

The Holding Space
(An adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Rothschild's Fiddle*)

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CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

BRONZE: An emotionally detached man in HIS late 50s; He is a strong, sturdy, and rigid man who makes coffins for a living; He plays the fiddle beautifully

MARFA: Bronze's wife; A sensitive, expressive, woman in early to mid forties.

ROTHSCHILD: A Jewish man in HIS forties; He is a man of strong faith; He plays the flute beautifully; Bronze despises HIM

VIOLIN: Onstage voice, Sings/hums in an alto voice whenever the violin music plays; Played by a FEMALE in HER late teens-early twenties.

**(When SHE hums, SHE always hums a line or two of 'The Water is Wide')*

SETTING: A rural town called Fountain in Central Pennsylvania



“Rising Cairn” by Celeste Roberge, (4,000 pound stone sculpture depicting the heaviness of grief)

Synopsis:

Bronze, a deeply depressed man who lives in a rural village, makes coffins for a living. He's been emotionally dead due to a tragic event that happened five years prior. His only respite from sorrow comes from playing his beloved violin. (Adapted from Anton Chekhov's short story, *Rothschild's Fiddle*)



Stones as Jewish grave markers

“While other things fade, stones and souls endure.” –Rabbi David Wolpe

Lights up on ROTHSCHILD. HE holds the fiddle awkwardly at first. HE doesn't know what to do with the bow. THE VIOLIN hums as HE plays. When HE is finished, HE gently places the fiddle into a coffin then exits with THE VIOLIN.

Lights up on the inside of an outdoor shed owned by BRONZE and his wife MARFA. There is an easel in the shed.

BRONZE is almost finished making his newest wooden coffin. MARFA enters and watches BRONZE.

MARFA sighs, approaches HIM

MARFA

I woke up today knowing I could no longer deny the truth.

BRONZE

Can't you see that I'm busy Marfa?

MARFA

Will you please accompany me to the river today? I ask you every year on this day, and the answer is always/

BRONZE

No. We made a pact ... an agreement ...

MARFA

It's the anniversary today, can we at least *talk* about it?

BRONZE

We don't talk about that, Marfa.

MARFA

(traces HER hands over the coffin) It's a beautiful coffin, Bronze. I see it's made to fit a person of your size. Who died?

BRONZE

Are you kidding? Nobody died. People have the audacity to die annoyingly slow in this small town.

MARFA

You're misdirecting your anger ...

BRONZE

So, now you're a Psychologist?

MARFA

No, but don't you find it ironic that you are the town coffin-maker, and you clearly fear death?/

BRONZE

Stop talking such nonsense/

MARFA

I *know* what you're about to say. "A man's life means loss and ..."

BRONZE

Death means gain.

MARFA

So, if nobody died, who is this coffin for?

BRONZE

It's for me, Marfa.

MARFA

Please tell me you're not sick.

BRONZE

No, nothing like that.

MARFA

Do you have a tumor? Do you have Cancer?

BRONZE

No.

MARFA

How's your blood pressure and heart? That's right. You don't have a heart.

BRONZE

What if I told you that maybe I feel *too* much.

MARFA

I wouldn't believe you.

BRONZE

I'd like my own wife to believe me/

MARFA

Well, I've been hurting for five years. And, you just informed me you are making your own coffin.

BRONZE

I like to plan ahead. God forbid something happen to me. I don't want to give you the gloomy burden of choosing a coffin.

MARFA reaches into HER pocket and retrieves HER prayer beads. SHE nervously plays with them before draping them around HER wrist.

MARFA

Bronze. I've written a poem for you.

BRONZE

Marfa, I'm working ...

MARFA

Please, let me read it to you.

BRONZE

I'm not in the mood right now ...

MARFA

It's extremely important. *(pause)* "The bed we share feels entirely too big."

BRONZE

Our bed is the perfect size, Marfa.

MARFA

"I try to have conversations with you, but all you want is another swig."

BRONZE

What is this? A Country Western song?

MARFA goes right next to HIM

MARFA

"My friends ask me about you all the time."

BRONZE

Your friends are entirely too nosy.

MARFA

"I feel distant from you so I tell them the same old rhyme."

BRONZE

I'm busy. I simply can't spend every minute with you.

MARFA

“My heart breaks because we used to be so close.”

BRONZE

Pick a night this week, and I’ll take you to dinner. But, not some fancy, expensive restaurant ...

MARFA

(places HIS hand on HER heart) “Feel the lonely beat of my heart. We spend too much time apart.”

BRONZE

If I’m not too tired, maybe we can watch a movie tonight?

MARFA

“Why don’t you bring me flowers?”

BRONZE

They cost too much.

MARFA

“You used to hug me and hold my hand.”

BRONZE

That was a long time ago.

MARFA

“This distance has me daydreaming about moving to another land.”

BRONZE

Will you stop?

MARFA

“Take me to a party. Maybe we can dance?”

BRONZE

We never dance.

MARFA

“If something doesn’t change soon, I’ll give another man a glance.”

BRONZE

Now, you’re just being heartless. Will you please be quiet?

MARFA

I refuse to be quiet until you decide to really listen to me.

BRONZE

If you refuse to give me some peace, I'll go to my very own quiet space. (*places HIMSELF in the coffin*)

Silence

MARFA

Bronze, remove yourself from the coffin immediately. We need to talk.

BRONZE

(*from inside the coffin*) No!

MARFA

I need to have a serious conversation with you. Now.

BRONZE

(*from coffin*) I said no.

MARFA

Then when? We're not getting any younger.

BRONZE

(*from coffin*) I know.

MARFA

Same old routine day in and day out ...

BRONZE

(*from coffin*) So?

MARFA

Same old routine to hide from the pain ...

Silence

I feel invisible.

No answer

We don't spend enough time together, Bronze.

No answer

Bronze, I'm lonely.

BRONZE

Then, get a dog. Or, don't. Dogs are costly.

MARFA

Do you *want* me to leave you for another man?

BRONZE opens the coffin, and sits up

BRONZE

Do I want you to leave me? The answer is no.

MARFA

Because sometimes I feel so lonely that I contemplate leaving you.

BRONZE

So you want a man who buys you flowers, sings you love songs, and holds your hand?

MARFA

It would be nice to feel loved and appreciated.

BRONZE

I'm simply not that kind of man.

MARFA

You *used* to be that kind of man.

BRONZE

Oh, no. I know where this is headed ...

