

MISS WINNIE
by Marla Porter

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MISS WINNIE

CHARACTERS

*ANTEDIA	woman (any age)
MISS WINNIE	woman (40 or older)

*Can be a male, Antedio, with very minor tweaks to the script.

SETTING

The action takes place in a comfy, colorful home office.

TIME

present day

(A soft blue light comes up on the stage and the following recording is played for the audience. It should be recited by multiple voices in unison.)

We were all once gone
Before we were born
We were all once air
And bright light to adorn

We were all once gone
When there was nothing but hope
To become, to become
To become and sweetly float

We have all been born
When once we were not
Except there we had been
Awaiting, aloft

In our dark disquiet
We began to stir
Our internal quiet
Began to infer

That our dark was our light
As we came into feeling
That our souls were so bright
As we came into being

(Lights up on a comfy home office with a desk and big chair or sofa. MISS WINNIE STIFFLEMIRE, [colorfully dressed in a neon tangerine pantsuit, big Texas hair, wearing rhinestone-studded cat-eye glasses] is seated at her messy desk, eating a donut, and licking her fingers as ANTEDIA (nondescript, dressed in black or gray pants and shirt) wanders on from offstage.)

ANTEDIA

Hello? Hellooooooo??

MISS WINNIE

Well, hello there Sugar Pie! C'mon in and have a seat!

ANTEDIA

Where *am* I?

MISS WINNIE

Want a chocolate cream filled?

ANTEDIA

A *what?* Who *are* you?!

WINNIE

Me? Honey, I'm Miss Winnifred Louise Jefferson Clovis Stifflemire. You'll know me as the Angel of Birth, but you can call me Miss Winnie.

ANTEDIA
(startles)

What??? The Angel of Birth???

MISS WINNIE

Got some bear claws here too. Yum, yum, yum, yum, yum!

ANTEDIA

The Angel of Birth? Nooooooooooooooooo.....

MISS WINNIE

Don't be afraid Sugar.

ANTEDIA

The *real* Angel of Birth???

MISS WINNIE

That's me Honey!

ANTEDIA

Do you mean? Does this mean...?

MISS WINNIE

That's right, Sugar. It's time. You're here so I can answer your questions and get you on across.

ANTEDIA

(falling into a seat)

Time? *MY* time? To be born???? Noooooooo. I'm not even three million years old!

MISS WINNIE

Now Honey, I know you're young. But you're ready and it's time.

ANTEDIA

I'm so scared.

MISS WINNIE

That's why you're here with me Sweetie. I'm gonna answer *all* your questions and I promise you won't be going anywhere until *you* tell me *you're ready*.

ANTEDIA

Really? Promise?

MISS WINNIE

Promise! One soul took less than a minute and another was in here with me for almost a thousand years before they went across to be born. We ate LOTS of donuts. Alrighty Sugar, spill! What are you most afraid of?

ANTEDIA

That's easy... Not existing! I mean, what if there's just nothing on the other side? Just *nothing*.

MISS WINNIE

Aww, that's the big one all'a y'all bring up. I promise you there's plenty on the other side of birth, so you can put that fear to rest right now.

ANTEDIA

I'll still exist?

MISS WINNIE

You'll still exist.

ANTEDIA

Okay! Oh! I know what I want to ask! You know how we've heard of ones who were born for a few minutes but then came right back?

MISS WINNIE

Oh sure! They *told me* they were ready but too scared once born so I called them back for another little chat.

ANTEDIA

Well, they all say the same thing... that there was a bright light as they were born and instantly they realized they could no longer fly! Every single one of them came back saying they couldn't fly any more, that they were in some kind of casing.

MISS WINNIE

A body. Y'all become what we angels call people who live inside bodies. And you live what we call "a life" on a place called Earth.

ANTEDIA

But we can't fly???

MISS WINNIE

Trust me Sugar, you won't miss it!

ANTEDIA

Not miss flying? Are you crazy???

