

THEN WAVES

A play by

Kevin Kautzman

Max Grossman
Abrams Artists Agency
275 Seventh Avenue
26th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(P) 646-461-9372
(E) mgrossman@abramsartny.com

kevinkautzman.com

THEN WAVES

CHARACTERS

BRADY: A Man
CAILIN: A Young Man (Also COLLIN)
RYAN: A Man
THEE: A Woman

SETTING

The hometown in summer. Before.

SCENES

ACT I

Of the Girl with the Golden Hair

SCENE 1

Out of darkness. On a hill.

SCENE 2

On a hill.

SCENE 3

On a hill. Before.

SCENE 4

On a hill.

ACT II

Of the Rifle and the White Rose

SCENE 1

Out of darkness.

SCENE 2

Thee's house.

SCENE 3

On a hill.

SCENE 4

Out of darkness. On a hill.

SCENE 5

Thee's house.

SCENE 6

On a hill.

SCENE 7

On a hill.

THEN WAVES

DEVELOPMENT

THEN WAVES received readings during the summer of 2008 at the Living Theatre (directed by Steve Capra) and Poliglot Theater (directed by John Hansen-Bravetti) in New York and was developed by the Playwrights' Center in their 2009-10 Ruth Easton New Play Series.

PREMIERE

THEN WAVES premiered at the Players' Guild Theater in Canton, Ohio on July 25th, 2010, produced by Jeremy Lewis and directed by Craig Joseph. The production featured the following cast:

Brady.....	Craig Joseph
Cailin/Collin.....	PJ Calac
Ryan.....	Christopher Gales
Thee.....	Maria Work

SELECT AWARDS & HONORS

2011 Pen Center (Finalist)
2010 Michener Fellowship
2009-10 Jerome Fellowship
2009 Yale Drama Series (Finalist)

ACT I

OF THE GIRL WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

SCENE 1

Out of darkness. On a hill. CAILIN on a red bench to the left side of a flag pole. THEE onstage.

THEE

Stabat Mater dolorosa
iuxta crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.¹

CAILIN

Of the girl with the golden hair
I know how to speak.
She inspires me.
She is a muse.
So let's begin with the maiden
to get to where this needs to go.
To get this story to crest
and cascade
and fall.
There was a girl with golden hair I know.
Fine golden hair of that kind
you know. That kind
that glows in soft light
and ripples over broad shoulders
that just a generation ago would have
dug, and hoed, and cut and sewn.
She loved me. I could see it in her eyes.
As young as we are, I could see it there
expanding toward the burst.
She threatened to kiss me once.
Right there behind the counter
where she worked
slinging coffee to hipsters
and men in suits
and hipsters in suits
and the suits were all torn
and worn to burning.
Said she'd use her tongue
when she'd kiss me.
Threatened to get all French

¹ CAILIN: The grieving Mother stood
beside the cross weeping
where her Son was hanging.

CAILIN
(cont.)

on me and embarrass me.
But I don't mind.
I don't mind the French.
I'd like to go to France one day
with the girl with the golden hair.
See the sites.
Tour Paris.
Get sunburned in Nice.
You know:
Quietly screw in random hostels
while strangers sleep nearby
and talk about tripping mushrooms
in Amsterdam but never actually do it
because we've ran out of our weak dollars
and the banks' weak dollars
which we make believe are our own
already tripping.
High on youth
and pheromones.
The smell of her hair.
It's a dream.
But it isn't going to happen now.
We won't see Paris.
We won't quietly screw in hostels
while strangers cover their heads
with too-hard pillows and try to ignore
the damned, horny yanks.
It won't happen
since he's come home all twisted,
since he brought back
with him what he did.
Some devil.
It's going to stop time.
And that's true.
I used to think one day he'd get better.
And since he was the root cause
of all our problems,
my mother's and mine,
his changing would change the world.
We used to think that if we ignored it
for long enough it would go away.
That time would change him.
But it's not true.
That's not how the world works.

CAILIN
(cont.)

The world.
The world. The world. The world.
In the world things
come in bursts,
then they come in waves.
Even time comes that way
and it doesn't always come
the way you'd like it to, I've learned.
And the waves are never what they seem, either.
Let me give you some examples.
A person can wave hello.

THEE

Hello.

CAILIN

A person can wave goodbye.

THEE

Goodbye.

CAILIN

Good. Bye.

THEE

There are tidal waves. And heat waves.

CAILIN

And shock waves.

THEE

And killer waves.

CAILIN

Tubular. Dude.
And you can love waves
or hate them.
If you're surfing.
If you're drowning.
If your boat's going down.
If your boat's going under then
you've got permission to hate them.

CAILIN
(cont.)

You've got every reason to.
Your boat afloat on top
swaying with the waves.
And there are alpha waves.

THEE

And omega waves.

CAILIN

My doleful mother.
Are there omega waves?
It doesn't matter.
I think there are omega waves.
We can't even see those waves.
Light waves.
Sound waves.
But they make everything.
So truth also must come in waves.
If truth's a part of everything
And everything's in waves.
well then, truth too...
first one, then the other,
then waves.
And there are other waves.
Waves of grain.
Golden waves of grain.
And a flag can wave.
Or it can hang limp like...
Limp like no wind will ever blow it again
Like no wind would bother.
Or dare.
Like it's good and dead.
Or it's resting for the next right moment,
and the wind is just its own will
and desire to wave,
and the flag and the wind are one.
If flags could feel
Surely it would be so.
You never see a picture
of a flag hanging limp,
flaccid,
sad.
And someone told me once

CAILIN
(cont.)

that red always symbolizes blood.
And someone else said once
that red's the first color the human
eye catches, when we look at a rainbow.
So if you put those things together
well then there's something about us.
About our instinct.
And blue is the last color we recognize.

THEE

I'm feeling blue.
I'm red with anger.
Green with envy.

CAILIN

White/

THEE

As a ghost.

CAILIN

And feelings can come in short, staccato bursts.

THEE

Or in waves.

CAILIN

And blood can come in rivers.

THEE

Or in waves.

CAILIN

And the rain can fall in sheets.

THEE

And then waves.

CAILIN

And it can surely rain blood,
just as surely as it can rain fire.
God once rained fire.
Now man rains fire.
We have the power.

CAILIN
(cont.)

Some men do.
There are men and then
there are men.
There are two kinds of men
I think.
And between them,
a front.
And the front is the storm
raining water and fire
and building up for something
more. A baptism
of peaceful tidings
when the blood burns
and the rivers flood.
Some vast, gushing
flow. In sheets. In waves.
It might take a long time
before it rains blood.
But if enough bodies fall,
bleeding, and go unburied
then I could see it.
I could see it happening one day
in our lifetime.
And nobody'd be to blame for it.
No. Nobody'd be to blame.
Because we don't know any better.
Do we, Mom?
Do we?