HE enters the coffin

MARFA

Remember the river?

SHE grabs HER easel, and paints passionately, without abandon

BRONZE

Don't go there.

MARFA

The three of us had picnics by the river during the summer ...

BRONZE

I'm warning you.

MARFA

Those summers were so hot. The sun blazed ...

BRONZE

I don't want to hear this.

MARFA

The sun's rays looked just like glitter on the water.

BRONZE

I'm begging you to stop.

MARFA

I can still picture that gorgeous, old oak tree ...

BRONZE

Enough. I'm getting out.

BRONZE removes HIMSELF from the coffin. SHE shows HIM the painting. HE looks away. HE glares at HER and begins to slowly sand the coffin. HE, then, smooths a section of it with a staining rag.

MARFA

If you're not ill, then why are you making your own coffin?

BRONZE

I'm healthy now, but I could get sick ...

MARFA

You're as fit as a fiddle.

BRONZE

Are you trying to get a rise out of me?

MARFA

No.

BRONZE

Are you trying to stir up bad memories of Rothschild? If he hadn't provoked me, I'd still be playing in the Orchestra/

MARFA

Bronze. No. It just came out of my mouth. It's an expression.

BRONZE

It's a stupid expression if you ask me.

MARFA

You're getting so defensive. Take a break from your work.

BRONZE

It's not even lunchtime. I don't want to take a break/

MARFA

Take a small break for me. For us.

BRONZE

You're annoyingly persistent.

MARFA

Play me a song.

BRONZE

Now?

MARFA

It brings me such joy to hear you play.

Silence

You can play anything. You were first violinist.

BRONZE

Concert master ... leader of the Orchestra. I no longer have an Orchestra to lead.

MARFA

Compose a song on the spot.

BRONZE

I don't know if I could do that ...

MARFA

Of course you can.

BRONZE

That painting you painted?

MARFA

Yes?

BRONZE

You, um ... you didn't paint her picture, right?

MARFA

No. I painted the river ... the sun ... the glitter on the water ... I was just starting to paint the outline of the oak tree. *(retrieves painting for BRONZE to see)*

BRONZE

It's a pretty painting. (pause) Why did we look away?

MARFA

We, Bronze. Not just you.

BRONZE

We should have gotten her to the doctor sooner.

MARFA

I don't think that would have made a difference/

BRONZE

Maybe I could play a song about the river?

MARFA

I would love that more than anything, Bronze. *(goes to the coffin to retrieve the fiddle)*
Perhaps we could find a better home for it? *(hands HIM the fiddle)*

BRONZE takes in the painting, closes HIS eyes, and THE VIOLIN enters and hums. HE and MARFA become lost in the music. HE stops playing. THE VIOLIN exits.

MARFA

You play and I see the man I fell in love with ...

BRONZE

Don't get all schmaltzy on me.

MARFA

But I hear you in the middle of the night.

BRONZE

Hear me? What on Earth are you hearing?

MARFA

Every night. You touch one fiddle string.

BRONZE

Nonsense. You're a sound sleeper. You don't hear anything /

MARFA

I think it helps you sleep.

BRONZE shrugs

MARFA (con't)

Why only one string?

BRONZE

I never realized you heard me.

MARFA

I hear it almost every single night. Why do you do it?

Silence

BRONZE

I touch one fiddle string because that's all I need to feel better.

MARFA

You mean what happened five years ago today?

BRONZE

No! Not *that!* (*gets up to return the fiddle to its case*) I'm talking about financial loss.

MARFA

I don't know what you mean.

BRONZE

You know it's a sin to work Sundays, and Mondays are unlucky.

MARFA

Unlucky?

BRONZE

Yes. It's an age-old superstition. I was brought up to believe Mondays are unlucky. I learned it from my father who learned it from his father who learned it from/

MARFA

I get the picture.

BRONZE

I've been waiting impatiently for that old superintendent of the prison to die. I have full-sized coffins just waiting to be used! But, the SOB decided to work at the Harrisburg Prison and had the *nerve* to die there.

MARFA

What happened to you? Impatiently waiting for a man to *die*?

I make coffins for a *living*.
BRONZE

It's a *job*. It's what you *do*.
MARFA

Of course it's a job. It gives us a little thing called income.
BRONZE

This job has stripped you of decency ... humanity ...
MARFA

I don't need to hear this.
BRONZE

You're not the Bronze I once knew.
MARFA

Things change. People change.
BRONZE

But, the old Bronze re-emerges when you make music.
MARFA

SHE hugs HIM, and HE allows it.

You pour *all* your heart and soul into that fiddle. I need your heart and soul, too.
Otherwise, what's the point of being in this marriage?

I can only give you what I can give you.
BRONZE

You're as rigid as your coffins.
MARFA

I'm a strong man. I hardly see that as a flaw.
BRONZE

You're infuriating. Just when I thought we were making a connection you retreat.
MARFA

I took a break and played you a song. What more do you want from me?
BRONZE

MARFA

I want more of the man I fell in love with ...

BRONZE goes to the coffin and starts sanding it

(she studies BRONZE for a moment) So, now I'm getting the silent treatment.

BRONZE sands HIS coffin more vigorously

BRONZE

I know I'm not the best husband to you, but I wouldn't want to live life without you.

MARFA

Then, act like you want to be with me. *(close to tears)*

Silence. BRONZE stops sanding the coffin.

BRONZE

Don't cry. *(pause)* I'm sorry, Marfa.

MARFA walks to the coffin and slowly traces HER fingers over it.

MARFA

(dries HER tears) Play for me while I cook?

BRONZE

What's the use?

MARFA

Your music relaxes me.

THEY walk to their living room. HE brings HIS fiddle with HIM and sits down while SHE begins preparing lunch at the stove.

BRONZE

They kicked me out of the Orchestra.

MARFA

You should have been decent to Rothschild.

BRONZE

But, he threatened me ...

MARFA

... Only because you were so cruel to him.

He's arrogant.

BRONZE

He seems well mannered to me.

MARFA

He has money.

BRONZE

Having money is not a crime, Bronze. It's not a competition.

MARFA

But, he's so ostentatious about it.

BRONZE

You've been performing in the Orchestra for years. I've seen countless concerts. He just doesn't seem snobby or pretentious to me.

MARFA

He took away the *one* thing I am good at, and the *one* thing that brought us a little more income.

BRONZE

So what if you don't play at the Orchestra anymore? Play for me.

