



Over the Moon
With Trains

A play with dance

By Luke Rosen

Music by Neil Young

Contact:
Amy Macnow
Symmetry Entertainment
2637 Centinela Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90405
P: (310) 210-3176
E: Amy@SymmetryEnt.com

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CHARACTERS

MARTHA: 40's. A working mother of two.

BEN: 40's. Martha's husband, a stay at home dad.

DANCER #1 (ALICE): 20-30. The new neighbor across the street.

DANCER #2 (SHANE): 20-30. Alice's husband.

MOLLY: 30's. Martha's co-worker and friend.

SETTING

Present day. The living room of a brownstone in Harlem.

Act One: Spring, 2016

Act Two: Summer, 2016

Act Three: Autumn and Winter, 2016

A NOTE ABOUT STAGING

The central set piece is a window in Martha and Ben's living room.

The window should be a simple frame downstage.

When characters look out the window they are facing the audience.

*Dance sequences add approximately ten minutes to the play as written. Therefore, it is possible to have one intermission, which would fall between Acts I and II.

for Nat

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Ben and Martha's living room. A large vintage table sits in the middle of the room. It has four chairs pushed in. On the table is a pitcher of water and four glasses. Downstage is a very prominent, large window frame. The entrance to the apartment is back of house, behind the audience. The kitchen is Offstage Right. The bedrooms are Offstage Left. MARTHA is rushing around getting dressed for work. She is late and can't find her keys. BEN enters from the kitchen holding a plate of pancakes. Martha stops. She looks at him. She smiles. He looks at her. He holds up the plate. He smiles. Almost like a dance, they walk to the middle of the room. He puts the pancakes on the table. They sit. Both of them start laughing.

Life is... MARTHA

Funny? BEN

Yes, and too short. Thanks. MARTHA

For what? BEN

Reminding me to stop and eat pancakes. MARTHA

Everytime. BEN

I love you like I love blueberry pancakes. MARTHA

BEN

I love you like I love strawberry milkshakes. Coffee?

MARTHA

Coffee.

BEN

Paper?

MARTHA

Paper.

Martha begins to eat. Ben gets up and walks to the kitchen. He glances out the window on his way. He stops. He walks to the window and stares out. Silence.

BEN

Oh boy.

MARTHA

Don't tell me it's rainy.

BEN

Nope. Not rainy.

Pause.

MARTHA

What?

BEN

Look at this.

MARTHA

What?

BEN

Look.

MARTHA

What?

Just come here.

BEN

Martha stands up and joins him at the window.
They look out. Silence.

Oh my god.

MARTHA

Silence.

Jesus.

BEN

Gross.

MARTHA

Beautiful.

BEN

Inappropriate.

MARTHA

Guess the renovation is done.

BEN

Silence.

Don't let the kids look out the window.

MARTHA

I used real peanut butter in his lunch.

BEN

Pause.

MARTHA

I love a defined lower back.

BEN

Silence.

They are stunning.

BEN

Okay this is icky. I gotta go. Can I have them?

MARTHA

BEN

I don't know what you're talking about.

MARTHA

Yes, you do.

Still looking out the window, Ben reaches into his pocket and holds out Martha's keys.

BEN

Strawberry milkshakes.

Staring out the window, Martha takes the keys. Mesmerized by what she's seeing, she drops the keys.

MARTHA

Wow.

She snaps out of it and picks up the keys.

MARTHA (AS SHE LEAVES)

Blueberry pancakes.

BEN

Yup.

Martha exits through the audience and out the door. Lights fade on Ben staring out the window.

SCENE TWO

Lights up on a bare stage. TWO DANCERS enter. The song *Harvest* by Neil Young plays. They dance. The dance should be romantic, passionate, playful, awkward and youthful. There should be a climax followed by an exhausting finish. Very much the act of two lovers; with a beginning, middle and end. Music fades. BLACKOUT.

SCENE THREE

Lights up on the apartment. The table is set for dinner. Ben is in the kitchen cooking. We hear the sounds of two young children (a girl and boy) from offstage.

BEN

Seven minutes guys! Hands washed and sitting at the table in seven minutes!

Martha enters and collapses on the couch.

MARTHA

I've never been happier to be home. I'm exhausted.

BEN

Wine?

MARTHA

Yup.

He pours a glass of wine and brings it to her. He returns to the kitchen. Martha drinks. Pause. The sound of kids playing in the other room continues and turns into bickering. Martha is in no mood for bickering kids.

MARTHA

God. Have they been at it all afternoon?

BEN

Totally. It's stunning.

MARTHA

Tell you what, he can be a total A-hole.

BEN

I know! I'm so glad you said that. I thought I was being insensitive but the way he treats her sometimes...

MARTHA

I know! Especially at the end of the day.

BEN

This happens on other days? You've seen this before? Totally thought it was the first time.

MARTHA

What? Does it not seem like every afternoon he treats her like this? Are you just blind? This is what I mean, we need to be on the same page. *(Pause)* Treats her like a total A-hole. Two days ago he punched her. Hit her pretty hard right in the back. Then she threw a train at him. Bashed him in the head and they both flipped. God. Enough already.

BEN

What? He hit her?

Ben stops what he's doing.

MARTHA

Yup.

BEN

Okay, enough. Calling him an A-hole is being too nice. He hits her again and I'm gonna walk over with my baseball bat and bash his brains in. You just don't hit a--

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

Woah! Hang on. I love him and all, he just *acts* like an A-hole sometimes. I think it's natural at his age. Don't you ever say that shit again about bashing his brains in. He's our son for god's sake. Jesus.