End Scene

SCENE 2

On a hill beneath the flagpole. Summer dusk. There is a red bench. Heat like suffocation. Dry, insomniac air. THEE onstage with CAILIN and BRADY. SHE watches but is not there.

CAILIN

Cuius animam gementem
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.²

I know.

BRADY

I know you know.

CAILIN

Oh.

BRADY

I know how you know. She told you. The bitch knew all along and she told you. She kept it from me. She kept it from me, and she kept it from you. You should hate her as much as I hate her. For lying to you.

CAILIN

She didn't tell me anything.

BRADY

People can deceive you with silence, Cailin.

CAILIN

That's not a lie, though. A lie takes words.

BRADY

You're too young to understand.

CAILIN

No. She didn't tell me anything. So it can't be a lie.

BRADY

Then how did you know?

² BRADY: Through her weeping soul,
compassionate and grieving,
a sword passed.

CAILIN

I've always known.

BRADY

You're lying.

CAILIN

Fuck you. Whatever. You wouldn't even know if I were lying. You're so fucked up anyway. You want to fight everybody.

BRADY chokes CAILIN. HE throws CAILIN to the ground.

BRADY

Told you not to swear, Son.

CAILIN

Go fuck yourself. Fuck. Four letters.

BRADY kicks CAILIN.

BRADY

Used to feel bad kicking my own kid. Always thought that was a kind of sin, a man beating his own kid. Boy or girl. Didn't matter either way. Girl's worse of course. But sometimes you gotta slap a girl or she'll go wild. Might even bring home a... You know. You know in "Araby" they'll kill a girl if she dishonors the family. Saw that happen once. Saw the body. Animals. And my father – well you know how my father was. He was my father. And a man has to make order out of chaos. To mold the shit into something hard. You are my son after all. And you are soft. It's like some goddamned Bible story. Are you Abraham or Cain or Abel or Isaac or what the fuck are you? I can't remember those stories. They're all jumbled in my head. I read them, and they don't make any sense.

And they're ugly to me. The Father makes the universe, and it is fucked and scrambled like eggs. It is not perfect. God is vengeful and eats breakfast at all hours. God has indigestion. And I'm the Tobasco sauce on those eggs. Red and hot. God likes Tobasco. Seven letters. You like Tobasco sauce on your eggs?

CAILIN

No. I fucking hate it. I hate Tobasco. You know that. Anyway I'm a vegan.

BRADY kicks CAILIN.

BRADY

Wrong answer. I might just break a rib if I'm not careful. You're lucky. You're a lucky boy today, Cailin. I brought my dancing boots, but I could have just as easily brought my shitkickers. You know why they're called shitkickers? They can kick the shit right out of somebody if you're not careful. That's logical, isn't it? You know the first thing that happens when someone dies? They lose their bowels. So next time you're watching a movie and they hang a guy, look for the shit on his boots. If it's not there, you know they're lying to you. Cinematic magic.

BRADY nudges CAILIN with his boot.

BRADY leans down and pulls CAILIN's phone from his pocket. HE removes the battery and throws it to one side.

Why don't you stand up for yourself, huh? That a vegan thing too? You eat so many plants you become a fucking plant? Get trod on. Cut down. Hewn. You're the wheat and I'm the scythe. What is it? Well?

CAILIN

You'd kick my ass is why.

BRADY

You're right. And more than that. I would kick more than your ass, Cailin. I'd kick your chest right in. I'd leave your ass alone for the next guy. How'd you like that? This is the real world we're talking about here, Cailin. No books here now. No Mom to coddle you. I'd like to kick a rib right through you and maybe gnaw on the fucker. A rib's really Biblical, isn't it? Break a rib off and feed it to your fucking mother with potatoes. She's a meat and potatoes kind of a woman. Don't know how you ended up getting shot out of her. Your mom gave birth to a plant. It's Garden of Eden time here... Genesis. Old Testament. Raining blood and fire.

How'd you like that, if I rained blood and fire, Cailin? I can do it. I raise my goddamned hand and set it upon you, the heavens part... and... Fuck it.

You know I brought you here to ask you a question? That was all. I didn't mean it all to come out now like this. Through my goddamned boots. But there it goes again. Here it comes. Right out of my best dancing boots.

Yee. Haw.

CAILIN

Stop. Stop please.

BRADY

Oh I'll stop. Give me a rib and I'll stop. You've got an extra one? Or was it Eve who's got an extra one. I can't remember. It was so long ago since it happened, and anyway: I wasn't there to see it.

BRADY kicks CAILIN.

Just one little rib, Cailin. Give it up.

CAILIN

Can't give you any, Brady. They're inside my abdomen.

BRADY

Oh. Oh right. Well answer my question then.

CAILIN

Brady/

BRADY

Call me Dad.

CAILIN

Dad.

BRADY

Daddy.

CAILIN

Daddy.

BRADY

Pappa. Pa. Fucking call me Pappy.

CAILIN

Pappa. Pa. Pappy.

BRADY

So here's my question. It's going to sound a little bit funny, Son. It's going to sound like it's not me talking. You know?

CAILIN

Yeah.

BRADY

"Yeah" what?

Yeah yes. CAILIN

“Yes” what? BRADY

Yes, Sir. Dad. CAILIN

Pappy. BRADY

Pappy. CAILIN

BRADY
My question is: did you ever love me? Ever once in all these years?

You think about it. You think about it really hard. I want to see blood drip from your ears and brow from thinking so hard. And then you open that mouth of yours. And you spit it out. Because you’re not leaving until you say one way or another. And I’m going to look into your eyes. And I’ll see if you’re lying.

And I’ve never been able to stand a fucking liar.

End Scene

SCENE 3

On a hill beneath the flagpole. Summer dawn. Before. No red bench. Crisp air. No wind. BRADY wears fatigues. RYAN is dressed for a jog.

BRADY

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta
mater Unigeniti!³

“Flag Code 8a: The flag should never be used as wearing apparel.” So don’t make a hat out of it when you bring it down, Ryan. That would be very bad.

A pause

I find out you make a hat out of this flag, I will not hesitate to kick your tired ass.

RYAN

Don’t think that’ll be a problem.

You think you could kick my ass?

Sorry. That’s not even a question, is it? You being what you are. Me being what I am.

BRADY

Don’t think so, no. Me being what I am.

RYAN

Yeah.

Nice morning.

Going to rain.

BRADY

Looks like it.

RYAN

Not yet though.

BRADY

Nah.

³ RYAN: O how sad and afflicted
was that blessed
Mother of the Only-begotten!

RYAN

Think they'll ground your plane?