MISS WINNIE

Your new body gives you so much in return for flying, like these donuts! Taste one! Here's a raspberry-filled glazed.

(hands Antedia the donut)

Like this.

(takes a bite and blisses out)

OH! SOOOOOO good! Now Honeypot, you try one.

ANTEDIA

(takes a bite and swallows)

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.... OMIGOSH! That is amazing!

MISS WINNIE

Told ya! That's called taste. And that's just the beginning. Listen...

(The beginning of a well-known piece of music plays, whether the Yellow Rose of Texas or Chopin's 13th Etude. Director can select.)

ANTEDIA

I love that! What *is* that?

MISS WINNIE

Darlin' that's music. Your new body may not fly but it *hears*. And life is full of music. Some of you have bodies that feel vibrations instead of hear sounds, but you all get music.

ANTEDIA

What else? What else will I get after I'm born?

MISS WINNIE

No Sweetie, after being a person you'll come back here for angel training. Angels all have to be people first to be able to understand them when they help them.

ANTEDIA

I'll be an angel?

MISS WINNIE

That's right, a junior deputy angel at first. And I'll be over there to guide you back over here, only on that side I'm called the Angel of Death. But it's just still me and I'll still have donuts for you!

ANTEDIA

I see...

MISS WINNIE

And there's one more very important thing you'll get in addition to music and nature and beauty and the senses...something even better than flying or anything else I've described.

ANTEDIA

Better?

MISS WINNIE

Yes, Sweetie. You'll get love.

ANTEDIA

Love?

MISS WINNIE

Your life will be for 84 years. You'll grow up, go to school, become a master gardener, and be Wimberly's annual flower show president for 32 years. You'll meet your husband Charlie in the 11th grade when he's dating your cousin Dottie...buuuuut... we won't talk about that! You'll marry Charlie after college and have a son named Mark who will become a gay rights activist, marry George and adopt a little boy named Peter, and be on the Wimberly City Council. Peter will be an honor student, have cerebral palsy, and grow up to be an astrophysicist. You'll have many, many friends...

ANTEDIA

You mean... You mean I won't be alone like I am here?

MISS WINNIE

That's right. You won't be alone. But Sugar, there will be pain.

ANTEDIA

Pain? Love? Pain? I don't know what any of these things are.

MISS WINNIE

But you will. Sweetie, great love brings agonizing loss. Charlie will die of a heart attack at 56 and you will spend two weeks in bed, unable to move, but your family and friends will rally round you and you'll embrace life again. But that's much later.

ANTEDIA

I won't be alone...

MISS WINNIE

No! Sweetie, Charlie is already over there and was five years old last month. Your boy Mark will eventually come visit with me in this very room, just like you are right now, and come to you on Earth in 23 years. You will love them both so very, very much.

ANTEDIA

Love them? What is that like?

MISS WINNIE

Oh, honey! It's like flying on the inside! Love is what you get instead of flying after you are born and in my opinion is even better. You exist now. You will exist when you return, but this adventure called life that you are about to begin is the jewel of existence. You will experience your life for what it really is...the sublime and the devastating. All of this will help you be of use when you come back to start training to be an angel. You'll understand the people you'll watch over.

ANTEDIA

Hmmmmm. I still don't really understand but I'm willing to try.

MISS WINNIE

That's it.... that's it Sugar! You just have to be willing to try.

ANTEDIA
(after a long pause)

Can I try another donut before I go?

MISS WINNIE

Sure honey, I'll split this one with you. Lemon cream!

(They eat their donuts in silence and lick their fingers in unison.)

ANTEDIA AND MISS WINNIE
(in unison)

Yum, Yum, Yum, Yum, YUM!

MISS WINNIE

Are you ready Sugarplum??

ANTEDIA

I am. I'm ready...

MISS WINNIE

Alrighty then!

(There is a flash of very bright light and then a recording of a newborn baby is heard as lights slowly fade.)

END OF PLAY