MARFA

Rothschild is the flute section leader. I was the first violinist. Do you know what an *honor* it is to be first violinist? Out of everyone in the Orchestra, Rothschild was the *only* person trying to outshine me.

BRONZE

You're both talented musicians/

MARFA

It makes me think of my two nephews/

BRONZE

Not this again/

MARFA

Both boys were straight A students ... ranked #1 in their class ...

BRONZE

I know where this is heading, and I don't like it/

MARFA

BRONZE

They were accepted into the best Universities. But, the Jewish students always did better on their exams ... It was always the Jewish students who were the valedictorians.

MARFA

Those students were obviously very smart and worked hard. Their academics had nothing to do with their faith/

BRONZE

They said those Jews walked around the campus as if they *owned* it.

MARFA

I highly doubt that. Don't you know that you and Rothschild can both shine as musicians?

BRONZE lets out a snort

Well, your music always moves me.

SHE begins cooking at the stove, and he plays the fiddle. THE VIOLIN hums

Lights up on the opposite side of the stage. ROTHSCHILD, with HIS flute, is sitting on a chair with a music stand in front of HIM. THE two MEN pantomime some serious Orchestra rivalry

BRONZE

(stops playing) You're playing too loud, Garlic.

ROTHSCHILD

Stop calling me "Garlic." My name is *Rothschild*.

BRONZE

But, you have hideous breath, *Rothschild*. So, I like to call you Garlic. *(reaches into pocket)* Here! Take a breath mint.

ROTHSCHILD

Stop behaving like a child.

BRONZE

Fine. I'll be a polite adult. Why don't you and your wife come over some night for dinner? Marfa makes an *excellent* pork and sauerkraut.

ROTHSCHILD

Very funny. You think you're so clever, don't you?

BRONZE

What's wrong? You don't like pork?

BRONZE ignores HIM, and begins to play THE FIDDLE again

ROTHSCHILD

Don't. I'm warning you.

BRONZE

Settle down, Jew Boy.

ROTHSCHILD

The conductor and I have been talking, and we are *not* tolerating your bigotry anymore.

BRONZE

(stops playing) Don't threaten me, Garlic.

ROTHSCHILD

You are nothing but an *uneducated* bigot.

BRONZE

So what if I don't have a swanky degree? I won't be threatened by the likes of you.

ROTHSCHILD

(stands up) I'm not putting up with this anymore. If you don't quit the Orchestra, I will.

BRONZE

(approaches ROTHSCHILD as if HE's going to hit HIM) I cannot afford another financial loss. I'm not wealthy like you.

ROTHSCHILD

You wouldn't have the nerve to hit me.

BRONZE punches ROTHSCHILD in the face, then returns to the here and now with MARFA. Lights dim on ROTHSCHILD.

BRONZE

The Orchestra will suffer without me.

MARFA

They had no choice.

Lights up on ROTHSCHILD who is lying on the ground

ROTHSCHILD

(screaming) You overgrown bully! What? Are you trying to kill me?

MARFA

... You can't go around hitting people ...

ROTHSCHILD

You want me to wind up in one of those coffins you make? Don't be shocked if I press charges against you. *(slowly gets up)* A physical blow deserves a financial blow.

BRONZE

Go to Hell, JEW!

Lights dim on ROTHSCHILD and THE VIOLIN

BRONZE, livid, wants to smash HIS fiddle.

MARFA

No! Give the fiddle to me!

SHE saves fiddle

What has become of you?

BRONZE

Rothschild has *everything!* Talent ... money ... a wife ... and ... and ...

MARFA

Just say it.

BRONZE

No.

MARFA

What else does Rothschild have that you don't have?

BRONZE

Leave me alone/

MARFA

Tell me/

BRONZE

(points to coffin) I'll stay in there all day if I have to.

MARFA

And, I'll stay in the shed all day if I have to.

BRONZE

What's gotten into you?

MARFA

Rothschild has everything. Talent, money, a wife, *and* ...?

BRONZE

It's in his very *name*. Rothschild. Rothschild. (*pause*) Rothschild.

MARFA

Oh, Bronze ...

BRONZE

Rothschild has talent, money, a wife, and *children*.

Blackout, except for a spotlight on MARFA. SHE plays the fiddle while THE VIOLIN hums. MARFA hands the fiddle to BRONZE who places it underneath THEIR bed. THE VIOLIN exits.

It is nighttime. BRONZE and MARFA are in THEIR bed with one bedside lamp on

MARFA

We are calling your doctor in the morning.

BRONZE

I'm fine.

MARFA

You're not well. You were so furious you almost smashed your fiddle.

BRONZE

I'm thankful you were able to save it, too.

MARFA

You took your Valium?

BRONZE

Yes, Marfa.

MARFA

Hopefully you will be able to get a good night's ...

BRONZE

Life is passing us by without pleasure.

MARFA

Life may not be perfect, but there are still things to be happy about... We have a nice home.

BRONZE

It's too small.

MARFA

You have a good job ...

BRONZE

My business would be more profitable if more people *died* ...

MARFA

You still make me laugh.

BRONZE

I'm just a grumpy old man.

MARFA

You love my cooking.

BRONZE

You're right. There's that.

MARFA

You play your fiddle so beautifully.

BRONZE

Let's not mention my fiddle. I don't want to talk about Rothschild – especially before I go to sleep.

MARFA

I wasn't talking about Rothschild ...

BRONZE

My mind connects the two.

Pause

MARFA

I really wanted to go to the river, but you had me so worried today. (*pause*) She would have been almost eight years old ... Would you have passed your "beliefs" onto her, too?

BRONZE

My Valium will be kicking in soon. I can't get into these crazy topics right now.

MARFA

They're human topics.

BRONZE

I don't even know what you mean.

MARFA

Would you have passed your ... way of looking at the world onto our daughter?

BRONZE

Are you calling me a bigot?

MARFA

I'm not calling you any names/

BRONZE

I'm not prejudiced. We live in a small, rural town. Have you not noticed that everyone looks the same, talks the same, worships the same?

MARFA

Not everyone worships the same/

BRONZE

I'm proud of my heritage. What's wrong with wanting to stick to your own kind?

MARFA

You should listen to yourself.

BRONZE

There you go again ... defending Rothschild.

MARFA

I didn't even *mention* Rothschild/

BRONZE

I don't like him because he thinks he's a better musician than me. I don't like him because he provoked me until I hit him. It has *nothing* to do with him being *Jewish*.