BEN

What?

MARTHA

I mean... What?

BEN

What are you talking about?

MARTHA

I'm talking about Peter. Our son. What are you talking about?

BEN

Oh god. No, I'd never... I thought you meant the...

He points downstage at the window. She walks over and looks out. Silence.

MARTHA

Holy...

BEN

Yeah.

MARTHA

God, have they been at it all afternoon.

BEN

All day. Morning, afternoon... I'm not even mad. It's super impressive.

MARTHA (STARING OUT THE WINDOW)

Yeah. They're beautiful. He's so... fit.

Ben joins her at the window.

BEN

Strong. And she's sculpted like a goddess. Stunning.

MARTHA

Okay, slugger. That's a bit much. But yeah, they're really beautiful. I can't believe I'm not irate.

BEN

Me too. I think it's because they're so hot.

MARTHA

Hot.

Silence.

MARTHA

What smells so good by the way.

BEN

Stir fry.

MARTHA

Stepping up your game. I like it.

They look at each other. They look out the window.

BEN

Seriously, we should draw the... I'm okay with it until the kids come in. The A-hole can't be sitting here watching that.

We hear the sound of kids running in for dinner.

MARTHA

Quick! Pull the curtains shut. They're coming.

Martha and Ben scramble. Ben pulls the curtains a little too hard and they come crashing down.

MARTHA

What the...

BEN

What do you want me to do?

MARTHA

Kids! Go back to your room!

BEN

Right now! Back! We're eating this stir fry in your room. *(Pause)* They're still coming. What should I do?

MARTHA

I don't know! Turn the lights off or something!

Ben runs to the wall and turns off the lights. A bright light shines through the window. Lights fade on Ben and Martha running offstage.

MARTHA

Ouch! God. Did you see that? He threw a goddamn train at me. Total A-hole.

SCENE FOUR

Lights up on a bare stage. Our two dancers enter. The song *Harvest* by Neil Young plays. They dance. The same passionate dance as earlier. Very much the act of two lovers with a beginning, middle and end. Music fades. The dancers collapse on the ground. BLACKOUT.

SCENE FIVE

Martha's office. There are two desks. MOLLY sits behind one desk, Martha behind the other.

He did not.
MOLLY

Yup.
MARTHA

Total sideways action.
MOLLY

Yup.
MARTHA

Pace?
MOLLY

Medium.
MARTHA

The whole way?
MOLLY

MARTHA
Well, no actually. Medium then slow. No strike that. Medium then fast. Then back to medium again.

But never slow.
MOLLY

Slow when it called for slowing.
MARTHA

Who called?
MOLLY

MARTHA
The situation. Slow when the situation called for slowing.

MOLLY
When the circumstance required a change in pace.

Exactly. MARTHA

Exactly. MOLLY

Pause. Martha checks her watch.

Break over. Back at it shall we? MARTHA

We didn't even eat anything. MOLLY

Martha pulls out a lunch box.

MARTHA
Ben packed us lunch today. Surprise. We work and eat, best of both worlds. Break over. Right. So, did Chaberski even get us the copy?

No copy. MOLLY

MARTHA
Chaberski. Every single time with this guy. It's like pulling teeth.

Can I just ask one question? MOLLY

No. MARTHA

Did you at least journal it? MOLLY

MARTHA
Of course. I've been putting it in my journal for...

A month! MOLLY

More like three weeks. Our vacation. MARTHA

MOLLY

Right. A week on the coast. What I would do for...

MARTHA

Wasn't much of a vacation. *(Pause)* We just kept thinking...

MOLLY

About them!

MARTHA

Right. My god. How embarrassing. Both of us just wanted to get back to the window and see them. Like they were part of our family left behind. They don't even know who we are.

MARTHA

Every single day we watch them... love.

MOLLY

Fuck.

MARTHA

Love, fuck-- whatever. We watch them talk. Interact. Live...

MOLLY

Naked.

MARTHA

Yes. They are always naked.

MOLLY

That's hot. Does it get you guys...

MARTHA

What?

MOLLY

Motivated.

MARTHA

God no. It's been over a month.

MOLLY

Nothing?

MARTHA

Nothing. No sex of any kind happening in our house. We thought vacation would... But no.

Silence.

MOLLY

You sure nobody else can see them?

MARTHA

Positive. Buildings are so old, trees haven't been trimmed in years. You can only see into their bedroom from one exact spot.

MOLLY

Your living room window.

MARTHA

Our living room window. *(Pause)* Back to work. Chaberski...

MOLLY

Okay, but can they see you? They must.

MARTHA

Don't think so. Back to work.

MOLLY

How do they not see you?

MARTHA

Blind spot. We're just high enough. Fire escape blocks them from seeing us. Back to work.

MOLLY

They have no idea you can see them.

MARTHA

They have no idea we're watching. Back to work. So, Chaberski never--

MOLLY (INTERRUPTING)

Fuck Chaberski. Why don't you just knock on the door and tell them to cut it out. Tell them you have kids.

MARTHA

Can't.

MOLLY

Why?

MARTHA

We waited too long.

Pause.

MOLLY

I get it.

MARTHA

They know who we are. We live across the street.

MOLLY

And you never say hi?

MARTHA

Never. Not even a wave. Not one word.

MOLLY

Wow.

MARTHA

We know their whole routine. What time they shower.

Silence.

MARTHA (CONTINUED)

He brings her water before she wakes up and puts it on the table. She knows he puts it there and she loves it. Smiles when she reaches for it but never thanks him. Just a smile. He smiles back at her. No words, just routine.

