” Petra Menas, *Depths of Meaning*, The International Journal of Spiritual and Political Affairs

The lights fade on the First Daimon as they come up on the Second Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON: We must recognize that today is a tragedy for the entire world, not only ourselves. And we must learn to see that just as the world shares in our tragedy, so too do we share in the tragedies of others. As President of the United States I will work tirelessly on the behalf of the American people to see that this tragedy makes us stronger as a nation. Indeed I will work on the behalf of all those who are not fortunate enough to find themselves in a land where their voice can be heard, to help them give voice to their desires for liberty and justice, and to build better tomorrows. But it is not yet tomorrow and today there are still many things to be done. There are survivors to rescue. There are loved ones to mourn. And there are those who must be brought to justice. This day will be with us for many years to come. And the wounds that were cut deep today will take time to mend. But we must not allow these wounds to divide us, for it is only through our communal effort and determination that these wounds can be healed. It is only by coming together, as a nation, and as a nation of the world, that we can prevent this day from becoming possible again. Together we will find both solace and justice. Together we will weep for those lost and rejoice in the fortune of those who are still with us. But we must proceed together. And we must try to help each other. And at this moment the best way we can help is by not allowing ourselves to fall prey to panic as many have done throughout the day. The best way we can help each other is to return to our homes and stay in them.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon and come up on Gabe, Sara, Nick, Jean, Harry, and Margaret in the gathering room.

NICK: Violence simply isn't justified unless it's in self-defense.

JEAN: But it is self-defense.

MARGARET: No, it's defense of an ideology, but it's not self-defense.

JEAN: How can you say that people struggling against a dictatorship with paramilitary thugs killing civilians left and right aren't acting in self-defense?

HARRY: She's right. Gandhi only managed to succeed because he was up against a democracy where he could leverage public opinion to his side. If he'd tried that shit with Stalin, he would have ended up in a ditch like everybody else.

GABRIEL: I thought you were a defender of communism?

HARRY: Communism I'll defend, but not most communists.

JEAN: The point is that sometimes violence is necessary.

SARA: So, why is it a necessary thing for guerillas and revolutionaries and terrorists, but it isn't necessary for us as a country? Explain that.

GABRIEL: Terrorists are defending their ideals and we're defending our ideals, so what the difference?

SARA: The difference is that we're right.

HARRY: The difference is in power. We have the power and they don't. Violence is their only means of defending themselves.

MARGARET: No, it's the means they choose to use. Just like violence is the means we choose to use. It's never the only option.

SARA: But how can anybody say their use of violence is justified, and ours isn't.

JEAN: I'm not saying either is justified, I'm saying they're both predictable.

HARRY: And I'm not trying to justify their violence, I'm saying that theirs is not more or less justifiable than ours.

JEAN: If theirs is rage, then ours is revenge. Does that make any more sense?

GABRIEL: Maybe ours isn't revenge, maybe it's justice.

NICK: Justice isn't about revenge.

JEAN: Tell that to the people on death row.

NICK: Look, when you take a human life you are violating something that shouldn't be violated unless it's absolutely necessary.

HARRY: And your idea of necessary and mine and someone else's are all different.

NICK: I agree, but you have to hold people to the highest standard.

MARGARET: What I think Nick means is that the person with the widest worldview will be the one to have the best idea of what is and isn't necessary because they will see the situation in the most complete way.

NICK: I don't know if that's what I'm saying, but it sounds good.

GABRIEL: I don't think because we use violence sometimes to accomplish our goals that this makes us as bad as our enemies.

SARA: We're not trying to kill innocent people.

JEAN: But we kill them just the same.

HARRY: And we help others kill them so we can do things like gain access to lucrative markets and precious natural resources.

JEAN: Which just makes people want to take violent actions against us.

SARA: I don't care what you say, I don't believe that we're all just as evil.

GABRIEL: Or that our mistakes justify violent actions against innocent people.

NICK: But what I'm trying to say is that unless the violence is in self-defense, it's never justified. If you want to make a political statement by blowing up a building, then you have a moral obligation to make sure that no one dies.

MARGARET: And our wrong deeds don't justify violence against us or anyone else unless it is in direct self-defense.

SARA: But you said yourself that the worldview will determine the actions. That doesn't seem like good news.

MARGARET: Considering the narrowness of worldviews in our world, no, it isn't good news. The only good news is that we can change the way we see the world.

NICK: Assuming that there are enough people who want to.

JEAN: And that's a big assumption. Just look around the room.

HARRY: What's that supposed to mean?

GABRIEL: Yeah, who do you think has the widest worldview?

JEAN: That's just the point. None of us do. So some of us are wrong.

MARGARET: And the question is how do you begin to see that you're wrong.

GABRIEL: Maybe I'm not wrong.

HARRY: Trust me, you're wrong.
NICK: And so are you.
HARRY: I'll stack my worldview up against yours any day.
NICK: Really?
HARRY: Yes. Really.
SARA: Please, Boys, let's not compare sizes now.
GABRIEL: Good, because I'm not really feeling like whipping out my worldview at the moment.
SARA: How are you feeling?
GABRIEL: Okay.
JEAN: Really?
GABRIEL: Really. I'm fine.
NICK: You don't look so good.
GABRIEL: I feel fine. Let's not talk about it right now. Margaret was about to say something.
MARGARET: I was?
GABRIEL: You're always about to say something.
MARGARET: Yes. Right. The thing is, there's always a wider worldview. But if you don't realize that, there's not much incentive to change.
NICK: And even if you do realize that, it's hard to change because you can get pretty comfortable thinking you're right about the way you see the world. That's the hardest part of a spiritual practice, looking at the world in a different way.
HARRY: So I'm supposed to believe that all we need to do to solve the world's problems is meditate?
NICK: It might not help, but I guarantee it wouldn't hurt.
SARA: I'd rather pray.
GABRIEL: If the world has more days like today, we'd all better pray.
JEAN: You mean if we have more days like today. Plenty of places in the world would consider today to be a vacation from the hell they usually know.
SARA: That doesn't make today any less hellish for us.
MARGARET: No, but it does help put things in perspective.
NICK: If we don't want to suffer this, why would anyone else?
HARRY: They don't, but we don't care.
JEAN: Or if we care, we certainly don't act on it.
SARA: What are you talking about? We give so much to the world.
HARRY: Big Macs are not a contribution to global civilization.
GABRIEL: But democracy is.
JEAN: When we don't try to warp it to our own ends.
SARA: What about all the food and medicine we give?
MARGARET: We give less than one percent of our gross national product in foreign aid. We probably spend more on beer and ice cream than we do on aid.
HARRY: Internet porn probably makes more.
JEAN: Maybe we should tax porn to feed the poor.
GABRIEL: Your bills would skyrocket.
MARGARET: It's not that we don't give to the world, it's what we give and how.
JEAN: Just look at the way we manage international trade.
GABRIEL: Not the evils of capitalism speech.
HARRY: It is evil. Just look at all the countries we're crushing so we can have cheap goods.

JEAN: Or so we can pay high prices for shoes while CEO's make millions by saving on the cost providing good jobs to people no matter what country they're in.

SARA: If they don't want the jobs, then we can give them to someone else.

JEAN: That's just the point. Everybody wants the jobs.

HARRY: And as soon as they ask for too much money, we will give the jobs to someone else.

JEAN: Someone in a poorer country.

HARRY: Which is how we lost the jobs in the first place.

GABRIEL: But you can't deny that the standard of living has been rising around the world because of capitalism.

HARRY: Because of it, or in spite of it?

NICK: The point is really how to create wealth and distribute resources, isn't it?

HARRY: Sure, but we create more wealth for the wealthy and we take resources from the people who need them and give them to the people who have more than they can use.

