



A Dramatic Collage: A Staged Reading Showcasing Queer Life

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Hello! And welcome to A Dramatic Collage presented by Dreams of Hope. I am your host this evening, my name is Monteze Freeland. A few months ago my friend Bekezela asked if I would work with some of the members of Dreams of Hope through the Theatriq program teaching the fundamentals of theater. We knew we wanted to perform a piece by a queer writer that expresses the queer experience. But we couldn't just pick one, so we decided to give you a plethora.

Tonight you will here selections from plays written either by or for queer people. How great is it to speak words that were written specifically for your circumstances, desires, morals and humor! Queer people existed long before we were seen in art, but look at how far we have come to be able to choose content that fits! So let me introduce you to our actors, let's give a big round of applause to Breydon, Melannie, Win, and Sam (Lee)

GIFT OF THE MAD GUY'S, Scene

By Brian Pope | Win Nunley as Andrew, Lee Richardson as Wes, Monteze Freeland as Narrator

In 2020, when Zoom theater was all the rage, local playwright Brian Pope wrote The Gift of the Mad Guys which was presented by the Pittsburgh Public Theatre. Brian created a play that surrounds a couple, Andrew and Wes, as they navigate the holidays in a new pandemic while dealing with being laid off, getting COVID, oh and loud ass neighbors!

WES and ANDREW'S bedroom.

NARRATOR Ah, December 23. Christmas Eve Eve. An underrated day in the holiday chronology. All the excitement of the impending festivities but none of the pressure of the annual parties or traditions of opening just one present that usually fall on Christmas Eve night. On this morning in Wes and Andrew's bedroom, there was nothing stirring. They did have a mouse problem earlier in the year, but it seemed to be under control. It was really quite peaceful until... *The drone of bagpipes ring out through their bedroom!*

ANDREW and WES jolt awake. ANDREW wears an eye mask. WES wears a face mask. The instruments are screeching and blowing an unrecognizable tune. Disoriented and furious, WES and ANDREW fight against the volume of the pipes.

ANDREW What. The Hell. Is. That?

WES It's 5:08.

ANDREW In the morning?!

ANDREW gets out of bed and puts his ear to the floor to listen more closely.

WES (Thinking he's recognized the tune) "When the beating of your heart echoes the beating of the drums. There is a life about to start when tomorrow comes. Do you-"

NARRATOR (Applauding) Not bad!

ANDREW (Popping his head back up) Why are you singing Les Miz right now?

WES Is it just me or do all bagpipe songs sound like "Do You Hear The People Sing?"

ANDREW Definitely just you, babe.

ANDREW climbs back into bed.

ANDREW Do you know how silly you look wearing that mask to bed every night?

WES (*Taking off the face mask*) Even though my self-quarantine is officially over, I worry about what happens if someone with COVID breaks into the building and our apartment. How will I protect myself?

The bagpipes crescendo! The most shrill crescendo ever. ANDREW covers his ears. WES covers his face with a pillow and falls back into bed.

ANDREW Who do we even complain to about things like this? Teresa won't care as long as she gets her rent from him. Maybe I could leave a note? Is that passive aggressive? Maybe the note could ask him to come up here to talk to me. No, a neutral space would be the best.

As the bagpipe playing fades out, WES's snoring is heard more clearly.

ANDREW Wait... Oh! Wes...? Wes! I think it stopped! Thank

ANDREW notices WES sleeping.

ANDREW Wow.

ANDREW (Announcer voice) Next up...on Hallmark's Countdown to Christmas.

WES jolts up faster than before.

WES What! What's next?

ANDREW I am trying to devise a plan here. Wake up!

WES I'm not the one who woke you. No need to take this out on me.

ANDREW There just has to be something we can do to make this guy stop. I just hope it's not a culture thing. The tune sounded kind of depressing. I know that Irish and/or Scottish people sometimes play bagpipes at funerals. Maybe someone he knows passed recently.

WES Every day this week?

ANDREW You're going to question something like that this year?