MARFA

Alright, alright. Lie down. I can see you're getting emotional. (*yawning*) I'm sorry I brought this up now. Get some sleep.

BRONZE

(*a beat*) Why do people in general hinder each other from living?

MARFA looks at HIM

BRONZE (con't)

If Rothschild had not provoked me, I'd still be playing in the Orchestra.

MARFA shakes HER head

And, if I weren't such a curmudgeon, you'd be a lot happier.

MARFA

Yes. Maybe. I don't know. Try to clear your mind, Bronze. Hopefully, the Valium will kick in soon.

Pause

BRONZE

I would have *tried* to raise our girl to be more like you. I don't know if I would have succeeded, but I would have tried ...

MARFA kisses HIM on the cheek. SHE retrieves HER prayer beads from the nightstand, and holds them to HER heart.

I would have wanted her to be more like you.

MARFA

I love you. (*holds prayer beads to HER heart, and places them on the nightstand. SHE turns out the light*)

MARFA falls asleep, and BRONZE is wide-awake. HE tosses and turns. HE retrieves a flashlight from under HIS pillow and gently pulls the fiddle out from under HIS bed. HE touches one fiddle string. HE puts the fiddle under HIS bed and places the flashlight under the pillow.

BRONZE

(*quietly*) Much better.

HE falls asleep. Blackout

Lights come up on the bedroom of BRONZE and MARFA. HE sleeps while SHE paints. The easel is facing away from the audience.

BRONZE

(*slowly awakens*) Morning already?

MARFA

I let you sleep in.

BRONZE
Thank you. What time is it?

MARFA
Around 9:30.

BRONZE
How long have you been awake?

MARFA
Since about 6. There's coffee and breakfast waiting for you.

BRONZE
I never sleep until 9:30 (*turns around to face HER*) You're still painting...?

MARFA
You know I've been taking art classes at the high school. That adult education course I've been telling you about ...

BRONZE
So, you're painting a still life now?

MARFA
...yes...

BRONZE
I'd love to look at it.

MARFA
I'll let you see it once I'm finished.

BRONZE
I'd like to see it now.

MARFA
I know you do, but it's a surprise.

The phone rings. HE exits. MARFA continues to paint. HE is heard clearly offstage.

BRONZE
Hello? Well, good morning to you, too, Mr. Miller. I'm glad to hear from you. What can I do for you? (*a beat*) Oh, no. Everyone in the community was pulling for her. Marfa and I will be sure to pray for them. (*a beat*) This Friday? Thank you for letting me know. We'll be sure to pay our respects. (*a beat*) What? (*a beat*) Oh, no. No, no, no. I won't be able to do that Mr. Miller. I'm sorry. (*a beat*) I can't. I just can't. Her family is requesting

BRONZE (con't)

me? (*a beat*) You know I hate to take orders for ... orders for ... (*a beat*) They really want *me*? (*a beat*) I see. I never take orders for children, but I'll make this one exception since I know the family so well. (*a beat*) I'll get to work. I'll get to work right away. Thank you, Mr. Miller. Goodbye.

Silence

BRONZE enters the bedroom again

Katherine Minnich lost her battle with Cancer. Last night.

MARFA

Oh, God.

BRONZE

Only thirteen years old ...

MARFA picks up HER prayer beads and holds them

MARFA

I'll pray for her family ... I'll pray without ceasing.

BRONZE

(*referring to beads*) Be gentle with your prayer beads. Her parents /

MARFA

My heart absolutely aches for them. What can we do?

BRONZE

Marfa. Her parents asked me to make her coffin.

MARFA

Make her coffin? That's too heart breaking, Bronze.

BRONZE

I have to.

MARFA

We should remember *life*.

BRONZE

They're such good people.

The service is this Friday.

MARFA

We'll go to the service. I'll order flowers ... get a card ... pay them a visit. *(pause)* They did the same for us.

BRONZE

I know.

MARFA

I think I need some fresh air. How about a morning walk? It's gorgeous outside ...

BRONZE

Later.

MARFA

I'm going outside to sit on the porch. *(kisses HIM on the top of HIS head, then SHE exits)*

BRONZE takes HIS fiddle. HE tries to play, but HE'S too sad. HE plucks one string. HE plucks the same string again. HE plucks the string one last time. HE paces the bedroom. HE decides to look at MARFA's painting.

BRONZE

Marfa. You lied to me!

MARFA

(runs in bedroom) What's the matter?

BRONZE

(points to painting) This. *This* is what's the matter.

MARFA

You weren't supposed to see that. I was waiting for the right time to show you /

BRONZE

You deceived me /

MARFA

Painting her picture has been so therapeutic /

BRONZE

I don't want to talk about her.

MARFA

How long are we going to keep this up? /

BRONZE

For as long as I say!

MARFA

You. You. You. What about *my* feelings? What about what I need?

BRONZE

See a Psychologist.

MARFA

That would cost *money*. I believe those were your exact words.

BRONZE

Talk to your friends. Talk to our Reverend.

MARFA

I would like to be able to talk to my *husband*.

BRONZE

Please, get this painting out of my house.

MARFA

Oh, so now it's *your* house.

BRONZE

Just get it out of my sight.

MARFA

Maybe you need to face it /

BRONZE

You don't tell me what I need to do /

MARFA

Are we just going to act like it never happened for the rest of our lives?

BRONZE

And what would be wrong with that?

MARFA

You never allowed yourself the time and space to grieve. And, by doing that, I've had to grieve alone.

BRONZE

I feel devastated about what happened every single day of my life.

MARFA

Then, tell me about that devastation. We can work through it. Together.

BRONZE
If *I* had been more observant.

MARFA
I know.

BRONZE
If *you* had been more observant.

MARFA
I know, I know.

BRONZE
Now's not the time to get into it.

MARFA
It's *never* a good time to talk about it. It hasn't been a good time to talk about it for five *godman* years.

BRONZE
I'm sorry. Maybe women and men handle things differently /

MARFA
That's nothing but a cop out ... a tired excuse/

BRONZE
It's a scientific fact. Women are more emotional beings.

MARFA
Then, allow me to express and release these *emotions*.

BRONZE
Release away. Go to church. Visit the river. Paint her portrait/

MARFA
(*grabs BRONZE*) BUT, SHE'S YOUR DAUGHTER, TOO.

Silence

BRONZE
Get your hands off of me.

MARFA
I'm sorry.