SARA: And communism was better?

HARRY: No. Because it was never democratic.

JEAN: Capitalism is supposed to be about an open society, but who's to say that communism wouldn't work in an open society.

GABRIEL: Well, I'll say it wouldn't work. How do you create innovation when everyone is rewarded the same?

HARRY: Not rewarded the same, but rewarded in proportion to their effort.

JEAN: You can't tell me that a CEO making 400 times the average worker is putting in 400 times the effort.

NICK: I don't think it would work. You can't make economies work through central planning.

HARRY: Says who?

MARGARET: Says complexity theory. Networked systems, like economies and ecologies require a free flow of information and energy between their constituent components. That's why capitalism works in an open society and flounders in a closed society, and that's why communism, or socialism fail when they try to impose too much order.

SARA: So too much structure is bad?

NICK: And too much chaos is bad as well.

MARGARET: Right. A complex system, like an economy, functions best when there is enough structure to provide stability, like laws and properties rights and a strong government. But it also needs enough chaos to become innovative and adaptive when necessary, and that's what open markets and democratic systems provide.

HARRY: Well, if that's all true then why are so many poor countries getting screwed by our open market economies?

MARGARET: In part because they aren't as open as they seem, and in part because we're trying to impose economic growth around the world in an overly structured and very top-down manner instead of encouraging an organic and networked bottom-up economic growth.

JEAN: Which benefits the people on top and fucks the people on the bottom.

NICK: Not the win-win situation it's advertised as.

GABRIEL: Anytime you have a win-win situation, or a nonzero sum interaction as it's called, the stronger party, the one with more leverage, will usually win more.

MARGARET: Exactly. That's what I was going to say.

JEAN: How'd you pull that out of your ass?

GABRIEL: I read. Sometimes.

HARRY: So, anyway, the point is, as has been the case throughout history, the poor are getting screwed and the rich are eating all the cake.

SARA: But the point is also that compared to history even though more people are rich, more people are able to share in that wealth.

JEAN: Have you looked at how many poor people there are in the world? A third of the world's population, over two billion people, live on less than two dollars a day.

HARRY: While we sip our diet sodas and get liposuction so we can keep gorging ourselves on over eighty dollars a day.

SARA: But look at our country. We don't have that kind of poverty here because we have capitalism and democracy.

HARRY: We're the wealthiest, most powerful nation that has ever existed, and we still have millions of children growing up in poverty, unable to get enough food and without any kind of healthcare.

MARGARET: In many complex systems, or what's known as scale free networks, there tends to be an eighty-twenty distribution of the connections in that network, or in an economy, an eighty-twenty distribution of the wealth. So twenty percent of the population tends to control eighty percent of the wealth.

HARRY: If that's true then there's no way that capitalism can ever be egalitarian.

NICK: It certainly explains why the rich get richer.

MARGARET: It does, but that doesn't mean that we can't adjust the system to be both economically efficient and socially equitable. The eighty-twenty distribution is normal, so what we need to do is make sure that it doesn't get abused so that we end up with ten percent of the population controlling seventy percent of the wealth, or one percent controlling nearly forty percent the way it is now.

JEAN: That's what socialism and communism try to do.

MARGARET: But they do it by making the system less efficient instead of more efficient. The key is to make sure that the twenty percent doesn't become a rigid section of the population, so that everyone has an opportunity to be part of that twenty percent at some point. Networks are made up of individual nodes that are connected to each other and some of these nodes become hubs, with huge numbers of connections. And that tends to mean more connections will flow toward them leaving other nodes virtually unconnected.

NICK: The poor you mean.

MARGARET: Right. So the trick is to figure out how to increase the potential for connectivity of the smaller nodes while not eliminating the connectivity of the hubs, and at the same time not allowing the hubs to dominate the system.

HARRY: But you would still have unconnected nodes. You'd still have poor people.

MARGARET: Maybe. It would depend on how you shifted resources within the system.

SARA: Why should we give? We tax our rich and because of that our poor people live like kings compared to the poor in other countries.

HARRY: So that makes it okay? It's fine then that there are billions of people living in poverty?

SARA: No, it's not okay, but what can we do if their countries don't adopt the same way of life?

JEAN: Well, half of the time we help make sure they can't adopt the same way of life. We support governments that aren't democratic so we can get what we want from them, or so they will leave us alone and not bother us.

GABRIEL: What do you want us to do, invade them all and set up our own governments?

SARA: You were just saying you don't want to use violence to attack other nations.
HARRY: I'd be happy if we just left them alone to figure it out themselves.
NICK: But that's potentially just as bad as what we do now.
SARA: You can't have it both ways.
MARGARET: Actually I think you can.
HARRY: You would. You're worse than them. You see what a mess the Western model of progress is creating and you still defend it.
SARA: At least she values something, unlike you.
HARRY: I value a lot of things.
GABRIEL: The only things you seem to value are the things that have been discredited or that attack the things you don't value.
NICK: There's no reason to gang up on each other.
GABRIEL: He was attacking Margaret.
JEAN: Margaret can defend herself.
MARGARET: Yes, actually, I can.
HARRY: So?
MARGARET: Look, this all comes back to worldviews again.
HARRY: I knew you were going to say that.
MARGARET: It's true. The problems that each worldview creates can best be solved, or can only be solved, by the perspective afforded by the next slightly wider worldview. The Modern worldview will see things that the Traditional worldview can't and will be able to provide new ways of being. That's how we got the idea of equal rights for everyone regardless of sex or race or religion.
NICK: Not that it's working completely for gays and lesbians yet.
MARGARET: Because not everyone has a Modern worldview. The Traditional worldview values stability and following cultural rules. The Modern worldview values individual agency and material progress. The Traditional worldview turns to scripture for authority, while the Modern worldview turns to science.
SARA: So what happened today is a clash of worldviews?
MARGARET: In many ways, yes.
GABRIEL: So a society with a modern worldview will be less likely to go to war over traditional ideas like religion and culture.
MARGARET: Right.
HARRY: But a Modern society will still go to war.
MARGARET: Sure. For new reasons even. For economic reasons, or to defend it's view of the world.
GABRIEL: But a postmodern worldview will be better? I don't know if I believe that.
SARA: Not with all the crap that postmodernists have come up with. Moral relativism my ass.
HARRY: But it's true. How can you say that one moral value is better than another? Morals are culturally created.
SARA: And some cultures are better than others.
JEAN: I think I may agree with both of those statements.
GABRIEL: A culture that values women is better than a culture that doesn't.
HARRY: That's your cultural value system speaking and you can't say that your values are better than someone else's.
NICK: Sure you can.
HARRY: How?

NICK: Hit him with the worldviews again.

HARRY: Jesus! Can we get off the worldviews?

MARGARET: They're everywhere. That's why you can have one system of ethics that's better than another. A traditional worldview will base its ethics on religious scripture or on cultural custom, and these tend to have very narrow applications of justice. An eye for an eye. A Modern worldview will base its ethics on philosophical rationalizations. It looks to create social contracts with others, or in more advanced stages, it looks to create universal rules that can apply to everyone. Of course that rationalization can get twisted with postmodernism and can start thinking that universal rules means there are no real rules.

JEAN: But even if you can say that each successive worldview has a better ethics, how can you say that it has a better culture?

HARRY: You can't.

MARGARET: Right, you can't. It's not that the culture itself will be better, it's that the way the culture expresses itself will be better with a wider worldview.

GABRIEL: So, our culture is better with a modern worldview than with a traditional worldview.

MARGARET: Right. Britain and America have different cultures, but the same worldview spreads. If our culture was dominated by a traditional worldview, and theirs was dominated by a modern worldview, they would have the deeper culture.