WES I didn't want to worry you before, but... The other day I heard him through the vent having this very in depth conversation...with himself. Like two sides of a dialogue but only one voice. He was using words like "our." And he mentioned something about duty and his parents and...a body,"some" body. And I kept an eye and ear out for anyone coming or going from his place. There was nothing, I swear. Maybe he's on to me. Maybe he's trying to send a message with the playing.

ANDREW "Some' body?" Like somebody. Like he was innocently referring to a person.

WES No! Definitely some *body*. Like a...dead person.

ANDREW Wes, have you ever seen *Rear Window*?

WES No, but that sounds like a very boring movie.

ANDREW What about that remake with Shia LaBeouf?

WES Yes! I love *Disturbia*! Awww, poor Shia. I hope he's doing well this holiday season.

ANDREW Didn't that movie teach you anything about the perils of eavesdropping on your neighbors?

WES You don't think he's some kind of violent criminal, do you? Oh god, it's a miracle he didn't get you when you saw him in the hallway that day.

ANDREW Maybe you should try going back to sleep.

WES You know I can't once I've been up.

ANDREW Try not to take too many naps this afternoon. You should enjoy your first day of freedom.

WES How should I do that? Go outside and potentially get exposed again? I don't think so.

ANDREW Just think about it, okay? The fresh air could do you good.

WES If the COVID doesn't get me, the overwhelming sadness that comes from walking by shops displaying a bunch of gifts I can't have or buy for someone else will.

ANDREW You're strong. I think you can survive both.

ANDREW yawns.

WES You have to try to get some more rest. I hate seeing you driving off to work so sleepy.

ANDREW If anything, I should be getting there early today. I'm pretty sure Candace is going to give me that bonus, but I have to work as if she isn't.

WES If she does give it to you, ask if you can have it in cash and you can store it in those bags under your eyes.

ANDREW (Not actually hurt) Rude!

WES I'm just saying that you'll put someone's eye out if you fall asleep mid-cut. And don't worry about Candace. You are amazing at what you do. You deserve to be recognized for that.

ANDREW Don't think that this bonus is going to have any bearing on our pact about Christmas presents. Every cent of it is going into an account, so we can start building our savings back up.

WES I was afraid you'd say that.

ANDREW Be very afraid!

WES Enough. Good night, Andrew.

ANDREW closes his eyes and pouts his lips, waiting for a kiss. It's cute.

WES I can do this now!

WES leans in to kiss ANDREW, Before they can make contact, they are interrupted by another shriek of the bagpipes. They cover their ears again.

WES Come on!

ANDREW You've got to be kidding me.

WES This time...sounds more like..."Empty Chairs At Empty Tables?"

ANDREW (Listening) Seriously? It's "The Little Drummer Boy." Now ask yourself Wes, what kind of violent criminal would learn to play Christmas carols on the bagpipes?

NARRATOR A valid question. A valid question, indeed.

BEFORE IT HITS HOME, Monologue

By Cheryl L. West | Breydon Prioleau as Wendal

You may know Cheryl L. West as the writer of the cult classic film Holiday Heart starring Ving Rhames and Alfre Woodard. But in 1991 Cheryl's stage play Before it Hits Home premiered at Arena Stage in Washington D.C. This drama follows Wendal's story as he navigates contracting AIDS. After a rough bout in the hospital, he goes to his parent's home to heal where he is finally honest about his life and choices. When his mother insists that his diagnosis is a result of not praying hard enough, Wendal informs her just how much he's actually been praying in the midst of his suffering.

WENDAL. Pray! Mama, what in the hell you think I've been doing? I've prayed every night. I laid in that hospital bed thirty two days and thirty two nights and all I did was pray. You know how lonely it is Mama to lay in a bed that ain't even your own for thirty two days, nothing but tubes and your own shit to keep you company; what it is to bite into a pillow all night so people can't hear you screaming? No, I didn't even have a quarter to buy myself a paper. I tried to get right with your God, I asked him for some spare time, to keep me from pitching my guts every hour, to keep me from shitting all over myself, to give me the strength to wipe my ass good enough so I didn't have to smell myself all night. I prayed that they would stop experimenting on me, stop the rashes, the infections, the sores up my ass. I prayed Mama for some company. I prayed that somebody would get their room wrong and happen into mine so I could talk to somebody, maybe they would even put their arms around me 'cause I was so damn scared, maybe it would be somebody who would come back., somebody who would want to know me for who I really was and I prayed harder and I prayed to your God that if I could just hold on, if I could just get home ... I'm not going to apologize Mama for loving who I loved, I ain't even gonna apologize for getting this shit. I've lived a lie and I'm gonna have to answer for that. But I'll be damn if I'm gon' keep lying, I ain't got the energy. I'm a dealing with it just like you taught me to deal with everything else that came my way ... but I could use a little help Mama.

