

*A woman stands in the viewing room of a funeral home, looking into a casket at the body of her former lover.*

WOMAN

Well, well, just take a look at you...all scrubbed and polished and ready for inspection. I have to hand it to them, they really did a good job on you. Who could imagine seeing you now that such a short time ago you were lying in a pool of your own vomit, your organs finally having decided to give up on you...just like everyone else.

*(Beat)*

Except me.

*(Beat)*

What did they stuff in your cheeks? Cotton, is it? Or some synthetic stuff? No, I think it's cotton...the look, the feel of cotton. Cotton mouth – how ironic. Well, whatever it is, it's a good look for you. You were always so gaunt and drawn, but now you look...well, quite lively. What a shame. Still, it'll make for a good send off. And like they say, you never get a second chance to make a last impression.

*(Beat)*

I will miss you, you know that, don't you? Despite all those years of being second-best to...well, just about everything really: the wife; later, the ex-wife; the job; probably the dog...and oh, let's not forget the all-consuming, never-ending, neurotic bouts of introspection. If you'd been any more self-absorbed you'd have turned into a black hole. Just a small one, though. And last but not least, of course...the bottle. Though under the circumstance, I suppose that goes without saying. Yes, I think it's fair to say the only thing in your entire life you ever committed yourself to fully and unreservedly was the bottle. And look how it's thanked you.

*(Beat)*

But, like I say, I will miss you. Because as awful as it is...was...it was what I knew. I knew it wasn't good, I knew I wanted better, but it was what I had...and I accepted it as such. There's a dealer in life, you know, and he's throwing the cards across the table, and the person next to you gets an ace and you get tossed a