BRADY

Doubt it.

RYAN

If they do, call me. We'll get something to eat.

How's Thee?

BRADY

Good. N' they won't ground it unless there's lightning. There won't be any lightning. So they won't ground her.

RYAN

You're right. It'd be really weird if there were lightning so early. I've never seen that. Don't know why that is.

BRADY

It's the heat. Sun has to be out. Heats the earth. That's it I think. I'm not a scientist.

RYAN

Maybe the lightning needs to sleep.

BRADY

Maybe.

RYAN

I love sleeping. Gotta admit it. Might be my favorite thing, honestly.

BRADY

National pastime. Why do you think people love watching baseball? Puts me right the fuck out. Now playing baseball, that I can do. With beer.

RYAN

Your flight leaves...?

BRADY

Noon. Noonish. Around noon.

RYAN

Sure.

BRADY

German word for lightning. That's a good crossword word. Remember German class?

RYAN
 Sure. Achtung mein Soldaten.

BRADY
 What is it? German word for lightening.

RYAN
 Can't recall. Never use my German.

BRADY
 Wish to hell they would have taught us Arabic. That'd be handy.

RYAN
 What's the word?

BRADY
 Blitz. Like football. Or Blitzkrieg.

RYAN
 That's funny.

BRADY
 Not really.

RYAN
 Funny like coincidence. Not funny like "funny."

BRADY
 Right. Coincidental. Funny like a toothache. Funny like someone else's toothache is funny.

RYAN
 German word for someone else's toothache...

BRADY
 Schadenfreude. I remember that one. Thirteen letters.

What? I'm not stupid. I'm fucking vulgar, but I'm not stupid. I do crosswords.

RYAN
 Brady?

BRADY
 Yeah.

RYAN
What are we waiting for up here?

BRADY
We're not waiting.

RYAN
No?

BRADY
We're watching that flag wave up there.

RYAN
Okay. Is there anything else we're doing? I mean it's a nice view, don't get me wrong.

BRADY
Just taking in the air. The sweet, sweet air of our home town. Don't you ever do that?

RYAN
No.

BRADY
Oh, Ryan. You don't know what you're missing. This air is a healing balm, my friend. Breathe enough of it and the past dies. So does the future. It's... true enough. I say so. So it's true enough. Come on. Take a deep breath with me.

RYAN
Right. I'm not going to disagree with you today. Not today.

BRADY
I am a goddamned king here. Or at least a prince.

RYAN
Yeah.

BRADY
So are you, Ryan.

RYAN
Nah. Not really.

BRADY

No. You are. You just don't see it. You are. You're just like a little goddamned king. Think about it. You've got your queen. You'll have a prince one day if you want. Or a princess. You've got your jesters. And your servants. Your waiters and waitresses. Erna and Betty at the diner. Sure they're not much to look at, but there they are. Serving you eggs at all hours of the day. How much work do you really do? I mean real work. Come on, Rexeisen. I know you know what I mean. A real day's work.

RYAN

What's a real day's work?

BRADY

If you're not sweating, it's not. You're just shuffling money around. Which is another guy's real day's work. Somewhere.

RYAN

Not much. No not much at all then. I do a lot of shuffling.

BRADY

And you have everything you could ever want. Really. Within reason.

RYAN

Sure. I guess.

BRADY

Your family's pretty well off. Not everybody's doing so well. Just don't take it for granted. Is what I'm saying.

RYAN

I make a point of not taking anything for granted, Brady.

But we're not that well off, anyway. Not compared to some people in Chicago. Or New York or London. You ever been to New York or London?

BRADY

Don't change the subject. You ever been hungry?

RYAN

Sure. I get hungry.

BRADY

No. I mean really hungry.

RYAN

No then. I guess no.

You're well off then. BRADY

A pause

How's your son? RYAN

Cailin? BRADY

You have another one? RYAN

Just the one. BRADY

Sure. So how is he? RYAN

He's I don't know. BRADY

How can you not know? RYAN

BRADY
He's twelve now. I don't know. He's not a child. He's not a teenager. He's not a man.
He's not a boy. He's nothing.

RYAN

Well he's something.

BRADY

I suppose.

RYAN

Sure. You just don't know what.

BRADY

That's right. You know Cailin's not even his real name.

RYAN

Huh. I didn't. What's his real name?

BRADY

Cailin's a girl's name. Collin's his real name. He didn't like it. Kept calling himself Cailin. So we called him Cailin.

RYAN

Is that right?

BRADY

That's right. Nobody knows, anyway. It's not like we're ever, you know, in Ireland. It's not like I'm fucking dancing with leprechauns on a regular basis. And even the Irish here don't know Irish anymore. It runs in the family, this thing with names... His mother's the same way. Thee's not her first name. S'her middle name, and it's not even her whole middle name – it's an abbreviation of her middle name: "Theona." It's like a curse or a disease or something. You're given a name, I say stick with it. My name is Brady. Not Bradwilliams Esquire Dumpkins. Brady is my goddamned name, and that's good enough.

RYAN

What's Thee's first name?

BRADY

Look at that. She's a beauty, isn't she? A beautiful thing a flag in the wind.

RYAN

What is it?

BRADY

Fucking ask her yourself, you're so curious.

A pause

RYAN

That flag is not waving. It's like a limp... You know what. We can't be watching it wave if it's not waving, Brady.

BRADY

Use your imagination.

RYAN

I'm better in reality. I do well in reality, Brady. You can keep the imagination.

BRADY shakes the flagpole.

It's not working, Brady. Stop it.

BRADY shakes harder.

Brady!

RYAN

Fuck.

BRADY

BRADY sucks his thumb.

What?

RYAN

Blister. Broke my goddamned blister.

BRADY

What blister?

RYAN

Goddamned pole broke a blister. Blister from carrying too much goddamned weight for too long. You'll recall I just moved my wife into a new place.

RYAN

Yes, I was there. I lifted a few boxes.

BRADY

Did you sweat any?

RYAN

Shut up.

BRADY

Goddamned motherfucking cocksucking pole.

RYAN

It flapped a little. Not really a wave. More of a flap. But it flapped.

BRADY

Bullshit.

RYAN

I saw it.

BRADY

You're just saying that to ameliorate my distress.

RYAN

No. It really did.

Right there. You can see it moved a little.

It's not so bad up here. The view's great. Real...

BRADY

Real what?

RYAN

Natural.

BRADY

Pastoral. The word you're looking for is "pastoral." Eight letters.

RYAN

No. I meant to say "natural." Since when do you tell me what word I'm looking for?

BRADY

Since now I guess.

RYAN

I meant to say "natural." Seven letters.

BRADY

Well it sure is that. Nothing but the rolling hills, smell of sweet grass...