JEAN: But then that means you're saying all those cultures with a Traditional worldview aren't as deep as ours.

MARGARET: In the sense of worldviews, yes. They may have wonderful cultural aspects that we lack, or that we have made the mistake of discarding as we moved from Traditional to Modern, but you need a deeper worldview to have a deeper culture.

HARRY: But if that's all true, then wouldn't the postmodern worldview provide a deeper culture and ethics than the modern worldview?

MARGARET: A functional postmodern worldview yes.

JEAN: But you've just been trashing the postmodern worldview.

MARGARET: The postmodern worldview as it tends to get expressed is very extreme; the realities that it exposes are taken to an untenable conclusion and it becomes dysfunctional. That happens with all the worldviews. There are perfectly reasonable and valid views from a Traditional perspective, but this doesn't mean that you should drown women you suspect of being witches. And the same things hold true for the modern worldview. Materialism is good as far as it puts a roof over your head, but how many pairs of shoes do you really need?

GABRIEL: So the problems of postmodernism are just defects?

MARGARET: Actually, what we usually call postmodernism is more of a stage in itself and the stage that follows it fully integrates the truths of the Traditional, the Modern, and the Postmodern.

HARRY: Let me guess, it's called the Integral, right.

MARGARET: Usually, yes.

NICK: So a culture with an Integral worldview would have more depth than one with a predominantly modern or postmodern worldview?

MARGARET: Yes.

GABRIEL: And an Integral ethics would have more depth than a religious or philosophical ethics?

MARGARET: It would be grounded in a more direct understanding of the interconnectedness of the world, so yes.

JEAN: And what's supposed to come after the Integral stage?

MARGARET: I'm not sure, but Nick thinks it's a spiritual stage.

NICK: Several spiritual stages actually.

HARRY: How can the spiritual stage come after the religious stage?

NICK: Because spirituality is a part of religion.

JEAN: You mean you can have spirituality without religion?

NICK: And religion without spirituality. The traditional worldview tends to ignore spirituality for dogma and scriptural literalism while the modern worldview rejects spirituality because it's associated with religion and religion isn't supported by science.

HARRY: You're saying spirituality can be supported by science?

NICK: In the sense that any knowledge of our interior experience of the world can be supported. Spiritual practitioners say that after meditating for a couple of years they don't see the world the same way. And after many years they may see it in a radically different way.

JEAN: Where's the science?

NICK: If they tend to agree with each other at each stage then we can reasonably expect that they are reporting a valid view of reality because people have agreed with each other in general at all of the previous stages. That's how we know there are stages of consciousness.

HARRY: I still don't buy it.

NICK: Then try the experiment. Meditate for a few years and see what happens.

SARA: So what does that all mean in light of today?

MARGARET: A lot of things.

HARRY: Such as?

MARGARET: Well, societies and cultures, and their individual members with traditional and pre-traditional worldviews will tend to react violently toward modern worldviews. Modern cultures and societies will tend to use other means to impose their will. You can see all of that happening today.

GABRIEL: And if a modern culture responds with violence does that make it wrong then?

MARGARET: That depends on your worldview. A society or an individual can revert to an earlier worldview when threatened and will often respond with violence when faced with violence. Now this may be the proper response. And it may not. It depends on the circumstances. And the worldview best suited to determine those answers is an Integral worldview.

NICK: Or a spiritual worldview, which will see more than the Integral worldview.

MARGARET: So you say.

GABRIEL: So in dealing with all the problems of the world, the best worldview is the Integral?

MARGARET: For now. I'm sure that the Integral worldview will create problems that only some later worldview will be able to solve.

NICK: Like the spiritual worldview.

MARGARET: So you say.

SARA: So then how do we change anything? How do we change the world?

GABRIEL: We have to change ourselves first. Or at the same time.

MARGARET: Well, it won't be easy. The first step is just realizing and admitting that there are better more valid ways of seeing the world. And that's not easy, because who wants to admit that they have a narrow worldview.

GABRIEL: Certainly not Harry.

HARRY: Look who's talking.

SARA: How?

JEAN: What?

SARA: How do you change your worldview even if you want to?

MARGARET: There's no proven way, but providing yourself with challenges to growth can help. Trying to see the world from different perspectives and trying to understand the relationships between them.

NICK: Contemplation and meditation help as well. If you don't contemplate the world, if you just react to it, or parrot someone else's view, then you don't really have the chance to grow. And meditation helps still your mind and give you perspective.

MARGARET: The definition of an Integral worldview is one that can see a number of different perspectives simultaneously and weave from them a coherently whole picture that reveals their depths.

HARRY: And a postmodern view tends to get caught in the array of multiple perspectives.

JEAN: I think you've had an epiphany.

HARRY: Maybe. But I don't know that it helps.

MARGARET: Why not?

HARRY: Because at least before I knew what I thought and now I'm not at all certain what I think.

GABRIEL: I'm not at all certain that you do think.

HARRY: Oh, and you're the great thinker? The farmer philosopher.

GABRIEL: Nick's the philosopher, I'm the writer.

HARRY: No, I'm a writer. I write. Everyday. The last thing you scrawled something was some chicken shit you call a novel seven years ago.

GABRIEL: Hey, fuck you! At least I don't have my head so far up my academic ass that I can't see what the fuck is really going on in the... fuck...

Sara runs to Gabriel begins coughing spasmodically and falters in pain.

SARA: Are you okay.

Gabriel leans forward.

GABRIEL: I... No...

Gabriel collapses to the floor. The others rush to his aid. Harry watches.

HARRY: Shit.

The lights fade on the six and come up on the Second Daimon reading from the book.

TITLES: *A Prayer for World Peace*, from the book *Prayers of Solace*, by Ikozu Wakamatsu, The New Tokyo Press.

SECOND DAIMON: "Slowly bring to mind all of the wars and conflicts in the world that you know about. Allow yourself to imagine each one separately, thinking about the people involved, the innocent families and children who are suffering death, the destruction of their homes, or being forced to flee as refugees. Imagine the effects on the land and the ruins that the cities have become. Imagine the soldiers of either side dying, often not because they want to fight, but because their leaders will kill them if they do not."

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they rise on the First Daimon reading from the book..

FIRST DAIMON: “Countless manifestos have evoked the notion of revolution as a legitimate means of remaking society. This manifesto declares firstly, and most importantly, that revolution is a dead end and that only transformation will lead to an Integral society. Revolution calls for change at any cost, even if the price to be paid is the civilization that is itself under attack. Contrary to this, Integralism demands that the transformation of the world go hand in hand with the transformation of the self. The future must be built in our dreams and our dreams of the future are constrained by the way we perceive the present.

The lights come up on Harry and Jean in the parlor.

HARRY: They hate me.

JEAN: They don't hate you. They just don't like you very much.

FIRST DAIMON: Only by shifting our perception to one that can see all perspectives simultaneously, and weave from these many threads of knowing a coherent tapestry of understanding, will we be able to create a better tomorrow.

HARRY: They hate me.

JEAN: They don't agree with the things you say.

FIRST DAIMON: Only by transforming our minds to benefit all human beings will we be able to transform the world to do likewise.” *from The Integral Manifesto, IntegralManifesto.org.*

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

HARRY: You say the same things.

JEAN: I phrase them better.

HARRY: You're mocking me.

JEAN: If I were mocking you I'd mention your poor diction.

HARRY: It doesn't feel very good.

JEAN: What can I do about it? They don't have the same politics as you or me.

HARRY: The world and your friends are all trapped in some backward mentality that can't accept the reality that is staring them in the face.

JEAN: Funny, that's what they say about you.