DANCING IN THE BLUE LIGHTS, Scenes 1 and 2

By Monteze Freeland and Tomè Cousin | Monteze Freeland as Verna and Gabriel, Melannie Taylor as Frankie, Lee Richardson as Hank, Breydon Prioleau as Scooter, Win Nunley as Dean

The next two scenes are from a play written by Monteze Freeland and Tome Cousin. It's 1966 in Baltimore, Maryland and Ms. Verna opens her basement to queer youths every Friday night for them to have a good time, take a few sips and dance the night away. Dancing In The Blue Light turns on the lights to basement parties that held secrets and friendships and love that the streets of Baltimore weren't ready for.

Knock

VERNA Frances. Happy Good Friday.

FRANKIE Not so far. You've been crying.

VERNA Just having a few memories. Nothing wrong with visiting yesterday.

FRANKIE Yeah well I'm tired of that bad movie, I'm looking to the future. This is a new day, a new time and if we don't push it forward, we're going to stay old fashioned forever. Living in black and white.

VERNA Old fashioned isn't so bad.

FRANKIE It is when it doesn't include me. You know, for once I just wanted to make my own choices, not put all this fuss into my hair, lose these dang itchy stockings and just be comfortable.

VERNA Well, if it helps, people don't get comfortable until they're old... I've heard.

FRANKIE And that's a shame, Ms. Verna. That's a shame. I just don't want to lie anymore. My whole life is becoming a lie. Tonight my mama set me up on a date with a boy. A whole boy. It would have been fine had it been just me and him, I coulda talked my way out of it. But his mama and daddy came and my mama and daddy was there and it felt like so much pressure. The poor boy was sweating through his shirt so bad, his daddy had to give him his jacket. I was so nervous, I kept chewing the silverware. When they brought up marriage and children I felt faint.

VERNA You didn't fall out, did you?

FRANKIE Didn't have to, the boy took care of that. Right into the Chinese food. At least the night ended early. Why can't parents just back off and let us live? I'm 21!

VERNA When you get home at night are the lights on?

FRANKIE The house is dark. (Thinking) But...yeah... I always see the light underneath my parent's door.

VERNA That's because they can't sleep until they know you're back in your bed. That means they love you. Now you can grow as tall or as plump as you want but you're going to always be their little girl. I'm still my daddy's little girl and I haven't spoken to him in years. But every Christmas I get a card with a money order in it. No matter where I move, he finds me.

FRANKIE Maybe I should move. But I don't want to move to find myself. Ms. Verna, how do I be... me?

VERNA I can't say for sure. But I have learned that by doing the good thing, no matter how hard it is, brings you closer to being the person you really want to be. Frances, you're a protector and I think you get afraid the most when you feel like you can't save people. But make sure you save some saving for yourself. I watch how you look after Scooter, you protect him. And my Dean. And me.

FRANKIE You? How?

VERNA You're the law around here. No one gets in without you. Do you think I asked you to sit by the door by accident? All these menfolk around here and I chose you.

FRANKIE Why though?

VERNA One day you'll figure out and it'll be much sweeter when you realize it than if I told you.

(A knock on the door.)

FRANKIE Do you know what time it is?

HANK 12:19... in the morning.

FRANKIE Hey Hank.

HANK It smells like deception in here.

SCOOTER Oh don't come in here with your mess.

HANK Speaking of mess. Scooter, I saw you a few days ago when I was being driven around, Wednesday was it? Hanging outside of Leon's. I know I taught you better than that. You need to be careful, you never know who could be driving by with the notion to stop and cause trouble.