RYAN

And a flag that won't wave.

BRADY

And us.

RYAN

And us. Up too early.

BRADY

Fuck that. You're going home to bed after this. I'm getting on a fucking plane for the desert. IEDs. Endless heat. Babylonian heat. Real Babylonian heat. I sweat blood over there for your tired ass.

I'm sorry.

RYAN

It's all right.

BRADY

It's not all right. I should have taken Thee into the woods when I was sixteen. After the junior prom. She was drunk enough. I could have hitched her over my shoulder and walked to Montana with her. Could have built a little shack out there and farmed beats and made babies. Any recruiter comes nearby, we'd shoot him and ask questions later. "Pay for college." Bam. "Great training." Blam. "Professional skills." Blam. "Service. Responsibility. Duty." Blam. Blam. Blam.

RYAN

Brady. It's all right.

BRADY

It's not all right. I'll tell you when it's all right.

RYAN

Okay. Okay, Brady.

BRADY

So we better do what we came to do. Lower this halfway. That's called half-staff. Let me show you.

BRADY does. RYAN watches.

First you raise it to the peak.

RYAN

Yeah.

BRADY

Shut up and listen. First you raise it to the peak, then you lower it one half the distance from the peak to the/

RYAN

I'm not going to pretend I can give you any advice about this. This fighting. I can't imagine what you see over there. I listen to the news. These wars/

BRADY

I said shut up. I'm/

RYAN

Nobody has any idea what's going on.

This war. It's never going to end. It's like a game you can't win, because the rules keep changing, and/

BRADY

Up the fuck shut, Ryan! You're so used to your own voice you don't know how to listen anymore. All you want to hear is you, and you bitching about people who talk too much anyway. We've got no end of people in this goddamned country willing to talk about how the next guy talks too much. Meanwhile, the rest of us are doing the dirty work because we're too damned dumb to stand up ourselves... or we need the check or something. We get sucked in. There's so much want, and they're right there to fill the void. But there's a price. Sure as shit there's a price. Just shut your mouth for once while I teach you how to do this thing. This simple thing here we came here to do.

RYAN

Fine.

BRADY lowers the flag.

BRADY

Have to do this every so often. It's not fun. You got to get up early and come out here. Nobody pays you for it. I volunteered to do it. Now it's your job. It's not rocket science, but if it doesn't get done, it doesn't get done. And that's not right, a thing like this going undone.

RYAN

Right.

BRADY

You watching? You can never let this touch the ground. Never. Flag Code 8b: "The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground." You know how many times I see somebody with a flag on their sweater? Think that sweater touches the ground? I'm guessing it does. And floor mats. And place mats. And bumper stickers. Everybody wants to wave the flag. Everybody wants a piece of it. Everyone thinks they deserve it.

It's a respect thing. You can't let this flag touch the ground.

RYAN

Yes. I know that. Everybody knows that. I'm not an idiot.

BRADY

Yeah. You better feel it though. Do you feel it?

RYAN

Sure. I feel it.

BRADY

I don't believe you.

RYAN

What do you want from me, Brady? Want me to shoot myself in the foot? Would that prove something for you?

BRADY

Sure. Let me see you do it. I want to see you bleed. Can a guy who's never done a real day's work actually bleed, I wonder? Go on. Where's your gun?

RYAN

I don't own a gun.

BRADY

Liar. You own a gun.

RYAN

I seriously do not own a gun, Brady. It's not a crime. I'm not in a militia or anything. What do you think I do in my spare time? Do I look like I hunt grouse? I am actually frightened of grouse.

BRADY

Seriously? No gun?

RYAN

Never fired one.

BRADY

Well you aren't about to shoot yourself in the foot with a pissy look, are you?

Just don't ever let it touch the ground, is all I'm saying.

You're thinking something. I can tell.

RYAN

Nah.

BRADY

What are you thinking?

RYAN

I'm thinking it's weird that we should lower a piece of fabric because somebody has died. It just seems like... like nothing. Like rolling a boulder uphill to let it fall down again. An empty symbol. What's that...?

You asked.

BRADY

It's a respect thing. And the word you're looking for is "Sisyphean."

RYAN

Sure.

BRADY

Nine letters. In case you're wondering. Means you may as well give up and get friendly with the boulder, dipshit.

It's a bit funny, though. You're right. I admit that.

RYAN

Sure. But not "funny" funny.

BRADY

I wish there were a bench here. Some place we could sit. I'd sit up here. And I'd think. Maybe I'd make something.

RYAN

What would you make?

BRADY

I don't know. A poem. Some kind of fucking poem about nature.

RYAN

You should write haiku. It's all about word count. You love to count things so much. Take advantage of it.

BRADY

I got started counting dead people. I suppose it transferred somewhere over the Atlantic. Bodies. Then crosswords. You know the most important time counting matters?

RYAN

Taxes?

BRADY

Fuck taxes. When you have a kid. Ten fingers. Ten toes. One dick... that's presuming it's a boy, needless to say. One follows the other.

RYAN

Needless to say.

BRADY

If only there were a bench. I'd sit here and write haiku. When I get back I'll do it.

RYAN

You should write the city about that. The bench.

BRADY

You'd be better doing that than me. My handwriting is terrible. You can just about imagine my handwriting. Makes me look like a kind of fucking sociopath.

RYAN

Sure. I will.

BRADY

That'll be nice.

RYAN

What color?

BRADY

What color what?

RYAN

Bench.

BRADY

Red.

RYAN

A red bench then.

BRADY

That'll be nice.

Think they lowered the flags when that fucker killed John?

RYAN

Kennedy? Of course. He was president.

BRADY

One guy didn't kill Kennedy. You know that. A whole cabal of fuckers killed Kennedy. I meant Lennon. Now that guy was a sociopath. Mark David Chapman. He was a nut. You think they lowered the flag for Lennon?

RYAN

I doubt it. He wasn't American, remember? If I'm not mistaken he was British. That was part of their schtick, wasn't it?

BRADY
 Yeah. You're right. Still...

RYAN
 He was practically a communist.

BRADY
 Still. Wrote some good songs.

RYAN
 Yeah. Well. You're the patriot. You tell me.

BRADY
 Wrote some nice songs anyway. So you think you can manage it? Lowering this when the Governor says so? Or the President?

RYAN
 It's not surgery.

BRADY
 Nah. You'll be all right. Might even get a chance to bring it down for me. I get blown up I'll be a hero.

RYAN
 I doubt that'll happen.

BRADY
 Why?

RYAN
 Everybody knows you can't die, Brady.

BRADY
 Can't I?

RYAN
 I can't see it happening.

BRADY
 Huh.

BRADY kicks the dirt. Lights a cigarette.
 Gives one to RYAN. THEY smoke.