HARRY: I don't understand how they can continue to see this way of life as ultimate and superior to every other culture in the world. How can you look at the multiplicity of societies around the world and choose the most destructive one as the pinnacle of social evolution? How do you look at a society that's living off the land for hundred of years and one that lays waste to everything it touches and pick the most destructive one as the most advanced.

JEAN: You're preaching to the converted here.

HARRY: But how do they do it? How do they look around at all the destruction they've reaped and still say that Western Enlightenment philosophy is superior to the Mayans or the Native Americans?

JEAN: I don't know. That's why I'm leaving.

HARRY: What do you mean you're leaving?

JEAN: I mean I'm thinking about leaving.

HARRY: Thinking about leaving the farm?

JEAN: Yes.
HARRY: To go where?
JEAN: I don't know.
HARRY: What about us?
JEAN: I'm thinking about leaving us as well.
HARRY: I don't understand.
JEAN: I need to leave the life I'm in. And you're part of the life I'm in.
HARRY: I thought things were going fine.
JEAN: Yes, fine for us. Which means we debate and have sex and wall each other off from our emotions. And while that seemed fine to me yesterday and every other day of my life, it doesn't feel fine today.
HARRY: So you're leaving because things are fine?
JEAN: Yes. I don't think I want merely "fine" anymore. I need more than that.
HARRY: So, I'll give you more than that.
JEAN: No you won't. You might try, but you can't open up the way I need. And I can't blame you. I can't open up the way I need either. That's why I have to go.
HARRY: So you're decided?
JEAN: Just now, yes.
HARRY: But I love you.
JEAN: And I love you too, Harry.
HARRY: Just not enough to stay together?
JEAN: No.
HARRY: That doesn't make sense to me.
JEAN: It doesn't have to make sense. It's just the way it is.
HARRY: I don't know what to say.
JEAN: You could wish me well.
HARRY: No. No I can't. I love you too much.

The lights fade on Jean and Harry as they rise on the Daimons reading from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "Hold these things in mind and as you breathe in, repeat the first line silently to yourself, and then the second line silently as you exhale."
SECOND DAIMON: May those who are engulfed by war,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May those who are dying in war,
FIRST DAIMON: Be without pain and suffering.
SECOND DAIMON: May those who are held prisoner in war,
FIRST DAIMON: Be without pain and suffering.
SECOND DAIMON: May those who have lost loved ones in war,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May those who have lost their homes in war,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May those who are living as refugees,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May those children fighting in wars,
FIRST DAIMON: Find freedom and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May those children dying in wars,
FIRST DAIMON: Be free from suffering and pain.

SECOND DAIMON: May all those fighting in wars,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and peace.
SECOND DAIMON: May the soldiers of war,
FIRST DAIMON: Have love and compassion.
SECOND DAIMON: May the generals of war,
FIRST DAIMON: Have wisdom and compassion.
SECOND DAIMON: May the leaders of the world,
FIRST DAIMON: Have wisdom and compassion.
SECOND DAIMON: May all wars quickly cease.
FIRST DAIMON: May all beings find love and peace.”

The lights fade on the Daimons as they come upon Ben and Harriet who are slowly placing flowers on three grave stones.

HARRIET: We are all someone’s child.
BEN: And we are all children of the world.
HARRIET: It’s easy to see our family as confined to the four walls of our home.
BEN: But our brothers and sisters encompass a much wider circle than this.
HARRIET: We strive to see ourselves as separate, our hopes and desires and pains as unique.
BEN: But everyone has the same desires as us. Everyone wants to be happy. No one wants to suffer.
HARRIET: On our better days this can seem reasonable to us. Something we can aspire to believe in.
BEN: But on days when our brothers and sisters cause us pain, when they strike out at us, we find it all too easy to believe that they are unworthy of love.
HARRIET: But a violent child is in need of love as much as any other, maybe even more so.
BEN: Not a mindless love. Not a love that indulges the violence and helps to harm the child.
HARRIET: But a love of compassionate wisdom. A love that is willing to act for the benefit of all children.
BEN: And yet, how rare this love is, this love of compassionate wisdom.
HARRIET: Because even when we can muster up the courage within our own hearts to offer unconditional compassion to our brothers and sisters we most often lack the wisdom to know when or how.
BEN: But just as we can cultivate our love and compassion, we can cultivate our wisdom.
HARRIET: And if we fail to nurture these twin seeds, we will harvest only the very things we hope to avoid.
BEN: And this harvest will be the only legacy we leave to our children.

The lights fade on Ben and Harriet as they come up on the First Daimon reading the book.

FIRST DAIMON: “The rain is nothing. The rain is water. A gift for a farmer at the end of a dry summer. But with the rain comes something else. It doesn’t just soak the land it soaks our souls. It fills them like so many barrels beneath drainpipes. But what it fills them with is what chills me, not the wind that it brings. The rain can cleanse you, wash you free of your sins and transgressions.”

The lights come up on Gabriel on the couch. He joins the First Daimon in finishing the passage.

FIST DAIMON AND GABRIEL: “But it can also drown you. It can wash you away from your life and set you adrift in a sea of fresh water fears. All of nature is duplicitous, capable of taking as well as giving life and the rain that fell that dark September did not intend to restore faith, or life, or hope.”

GABRIEL: “It fell for reasons I could not comprehend. And all I, or anyone else, could do was seek shelter from its fury.”

FIRST DAIMON: From the novel, *A Dark September Rain*, by Gabriel Masters.

The lights fade on the First Daimon as they come up on Gabriel on a couch.

GABRIEL: There’s nothing like a day filled with death and destruction to make you feel like the world has no meaning. And what’s worse is knowing that every day is filled with death and destruction. And now, added to this, is the knowledge that I may die. So, maybe it’s not that the world has no meaning, but my life has no meaning. We’d all like to think our lives have meaning, but do they really? When you get right down to it, if you disappeared today, would more than a handful of people notice? Is it only when we die en mass that our lives suddenly take on great meaning? Or maybe it’s that our lives take on meaning by the meaning we create for those we know and love.

Sara enters with a cup of tea and a cold compress that she applies to Gabriel’s forehead.

SARA: Drink this.

Gabriel sips the tea.

GABRIEL: Tastes awful. What is it?

SARA: Nick made it. Some healing concoction. Won’t get me to drink it.

GABRIEL: Then why give to me?

SARA: Maybe it works.

GABRIEL: Maybe the tea will be what kills me.

SARA: Shut up.

They are silent for a moment.

SARA: How are you feeling?

GABRIEL: Better.

SARA: Dizzy at all?

GABRIEL: A little.

SARA: Do you want to try and eat something?

GABRIEL: I don’t think so.

SARA: You should get some sleep.

GABRIEL: I’m not tired.

SARA: I don’t care. Get some sleep.

Sara stands to leave and kisses Gabriel.

GABRIEL: I'll be fine. I promise.

SARA: Don't make promises.

GABRIEL: I'll be fine.

Sara kisses Gabriel and strokes his hair before she leaves.

GABRIEL: Maybe Sara is right. Maybe our grand purpose is just to make babies and try to raise them into decent human beings. It's not like that isn't a difficult enough task. Is that what I'm looking for, a difficult task to give my life meaning? The world has become a desert of meaning. How do you find meaning in your life when you live in a world that presents itself as insubstantial and without import, and with values that are all relative? Maybe you have to find it in the real. The touch of a kiss, an embrace, the death of your friends, the slaughter of innocents before your eyes, the violence of the world. Or maybe it's just holding your child for the first time. Or maybe it's looking into a star filled night and seeing yourself reflected there in some way, in that infinite expanse. Do stars ever doubt their importance to the universe? We are the only creatures we know of that know they are aware of the universe.