BRONZE

There's no need to put your hands on me/

MARFA

I'm sorry. I'm just so angry. And, she *is* your daughter, too.

Silence

BRONZE

I don't deserve any of this.

MARFA

(pause) Do you remember, Bronze?

BRONZE

I need to get to work. The service is Friday /

MARFA

Do you remember five years ago? God gave us a little baby with flaxen hair /

BRONZE

You need to stop /

MARFA

We used to always sit by the river then ... Singing songs under the oak tree /

BRONZE

I'm warning you /

MARFA

The baby girl died.

BRONZE angrily walks towards the painting. MARFA grabs the painting to protect it

Here she is. I painted her. *Look* at her.

BRONZE angrily tries to grab the painting away from HER

No! You will not destroy this painting like you tried to destroy your fiddle.

BRONZE

I never want to see it again.

MARFA

(pause) Whose coffin will you be making this afternoon?

BRONZE

You know very well whose coffin ...

MARFA

Will you be making Katherine's coffin?

BRONZE

Don't ask such ridiculous questions/

MARFA

Or, will you be working on your own? (*HER prayer beads come undone and scatter all over the floor*) Oh, God. (*SHE kneels to the ground and feverishly picks them up*) Life is passing us by without pleasure? Why do people in general hinder each other from living?

BRONZE

Don't misinterpret my words.

MARFA

Are you thinking about harming yourself?

Silence

Bronze, answer my question.

BRONZE

Sometimes the sadness is unbearable.

MARFA

Allow someone to help you. *Please.*

BRONZE

I don't want any help.

MARFA

You need to face this so we can somehow, *someway*, continue with our lives.

BRONZE

I never even got to say good-bye to her. What if I have no interest in continuing my life?

MARFA

Please, don't leave.

MARFA goes to embrace BRONZE. HE rejects HER touch.

BRONZE

I have work to do. I'll be back for supper.

HE heads for THEIR bedroom

BRONZE (con't)

I'm taking my fiddle with me.

MARFA

(kneels on the floor, and grabs BRONZE's legs. A few beads remain on the floor)

Promise me you won't leave me.

BRONZE slowly helps MARFA up

I'll take you to the doctor today.

BRONZE

I don't need any help.

MARFA

You just said the sadness is unbearable. You just admitted you have no interest in continuing your life.

Pause

BRONZE

They're nothing more than fleeting thoughts.

MARFA

I don't want you having those thoughts at all.

BRONZE

You've never wrestled with those thoughts?

MARFA

Of course I have. That's why I need to feel connected to you again.

BRONZE

I am not going anywhere.

MARFA

I'm scared of losing you. I'm scared I've already lost you.

Pause

BRONZE

(picks up a few beads and gently hands them to MARFA) Just let me get to work in the shed. Why don't you cook us a nice lunch? It'll get your mind on something else.

MARFA

I don't *want* my mind to be on something else. Maybe I need to allow myself to fully feel this sadness ...

BRONZE

We'll have lunch. Together.

MARFA

Together.

BRONZE

Yes, together. (*HE squeezes HER hand, helps HER up*) We'll pick up the rest later, okay? (*exits*)

*MARFA goes to fridge to retrieve ingredients for a beef stew.
BRONZE can be heard making the coffin.*

MARFA

God, please listen to me.

Begins chopping beef

Can you help us? I'm worried sick about my husband ... He's having these ... these episodes ... They're happening more frequently ...

Continues chopping beef

Is he hallucinating? I can't seem to help him...

Chops carrots, potatoes

He's angry ... filled with rage ... Five years, God. Five painful years ... I can barely stand it anymore ... I'm so lonely it hurts ... It actually hurts physically.

Chops onions. Tears emerge from HER eyes

He used to be gentler, warmer ... But, since that *day*, he's just so sad, God ...

Rubs arms, and chops onions less aggressively

He struck another man. He called him "Jewboy," then hit him. Bronze was taught to *hate* anyone who was different from him. When he tells me he's "proud of his heritage" it's just a guise for thinking his heritage is superior. Guide him, God. (*pause*) Or, can you guide him, my Sarah ... our Sarah?

HER breathing is becoming shallow

MARFA (con't)

Why does he ignore me?

Stops cooking, HER breathing still shallow

He's building his own coffin. Please ... please ... *please* ... bring my Bronze back to life.

Drops of sweat appear on HER face. SHE's looking pale.

I'm begging you, God. I'll do *anything*. (*a beat*) Please, relieve Bronze and me from this debilitating grief and guilt regarding the death of our little girl.

SHE finds the painting, brushes, paints, and water. SHE begins painting in HER weakened and fragile state.

I'm finishing your portrait, Sarah ... wavy blonde hair ... sweet gray eyes ... lips shaped like a bow ... (*throws paintbrush on the ground as SHE is too ill to continue*)

Loud drilling and hammering can be heard from the shed.

Too loud ... too much noise ... (*in a strained voice*) Bronze. It's too loud. Bronze. Please, stop.

THE sound of HIS hammering gets louder

Too loud. My head hurts. (*massages left arm*) Something's not right ... Bronze. Bronze. Come quickly. Something's not ...

SHE collapses.

Silence.

THE VIOLIN hums, then exits. BRONZE enters the kitchen, fiddle is HIS hand.

BRONZE

Marfa? I don't know how to say this, but ... I'm sorry. I'm worried about you. Perhaps we should see a doctor. (*looks down and finds MARFA on the floor*) Marfa! (*drops fiddle*)

Gets down on floor

Oh, God. What's happened? (*brushes HER hair from HER face*) So pale. What's happened? Help! Somebody help! (*feels HER chest*) (*clumsily tries CPR*) Wake up. Wake up. Come on. Wake up. (*tries CPR again*) Somebody please help! No heartbeat. Please, wake up, Marfa. (*holds HER lifeless body*) I'll call an ambulance ... an ambulance. (*Holds and kisses HER lifeless body for a few beats*)

Slowly gets up and dials 9-1-1.

This is the home of George Rebeck ... Or, Bronze. People call me Bronze in this town. 24 East Main Street, Fountain ... I need an ambulance right away ... Yes, 24 East Main Street ... My wife ... I think she's dead.

*BRONZE gazes at MARFA's unfinished painting.
ROTHSCHILD enters the stage. BRONZE does not see/hear HIM*

ROTHSCHILD

(praying) Al molay rachamim, shochayn bam'romim, ham-tzay m'nucha n'chona al kanfay Hash'china, b'ma-alot k'doshim ut-horim k'zo-har haraki-a mazhirim, et nishmat Marfa Rebeck she-halcha l-olama, ba-avur shenodvu tz'dakah b'ad hazkarat nishmatah.