We do need the rain.

RYAN

It's coming, though. Sure as you're going. It's coming. Any time now. Then that flag's going to wave. And the grass is going to grow. And girls will take their shirts off in wild abandon, yea verily they shall.

(singing)

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the bra...

(no longer singing)

And we'll forget about the past. It's going to be great. Just you watch. Any day now it'll come.

BRADY

I don't mean any goddamned make-believe rain. I mean a real rain, Ryan.

RYAN

Can't it be both?

BRADY

I'm leaving. I've got shit to do before I fly back to our very own oil-soaked hell, and I don't want to listen to another one of your goddamned speeches. Tits. What good are tits if you're dead?

RYAN

You are a poet warrior, Brady.

BRADY

You coming with me?

RYAN

No. Going to take a walk. Think a bit.

BRADY

Fine. I'll see you when I get back.

THEY share a moment. RYAN might want a hug. BRADY definitely does not want a hug. THEY settle for a shake.

RYAN

You've got a cut on your forehead.

BRADY

Do I?

RYAN

Yeah. Right there.

BRADY

Huh. Don't know what from. That's fucking odd. Could be I'm just worried. Worried my head to bleeding. That can't happen, can it?

RYAN hands BRADY a handkerchief made to look like the flag.

Would you care to tell me what the fuck this is?

RYAN

May as well use it. It's what I've got. You want an apology? I own a tacky handkerchief made to look like the flag. Sue me.

BRADY

Well this is really fucking ironic.

RYAN

You want an apology?

BRADY

Wouldn't hurt.

RYAN

It's just a handkerchief. It's not like it's a hat. It's not like I'm wearing it.

Lighten up.

It's my flag too.

BRADY wipes his head. There is blood.

BRADY

Weird. Don't know what that's from.

RYAN

Maybe you've been thinking too hard.

BRADY

That isn't it. And that's not funny.

BRADY offers the handkerchief back to RYAN.

RYAN

Keep it.

Thanks.

BRADY

THEY put out their cigarettes.

RYAN

Feel like I should salute you or something.

BRADY

If you salute me, I'll bitch-slap you.

Know what I'm going to do with this handkerchief?

RYAN

What?

BRADY

I'm going to burn it.

RYAN

Just as long as you don't drop it on the ground.

BRADY

If it's just a handkerchief, then it shouldn't matter. I'm going to burn it right now. Blood and all. It's all the same to me. Doesn't mean anything. It's not the real flag. Goddamn it, Ryan. Why do you own this, and why'd you have to show it to me now?

RYAN

You were bleeding.

BRADY

Yeah, well...

RYAN

It's your choice, tough guy.

BRADY

Yeah. I suppose that's the fucking point, isn't it? Freedom.

RYAN

Freedom.

BRADY holds his lighter underneath the handkerchief. RYAN watches. BRADY does not burn the handkerchief.

RYAN
(cont.)

Can't do it?

BRADY

Can't or won't.

RYAN

You tell me.

BRADY

You know people think it's never okay to burn a flag. That it's a crime. That's not true. If the flag's worn down. If it's worn out and beyond repair, you burn it. You burn it and you bury the ashes.

Take this back. I don't want it. It's like a nightmare. It's a fucking bad dream.

BRADY hands RYAN the handkerchief.

RYAN

How's that flag up there look?

BRADY

Looks fine to me.

RYAN

You want to let me know when it's okay to burn it?

BRADY

Yeah. Whatever. If it's in tatters. Falling to pieces. And can't be sewn together again. Then you burn it. But you don't burn it in protest. Then I would have to kick your ass.

RYAN

You let me know when it's okay, then.

BRADY

Might not be here to say. Why do you think you're learning how to half-staff it?

RYAN

Yeah, well. If you get shot. And killed. If it turns out Bradwilliams Esquire Dumpkins can actually die... which I doubt... come back as a ghost and tell me when it's okay. Because otherwise that flag will fly until it's like a string of red, white, and blue fishing line.

BRADY

You don't think I'll have better things to do after I'm dead than come back and bother you?

RYAN

Frankly. No. No I don't.

BRADY

You're probably right.

Though a man may avail himself of the tide, for she is constant, a man may not avail himself of the wind. For the wind is fickle.

Later, Ryan.

RYAN

Later, Brady.

BRADY exits. RYAN salutes him behind his back. HE looks up at the flag.

Wave! Goddamn it. Wave!

End Scene

SCENE 4

A picnic on the hill near the red bench. BRADY has returned. HE and CAILIN throw a football back and forth.

RYAN

Quae maerebat et dolebat
pia mater cum videbat
nati poenas incliti.⁴

BRADY

That's no way to catch. You're fifteen now, right? Catch like you're fifteen. I was on the varsity squad when I was fifteen!

CAILIN

Told you I don't know how, really.

THEE

Food's up. Come and take a seat.

BRADY

Fine. That's fine. We'll throw later.

CAILIN

Sorry.

BRADY

Nothing to be sorry about. You got your mom's hands.

THEE

I've got nice hands.

BRADY

Nice hands, yeah. But you don't know how to catch a football with them.

THEE

You ever try to throw me one?

BRADY

Not in my recollection, no.

⁴ THEE: Who mourned and grieved,
the pious Mother, with seeing
the torment of her glorious Son.

Then how do you know? THEE

Just do. I can see it in the way you move. BRADY

You're the expert. THEE

Goddamned right I'm the expert. BRADY

A pause

Good burgers.

Thanks. THEE

Been talking to Dr. Berg lately. Down at the hospital. BRADY

That's good. It's good to talk. THEE

He's a righteous fuck. BRADY

I really wish you wouldn't. THEE

What? Swear? Fuck? Fuckity fuckity fuck. BRADY

In front of Cailin. THEE

Cailin can take it. Can't you Cailin? He's a big boy now, isn't he? BRADY

I can take it. CAILIN

BRADY

See. The kid can take it. Eats nothing but potatoes and corn, but he can take the F bomb. Used to be a man would go out with his kid and you'd all eat sausages together. Just sausages all day. No bread if the bread were stale. No, you'd just eat the wieners, maybe with some catsup if you were lucky. Then you'd play baseball in sweltering heat. Now it's tofurkey and fucking bean sprouts and goddamned figure skating faggetry. Or debate. Or whatever the fuck you do.

CAILIN

Sorry.

BRADY

Don't fucking apologize to me. Jesus. You really don't get it. You're not hearing a word I'm saying. It's all a blur to you.

CAILIN

I hear you.

THEE

Leave him alone.

BRADY

Fine. Let's just enjoy our little picnic.