The lights rise on the Second Daimon who reads from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "I don't remember anything of the moment it happened. Not really. I was looking up at the sky."

GABRIEL: Isn't it ironic that even one of us would question our meaning and significance?

The lights fade on Gabriel.

SECOND DAIMON: "And then there was just blackness. Nothing but blackness. I think I was unconscious, but I have no idea for how long. There was the pain in my leg, the stinging in my lungs, but in my head, it just didn't seem real. I started walking and finally, through the tears in my eyes, I could see the sky. Azure blue. That was the color of the sky. When I saw that sky I knew I would live. Eventually I painted the ceiling of my bedroom the blue above the clouds." Hamadi Panhir, from *Tragedy Terminus: Words of Survivors*, The New Egyptian Press.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they come up on Gabriel and Jean on the couch.

GABRIEL: Where will you go?

JEAN: I don't know. I was thinking of maybe following Margaret when she leaves again.

GABRIEL: I don't know if she will be leaving.

JEAN: Really?

GABRIEL: Apparently the thought has crossed her mind that she might have seen enough of the world. Seems she wants to grow or something.

JEAN: Isn't that ironic.

GABRIEL: The world is one big irony machine. Just put your quarter in and turn the knob.

JEAN: You know, I never really thanked you for inviting me to join you here on the farm.

GABRIEL: You've really never thanked me for anything.

JEAN: Be that as it may, I wanted to thank you now. I know sometimes I'm a pain in the ass, and I know that lately we haven't been seeing things quite the same way, but I appreciate your constant friendship through everything.

GABRIEL: You'll always have a room here.

JEAN: Thanks.

GABRIEL: We'll probably pile a lot of shit in it, but it'll be here.

JEAN: You'll probably put a crib in it.

GABRIEL: Let's not think about that just yet.

JEAN: If it's a girl you have to name it after me.

GABRIEL: I refuse to name my child Obstinate.

JEAN: Well, if it's a boy you can name it after yourself and call him Abstruse.

GABRIEL: Better abstruse than obtuse.

JEAN: Do you really think kids are a good idea after the things we've seen today?

GABRIEL: I'm beginning to think maybe they're the best thing. The antidote.

JEAN: I wonder if I'm just too afraid to even contemplate something like that.

GABRIEL: We're all afraid.

JEAN: You know in the wintertime when it will rain just a bit and ice over the snow and you try to see how far you can walk out over the icy skin before you break through? That's what I feel like right now. That's the sense I have. That the world is balanced on brittle ice and it could fall through at any moment. Today was just a minor crack in the surface.

GABRIEL: If you're afraid then why leave?

JEAN: You don't conquer your fears by hiding from them.

GABRIEL: What about your fears of death?

The lights come up on the First Daimon who reads from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: "The five stages of grief as defined by Elizabeth Kubler Ross in her book *On Death and Dying* were originally intended to explain the psychological processes that a patient with a terminal illness passes through.

JEAN: You're not going to die.

FIRST DAIMON: "These stages have general application to the grief of survivors of those who have died as well, though grief is a complex process and should not be construed to be entirely stage-like."

GABRIEL: We're all going to die someday.

Jean takes Gabriel's hand and the lights fade on them.

FIRST DAIMON: "The first stage of grief is denial, in which one rejects the reality of the loss. The second stage is anger, which can be focused at the loved one who has died, at one's self, or at the world in general. The third stage is bargaining in which the individual tries to rationalize with God, themselves, or the loved one, some exchange of behavior for a reversal of death. The fourth stage is depression, in which the individual retreats from the world psychically and mentally. This can be both an important healing phase, or if prolonged, it can signal significant psychological danger."

The lights come up on Ben.

BEN: There was a small troupe of actors who would come out from the city every summer and set up a makeshift stage at the corner of town near the edge of old man Colson's field.

FIRST DAIMON: "The final stage is acceptance, where the individual has come to terms with the loss and has successfully been able to move on to the next part of their life."

BEN: Every summer we would put the kids in the back of the truck and ride into town. We would watch as the actors performed in the light of the setting sun, their faces tinged orange by its dimming glow and the field of ripening wheat behind them seeming like an oxidized ocean.

FIRST DAIMON: "It is not unreasonable to suspect that communities and even entire nations may pass through stages similar to these when faced with catastrophic loss of life." Dr. Manuel Lopez, *The Grief of a Nation*, The New Free World Press.

The lights fade on the Daimon.

BEN: I remember one summer night they set up lights and performed *MacBeth*. I don't remember much of the play, but I do remember the words he spoke when Lady MacBeth died. They were so tender that you couldn't doubt his love for her. Those were the first words to come to my mind when I came in from the barn that morning to find Harriet asleep in her favorite armchair. She never woke up from that midmorning nap. As I knelt beside her and took her hand the words from that play drifted into my mind like the smell of jasmine on a mild spring breeze.

The lights come up on Harriet asleep in a chair.

BEN:

"She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

The lights fade on Harriet. Ben slowly sits down in her chair.

BEN: I buried her that week in a small ceremony out by the hickory tree and the following Monday I sat myself down in her chair and closed my eyes for the last time.

The lights fade on Ben as they rise on the Second Daimon reading from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "Within each wave of consciousness there are many wavelets, or streams of development. These include but are not limited to the interpersonal, cognitive, moral, emotional, and spiritual. Thus while each person will have a gravitational center, so

to speak, at a particular level of consciousness, their individual streams of development may be beneath or beyond this level. In this way a person may have a very developed cognitive stream, but be lacking in moral or spiritual development. In these days of trial and turmoil we must all attend to our individual spiral of development, as well as that of the whole world.” Nancy Geshler, *Editorial from The New Horizon Journal*, Jerusalem Inter-Faith Publications.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they rise on Nick on the porch.

NICK: The world is impermanent. It is not solid, fixed or stable. There is no true safety in this world. After what’s happened to Gabe, this is more apparent to me than ever. My teacher says that we want to believe that happiness and security come from the world, from our friends and family and our homes and jobs and the food we eat and the TV we watch. But there is no security in those things. They can bring us pain and suffering at any moment, because at any moment they can be ripped from us. The only true happiness comes from seeing the world as it truly exists. Happiness is in our mind, not the world outside. But the problem is, to really have that happiness, to have that peace of mind, you need to see the world as it really exists. But I’m not at that point.

The lights rise on the First Daimon reading from the book.

FIRST DAIMON: We have consistent reports of power losses not only within the city, but throughout the surrounding counties and much of the rest of the state as well. Utilities workers are still attempting to determine if the storm will continue to cause widespread power outage, but they hope to have most areas back online by morning. At the moment however, the majority of the citizens are in the dark, both literally, with the absence of power, and figuratively, with the inability, other than battery powered radio, to follow the tragic events of the day. If you are listening, stay tuned to Lead Line News.

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

NICK: There is a Buddhist practice called tonglen which is supposed to help you understand the suffering of others, and in turn help you understand your own suffering. You still your mind, and meditate on the person or people who are suffering. And then you imagine that you are breathing in a thick, oily black smoke of suffering from them and drawing it down into you heart center where you instantly transform it into a brilliant light of peace and love. And then you breathe this brilliant light back out into those who are suffering. I’ve been doing it a lot today, for the people who died and for their families. And now for Gabe. It helps. Helps me accept that he may die. That he will die one day. That we will all die one day. And that day may be today.

The lights fade on Nike as they come up on the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: “From an anonymous posting on the Chinese Internet: Later that day, after I had cried tears that seemed endless and unstoppable, after I had watched it on television over and over, and after I had exhausted my inner resources of shock, despair, and anger, after all that, I sat down with my books. Passing through page after page I slowly unearthed the familiar wisdom I was hoping I might find. I knew I was not the first to feel

what was welling up from within me and I knew someone would have put into words what I seemed unable to articulate. That someone turned out to be a Chinese Court bureaucrat from the fourth century AD. His name was P'An Yueh. His poem is titled *In Mourning for My Dead Wife*.