SCOOTER I had my class on Wednesday. I wasn't at no Leon's.

HANK Oh. So that wasn't you I saw with Stash?

SCOOTER Gabriel? No, and he was on soup kitchen duty at church on Wednesday.

HANK Oh, he was giving out something, alright. But hey, I could be mistaken. That might not have been him. But if it's true, you be sure to make him jealous as hell.

FRANKIE Gabriel wouldn't be so careless.

SCOOTER I don't like this. I had a feeling in my stomach that night too, I thought it was those crabs.

FRANKIE Don't have feelings. Don't do that. They are not good. Look, Hank said he might be mistaken. When Gabriel gets here, we can settle it.

SCOOTER That's another thing. Where is he? We only get one night together and he's going to make me wait!?

FRANKIE Take a chill pill brotha. Hank is probably just saying all of this because you have a man and all he has is a wrap sheet to sleep under every night.

HANK Excuse you, I have a man. But you are right about one thing, he has a long wrap sheet.

FRANKIE What? You met him in jail?

HANK When in Rome.

FRANKIE You're telling me you are holding on to some clink meat? You're sadder than I thought.

HANK He's not in jail. He is of the jail.

FRANKIE You're not making sense.

HANK And to you, I never will.

SCOOTER What about Ronnie?

HANK I'm not waiting for a man to roll over and remember what he's missing. I'm going to mind my business with the woman of the house. I have treats.

DEAN Oh I'll take it, Aunt V's not keen on people going through the house.

HANK I am not "people". Dean I don't believe we've officially met.

DEAN You're Hank. I heard about you.

FRANKIE Hank, you think you can get me a beer from behind the bar?

HANK You and these beers. You better be careful, you're going to get yourself a belly.

DEAN Aunt V don't like when people go behind the bar.

HANK Once again, I am not the common herd. Ms. V and I have a long understanding, nephew. *(Holding out a beer)* Here Frankie.

SCOOTER I need one too. Might as well start drowning my sorrows.

HANK Dean, would you care for a beverage?

DEAN Not old enough.

HANK That must feel so good to say. So what did you hear about dirty ol' moi?

DEAN Not my place to repeat.

HANK Oh now I am intrigued. I know something about you. How about a little game of to-tell-the-truth? Let's see what the streets are saying. I promise, if it's true I'll cop to it. But if it's not, you have to drink.

DEAN Well, I heard you went to jail...

HANK For?

DEAN 8 weeks.

HANK For?

DEAN For tricking.

HANK Hmm...the judges will allow it. But, not just tricking, public indecency. That's where they really stuck it to me. Indecent exposure. Let me be a cautionary tale to you boys and girls. Freedom doesn't live in the wind. It lives in basements like these. And the moment you forget that, you'll do all types of things in the naked light of the night, forgetting that there are eyes everywhere. Watching everything. And everyone. You understand me right, Dean?

DEAN Yes, sir.

HANK I'll leave a beer out for you just in case you decide to break the law tonight. But remember what I said, be careful, you never know who's watching. Don't wait up for me, children!

DEAN I don't like him.

FRANKIE Mmm-hmmm.

DEAN He got one more time to talk to me like I don't know the deal.

SCOOTER He's had a hard life. It's like he was an orphan before he was born. Nobody wanted him. Except Ms. Verna.

DEAN He was supposed to stop by this week and sit a spell with Aunt V and he never showed up. She tried to hide how sad she was but I could tell. I just kept the house filled with good music. That kept a smile on her face.

SCOOTER Put something good on, for me.

DEAN What are you in the mood for?

SCOOTER Revenge.

DEAN How about I take it a little slow.

FRANKIE Scooter, Don't play with that boy.

SCOOTER It's harmless.

FRANKIE For you.

DEAN plays something like Every Little Bit Hurts by Brenda Holloway. SCOOTER goes into a dance solo, eventually pulling DEAN in. They get closer and closer and closer... (A knock on the door)

FRANKIE Do you know what time it is?

GABRIEL 12:19...in the morning.