*Slow blackout. THE VIOLIN hums as the scene transitions and ROTHSCHILD exits.
THE VIOLIN exits, too.*

*Lights up on BRONZE's kitchen where HE wears all black. The phone rings, and HE
picks it up.*

BRONZE

Hello, Mrs. Minnich. I was just about to call you. Katherine's ... I don't mean to talk business matters right now ... but, Katherine's coffin is ... finished. The funeral home will retrieve it tomorrow morning. Again, my deepest condolences (*a beat*) No, I don't need anything. I'll be fine. (*a beat*) I thank you for your kind offer, but I'd rather be alone right now. (*hangs phone up*)

*BRONZE begins wandering around HIS living room. HE picks up HIS fiddle and strums a string or two. HE puts the fiddle down. HE looks in fridge, and closes the door. Finally,
HE sits on the couch, sitting with HIS hands folded on HIS lap. There is a knock at the
door.*

Goddamn it. Can't a man grieve by himself?

HE opens the door, and it's ROTHSCHILD carrying a bouquet of flowers

Oh, no. Not *you*. Go home, Garlic.

ROTHSCHILD

I've been trying to call you ...

BRONZE

And, I've been ignoring your calls ...

ROTHSCHILD

I called because I'm afraid you'll hit me again ...

BRONZE

Who's to say I won't?

ROTHSCHILD

Your wife died. We need to put the past behind us.

BRONZE grimaces. ROTHSCHILD sheepishly offers HIM a bouquet of flowers.

BRONZE

What? Are you taking me to prom? Peonies? Lilies? Roses?

ROTHSCHILD

I ... I hope you like them. My wife chose them ...

BRONZE

Your wife is an idiot.

ROTHSCHILD

Excuse me?

BRONZE

These flowers are apropos for a *wedding*. Not a *funeral*. Everyone knows that!

ROTHSCHILD

We just wanted to offer our sincere condolences.

BRONZE

I don't *want* your condolences. This bouquet is all wrong. Carnations, roses, orchids. *Those* are the types of flowers appropriate for a funeral. (*throws ROTHSCHILD'S bouquet in trash*)

ROTHSCHILD

Why do you hate me so much?

BRONZE

Because you smell like garlic, and you offer me a tacky bouquet.

ROTHSCHILD

I'm extending an olive branch ...

BRONZE

You and your olive branch need to leave me alone.

ROTHSCHILD

The conductor sent me. It's a sincere offer to return to the Orchestra.

BRONZE

Not interested.

ROTHSCHILD

Perhaps it would be good for you.

BRONZE

You don't have a clue what's good for me.

ROTHSCHILD

You play the violin with such beauty and expression. I know there's a good man hiding underneath that tough exterior.

BRONZE

You know *nothing* about my life.

ROTSCHILD

Then, tell me about your life.

BRONZE

No. I prefer to keep my personal affairs personal.

ROTSCHILD

Maybe you need to open up to more people.

BRONZE

I barely opened up to my own wife. Why would I ever open up to you?

ROTHSCHILD

I thought you and Marfa had a close relationship. She always seemed so proud of you at the concerts/

BRONZE

She was proud of me. And, for some insane reason she loved me even though I wasn't the best husband to her/

ROTHSCHILD

You provided for her. You gave her the gift of your beautiful music. Did you play for her?

BRONZE

Yes.

ROTHSCHILD

Then you're probably not giving yourself enough credit.

BRONZE

She was lonely. I never made enough time for her. (*pause*) I took her for granted ...

ROTHSCHILD

Go easier on yourself, Bronze.

BRONZE

She was a good, devoted, wife and mother/

ROTHSCHILD

I had no idea you had children.

Silence

BRONZE

Everybody knows what happened. Stop lying to me/

ROTHSCHILD

Why would I lie?

BRONZE

Everybody in this town knows we had a young child who died.

ROTHSCHILD

I can't even imagine. How did your child?/

BRONZE

I'm not telling you. Just ask anyone in the community.

ROTHSCHILD

I'm not exactly *popular* in this community.

BRONZE

You're a millionaire with a picture perfect family. Who cares if you're popular?

ROTHSCHILD

We live in a beautiful and picturesque town. On paper, it's the ideal place to raise a family ...

BRONZE

You're goddamn right it is. I was born and raised here.

ROTHSCHILD

Well, I wasn't. And aside from a few kind-hearted people ...people like Marfa ... people in the Orchestra, I obviously don't "belong." Why do you think I love playing in the Orchestra so much?

BRONZE

Perhaps you could find yourself a Jews Orchestra? Then, you'd really fit in.

ROTHSCHILD

Why are you so cruel?

BRONZE

Or you could move somewhere with a synagogue ... Move somewhere with a larger Jewish population.

ROTHSCHILD

There has to be sensitivity underneath all that rage. You're a musician.

BRONZE

I am not returning to the Orchestra, and we can never be friends.

ROTHSCHILD

I've never known someone who harbors such disdain for me.

BRONZE

You have a wife, children, and a mansion. You have *everything*, Garlic. I have nothing but loss.

ROTHSCHILD

You actually hate me because I have a family and a nice home? And, quit calling my Garlic.

BRONZE

Should I refer to you as Jew Boy instead?

ROTHSCHILD

Do not /

BRONZE

Stop bothering me and go home, Heeb.

ROTHSCHILD

Don't you *dare*.

BRONZE

Go back to your wife, children, and mansion, Ki - /

ROTHSCHILD

That's *enough*, Bronze.

BRONZE

You can't fool me. I know the real reason you're here.

ROTHSCHILD

...

BRONZE

I hit you, so you want to hit me back. (*puts HIS hands up as if to fight HIM*) I'm ready for you.

ROTHSCHILD

No. I'll never hit you. I'll *pray* for you instead. (*takes a breath*) Oseh shalom bim-romav

BRONZE

Stop it.

ROTHSCHILD

Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu.

BRONZE

I don't know what you're saying. It all just sounds like stupid gibberish to me.

ROTHSCHILD

May He who makes peace in high places, make peace for us.