The lights fade on the First Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON:

“Winter and Spring are now past.
Once more Summer bleeds into Autumn.
She has returned
To the Sacred Springs.
And all the heavens separate us forever.
Who will listen to my stories?
Who will I live for?
I try to do my work at Court,
Going through the motions
Of duty and honor.
But when I return home
I can think only of her face.
When I step into our room
I expect to hear her voice.
I glimpse her shadow in the corners
Smell her perfume on the pillows.
Her robes still hang in the closet.
She is nowhere.
But in my dreams,
She is alive.
I awake to her touch,
And she vanishes.
And I am besieged with sorrow.
Two sparrows built a nest
And then there was only one.
Two salmon separated in the current
And lost forever.
The morning breeze rustles the
The dew soaked leaves.
All through the sleepless night
I could not forget.
I hope the day will come when
I am brave enough to beat
On a kettle like Chaung Tsu did
In mourning for his dead wife”

The lights fade on the Daimons as they rise on Harriet.

HARRIET: The morning I passed away, I was thinking of planting hydrangeas. I thought they'd look. I certainly wasn't thinking about dying. Ben and I had talked about it on occasion, but it wasn't something we wanted to dwell on. While that made it easier to ignore the reality of what was coming, it didn't help to give it meaning. Our lives are precious and they only gain more value as we acknowledge that they will end. If we pretend that things will go on like they have, that we will go on like we have, then it is easy to let slip the moments and the people that we should treasure. It is all too simple to pretend that the ones we love will always be with us, or we with them. Every living thing dies. And there is no knowing when that death will come. It may come in a tragedy large or small, it may come as an accident, or it may come while you are sitting in your favorite chair thinking about flowers. But it comes to everyone. Denying this, we can pretend that there is time for real living at some later date and cut ourselves off from our hearts and our loved ones in an attempt to fulfill some fleeting desires that in the moment of our death will be forgotten. I had no regrets that I had not spent enough time with Ben or with the children before they died, or that I had left things undone, or places unseen when I passed. And that made it easy to go.

The lights fade on Harriet as they rise on the Daimons who read from the book.

SECOND DAIMON: "As we change, the world changes. And as we change the world, it changes us. This is an inescapable cycle that we can either become aware of and use to the advantage of all human beings, or which we can ignore, and in our ignorance, allow the world, as well as our hearts and minds, to be molded in ways we would never consciously desire. We must instead, wake up. We must awaken to the reality of the Divine in all things, and the need to consciously express the Divine in all that we do. By expressing the Divine in each of our actions, we create a world alive to the Divine."

The lights rise on Nick and Margaret in the kitchen.

MARGARET: I'm afraid of losing him.

NICK: We're all afraid. For him and for ourselves.

FIRST DAIMON: "Imagine a world where each person was awake to the Divine and expressed it in every breath, every step, every embrace, every thought, and every creation? Imagine that we could express the Divine with each building we erected, with each plant harvested, and with each action we implemented."

MARGARET: I've already lost one friend today, and the worst part of that is admitting that I lost her years ago through my own neglect.

SECOND DAIMON: "Such a world is possible. It is within our ability to create. But it will never come to pass as anything more than the wishful daydreams of a few visionaries unless we can learn to desire it more than the world of glitz and glitter that we pawn off on one another as the height of civilized humanity."

NICK: He's been my best friend for as long as I can remember. The thought of this world, or this farm, or this life, without him in it... Leaves me cold inside.

MARGARET: It could have been any of us.

NICK: It should have been me. He was doing my chores.

MARGARET: It could still be any of us.

FIRST DAIMON: “Unless we collectively cultivate an aspiration for the Divine that exceeds by many times our delusional desires for excessive material luxury and the vacuous virtual reality of homogenized entertainment, we will forever be trapped in a samsaric web of our own making. And we will have created the collective spider of consumption that comes and dines upon our individual souls, leaving them as dried empty husks, rotting in the sun.”

MARGARET: What will we do? What will Sara do?

NICK: We’ll do what so many others are doing today, what so many do everyday. We’ll mourn. Until it’s our turn.

SECOND DAIMON: “To change this scenario we need only change our minds. It is not something that we can do in one day, or one week, or one year, but hopefully we will begin this task.” Godfrey Brendon, *The Chrysalis Age: A Handbook for Spiritual and Global Transformation in the New Millennium*. www.thechrysalisage.com

The lights fade on the Daimons.

NICK: I think it would be good for you. I never understood how you could keep your balance moving as often as you do.

MARGARET: Sometimes I don’t. And on a day like this, I really sense that need to have some roots. Some place to call home so that at least some part of my life is stable,

NICK: That’s one thing the farm is. Stable. I think you should stay put.

MARGARET: For what it’s worth, I think you should as well. I’ve seen the world, it’s beautiful, it’s ugly, and in a lot of ways, it’s just like here. And you have something really special here.

NICK: I know, that’s what I meant. I think you should stay here. On the farm.

MARGARET: That sounds wonderful. How would the others feel?

NICK: I’m sure they’d be all for it.

MARGARET: So, you’d stay if I stayed?

NICK: Well, maybe, I think so, yeah. I think your being here would be a good reason to stay.

MARGARET: So, let me ask you something, Nick, is that a prelude to some future pass?

NICK: Honestly, I don’t know. Knowing me, probably, yeah. This will sound kind of corny, but I’ve been thinking a lot about you over the last year. You were the last person I was with.

MARGARET: That’s some kind of record for you, isn’t it?

NICK: Yeah, some kind. But the thing is, I’ve been thinking about my relationships and what I wanted out of them and what I ended up getting out of them and I just couldn’t imagine starting one again unless it was going to fulfill my real needs. And of all the people I’ve been with, you’re the one who keeps popping into my head as being someone who might see those needs even better than I do.

MARGARET: That’s very flattering, Nick, but it was only a few weeks.

NICK: But we’ve known each other for years. And in those years, you’ve always been someone I could admire.

MARGARET: This is making me a little uncomfortable.

NICK: Look, I don’t want to make you uncomfortable. I do think you should stay on the farm. It would be good for you. Maybe the best thing you could do right now. And if you’re uncomfortable, I’ll move. It’s not like I haven’t been contemplating moving for months.

MARGARET: No, I'm not uncomfortable because of what you said, I'm uncomfortable because, to be completely honest, I've been thinking about you as well. Especially as I started to consider settling down. I really enjoyed those weeks and I regret in some ways, a lot of ways, that I left when I did. I feel like we didn't get a chance to see what might have happened.

The lights rise on Ben and Harriet.

BEN: You plant seeds in the earth and in the world and you nurture them and cultivate them and you harvest them as best you can.

HARRIET: But there are seasons beyond your fields.

NICK: So, well... That's good then.

MARGARET: Yeah, I think so.

Nick and Margaret slowly kiss. The lights fade on Nick and Margaret.

BEN: Seasons of death and birth and renewal.

HARRIET: And try as hard as you might, it does no good to plant out of season, to try and gather your crops in winter.

BEN: The harvest of the world can be like this.

HARRIET: The seasons are a dance that you cannot learn or step to in part.

BEN: And you ignore a season at your own peril.

HARRIET: The world's seasons are complicated and elusive if you have not studied them.

BEN: To the growing plant the soil and the sun are both of value and yet their promise cannot be fulfilled without the rains.

HARRIET: The world's promise, its store of seeds, its peoples and ideals, its bounty and its hazards, cannot be reaped for the benefit of all without careful study of its ways.