SCOOTER Gabriel!

GABRIEL Having fun?

SCOOTER I was just...

DEAN We were just having a dance.

GABRIEL That was more! More than a dance.

SCOOTER You have some nerve being jealous! After what I heard.

GABRIEL What are you talking about?

SCOOTER Wednesday. Leon's. You and some fink spilling out on the street.

GABRIEL I wasn't there with anybody.

SCOOTER Oh so you were there?

GABRIEL Who has gotten into your head? Frankie?

FRANKIE Watch where you're pointing those long ass fingers, Gabriel.

GABRIEL If someone's been spreading my name I should know who it is so I can deal with it.

DEAN Hey! Calm down, man.

SCOOTER Hank told me.

GABRIEL You believe some coked up community ass? He lives in the gutter.

SCOOTER He just said he saw you...

GABRIEL He was hallucinating. That's what happens when he pops whatever gets slipped into his hand. I see you took the bait too?

SCOOTER Why were you even there? You lied to me.

GABRIEL Baby let's go somewhere quiet and talk. It's complicated, you know?

DEAN: Yeah right

GABRIEL: What'd you say lil boy?

SCOOTER Get out of his face, Gabriel.

GABRIEL Why? You're afraid I'm going to hurt your friend? I'm not going to hurt him. I'm going to show him why you'd never leave me to even cross the street for his country ass.

SCOOTER Gabriel!

GABRIEL Let's go, Scooter.

DEAN: I don't like him either

WILD WITH HAPPY, Scene 1

By Colman Domingo | Win Nunley as Gil, Melannie Taylor as Adelaide

Colman Domingo is a man of many talents, most recently winning an Emmy award for his work on Euphoria and will be seen in the upcoming biopic Rustin- which tells the story of queer civil rights icon Bayard Rustin. In addition to burning up the silver screen he is also an accomplished playwright. His outlandish yet ultra black comedy Wild With Happy follows an aging, out of work actor Gil as he navigates having a sick mother in Philadelphia while he lives in New York trying to "make it". Their phone conversations are legendary, like this one.

GIL. You alright?

ADELAIDE. I gotta new dress. It's sharp! It's white with beading around the neckline. You know, for the past year I can't keep no weight on ... Gil, it would be nice if you drove down from the Big Shiny Apple to see Ms. Adelaide and accompany me to church.

GIL. Adelaide, I told you already ...

ADELAIDE. I know, I know, you are scared of church!

GIL.* I ain't scared of church, just the people!

ADELAIDE.* Maybe they can baptize me.

GIL.* We just gonna walk in and they gonna baptize you?

ADELAIDE.* I gotta do something to get this completely off of me.

GIL.* Don't you need an appointment or something?

ADELAIDE.* I don't know. Maybe they can throw some holy water on me or something!

GIL.* You can't just walk up into a church and get holy water thrown on you like it's The Exorcist!.

ADELAIDE. This is an exorcism! This woman put a curse on me!

GIL. I have an audition on Monday.

ADELAIDE. What's it for?

GIL. Nothing.

ADELAIDE. TV?

GIL. No.

ADELAIDE. A movie?

GIL. No.

ADELAIDE. A Broadway play?

GIL. No.

ADELAIDE. Vegas?

GIL. NO!

ADELAIDE. What then?

GIL. (Under his breath.) A Craisin.

ADELAIDE. A who?

GIL. {Inaudible.} A Craisin.

ADELAIDE. A what?

GIL. (Even more inaudible.) A Craisin.

ADELAIDE. A RAISIN? A Raisin in the Sun?

GIL. No, a CRAISIN! A national commercial to play a Craisin. A dried cranberry that you snack on like raisins! (Silence.)

ADELAIDE. It's healthy, right?

GIL. Can we talk about something else other than my fledgling career? Or my lack of a fledgling career!

ADELAIDE. Oh, honey. You have a degree in English literature from Yale. You can read.

GIL.* I don't need an English literature degree to be a nightshift proofreader and a C-list commercial actor.

ADELAIDE.* I told you, you can do anything that your heart desires. As long as you are happy. You want me to write Oprah?