MOLLY

Sweet.

MARTHA

Thoughtful. I miss that. They're so young.

MOLLY

I get why you can't talk to them. It's been too long. What would you say? "Hello neighbor, can you please get curtains? We can see you guys naked through the window. We see you but you can't see us. Oh, and it's been over a month we've been watching you."

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

Creepy. A lot happens in a month.

MOLLY

A whole month. Watching for a whole month. Goose bumps.

MARTHA

Back to work.

MOLLY

Creepy. But beautiful in some way.

MARTHA

Beautiful. Back to work.

MOLLY

Right. So, Chaberski never got us the...

Lights fade.

SCENE SIX

Harvest plays. Martha and Ben sit on a couch downstage. Lights up to reveal our dancers. They begin a routine. It's a very loving dance. Kissing, hugging, holding and moving across the stage together. Ben and Martha hold hands and watch as the dancers complete their passionate routine. Ben kisses Martha. He stands up. He extends his hand. She slowly extends her hand. She stands up. They walk offstage toward the bedroom. Blackout.

SCENE SEVEN

One month later. Lights up on the apartment. A large telescope now lives next to the window. Ben is making breakfast and whistling. Martha is wearing workout clothes and doing yoga. She's looking out the window trying to copy difficult poses from the girl across the street. Martha talks to the window.

MARTHA

You are so flexible! I have no idea how you pronate like that.

Martha looks out the window with even greater concentration.

BEN

I'm calling them "South Beach Pancakes." Fat free yogurt instead of butter and only egg whites. Totally healthy but still--

Martha holds up her hand silencing him.

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

Stop. Please don't interrupt our workout. I'm just getting this pose.

BEN

Blueberry pancakes.

MARTHA

Yup. Strawberry milkshakes, okay? I love you like I love strawberry milkshakes. Just hang on.

She looks out the window with even more focus.
She bends with great effort and touches her toe.

MARTHA (CONTINUED)

I got it! Thank you **Alice!**

She blows a kiss to the window, walks to the table and sits down.

BEN

Good workout?

MARTHA

Great one. I'm really feeling the difference.

BEN

Seven pounds in four weeks. Awesome. They really guide us. So patient. So in love. Better than any gym membership.

Ben walks to the table and puts down a plate of his healthy pancakes.

MARTHA

Look at you. Gorgeous. Glowing.

BEN

I wish I could say it was from last night--

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

But...

BEN

No, I mean that was great. Like so great. But I think I'm glowing because of **Shane's** facial scrub.

MARTHA

The Nueva?

BEN

No, no. He got rid of that last week. She bought him this great product. It's called "Facial Fuel." Really refreshing.

MARTHA

Where did she get it?

BEN

Amazon. I think. After they drove to church Sunday I saw an Amazon box on the stoop.

MARTHA

How do you know they went to church? We said no following. We can only gather information about their life from things we see right here. From this window. No following them! Those are the rules.

BEN

I didn't. I wouldn't violate them like that! Friends don't follow each other. *(Pause)* Their clothes. They started dressing up on Sunday mornings and leaving the house together.

MARTHA

How do you know it's church?

BEN

I just do. Something about how they behave when they get home. Relief...

Martha stands up. Ben kisses her.

MARTHA

Stop.

BEN

What?

MARTHA

Lets move over to the window.

They walk over to the window. Lights fade as they kiss.

SCENE EIGHT

A month later. Lights up on Martha and Ben looking out the window. Ben goes to the kitchen. He brings a plate to the table.

BEN

Please sit down. We can't keep this up.

MARTHA

I can't keep anything down. I'm so worried. We've never been apart from them for this long. A whole month. They haven't been near the window in a whole month. They haven't even been home. *(Pause)* Must be on vacation. Some beautiful beach rolling around naked and teaching paddle board yoga classes.

Silence.

BEN

I saw them this morning.

Martha looks at him. Pause.

MARTHA

What? How could you not tell me? We've been worried sick for weeks. Well... I guess I'm relieved. Are they okay?

BEN

No. I don't think so.

Silence.

MARTHA

Just tell me.

BEN

Around 5:00 I heard a car pull in. I walked over to the window and watched. Alice and an older lady got out of the front seats. Beautiful lady. Couldn't see her face but... I just knew she was his mom. *(Pause)* Alice got out of the driver's seat. Shane's mom... They stared at each other over the hood of the car as if both needed a break. Exhausted. A breath from whatever was happening. No, more like they were scared of something *about* to happen.

MARTHA

Imminence.

BEN

I almost didn't recognise Alice. She was a little heavier. Not just her body. Her being was heavy. Labored. Fragile. Like she could shatter into pieces if the wind picked up.

Silence.

BEN (CONTINUED)

They looked at each other and took a deep breath. Then Alice opened the back door and helped somebody out of the car. He was so skinny. Just a white shirt and scrubs. No hair.

MARTHA (CRYING)

Please. No.

BEN

Yes.

MARTHA

But he's so strong. So...

BEN

No.

MARTHA

Shane?

BEN

He couldn't walk without... His mom came over to help. She was sobbing. She had to let go for a second. Alice rushed over and kissed his face. He let go of her and tried to touch her hair.

Silence.

BEN (CONTINUED)

He fell to the ground. Alice and Mom picked him up. They struggled to the stairs and into the house. I desperately wanted to run out and help them... Alice was shaking. Crying.

Silence.

MARTHA

I can't bare this.