BRONZE slams the door in HIS face. Frightened, ROTHSCCHILD runs away. BRONZE laughs. HIS laughter gradually turns to sadness as HE is trying not to cry. HIS breathing progressively becomes shallow. HE looks feverish and weak. HE slowly walks to the refrigerator and retrieves a bottle of wine. HE takes it to the sofa, and drinks it as HE speaks.

BRONZE

May He who makes peace in high places, make peace for us. Ha! There will *never* be peace between us. And yet, he prayed for me. The son of a bitch prayed for me. Marfa, you were always so nice to Rothschild. I should have paid more attention to you. You deserved far better than me. You need to know the coffin I made for myself is almost complete. A man's life means loss and death means gain. I won't have to pay taxes. I'll no longer offend anyone. I can lie in my grave for hundreds, no, thousands of years. What bliss.

HE stumbles to the bedroom to see the painting. HE returns to the sofa with the painting and sits by it. HE drinks the wine in fast gulps. HE pulls a bottle of Valium from HIS pocket and stares at it.

BRONZE (con't)

I have nothing. (*takes Valium with alcohol*) No wife. (*Valium with alcohol*) No Orchestra. No friends. (*Valium with alcohol*) No child. I feel responsible for her death every single miserable day for five miserable years. (*pause*) Death, take me. Just *take* me. No one will miss me. Not a soul. I don't deserve life. (*pause*) I don't deserve to be here. (*shatters wine bottle, takes a sharp edge, and draws a line with it on HIS wrist*) I'm responsible for Marfa's sorrow, too. (*draws another line with HIS wrist*) Why didn't she leave me? *Why* did she *love* me? Oseh shalom bim-romav ... Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu ...

HE falls asleep and dreams a vivid dream about the river and the oak tree

MARFA (off-stage)

Do you remember, Bronze? Remember the river? The three of us had picnics by the river during the summer. We used to always sit by the river. Those summers were so hot. The sun's rays looked just like glitter on the water.

Pause

Here she is. I painted her. Look at her. Look at our *daughter*, Bronze.

THE VIOLIN hums while BRONZE is in the dream world of the river and the willow tree. The music sounds like a mournful wail. Lights up on ROTHSCHILD as music gradually softens.

ROTHSCHILD

Please don't beat me, Bronze.

BRONZE

I'm sick, brother.

Silence

ROTHSCHILD

You just called me/

BRONZE

(*disbelief*) Brother.

Silence

ROTHSCHILD

Brother. Thank you. (*pause*) Achi means brother in Hebrew.

Silence

BRONZE

Achi. *(pause)* If only Marfa could have heard me call you brother ...

THE VIOLIN hums softly. BRONZE cries. ROTHSCHILD cries, too. As BRONZE speaks, HE collects rocks and places them in HIS pocket. ROTHSCHILD listens to BRONZE intently.

BRONZE

Our daughter was about two and a half years old when Marfa and I brought her to a nearby park. She was always curious and full of energy.

Places a rock in HIS pocket

We let her climb trees in the park. We told her to be careful, and watched from a nearby bench.

Places a rock in HIS pocket

(recalling the memory) Sarah! Not that high! You could hurt yourself.

Places a rock in HIS pocket

Marfa and I got lost in conversation. Eventually, she called, "Sarah! Come down from there immediately." We sipped our coffee. She told me what she was planning to make all of us for dinner. And, then we heard the most terrible sound. Our daughter fell.

Places a rock in HIS pocket

She screamed in pain.

Places a rock in HIS pocket

Then, nothing. No sound. *(THE VIOLIN stops humming, then exits)*

Places a rock in HIS pocket

We had the nerve to look away for one minute ... a stupid succession of sixty seconds ... one miserable minute ... gone.

BRONZE takes a deep breath, looks at HIS weighted pockets, and begins walking towards the river to drown HIMSELF. Once ROTHSCHILD figures out BRONZE'S intent, HE runs to HIM.

ROTHSCHILD

What are you doing?

BRONZE slowly walks to the water with weighted pockets

I won't let you.

BRONZE

Marfa and I always blamed ourselves for her death. I deserve to die.

ROTHSCHILD

Sarah's fall was not your doing. It wasn't Marfa's doing, either.

BRONZE

We allowed her to climb that tall tree against our better judgment. Then, we looked away.

ROTHSCHILD

A parent can't possibly hover over a small child 24 hours a day. It's not realistic.

BRONZE

We should have never brought Sarah to the park that day.

ROTHSCHILD

You were loving parents taking their child to a park.

BRONZE

She's dead. Then, I didn't allow Marfa to express her pain for five years.

ROTHSCHILD

I know. I understand that. But, Marfa would never want you to end your life. She loved you.

BRONZE

I refuse to tolerate the immense devastation for one more minute.

Heads for the river again

ROTHSCHILD

(runs towards BRONZE) When your daughter died, your entire life changed in one minute, correct?

Silence

Give me one minute to try to save you.

BRONZE

(continues walking) I don't want to be saved. Let me go.

ROTHSCHILD

(grabs BRONZE, and turns HIM towards the river) Stop. Look at the river.

BRONZE

Please, let me die on my own terms.

ROTHSCHILD

Let me hold your suffering.

BRONZE

Hold my suffering? You're talking like a crazy person.

ROTHSCHILD

Bronze, look at the river. Look at the fish bobbing up and down.

Removes a rock from BRONZE'S pocket

BRONZE

Put that back/

ROTHSCHILD

I'm holding your suffering. Do you see the geese floating on the river? Do you see their remarkable white feathers?

Removes another rock

BRONZE

Give that back to me.

ROTHSCHILD

Look at the family sailing on a boat over there.

BRONZE

No. The last thing I want to do is look at a family.

ROTHSCHILD

Then, imagine yourself sailing on a boat and playing music on your violin.

Removes another rock

This river doesn't represent death. This river represents life.

Removes another rock

Let the life of the river wash away your sorrow.

BRONZE

Stop talking in ludicrous metaphors. I can't tolerate them.

ROTHSCHILD slowly walks away from BRONZE, but keeps looking at HIM intently.

BRONZE rolls up the legs of HIS pants and walks until HIS ankles are immersed in water.

Oseh shalom bim-romav ...

HE rolls up HIS shirt sleeves and allows the water to trickle through HIS hands

BRONZE (con't)

Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu. I recited that perfectly, didn't I? What the Hell did I just say?

ROTHSCHILD

You're beginning to make peace with yourself, Bronze.

BRONZE throws one rock into the water and enjoys the splash it makes. THE VIOLIN hums a sad tune, which eventually morphs into a more hopeful tune as BRONZE splashes in the water.