BEN: You learn how to be a farmer every day you are alive on the land.

HARRIET: And we have to learn how to live in the world every day we are alive, or the world's time for living, like our own, may be shorter than we might ever suspect.

The lights fade on Ben and Harriet as they rise on the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: "It is only when the film brings its questions to a community that has been thinking about the country since long before it was a nation that the necessary perspective for analysis arrives. And with it comes even more insightful questions about the future. As one young Sioux girl expresses it, 'Two hundred years ago the Europeans didn't question the rightness of their actions anymore than modern people question the rightness of theirs, and my people were destroyed by this. If we do not have the courage to question our actions today it may be all peoples who are destroyed in the future.'" Jerry Winnik, Review of the Documentary Film, *Facing the Future in the Face of Catastrophe*.

The lights fade on the First Daimon as they rise on Sara and Gabriel in the gathering room. Gabriel is still on the couch.

SARA: What did you say?

GABRIEL: Are you seriously going to make me say it all again?

SARA: Well, not all of it, but the last part would be nice.

GABRIEL: I said, I think it's time we made our commitment to each other real. And will you marry me?

SARA: That's what I thought you said.

Silence.

GABRIEL: So... Are you thinking of an answer?

SARA: Yes, Gabriel, of course I'll marry you, I was just...

GABRIEL: Look, I don't want you to think I'm being unromantic or anything. I'll propose all proper with the ring and the flowers and the bended knee, but it didn't seem like the right thing to do now, with everything that's happened, but I still wanted you to know how I was feeling.

SARA: Where did this come from all the sudden?

GABRIEL: A lot of places. A lot of thinking. With everything that is happened... To the world... To me... It started to make sense.

SARA: How?

GABRIEL: What I'm doing with myself. The new novel is sitting there waiting to be started, but I don't feel like I have anything worthwhile to say. And then today happens. How do you write about the same old things again and again in the face of something like this? But then the other question is how do you write about this? How do you create something that has meaning and says something about the world we're living in?

SARA: How did it make sense?

GABRIEL: I realized that you have to want to say something and then you have to try. Maybe it works, maybe it doesn't. If it doesn't, start over, try again.

SARA: I don't understand what that has to do with us.

GABRIEL: It's the same with us, with being a family. You just try until you get it right.

SARA: So you think our children can set it straight?

GABRIEL: Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe it's their kids, or their kid's kids who will set it straight, but if no one ever tries, if no one ever makes the effort it isn't likely to happen by itself.

SARA: Gabe, is now the best time to think about this? I mean, you...

GABRIEL: I know. I'm feeling worse all the time, but that just makes it all the more important.

SARA: It makes me feel... I don't know.

Silence.

GABRIEL: I've written a will. I left the farm to you. My great grandparents would have wanted...

Sara places her fingers to Gabriel's lips

SARA: Don't. This farm has been here for over a hundred years. In all that time they never lost hope.

GABRIEL: You're right. They survived two world wars, a depression, and every other struggle you can imagine, but they didn't let it stop them from living their lives, from trying to be the best people they could be.

BEN: I miss the feel of the soil in my hands, the smell of it in the spring.

HARRIET: I miss the smell of the air right before it would rain, the way the trees would sway in the wind.

GABRIEL: That sense of commitment may be the thing that I really inherited when they left me this farm and it's taken me ten years to realize it.

BEN: I remember him as a small child, sitting on my knee on the porch, staring out over the fields, watching the clouds of a thunderstorm roll in.

GABRIEL: I miss them. I remember planting seeds with him in the fields the same way he said he had with his grandfather years before.

HARRIET: I would hold him up to the sink because he always wanted to wash his own dishes.

GABRIEL: And I would stand on the kitchen stool beside her and help bake the pies and breads for dinner.

HARRIET: His hands covered in flour as we kneaded the dough.

BEN: His hands covered in dirt as we walked through the fields.

GABRIEL: Their hands holding mine when I was a child, wrinkled with the passing of so many years, but still firm and strong even in their last days on this earth.

HARRIET: We gave all we could.

BEN: All we had.

GABRIEL: They gave me a sense of life, of how to live it.

The lights fade on Ben and Harriet.

SARA: They didn't only give it to you; they gave it to all of us. And now we can pass it on. Promise me you'll be here with me to pass it on.

GABRIEL: I promise I'll try. And you promise that you'll pass it on even if I'm not here with you.

SARA: I promise.

Gabriel gently kisses Sara. The lights fade on Sara and Gabriel as they rise on the First Daimon.

FIRST DAIMON: In twenty-four years of news casting I have never seen tragedy of this magnitude strike twice within the same day, yet this is what has happened.

The lights rise on the Second Daimon.

SECOND DAIMON: "I know that in the wake of the events of the last year I will likely be considered a fool, if not worse, but I have become more convinced than ever over the course of these many months that the only hope for all of us as a nation and a species and as a planet is if we can learn to open our hearts to the love that is our nature."

FIRST DAIMON: "Before we have even had the time to dry our tears and collect ourselves from the shock of yesterday's events, we are suddenly thrust back into the unknown."

SECOND DAIMON: "I'm not saying we shouldn't take actions that are intended to defend ourselves or others, only that we act out of love and not out of fear."

FIRST DAIMON: "Details at this time are few. We do know that there are at least as many dead in these early morning hours as were lost not even some twenty-odd hours ago. And we do know that the death toll is very likely to rise in the coming hours."

SECOND DAIMON: "It is only from love that we can hope to rebuild our lives and construct our future."

FIRST DAIMON: "We can only hope with the sunrise some sort of sanity is restored to the world. As usual, we here at Lead Line News will be with you bringing you the latest developments."

SECOND DAIMON: "To act out of fear, or anger, or hatred, will only leave us with a future of the same. We must instead act from a place of love. A place of hope" Letter to the Editor from *The Istanbul Times*.

The lights fade on the Second Daimon as they slowly rise on Nick, Gabriel, Sara, Jean, Margaret, and Harry as each one speaks. This is not a conversation. Their lines are not delivered to each other.

GABRIEL: My mother died during an operation when I was ten, my great grand parents died in their sleep when I was twenty-five and my sister was killed by a car thief when I was twenty-seven.

SARA: My uncle passed away from cancer three years ago and my grandmother died of a stroke a year later.

NICK: My best friend committed suicide when I was fifteen.

JEAN: My aunt died in a fire that was started by a shorted out lamp she inherited from my grandmother who died the year before from lung cancer.

HARRY: My girlfriend was killed in a mugging the year I left college.

MARGARET: My closest cousin died in a car accident when I was seventeen and a friend I used to have dinner with every week died today. I hadn't spoken to her in three years.

GABRIEL: I do think our dreams of the future can be shattered. And we can become paralyzed by their absence. We're a hopeful species. We can't help ourselves. We're always dreaming of a better tomorrow. But when we lose that dream, that constant companion of hope, I think that's when the world can be the most dangerous. Because we might actually start to believe that it will all come to an end. And then it's that much easier for this nightmare to become reality.

HARRY: I have nightmares all the time. I wake up from a dead sleep and find myself sitting up in bed, sweating. And I have no idea why. I have no memory of the dream that caused me to wake. Just a vague sense of dread and fear. That's what this day has felt like. As though I have just woken from one of those dreams and I can't quite tell if it's reality or not.

JEAN: I do feel like this makes me question my reality. Yesterday I couldn't have envisioned this and tomorrow I'll see it as a constant possibility. My reality has been totally altered. Set adrift. And what frightens me is that tomorrow my reality may be shifted again. And the day after that and the day after that until I won't know what to believe even when I see it with my own eyes.