BEN

After a few minutes the light in their room flicked on. This is really hard for me to...
(Pause) Mom brought him into the room and laid him on their bed. He was so tired. She put what seemed like ten blankets over him but he was still shivering. Alice left the room. She gave Shane and Mom a moment alone.

MARTHA

No.

BEN

Mom tucked in her sick boy. She stood up, wiped her tears and smiled at him. Alice came back. Mom walked out of the room. Stopped and gave Alice a perfect hug then walked out of the room.

MARTHA

Please don't.

BEN

Alice had a glass of water. She delicately sat on the edge of their bed. He tried to sit up but fell back. She held him. Picked his head up and offered him water. They looked so scared, Martha.

MARTHA

Please stop.

BEN

They were crying. So scared. Then she lied down next to him. An hour later his mom came back in the room. Alice sat up and they all held hands. They held hands and each of them spoke to Shane. He smiled. It was a thankful smile. A crushing smile. Mom let go of his hand. She leaned over and kissed Alice then she... This is really hard for me.

MARTHA

Then stop. We don't know them.

BEN

She hugged her son. Held him so tight. He looked like an infant in her strong arms. She kissed him so sweetly on his head. Then she left. She walked out of the room.

MARTHA

Goodbye.

BEN

Shane... He was crying now. Crying and shaking. Desperate and terrified. Pleading. Alice was so calm. She kissed him and looked deep into his eyes. He was just so scared. He didn't want to... *(Pause)* I'm sorry honey, this is just too...

MARTHA

Yes.

BEN

Then they lied down. They just lied down next to each other. Holding hands. *(Pause)* His moment. Gone. They were holding hands and lying down. *(Pause)* Mom walked in for one last look. She turned off the lights. That was six hours ago.

Long silence.

MARTHA

We were not supposed to... the most intimate moment in these people's life. We were not supposed to be there.

BEN

I know. *(Pause)* Our best friends. They don't even know we exist.

MARTHA

Every morning, every night... every goodbye.

BEN

Nobody should spy on the last breath of two people so in love.

MARTHA

So beautiful.

Martha and Ben look out the window. Silence.

Lights fade.

SCENE NINE

Lights up on a bare stage. Our dancers enter from opposite sides. They are worn down and out of breath. He is emaciated, no hair. She is out of shape, even heavy. Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons - Spring One* plays. Their once passionate dance is now a laboring, long walk. She holds him. He tries to touch her, to kiss her. He stands up straight. He collapses, dead. Alice caresses his head. Shane slowly escapes her arms and floats off stage. Pause. Blackout.

SCENE TEN

Two weeks later. Lights up on a bare stage. Our female dancer enters alone. She moves across the stage. Lonely, lost. She stops. Her head falls. Martha enters from the other side. She touches the dancer on her shoulder. Frightened, the dancer turns to see Martha. They look at each other. Pause.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Two months later. The living room. Molly is eagerly looking out the window. She yells offstage to the kids.

MOLLY

No way. No fucking way!

Pause.

MOLLY (CONTINUED)

I said trucking... Ducking... I said look at the ducks across the way. No trucking way will I ever do what you're asking me!

Martha enters from behind the audience with a grocery bag.

MARTHA

How were they?

MOLLY

A wipe. Your child is requesting a wipe. "I need a wipe!" is playing on repeat from the bathroom. What the truck? No way am I ever "wiping" a person. How old is he? Don't they teach him that in school? "A wipe." No way.

MARTHA

He's regressing a bit. But we're not concerned. Better than walking around all day with a speck of--

MOLLY (INTERRUPTING)

Enough. Just, enough. (*Looks out the window*) Not once in three hours... It's yoga time, right? I mean what self respecting yogi doesn't practice at sunset? That's a thing, right? Downward -whatever- at the exact moment the sun goes down? I'm starting to think they don't exist.

MARTHA

She exists.

MOLLY

By the way *three hours*. You left me here with children for three hours.

MARTHA

I'm so sorry. I couldn't decide what to serve. To shop for. Fish? I don't know. Ben does this. Ben cooks. Is cooking. Ben is cooking.

MOLLY

I get it. Why you're doing this... rouse. Long overdue. It won't be awkward at all.

MARTHA

You think?

MOLLY

It's going to be so awkward.

MARTHA

Yikes. *(Pause)* I should...

MOLLY

Right. Cook.

MARTHA

Set up. Ben cooks. I set--

MOLLY (INTERRUPTING)

The trap.

MARTHA

The trap. One last secret. We come clean tonight.

MOLLY

Goose bumps. I'm not saying goodbye to your children. Okay if I just sneak out? I'm repulsed. Three hours. Last time I checked on them he threw a train at me.

MARTHA

I should go give him a wipe.

MOLLY

You are amazing.

They hug. Molly exits out the front door. Martha exits to the kid's bedroom.

MARTHA (OFFSTAGE)

I'm home!

Blackout.

SCENE TWO

*Note: From this point forward our dancers will be referred to by their names, **ALICE** and **SHANE**.

Alice's bedroom. The room is sparse. A simple dresser and a table next to a simple bed. A vase holding a single sunflower sits on the dresser. Downstage is a window. Alice is sleeping in bed. The song *Harvest Moon* by Neil Young plays. Shane enters holding a glass of water. He places the water on the table next to Alice and begins to dance around the bed. Playful, loving, youthful, beautiful. Several times he almost touches Alice but never does. Music stops. His dance ends. Pause. He looks at Alice. He exits. Alice sits up, awake. She sees the glass of water. She smiles. She picks it up and takes a sip. She puts it down. She gets out of bed and walks to the window. Lights fade.