You know that bench there? I got that bench put there. Had the City do it. I said, "We need a bench up there on that hill beside the flag at the vet's cemetery. People need a place to sit in case they want to sit and think about the sacrifice that's gone into making this country free." You think they'd argue with that? Somebody like me says something like that to those queers down at city hall. They jump right up. Even Rexeisen with his gimp leg jumps.

I'm a goddamned war hero.

How's the tofurkey? It better be good. It cost enough.

CAILIN

You want me to be honest?

BRADY

I hate a liar.

CAILIN

It's a bit rubbery.

BRADY

It's goddamned motherfucking tofurkey, Cailin! What do you want, a miracle? Christ on crutches you can be dumb for a smart kid. You're a smart kid, aren't you? That's what your mom says. I'm starting to wonder.

THEE

Brady.

BRADY

Thee.

THEE

Please.

BRADY

Thank you. What? What do you want?

THEE

Can we just have a nice meal for once?

BRADY

Sure. Sure. Just let me see him catch one pass first. That's all I want.

THEE

We're eating.

BRADY

No. Right now. I want to see it.

THEE

Not now.

BRADY

Yes now. Goddamn it. Stand up.

CAILIN

Sure. Sure.

BRADY

Now when you go... you're going to run a curl route. You know what that is?

CAILIN

I'm guessing I curl around.

BRADY

You curl around. That's right. You hike the ball to me. You run like you're heading for the end zone. That's a fly pattern. But you only run for ten yards or so. So about to that rock over there. Then you quick turn around. And I hit you with the pass.

THEE

You aren't hitting anybody with any pass, Brady.

BRADY

It's a goddamned expression, Thee. It means he catches the ball and gets a goddamned first down in the goddamned clutch, and we go on to win the goddamned father-son Superbowl.

CAILIN

Okay. Let's just get this over with.

BRADY

That's the spirit.

CAILIN hikes the ball to BRADY, then runs the route out of sight. BRADY throws the ball.

BRADY

Fuck! Cailin, that was horrible.

THEE

Oh Jesus. Are you okay?

CAILIN returns with his face bloodied.

Oh Christ.

BRADY

You are a girl. You're a big goddamned girl, Cailin.

THEE

Shut up, Brady. You're not helping.

THEE wipes CAILIN's face with a towel.

BRADY

You've got a big future in volleyball, I think. Or synchronized swimming. I can see it now. I always wanted a figure skater in the family.

THEE

Why do you have to be such a bastard?

A pause

BRADY

You know you shouldn't call me a name like that. I don't like it, Thee. I'm liable to get mad. Clean him up. It's just a nosebleed. I'm going to finish my real dead cowmeat burger.

Just pinch it over the nose and sit down.

Sit down, I said!

THEY do.

Hurts?

CAILIN

Nnn.

BRADY

Should hurt. You missed the pass. Cost us the father-son Superbowl.

CAILIN

Sorry.

BRADY

Stop apologizing.

CAILIN

Nnn.

BRADY

You done bleeding?

CAILIN

Nnn.

THEE

Maybe it's broken.

BRADY

Maybe. Want me to look?

Nnnhnn.

CAILIN

Okay, I'll look.

BRADY

BRADY does. HE takes the towel and holds it.

No. It's not broken. If it's not a steady drip, it's not broken.

CAILIN

Kay.

BRADY keeps the towel away from CAILIN.

BRADY

You want this?

THEE

Don't be/

BRADY

Don't be what? Tough?

THEE

Cruel.

BRADY

Cruelty is raising your son to be a pussy. You want this back, Cailin? Come and get it from me.

CAILIN sits.

You don't want it then?

Fine. I'll keep it. A souvenir.

You know the last time I saw this much blood
 Somebody'd had their
 Well you know how it is
 Or you can imagine
 They'd lied to us
 This person lied to us
 Like a snake
 A snake in the tall grass
 or in a hole in the desert

BRADY
(cont.)

That bites you when you walk past
And you didn't mean anything by it
You were just walking.
You just happened to stroll into his home.
Maybe there was somewhere you needed to be,
but it doesn't matter to this snake.
He's going to bite you,
no questions asked.
And this man lied to us
just like that.
He was one of them.
Or he was in collusion
with them.
Same difference.
So we took a knife
and we cut the tongue a quarter inch from the top
To... you know... bifurcate it... to split it in two
like a big, slippery strawberry.
We needed to make a point
and show the guy how much he cost us
in lives.
I could name names.
But they wouldn't mean
anything to you.
Like they didn't mean
anything to him.
Good, normal names
Like Smith. And Pettybone.
And Walter.
But the fucking guy
Like an animal
just wouldn't stop screaming
after we cut his tongue a bit.
Just a bit.
And if you've never heard somebody screaming in
in that goddamned
sand-nigger jabber
well you don't know fear then
Because it scared me then
Like he was laying down
A curse on my head
You know?
You ever heard anyone
swear at you

BRADY
(cont.)

from the bottom of their lungs?
Except for me, I mean.
Nah you don't know.
Blood slipping down his white shirt
And all.
And his words muffled
By the blood
I don't speak it anyway
But I could tell he couldn't
Pronounce everything
He wanted to.
The Ls coming out like
Lisping Ts.
The holy name of almighty God
Spit out in blood
Lisping... and incorrect.
And that made him angrier.
So we cut it off.
Right off.
And it flopped on the dusty floor
Once. Twice. Three times.
And once that's happened
Once you've cut off
somebody's tongue
You've got to shoot the guy
quickly after that.
It isn't right to let somebody
live like that for very long.
And suffer.
And anyway, you don't want
Anyone to find out you did that.
There would be
repercussions.
And you've got to burn the body
Or hide it.
After you've killed everybody else
who saw what'd happened.
Or might have seen.

It's like a goddamned nightmare, really.

It's like a goddamned bad dream.

End of Act

ACT II

OF THE RIFLE AND THE WHITE ROSE

SCENE 1

Out of darkness. BRADY delivers. CAILIN stands nearby, shown and acting when mentioned as described.

RYAN

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?⁵

BRADY

Fuck off, faggot.
I'm talking here.
What is that gibberish anyway?
If I wanted to go to church
I'd go to church.
Jesus H Christ Crucified.
You talk a lot.
Get out of here, I said.
Out. O. U. T. Three letters.

RYAN exits.

Of the rifle and the white rose
I don't know how to speak.
Well. I was never very good at it.
I know words. I read words.
But saying them is hard.
In a way that means anything.
You understand? I know you do.
Doctor. Doctor Doctor Doctor.
You have a nice place here.
A real nice place.
I have a son.
A son. A son. A son.
His name is Collin.
But we call him Cailin.
Cailin means "girl" in Irish
we realized eventually.
Don't ask me how that happened
Maybe that's the problem
Maybe that's why he's

⁵ THEE: Who is the man who would not weep
if seeing the Mother of Christ
in such agony?