The Hebrew word for pebble is tz'ror.

BRONZE

Tz'ror.

ROTHSCHILD

Tz'ror is also a Hebrew word for "bond."

BRONZE

You're joking.

ROTHSCHILD

Tz'ror also means bond.

BRONZE walks to ROTHSCCHILD

BRONZE

Here. Throw the last pebble into the river. Have fun. Really make the water splash.

ROTHSCCHILD creates a wondrous splash. ROTHSCCHILD hands BRONZE an empty bottle, which BRONZE fills with water from the river. Gradual blackout as the dream sequence ends.

Lights up on BRONZE as HE slowly wakes from the dream. HE stumbles around until HE finds MARFA's poem. HE reads it aloud.

BRONZE

"The bed we share feels entirely too big. I try to have a conversation with you, but all you want is another swig."

MARFA slowly enters, but BRONZE cannot see/hear HER

MARFA

I detest Country music. I'd never write you a Country tune.

BRONZE

“My friends ask about you all the time. I feel distant from you, so I told them the same old rhyme.”

MARFA

I told them you were a good, hard-working husband. They never knew the extent of my sadness.

BRONZE

“My heart breaks because we used to be so close.”

MARFA

Five years of mourning ...

BRONZE

“Feel the lonely beat of my heart. We spend too much time apart.”

MARFA

I’m starting to feel closer to you now.

BRONZE

“Why don’t you bring me flowers?”

MARFA

It would have been nice on occasion.

BRONZE

“You used to hug me and hold my hand.”

MARFA

I cherished those days.

BRONZE

“This distance has me daydreaming about moving to another land.”

MARFA

What do you know? I *am* in another land.

BRONZE

“Take me to a party. Maybe we can dance.”

MARFA dances around BRONZE

“If something doesn’t change soon, I’ll give another man a glance.”

MARFA

(stops dancing) I *only* ever loved you. *(pause)* And, I will *always* only love you.

BRONZE

I love you, Marfa. Once the floodgates opened, I called Rothschild brother.

MARFA

I know.

BRONZE

I hope you heard that from wherever you are now.

MARFA

I did.

BRONZE

I would have wanted her to be more like you.

MARFA

Play us one more song.

BRONZE

I'm going to the Orchestra today. I don't feel well ...

MARFA touches HIS heart center, then exits.

*BRONZE takes the poem and gently places it in HIS coffin. HE finds the painting, and HE finishes SARAH'S portrait to the best of HIS ability. HE looks at it, kisses it, and gently places it in the coffin. The coffin lid must remain open. *HE somehow must give it a boat-like appearance.*

BRONZE and THE VIOLIN

(BRONZE sings the words. As HE sings HE rubs the bottled river water onto HIS face, hair, arms, hands, etc. THE VIOLIN hums the melody)

*The water is wide, I cannot get o'er
Neither have I wings to fly
Give me a boat that can carry two
And both shall cross my true love and I
I lean'd my back against an oak
Thinking it was a mighty tree
But first it bent and then it broke
So did my love prove false to me
I put my hand in some soft bush
Thinking the sweetest flow'are to find
I prick'd my finger to the bone
O love is handsome and love is kind*

*Sweet as a jewel when it is new
But love grows old and waxes cold
And fades away like the morning dew
The water is wide, I cannot get o'er
Neither have I wings to fly
Give me a boat that can carry two
And both shall cross my true love and I
(*The Water is Wide, Cecil Sharp, 1906)*

BRONZE and THE VIOLIN face one another, and hold hands for a few beats. HE tenderly kisses HER cheek.

Lights slowly rise on ROTHSCHILD and a weak and fragile BRONZE at the Orchestra

ROTHSCHILD

It's you

BRONZE

I can't believe I'm here, either. I'm sick, Rothschild. *(pause)* I know it's a lot to ask of you, but please forgive me.

HE takes MARFA'S prayer beads out of HIS pocket and offers them to ROTHSCHILD

ROTHSCHILD

What's this?

BRONZE

Marfa's prayer beads *(hands them to ROTHSCHILD)*

ROTHSCHILD

No, you should keep them.

BRONZE

I want you to have them. *(quietly)* I don't need them anymore.

ROTHSCHILD

(takes them) Are you sure?

BRONZE

Marfa always liked you. You said she was one of the few people in this town who offered you kindness. She would want you to have them.

ROTHSCHILD

That's very sweet of you/

BRONZE

Please also take them as a token of apology. I always treated you so poorly.

ROTHSCHILD

(takes HIS hand) Are you well enough to be at the Orchestra? Should I take you home to rest?

BRONZE

I'm not well enough to be at the Orchestra. But, I need to make music.

ROTHSCHILD

We are fortunate to have you back, Bronze.

Lights dim on ROTHSCHILD. Spotlight on BRONZE who plays THE FIDDLE with emotion. When THE VIOLON's music is finished, HE takes a small bow from HIS seat. HE gives HIS fiddle to ROTHSCHILD, then gently closes HIS eyes.

Lights up on ROTHSCHILD.

ROTHSCHILD holds the fiddle awkwardly at first. HE doesn't know what to do with the bow. HE slowly begins to play. THE VIOLIN hums. To HIS shock and amazement, HE plays THE FIDDLE well.

ROTHSCHILD

Bronze, I am completely mystified. I don't even play the fiddle. Bronze, are you awake? But, for some unexplainable reason, I play your fiddle like a virtuoso. Bronze, can you hear what I'm saying? *(looks around)* The whole orchestra is weeping. They're weeping and applauding, Bronze. Why, I don't even want to play the flute anymore. I only want to play your violin. What do you make of this surreal experience? Bronze? Answer me, please. *(places HIS hands on BRONZE'S heart)* No heartbeat. *(puts HIS ear to BRONZE'S mouth)* You're not breathing either. *(pause)*

*Osheh shalom bimromav
Hu yaaseh shalom aleinu
V'al kol Yisrael. V'imru: Amen.*

HE looks out at the Orchestra who probably do not realize BRONZE died.

They're crying, Bronze. Everyone is crying. Over your music. And yet, they seem to want me to play your song over and over and over and over again.

*Overcome by emotion, HE is rendered speechless.
HE plucks one fiddle string.*

Much better.

HE places an arrangement of stones center stage

Stones last longer than flowers. Like souls, they endure. *(pause)* Farewell, my brother.

Blackout. End of Play.