SCENE THREE

Lights up on Ben and Martha's living room. An out of focus picture of Alice and Shane hangs on a wall. Martha is setting the dinner table and Ben is cooking. Martha stops.

MARTHA

I'm going to start crying. Please, just don't let me cry.

BEN

You cry and it's all over. Crying will out us. I'm cooking with onions in case we need a cover. No way I can hold it together through the salad. Should I eighty-six the salad and go straight from polenta wedges to the snapper?

MARTHA

I don't even know how to look at her.

Will she know right away? BEN

We were there. MARTHA

We were there. BEN

Silence.

How do we eat with her? She's going to be so close to me. So close. MARTHA

Close to me too. BEN

So close to us. MARTHA

The same room. Terrifying. BEN

Same table even. Eating. MARTHA

Ben stops. Pause.

Oh god. BEN

Am I crying already? *(Pause)* That's silly. How could I not know if... I'm so silly. This whole thing is so silly. MARTHA

Not crying. Oh god. BEN

What? MARTHA

God. BEN

MARTHA

Put it right out of your mind. Think about... Think about her naked. Can that apply to this situation? Possibly. Naked. Think about them naked. *(Pause)* I meant her. Think about her completely naked. Stunning.

Ben points downstage at the window. Martha looks. Silence.

BEN

Of course she'll know. How did we not think about this?

MARTHA

Oh my god. That would be catastrophic. How did we miss the window? So obvious.

BEN

She's going to sit down for fish and look directly into her own bedroom. *(Pause)* I'm closing the curtains. Easy. She'll never put it together.

MARTHA

First thing I do in an apartment is check the view. The light.

BEN

She will too.

MARTHA

We have so much in common.

BEN

I long for him.

MARTHA

For them.

Silence.

BEN

This is how we come clean. This dinner is a blessing. We show her our window. We say nothing.

MARTHA

Let her discover it. We invite her in. Transparency. Best friends have complete transparency.

BEN

I miss mine. *(Pause)* Okay. Lets do it. Lets move the table close to our window.

Pause. They move the table downstage. Martha places two chairs directly in front of the window, back to the audience. Pause. Ben moves the third chair opposite them looking out the window facing the audience.

I love you so much.

MARTHA

The picture.

BEN

Right.

MARTHA

Martha walks to the wall and takes the picture of Shane and Alice down. She kisses it. She puts it somewhere out of sight.

How are we on time?

BEN

Ben looks out the window.

Sip of water... tank top on...

BEN (CONTINUED)

J Crew or Lululemon?

MARTHA

Lulu.

BEN

I knew it.

MARTHA

Aaaand she's headed out.

BEN

A light flicks off from behind the audience.

This is right. Transparency.

MARTHA

BEN

Total transparency.

Ben exits to the kitchen. He brings out a bottle of wine and puts it on the table. He returns to the kitchen. He brings three glasses to the table. He takes a cork screw out of his pocket and fumbles with the bottle. Martha walks to him. She tenderly helps him open the wine. They look at each other.

BEN

This is happening. In seconds she'll be in our apartment. Close to us. Inches. Seconds.

MARTHA

I can finally smell her. Only thing I don't know about her. How she smells. I've been waiting to smell her.

BEN

So beautiful.

Pause.

MARTHA

Five.

BEN

Four.

MARTHA

Three.

BEN

Two.

MARTHA

One.

Ben points to the door. The doorbell rings. They look at each other. Ben walks upstage away from the window. Martha walks through the audience to the door. She opens it. Pause.

MARTHA

Please. Come in.

Alice walks past the table and into the apartment.
Martha slowly follows. Alice sees Ben. Ben
looks at her. Silence.

ALICE

Thank you so much. I'm so absent minded these days.

MARTHA

How could you not be?

Awkward pause. Alice smiles. She looks around.

ALICE

What a creative space.

BEN

Not to worry. We all do these things. Just the other day I lost our son. Really. Lost him. He
went into the bathroom and I lost him. Didn't see or hear him for three hours. Then he just
turned up. Walked into the kitchen and threw a train at me.

MARTHA

A-Hole.

BEN

So losing your keys is no big deal.

ALICE

Truthfully (*she whispers*) I never have my keys. I just keep the door open. Lost them a
long time ago. But good to know they're found. Thank you.

BEN

Rescued them. Safe and sound.

Ben and Alice look at each other. Pause.

MARTHA

So rude, I'm sorry. Me again. (*Pause*) Me Martha. This guy... What's your name again?

ALICE

Ben.

Pause.

ALICE (CONTINUED)

Your note. It said “From Ben across the way.”

Alice holds up a small piece of paper.

BEN

Right. She’s pulling your leg. She knows my name. She’s my beautiful bride, that Martha. Sometimes she just calls me “Hey-you”.

MARTHA

Or “whats-your-face.”

Alice smiles.

ALICE

Sweet.

BEN

So how long have you lived here...

ALICE

Alice.

BEN

Alice. Nice to meet you Alice.

Alice extends her hand. Pause. Martha and Ben look at each other. Ben slowly reaches and takes Alice’s hand.

ALICE

Pleasure.

BEN

All mine.

Pause. He lets go of her hand. Martha smiles.

ALICE

I’ve been here for... almost a year now. Wow. Feels weird saying that. Yes. Almost a year.

BEN

Welcome.

MARTHA

Yes, a long overdue welcome to the neighborhood. Can't believe... City living for you. Almost a year and paths don't cross.

ALICE

I've seen you.

Pause.

ALICE (CONTINUED)

Just on the street. I've seen you. I waved to you. Well, tried to. My hands were full of groceries but I tried to wave.