BRADY
(cont.)

I think he's
He's a fucking vegan.
Whatever that is.
I used to think it was
A band.
But it's not a band.
He won't eat honey.
Honey! Jesus.
Nobody's oppressing the bees.
Unreal.
Well that's beside the
the point here.
The fucking point here is that
after that night
in the desert
with the cut off, flopping tongue.
The night I told you about
with the snake
You remember
Doctor. Doctor Doctor Doctor.
Of course you remember.
Well that night after
the aforementioned incident
I had a dream
And in the dream
Collin was there
Dressed like a regimental soldier
from the Revolution.
It's funny
But our family wasn't
here for that war. We
we came long after the
Revolution. But that
doesn't matter
does it?
Doesn't matter.
Cailin who is Collin
stands there
And he has a
He has a rifle over one shoulder
And a white rose in his other hand
And I hate him for the white rose
I want the rose to be red.

BRADY
(cont.)

So he squeezes the rose
And the blood pours forth
from his hand
first a drop
then a steady flow
then
It just flows
And now he holds the flower to his teeth
and bites down on the flower
and it is all red now.
And this means something to me.
This tells me something
Something very important
Something immense and real
and powerful
and true
And it was then that I decided
to kill him.
Right in my dream.
And I woke up
Knowing he would have to die.
And waking
In my own sweat
Bolt upright in bed
I began to think
about killing him.
And it was then that I decided how.
And it was then that I decided where.
And it was poetry.
It was beautiful poetry
written in blood.

End Scene

SCENE 2

THEE's house. SHE sits at a table and silently prays the Rosary. RYAN is there.

BRADY
 Quis non posset contristari,
 piam matrem contemplari
 dolentum cum Filio?⁶

THEE
 Thanks for coming.

RYAN
 No problem. It's no problem at all.

THEE
 Have a seat. You want some coffee?

RYAN
 It's almost dark, Thee.

THEE
 Yeah. Yeah I suppose. I've got decaf.

RYAN
 It's all right. No, but thank you.

THEE
 All right.

RYAN
 What is it?

THEE
 Well we've known each other for awhile, haven't we?

RYAN
 A long time.

THEE
 And you've known Brady even longer.

⁶ UNSPOKEN: Who would not have compassion
 on beholding the devout mother
 suffering with her Son?

I have. RYAN

And you know how he is. THEE

I know how he is. RYAN

How would you say he is? THEE

I'd say he's wild. And he wants structure. And when he can't get it, he gets pissed off very quickly. RYAN

And now he's got no structure. THEE

Nope. RYAN

So. THEE

So everything's chaos to him. RYAN

I want to divorce him. THEE

I'm sorry. RYAN

I'm afraid of him. THEE

It's okay. RYAN

I'm afraid of what he'll do. THEE

Okay. RYAN

THEE

I never wanted
never wanted to be
you know
afraid of my own husband. But it's here. Here's this day. And my mother was afraid of
hers. And I'm pretty sure grandma was afraid of grandpa. It doesn't stop, does it?

RYAN

What are you afraid of? Of him doing, I mean?

THEE

Well he screams in the night. He wakes up and he's sweating. He wakes up and he
shouts sometimes. Sometimes he screams the word "Jonah." Just that one name.
"Jonah." It doesn't mean anything on its own, but there's more. He's obsessed with the
Bible. He reads it. He never used to read it. Thumbs through the Old Testament. I tell
him he should look at the New Testament. But he won't. Says he's not interested in a
god who'd eat granola before a steak. He says, "God isn't a pussy. God's mean." Says
he won't even let the other guy hit his first cheek. Says that's not natural. Things like
that. He's angry. And other times he'll mumble and mutter awhile before he wakes up,
and then smack bolt upright he's sitting, his eyes as wide as the sun. And he's staring
and seeing things, and I know I can't see those things. I can't go there. And I try to
touch him, and he won't be touched. I've got my fingers on his back, and in his hair, and
over his forehead, and he's not feeling a thing. He's seeing something I can't see.
Something I don't think I'd want to see anyway. But he's seeing it. And that makes it
real. And that puts it right in our room too. Some devil. And it scares me.

RYAN

It would scare me too.

THEE

Dr. Berg called.

RYAN

Okay.

THEE

Dr. Berg from the hospital.

RYAN

I know him.

THEE

He says Brady's delusional

RYAN

More than usual?

THEE
 Don't be cute. I'm being serious.

RYAN
 Sorry.

THEE
 He says Brady's delusional, and that he was calling me because he had to now. Because he's been getting worse. For six months now. Steadily worse.

RYAN
 Okay.

THEE
 He thinks I've been lying to him. He thinks I'm a liar.

RYAN
 Are you?

THEE
 No.

RYAN
 Why does he think you're a liar?

THEE
 He thinks I / it's embarrassing.

RYAN
 Just say.

THEE
 He thinks Cailin's not his.

RYAN
 What?

THEE
 He thinks I cheated on him and had Cailin, and all this time I've been pretending that Cailin's his son.

RYAN
 Why does he think that?

THEE
 I don't know. But he does.

RYAN
Do you want me to call Dr. Berg?

THEE
No. It's/

RYAN
What?

THEE
Well Dr. Berg called and said
he said that
you know
for the first time,
Brady could be dangerous.
To us. To all of us.

RYAN
Why didn't they lock him up?

THEE
You can't lock a guy up for nothing. He hasn't actually done anything. Anything really wrong. Since coming back. Anyway they've got him on medicine, so that's supposed to help. But I checked and he's not taking it.

RYAN
Oh.

THEE
Three full bottles in his sock drawer. They just sit there. I've checked. He doesn't take any pills. He takes epinephrine sometime. For no reason. And he goes out all night. I don't even know what he does. I'd be glad if he came home drunk. He's actually harmless when he's drunk. But he doesn't. And he has an edge to him now he didn't have before. He picked up something last time he was over there. Something bad.

RYAN
Maybe it's just a phase, Thee. Brady's always been intense.

THEE
He thinks you're the father.

A pause

RYAN
What?

THEE
He thinks you're Cailin's father.

RYAN
That's ludicrous.

THEE
I know. Don't you tell me. I know.

RYAN
Where are they?

THEE
That's why I called. They're gone. It's been six months since he... and this is the first time Brady's taken Cailin out on his own. They don't ever go out on their own. He doesn't even like Cailin, really. But this afternoon they did. They went out.

RYAN
Where?

THEE
They said mini golf and the batting cages. But that closes at six. Six on a Sunday. And I called down there and nobody's answering. And it's what, eight now? And I'm scared as hell. And Cailin's not answering his phone. And you know... I'm just frightened, Ryan.