GIL.* No. No. No.

ADELAIDE. I wrote her six times already.

GIL. What's she gonna do?

ADELAIDE.* She's gonna come through.

GIL.* She don't care nothing about me.

ADELAIDE.* We can pray for Oprah to grant your wish. I still haven't heard anything from her yet but you gotta play the game to win right?

GIL. Right!

ADELAIDE.* Have you been calling in to Power 99 FM like I told you? Remember that free trip to Disney last year! You could be a winner! Now look, you've had a lot of roles, albeit with no lines, on all those Law & Order shows. But you just have to believe more in your dreams.

GIL.* No. I don't have time to call in to radio stations. (Pause.) I don't want to talk about dreams! They don't come true.

ADELAIDE.* Now you know I don't want to get into it on the phone but you gotta pray on your situations. You need to be open to love in your life. I know that boy broke your heart, but that's what they do.

GIL.* Adelaide, I don't want to talk about him.

ADELAIDE. What DO you want to talk about?

GIL. Nothing! You called me!

ADELAIDE. Men ain't shit and then they die! You gotta get up, brush your knees off, shake your wig, and start all over again. (Silence.)

GIL. I don't think you realize that you just made me sound like a hooker.

ADELAIDE. So what, things don't work out as planned. So what?! You gotta let go and open up to something new. Magic. It baffles me why you don't have anybody. You are a prize. You gotta pray on your "love" situation.

GIL. There is no need to pray on my "love" situation. I live in New York. I can get a "situation" anytime!

ADELAIDE. That's your problem! Too many "situations" and not enough love!

GIL. Bye.

ADELAIDE. Maybe it was my fault! I could never keep a good man around for you to look up to!

GIL. Bye.

ADELAIDE. I haven't given you the greatest inspiration for healthy relationships, have I?

GIL. Bye.

ADELAIDE. No real father figures for almost forty years. Maybe that's why you are gay.

GIL. Bye.

ADELAIDE. Everyone should be able to have love. Especially "the gays!" (Silence.)

GIL. Adelaide, look, I've stopped putting my faith in "the gays" or in my silly little dreams.

ADELAIDE. Your heart has really turned to stone.

GIL. No, cast iron! And there ain't no magic potion that is going to fix it! I'mma rake my magic wand on down to the post office and like Aunt Glo says, "Get a real job!"

ADELAIDE. I thought you told me that being an actor is a real job!

GIL. I lied! It's make-believe.

ADELAIDE. I taught you to believe in make-believe!

GIL.* I live on Earth! With its toxins and its poisons and its fumes. I'm an enchanted middle-aged grown man, who still has \$80,000 of student loans, an illegal sublet in Spanish Harlem, and I'm still reeling from being left by "my gay" a year ago. There is no make-believe.

ADELAIDE.* Don't say that.

GIL.* Oprah ain't NEVER gonna answer your letters, princes don't come back, and there ain't a lotion or potion or tale to keep a person from . . . (Silence. Gil looks at his cell phone.)

ADELAIDE. Okay. I will try to get you next Sunday. Ladies' First Sunday! Maybe you can stay over and we can go down to the bank. I wanna get your name on my papers and show you my deposit box and I want to talk to you about the life insurance policy.

GIL. Okay. Okay. (We hear the sound of gongs from Adelaide's Cinderella clock.)

ADELAIDE. (Beat.) Oh, that old clock. "Old killjoy." I gotta go get my dress taken in. Your Aunt Glo talked me into buying the wrong size. You know she is always trying to run things. Talking about, I don't know my size! I gotta go.

GIL. Bye.

ADELAIDE. Gil?

GIL. Adelaide?

ADELAIDE. I love you.

WILD WITH HAPPY, Scene 2

By Colman Domingo | Win Nunley as Gil, Lee Richardson as Mo

After Adalaide passes away, Gil is in charge of her final arrangements. He realizes he needs a little help so his best friend Mo comes down from New York to "Help". The two meet in a park to get a plan together.

MO. (To an unseen bicyclist.) NICE BIKE! Hola papi como estas! Ohh, Philly is CUTE! Damn, they grow 'em thick up in around here! (Gil enters.) Hey boo! My cell phone is out of service.