BEN

I missed you. I would have helped you carry them to your door. I would have.

Pause.

ALICE

Well. I should have waved a long time ago.

Ben pulls a set of keys out of his pocket. He hands them to Alice.

ALICE

Kismet.

Alice looks at Ben. She looks at Martha. Pause.

ALICE (CONTINUED)

Fate introduced us today. Those are not my keys. *(Pause)* I guess my door is just meant to be open. *(Pause)* Well, it's nice to meet you anyway. I'm happy to have. I should go.

MARTHA

Please stay. Stay for dinner. It would be our pleasure.

Pause.

ALICE

Yes.

MARTHA

Really, yes?

BEN

Perfect. I cook.

ALICE

Then perfect.

MARTHA

Yes.

BEN

Kitchen.

Ben points to the kitchen. Alice crosses and exits to the kitchen. Ben and Martha look at each other. They follow Alice to the kitchen. Blackout.

SCENE FOUR

Later that night. Lights up on the living room. Martha, Ben and Alice sit on the floor upstage away from the window. Plates and wine glasses are full. They have been eating dinner on the floor. Throughout the scene they eat and drink.

ALICE

A while now.

BEN

We were wondering... More wine?

He fills her glass.

BEN (CONTINUED)

Wondering if you always eat in the dining room. Or kitchen.

ALICE

That's an odd thing to wonder.

MARTHA

We sometimes eat in our bedroom. Do you keep all meals out of the bedroom?

ALICE

Well, yes. *(Pause)* Yes. Only eat in the kitchen area. We don't really have a living room. A space. There's a space. A kitchen and an open space.

BEN

No table?

ALICE

No table. We always eat on the floor. So, thanks for... this.

MARTHA

Odd request. But new guest, so you got it. We really love our table. Will you at least try it out? Very comfortable. Window is always cracked. Nice breeze.

BEN

You must try our table. Before you go. You must try it... So no table? You really have no table in your house?

ALICE

Nope. Less distraction. Sitting on the floor you really get to look somebody in the eye. No papers or phones or anything. Just one Sharing Plate, a glass and maybe utensils. Depending on the dish. *(Pause)* There *is* one table. Next to the bed. But no food in the bedroom.

MARTHA

Never?

ALICE

Never. Major rule.

BEN

But you always have water in there.

Pause.

BEN (CONTINUED)

Everybody has water next to their bed at night.

ALICE

Water. Yes. Only water. The bedroom is for two things. Anything else distracts. The bedroom is... Sacred. So no food in the bedroom. No tables in the house.

MARTHA

Two things.

ALICE

Yes. The bedroom is for two things.

BEN

Sleep and sex.

ALICE

Sort of.

MARTHA

Dreaming and... Sex.

ALICE

Again, sort of. That's part of it. I'm boring you. You were telling me about your kids. Trains and water colors. I already love them.

BEN

This is not boring at all. What are the two things? Exactly.

MARTHA

Exactly what two things is your bedroom is for?

ALICE

Well. Definitely not television. Definitely not eating. No phones. We never allow phones in the bedroom. I can't think of anything that makes people less--

BEN (INTERRUPTING)

Motivated.

ALICE

Present. Eating is special. Ritual. It happens on the floor in our large space. Television has no place in my life so we don't have one.

MARTHA

Present.

ALICE

Present. The bedroom is a place to be present.

BEN

Present.

ALICE

Right. There's a difference between being with somebody and being *with* somebody. More than just geography.

MARTHA

Presence.

ALICE

Yes. The bedroom is a place to be present and a place to connect.

BEN

Two things.

MARTHA

Presence.

BEN

And connection.

ALICE

Presence and connection. Simple. Two things.

MARTHA

With your husband. Or boyfriend. Roommate...

ALICE

Sure. With yourself. To be present and connect with yourself or another person.

BEN

In private.

ALICE

If you're really present and really connecting... you aren't aware of other people. Only the person you are with. Those two things. Nothing else matters.

MARTHA

Beautiful.

BEN

I'll drink to that.

He fills wine glasses. They drink.

MARTHA

I'm a bit buzzed.

BEN

My back is just... I tweaked it.

ALICE

Core. Strong core, strong back.

Alice touches Ben's back. Pause. Alice smiles.

MARTHA

You are so good at yoga. It's awesome. Awe. I'm in awe.

Awkward pause.

BEN

Your body. She means... you have a sinewy yoga body.

MARTHA

Sculpted.

ALICE

Thank you.

BEN

My back though. Core... I love your idea of no table and The Sharing Plate. But can we sit at...

MARTHA

Yes, The Sharing Plate. That is perfect. One plate, three people. Or two people.

BEN

Or four.

ALICE

The Sharing Plate is key.

BEN

My back... Would you both do me the favor of moving this party to the table. I could use some support. Maybe crack the window, fresh air. The wine is going to my head.

Ben and Martha stand up. They bring the plate, wine bottle and glasses to the table. When they turn around Alice is still on the floor stretching. She's in a subtle yoga pose, holding out her arm straight with her palm facing up.

MARTHA

How! How on earth to you pronate like that? I've done it once. Only once.

ALICE

It's impossible to pronate from this position.

MARTHA

Impossible.

Pause.

ALICE

Supinate. You supinate from here. Supination is the opposite of pronation. Here.

Martha walks to Alice and extends her arm, palm facing down.

ALICE (CONTINUED)

Just turn it this way.

Alice touches Martha's hand. Martha adjusts so her palm is facing up.

MARTHA

Wow. This is...