NICK: Maybe these moments are important for another reason. Maybe they help us to recognize that we don't normally see reality as it exists. We project upon the world all kinds of things that are simply in our minds. We do the same thing with everyone we know. We create people in our heads and then clash with the reality of the person in front of us. Today was real. Tomorrow will be real. But how many of us will be able to peel back the thick veil of our minds and see it as it truly is?

MARGARET: Mind or heart, which to choose? Do we have to choose? Can't we choose both? Can't we finally see the world through heart, mind, and soul? What does it take to see the world that way, to see the events of today like that, to see every event every day like that?

Most of us struggle with heart and mind so much, how will we learn to unite them and embrace our souls?

SARA: In my soul I know that God is watching, but what I fear in my soul is that God is also acting. It's easy to believe that God is aloof and above participation in the world beyond a few miracles, but to suspect that God is in every action, in every cause; I find that frightens me. Because then I have to reconsider my notion of God. And I don't know if my notion of God is strong enough to be shaken like that.

JEAN: I can't believe in a God that allows people to suffer like this. Is God an absence that is present, or a presence that is absent? Does God choose who will suffer and who will live or was that all put in motion at the beginning and now we're just playing our parts like dominoes falling one against the other? Or is there no God at all and we've tormented ourselves with hope of rescue from a disaster of our own making?

MARGARET: The notion of some all mighty all-powerful being watching over me is not comforting. You can see today what persons of limited power are capable of. Imagine the consequence of unlimited power. If we were to look behind the curtain, why would we expect to find some version of our own nature writ large over the universe?

NICK: I do believe that the ultimate reality reveals God as All. Not that God is outside us, but that we are inseparable from God. That nothing is separable from God because it is all God. Not the God of stories and myths, but the ground of all being. The ground of all being is One Without a Second, is God, and the ground of God is beyond conception. Beyond difference, or separation or duality. Radiant Emptiness, beyond word, thought or expression.

Harriet and Ben enter the stage.

GABRIEL: In the early autumn, before the leaves have begun to change, but after the heat of the summer day is still rising off the lake, I like to sit with Sara by the water and watch the stars. On a really still night, on a clear night when there is barely any breeze and no clouds in the sky, I can look out into the lake and see the Milky Way and the whole of the universe reflected in it. And if I look at Sara just right, I can see the whole cosmos in her eyes. And I find that fills me with a pure, calming joy.

HARRIET: When I held my son for the very first time I felt as though I was holding the whole of the world in my arms. And many years later, when I learned of his death, it seemed as though the whole of the world had died with him. But his death was like all others, like mine, like everyone's. Important, special, countless, endless, and unavoidable.

HARRY: I do fear death. I don't fear it in the usual way. I don't fear the end, or a ceasing of being, or even the thought of it being painful. I fear that I will have wasted it before I even know it's gone. Like some prized possession that you never look at and only really notice when it is lost and unrecoverable. Once you've crossed over, beyond the reach of life, all your dreams come to an end.

SARA: When I think about dying, suddenly, or unexpectedly, like the people who died today, I do find myself hoping for something more, something beyond this life. If I envision myself passing when I'm old, slipping away in my sleep, I don't so much mind the idea that there might not be more. I want to believe in a heaven, but I only feel the desire for it when I think about my life being cut short. About anyone's life being cut short.

BEN: Heaven, hell, purgatory, reincarnations, the bardo, endless finality of the ending, only those of us who have passed beyond life can speak of it and the journeys to be found. But no matter the belief in what happens afterward, we all take to our death a belief in life, and a

desire to cling to it as long as possible. The wonder is that afterward we have an equal desire to cling to our deaths.

NICK: The doctrine of reincarnation teaches that only our mental continuum survives the death of our body. Only our very subtle mind, the mind that is stripped of memories and ideas and thoughts and everything we normally associate with who we are. This is what passes from life to life with its reincarnation determined by the seeds of karma that have been sown. When I was a boy my family would go to the beach on hot summer days and I would sit by the water's edge and wonder what it would be like to be a wave riding on the surface of the ocean, crashing into the shore. How would I know that I wasn't the same wave that crashed there earlier that day? How would I know if I was wave or ocean?

GABRIEL: I am a farmer who writes novels in his spare time and worries about his friends. And I may die today.

SARA: I am a farmer who dreams of raising children and one day sitting around the dinner table with her many grandchildren. And I may die today.

JEAN: I was a farmer and now I'm a wanderer, trying to see what the world has in store for me. For us all. And I may die today.

MARGARET: I was a traveler looking for something I couldn't find in the world and now I am a woman living on a farm. And I may die today.

NICK: I am a farmer and a seeker, and I doubt that I will ever be anything else. And I may die today.

HARRY: I am a reporter and a skeptic and a loner and I can only hope that some of that changes. And I may die today.

GABRIEL: I am a fireman and today, for the last time, I went back into a building that was burning. I died today.

JEAN: I am an office manager and I died today before I even knew I was in danger.

NICK: I am a soldier and I died today in a country that most people have never heard of.

BEN: I am a child, dying slowly from a disease that claimed my parent's lives while I watched.

SARA: I am a woman starving in the streets of a city that has too many poor and not enough food.

HARRY: I am a child trapped in slavery, separated from my parents and forced to work instead of going to school.

HARRIET: I am a prostitute held in slave-like bondage in a country that will not even recognize my existence.

MARGARET: I am a mother struggling to pull her children out of the crime and drugs and poverty that surround them.

GABRIEL: I am a child forced to carry a rifle and fight in a war I cannot understand.

BEN: I am a prisoner, tortured and beaten for my beliefs, forgotten by the world.

NICK: I am a child dying of a curable disease in the wealthiest country that ever existed.

SARA: I am a child dying of an incurable disease in a country that knows nothing but death and poverty.

HARRIET: I am the air that floats through your lungs and passes into the lungs of every other human being on this lonely planet.

JEAN: I am the seas and oceans out of which all life arose.

HARRY: I am the Earth, a lone sentinel of life in a vast and endless universe.

MARGARET: I am the cosmos, the whole of existence, timeless and without boundary.

The lights do not fade on the eight, but do come up on the Daimons who read from the book. As the Daimons speak, the eight gradually and softly join in, reciting the words one after the other from the beginning.

FIRST DAIMON: In the ancient black book it is written:

ALL:(EVERYONE DELIVERS THIS SEPARATELY IN SUCCESSION)

I am the wind that breathes upon the sea,
I am the roar of the ocean,
I am the whisper of the leaves in Autumn,
I am the beam of sunlight at morning,
I am the rays of the moon and stars,
I am the chrysalis transforming into butterfly,
I am the strength of the trees growing,
I am the power of buds breaking into blossom,
I am the force of the salmon swimming,
I am the courage of the wild boar,
I am the swiftness of the stag running,
I am the might of the ox behind the plough,
I am the size of all things,
And I am in the hearts of all people,
Who praise my splendor and grace.

The lights fade on all but the two Daimons, who slowly close the sacred black book.

FIRST DAIMON: As the sun breaks past the advent horizon of a new day and its life-giving rays spread out over the whole of the land, the clouds that still streak the sky are tinged with a crimson-gold hue not unlike that of a raging fire. The rain has broken and revealed a sky of change. The sailor's rhyme says "red sky at night sailor's delight, red sky in morning, sailor take warning" and with this sunrise, in this time of mourning, all warnings are heeded within the farmhouse.

SECOND DAIMON: Its sturdy walls are braced for bad weather, for more rain and more wind. But they can protect those within only from the forces of nature outside. The farmhouse can offer no fortification from the natural forces that dwell within their hearts.

FIRST and SECOND DAIMON: For this, like so many things under the wide sky of life, they must, and do, turn to each other.

The lights fade on the stage.

THE END