GIL.* Mo, your cell phone is out of service.

MO. Fucking Sprint. They just cut a bitch off with no warning! Damn! How did you know I was over here?

GIL. The concierge at the hotel told me that you were over here scaring the locals.

MO. Oh, so he's been keeping an eye on me. Hmm.

GIL. What took you so long? You were supposed to be here yesterday!

MO. I got a ZipCar instead of taking that Chinese bus. All them smells! Colored people and Chinese food. Did you go to the funeral home? I'm sorry I couldn't get my nerve up to meet you there. I don't like dead bodies.

GIL. You said that you would be here for me.

MO. I'm sorry. I am here for you now. What you need - Oh shit, look at that fine-ass muthafucka! Why all the brothas in Philly got beards? Mustafa's and shit! Bean pies! (Silence.) OK. Done. Death does something to my endorphins. Do you like my bangs?

GIL. Just forty-eight hours ago you and I were laughing at Lady Vulva's Tranny Bingo Brunch and today I'm trying to slay a witch.

MO. A witch?

GIL. My Aunt Glo.

MO. Oh Lord. Is she the one that rocks the velour sweatsuit? **GIL.** Since 1985.

MO. And getting on your last dry nerve?

GIL. She and I don't agree on services or cremation.

MO. Cremation?

GIL. I decided on cremation before I had sex with the funeral director.

MO. Sex with a funeral director?

GIL. I told him that I wanted cremation, he said, "If that's what you want!" and then I ...

MO. Oh my god! What the? Oh un-uh! NOW, I HAVE HEARD EVERYTHING! A funeral director? A director of funerals? Dead mother?

GIL. You talkin'?

MO. Checkmate!

GIL. And I left a shoe.

MO. A good one?

GIL. Kenneth Cole.

MO. Let it go.

GIL. And now, Glodine wants me to have a church memorial.

MO. As long as it's not like my cousin, Feet Manses.

GIL. Feet Manses?

MO. He had BIG-ASS feet! Hmmm. Anyway. (Realizing.) He had BIG-ASS feet? No, that is not what I was talking about. Ooooh, churl! It was a hot steaming mess. My cousin was unfortunately fallen due to being a statistic among many of our young men.

GIL. He was a drug dealer.

MO. I was trying to elevate his chosen profession. He was a drug dealer. He got beaten up over some money and left to die in an alley. They even took his sneakers. His funeral was such a mess. This deaconess sang "The Lord's Prayer" so slow that halfway through, I swear she was singing it in reverse! There were all these teenagers in there looking more angry than sad. They looked like they were ready to fuck up everything and everybody! Just hostile! Like a pack of wolves! The grown folks were trying to keep order over the proceedings. Some fool who looked like a more unattractive Biggie Smalls went up to the casket and put Cazal sunglasses on Feet Manses' face! My Aunt Punchy, a handsome-looking woman, went up to retrieve them. Now, nobody fucks with Aunt Punchy! She looks like she could cut you with her face! (Notices cyclist returning.) THAT IS A NICE BIKE! I WOULD SURE LIKE TO BE THAT SEAT!

GIL. You see? I don't want all that wailing and theatrics.

MO. What actor doesn't like wailing and theatrics?

GIL. I haven't ACTED in years!

MO. True.

GIL. Churches! Filled with judgment! Powdered wigs and gavels. There is something about people wailing and wringing their hands to the heavens, that just dries up everything inside of me! It's just all too much. I'm having her cremated and that's the end of the story.

MO. Oh. Okay. I am so sorry-

GIL DON'T. I have too much to do. I've got to get all this settled and get back to New York and move on!

MO. You know you can't get all of this settled in one day?

GIL. Oh yes I can! I can get all of this settled and get back to New York before these people make me lose my mind! "Up in here, up in here!"

Thank you so much for coming tonight and for celebrating queer life, art and love! As I said before, how lucky are we that in this day and age we have so much material to pull from not to mention the many other stories that highlight our experiences, wishes and needs! We appreciate you spending the evening with us!