ALICE

Present. You're present with your body. You're connecting with me. Our two things. I'm guiding your body. The whole time you were bending one way when really, all you needed to do was--

BEN (INTERRUPTING)

Supinate.

ALICE

Exactly.

Martha and Alice stand. They look at each other in silence. Alice holds out her hand. Ben joins them. They all hold hands, looking at each other.
Pause.

MARTHA

Connection.

BEN

Presence.

Alice smiles.

ALICE

The only two things. At least in my room.

MARTHA

And water.

Alice smiles.

ALICE

And water.

MARTHA

Routine.

ALICE

Routine.

Ben walks to the table near the window. He pulls out a chair for Alice to sit down in. She looks at him.

BEN

Please.

MARTHA

Please sit at our table. Look out our window.

Alice does not move.

ALICE

This was just what I needed. Thank you both. *(To Ben)* You sir, are a good cook.

Alice smiles at them. She turns around and exits through the audience and out the door. Ben sits at the table.

MARTHA

She wouldn't sit at the table. She didn't go near our window.

BEN

She still has no idea.

MARTHA

No idea.

Pause.

BEN

I don't want our window anymore.

MARTHA

What do you want, my love?

BEN

Two things.

Lights fade on Ben and Martha.

SCENE FIVE

Lights up on **Alice's bedroom**. Alice is sleeping. Shane enters holding a glass of water. He walks to the bed and puts the glass on the table. *Harvest Moon* plays. Shane dances. A loving dance. Supportive. Longing. Happy. Angelic. Half way through his dance Alice rises. They dance together, never touching. Music fades. They look at each other. Alice closes her eyes. She reaches out trying to touch his face. Shane floats off stage before she reaches him. Lights fade on Alice standing alone with her eyes closed.

SCENE SIX

A month later. Martha sits at the table looking out the window. Silence. She hears the front door open. She quickly gets up and walks away from the window. Ben, ecstatic, rushes in from behind the audience holding a beautiful wooden plate.

BEN

A Sharing Plate for your two things.

MARTHA

My two things?

BEN

Our two things. You know. Alice. The two things. Presence--

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

And connection.

BEN

Amazing. "A Sharing Plate for your two things."

MARTHA

I heard you.

BEN

That's what the note says.

MARTHA

Beautiful. No signature?

BEN

No signature. But obviously...

MARTHA

How's your back? We haven't sat at the table for weeks now. I think we can use The Sharing Plate at the table. It's not cheating.

BEN

Maybe. My back hurts. Getting old.

MARTHA

Can I rub it for you?

BEN

Please.

MARTHA

Lets open up the window, breathe a little bit. Go over and feel the sun. I'll rub your back over there.

BEN

Blueberry pancakes.

MARTHA

Strawberry milkshakes.

They walk to the window. He puts The Sharing Plate on the table. Ben turns upstage, his back facing the audience. Martha steps around him and rubs his back.

BEN

The sun feels nice on my head.

MARTHA

You're strong.

BEN

Fit. Lost a few more pounds. Back on track.

MARTHA

How can you be so close and not look out the window? You don't look out the window anymore. Ever.

BEN

Presence. I'm only present with myself and whoever I'm sharing our space with.

MARTHA

Me.

BEN

You.

MARTHA

Strong. Not even tempted to check on her?

BEN

Not even tempted. I go outside a lot now. When you're at work I'm always outside. Walking with the kids. Playing freeze tag. I'm always the frozen one.

MARTHA

I'm jealous.

Pause.

BEN

I never talk about it because I know you are. I don't want to crush you with...

MARTHA

Absence is crushing.

BEN

They... We admire your ethic. Your provision. We admire you. *(Pause)* Amazing the time I missed. This window cost me... *(Pause)* They're always happy and laughing. But this year... in their room without me while I was--

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)

In love with the window.

BEN

Our kids are filled with your... *(Pause)* filled with you. Every flying train, every struggling stride... bliss beyond measure. Nothing else matters. Certainly not what happens outside our damn window.

MARTHA

Bliss. Connection.

BEN

Beyond measure. *(Pause)* That feels so good. Your hands feel so good. I'm tired. They wear me out! Getting old.

MARTHA

Them or you?

BEN

Funny. Both.

Silence.

MARTHA

Have you seen her?

BEN

I haven't. Have you?

She looks out the window.

MARTHA

Every single day.

Silence.

MARTHA (CONTINUED)

No more window.

BEN

No more window.

Sounds of the kids coming into the apartment.

MARTHA

Enter chaos.

Ben smiles.

BEN

Go into their room and hide under the covers. I'll say you're working late. Then I'll bring them in to play trains. You jump out like a monster. They'll be over the moon!

MARTHA

Over the moon with trains.

Martha runs offstage into the kid's bedroom. Ben walks to the front door to greet the kids. Half way he stops, out of breath. He puts his hands on his knees and bends over.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

A month later. Lights up on the apartment. A party is just ending. Bottles strewn about, empty wine glasses etc. Molly sits at the table drinking wine. Martha sits on the floor with The Sharing Plate next to her.

Well. MOLLY

Well. MARTHA

All mine. MOLLY

All yours. MARTHA

About time. MOLLY

About time. MARTHA

They laugh.

MOLLY
Of course the one day I come over... nothing. This was a great party. I'm so happy for you. Excited for me... BUT the entire time I was--

MARTHA (INTERRUPTING)
Looking out the window.

MOLLY

Looking out the window. For her. I am dying to see her. Goose bumps. Where is she?

MARTHA

Don't know. We don't look out the window anymore.

MOLLY

Bull. I need to see her. I have been needing to see her for a year now.

MARTHA

No bull.

Pause.

MOLLY

Where's Ben?

MARTHA

Lying down.

MOLLY

Lying down.

MARTHA

Kids tucker him out.

MOLLY

You are amazing.

Pause.

MARTHA

I cannot wait for the kids to tucker me out. Everyday. Tucker us out. We'll lie down together in the middle of the day.

MOLLY

Jobless.

MARTHA

Retired. Together.

MOLLY

Just the two of you all day.

MARTHA

Until the kids get home. Then the whole fambily.

Molly laughs.

MOLLY

You said *famBily*. With a B.

Martha smiles.

MARTHA

Peter says it that way. He adds a B after every M. We did speech therapy last year but he still does it. Even his sisters name.

MOLLY

Emily.

MARTHA

EmBily. She's so kind. She loves it. *(Pause)* They fight and make each other cry all day, but the second he says her name the fighting stops. She smiles and hugs him. Embily.

MOLLY

Beyond sweet. My heart just melted.

Martha smiles. Pause.

MOLLY (CONTINUED)

I get it. Why you're quitting your job.

MARTHA

Retiring. Not quitting. Retiring.

MOLLY

To be with your fambily.

MARTHA

To be with my fambily.

Pause.

MOLLY

Shall I walk into the room and kiss Ben goodbye, or is he still tuckered?

MARTHA

He's tired. Lets let him be.

Pause.

MOLLY

I'm coming over here every single day and looking out your window until I see her.

MARTHA

Feel free. Door is always open. We lost our keys a long time ago.

Molly stands up. She hugs Martha and exits.
Martha stands. Pause. Ben enters from the
bedroom. He slowly walks to the middle of the
room. He stops. He walks to the table near the
window. He struggles to sit down. He looks at
Martha. Long silence. Martha walks to him. For
the first time in months Ben looks out the
window. Lights fade.

SCENE TWO

One week later. Lights up on the apartment. Ben
and Martha are sitting on the floor setting up
small wooden train tracks.

MARTHA

Why does he always insist on a figure eight? Am I just... I can never get it! I always end up
one track shy. Takes you guys two minutes to put it together, but an hour later and I'm still
one track shy.

BEN

I'm gonna fill his room with trains. I figure one train a year until he's eighteen. No money
or anything, just one train a year until he's an adult. From me.

MARTHA

He'll be over the moon! He'll wake up one random morning every year and you'll give
him a train. We'll have to tell him it's because he's a good listener. Or a great big brother
or... You'll figure it out.

BEN

You'll figure it out! This is for you. Your task. He'll always know it's from me, but it'll be
your task. No matter what man is making the figure eights, your task is to give him a train
from me.

Pause.

MARTHA

Guy was a total quack.

BEN

Total quack. Can't trust a guy with one eyebrow.

MARTHA

Where did he even go to school? I saw no diploma on that wall. No credentials. Quack.

BEN

Quack.

MARTHA

And by the way, third time's the charm. Second opinion shmecond opinion. Third time's--

BEN (INTERRUPTING)

The charm.

Silence.

MARTHA

I'm sorry honey, this is so hard for me.

BEN

Then don't.

MARTHA

Where should we go? Where do you want to--

BEN (INTERRUPTING)

Wrap things up?

MARTHA

Stop it. *(Pause)* An island? A mountain? A lake?

BEN

Wanna hear something hilarious?

MARTHA

I know that voice...

BEN

I let him go to school with his underwear on over his pants like a superhero.

MARTHA

He's been asking to do that for weeks.

BEN

He was so excited. Then he asked me if I was stronger than hulk.

MARTHA

Obviously.

BEN

I didn't have the heart to say no. *(Pause)* First time I've lied to him in months.

Martha puts the last track in place, completing the figure eight.

MARTHA

Ha! I did it. Finally figured it out. I'm getting faster and faster with these.

BEN

You, madam, are a natural.

Martha stands up. She looks at Ben. *Pause.*

MARTHA

I will always tell him you were stronger than hulk.

Lights fade.

SCENE THREE

Two weeks later. Lights up on the apartment. Ben sits at the table looking out the window. Pale and weak. Tired. Martha enters carrying The Sharing Plate. She puts down The Sharing Plate and sits next to Ben. He looks at her.

MARTHA

The happiest two weeks of my life.

Ben smiles. He looks out the window. He points.

BEN

There. She's right there. Doing yoga. She is stunning.

MARTHA

Beautiful.

BEN

I still have no idea how she pronates like that.

MARTHA

Supinates.

They laugh. Ben coughs. They look at each other. Pause.

MARTHA (CONTINUED)

Blueberry pancakes.

BEN

I love you like I love strawberry milkshakes.

MARTHA

Thank you.

BEN

For what?

MARTHA

Reminding me to stop and eat pancakes.

BEN

Everytime.

MARTHA

I am so scared.

BEN

I am so scared.

MARTHA

You are going to miss everything.

BEN

Everything.

Martha stands and looks out the window. Ben stands and joins her.

MARTHA

She's gone.

Shane and Alice enter. Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons - Spring One* plays. Shane and Alice dance. Ben and Martha stand still, watching.

With music still playing, Shane and Alice stop.

For the first time, Shane looks at Ben. Ben looks at Martha. Shane extends his hand. Ben accepts the invitation and crosses to him.

Ben and Shane dance beautifully, hand in hand. The dance continues until finally they exit leaving Alice and Martha alone on stage. The two women look at each other. Pause. Blackout.

END OF PLAY.