RYAN
They're probably out to dinner.

THEE
I said I'd make dinner. There's hardly anyplace Cailin can eat in this town anyway. He's very picky. I've got dinner on. Don't you smell it?

RYAN
Thee. You're panicking.

THEE
You're goddamned right I'm panicking, Ryan. Something's going to happen. I can feel it. And I called you, okay?

RYAN
Okay.

THEE
Do you have any idea where they'd be?

RYAN
No... no I... There is one place I can think of.

THEE
Will you go and look?

RYAN
We should call the police.

THEE
Please. Just go look. If you call the police, it's going to be bad.

RYAN
Okay. Okay, I'll go.

RYAN stands.

THEE
Hold on.

THEE takes a snub-nosed revolver from her
purse.

RYAN
What is this?

THEE
It's a gun.

RYAN
I don't know how to use a gun, Thee. I've never fired a gun.

THEE
It's not complicated. You just pull the trigger.

RYAN
Yeah. Yeah, but/

THEE
Take it.

RYAN
Is it loaded?

THEE
Of course it's loaded. Please hurry.

RYAN takes the gun. HE exits. THEE sits at the table and prays the Rosary.

End Scene

SCENE 3

On a hill beneath the flagpole. Summer dusk. There is a red bench. Heat like suffocation. Dry, insomniac air. THEE is with CAILIN and BRADY. SHE watches but is not there.

BRADY
(with a marching cadence)

Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis
et flagellis subditum.⁷

One two three four five six... you're not counting.

CAILIN
I'm tired.

BRADY
Tired. Shit. That hill is nothing. That hill is nothing at all.

CAILIN
Not nothing.

BRADY
That's a double negative. Oughtn't be using double negatives, Cailin. You don't not wanna do that. Hurr.

CAILIN
Whatever.

BRADY
May as well count along with me. I'm not going to stop marching till you count along with me just once. Count to six. Pick up sticks. Come on, Cailin. You've got it in you. You're almost a man now, practically. Ready. One, two, three...

CAILIN
One, two, three...

BRADY
... four, five, six.

⁷ UNSPOKEN: For the sins of His people
she saw Jesus in torment
and subjected to the scourge.

... four, five, six.

CAILIN

There you go. There you go.

BRADY

Still thinking about studying science?

CAILIN

Yeah.

BRADY

What science then?

CAILIN

Medicine. Or maybe physics.

BRADY

Physics?

CAILIN

Yeah. You know. Newton. Einstein. One thing equals another unless it doesn't.

BRADY

I don't know much about that.

CAILIN

Neither do I. The more I learn the more I don't know.

BRADY

Won't that get expensive? Huh. Well. I know a bit about religion. Now science and religion don't always get along too well, last I heard.

CAILIN

Einstein said that God was there. In the numbers. That's not a direct quote. But he said something like that I'm pretty sure.

BRADY

Six is the devil's number, Cailin. One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven's the number of God.

A six sided thing is a hexagon. Like a witch puts a hex. German word for witch is "Hexe." How do you like that?

You believe in things like that? You believe in witches, Cailin?

Old ugly ladies with the hats?
CAILIN

Yeah. With the hats.
BRADY

Never thought about it. There's Miss Collins. Mom says she's a bitch/
CAILIN

She is a bitch. A crazy old bitch. But watch your mouth.
BRADY

She's not a witch, though.
CAILIN

Nope. Even bitches go to church. She is a devoutly Catholic bitch.
BRADY

I guess I don't know then.
CAILIN

Well think about it. Boil. Bubble.
BRADY

No. I don't believe in witches.
CAILIN

No? Really? I always believed in witches. Keeps the mind honed. Got to watch out for the devil. The devil can come as a woman, Cailin.
BRADY

Right.
CAILIN

So you really don't believe in witches, huh?
BRADY

On Halloween maybe. Sure. On Halloween there're witches.
CAILIN

Are you saying your beliefs change by the day now?
BRADY

I guess. Yeah. That's what I'm saying.
CAILIN

BRADY

You're saying your belief changes when it's convenient? You're saying one day this is my left hand, and the next this is my right hand. You're saying this isn't a football. Is that what you're saying? And that tomorrow it might be a football, or it might be a baseball? You aren't making sense, kid.

CAILIN

I'm saying on Halloween maybe I believe in witches and the day after maybe I don't. Yeah. It makes no sense, but there it is.

BRADY

So you're saying one day the whole world can be one way, and then the next the world just changes. You just change the world the way you believe, willy nilly. Zap. Like a wizard. Or a goddamned politician.

CAILIN

Maybe. Don't know.

BRADY

You'd better figure it right the fuck out, kid. You better figure it right the fuck out or somebody's going to figure it out for you. That's how people get crushed in this world. Stuck behind. They don't figure out their own principles. They let other people do it for them. It's easier. It's easier than thinking.

You going to start thinking about witches, Cailin?

CAILIN

Yes, Sir.

BRADY

Good. That's a start.

Six is the devil's number. That's what they taught me. You learning religion from your mother?

CAILIN

Not so much.

BRADY

She take you to Mass?

CAILIN

Only on Christmas.

BRADY

Is that so?

Yeah. Why are we up here?
 CAILIN

Why do you think she takes you only on Christmas?
 BRADY

Jesus' birthday.
 CAILIN

Jesus has two birthdays.
 BRADY

What?
 CAILIN

Jesus has two birthdays. Christmas and Easter. On Easter He rises from the grave. He is born again. It is His second birthday. Fucker gets two of them. Lucky bastard.
 BRADY

You shouldn't say those things.
 CAILIN

What?
 BRADY

Calling Jesus. You know.
 CAILIN

What are you, the Pope now?
 BRADY

No.
 CAILIN

No what?
 BRADY

No, Sir.
 CAILIN

Can't believe you don't go on Easter. Easter fucking Sunday.
 BRADY

We go on Christmas.
 CAILIN

BRADY

Should go every Sunday.

CAILIN

I know. Are you going to say something to Mom?

BRADY

No.

Look here. This is a flagpole. And down there in that valley is a veteran's cemetery. See the crosses. And the Jew stars.

More crosses than Jew stars. But then there aren't many Jews out here in the boonies, are there?

CAILIN

Why are we here?

BRADY

See that flag? I used to be responsible for that flag. Responsibility, Cailin. Something your mother doesn't know dick all about. Seems like responsibility's gone right out the window. Right out the window with religion. And duty. Nobody knows the meaning of duty.

CAILIN

Huh.

We watched on the news.

BRADY

Oh?

CAILIN

Yeah. All about the war. And the massacre. Heard all about that. They mentioned your name.

BRADY

That wasn't anything. That was overblown. Way the fuck overblown.

CAILIN

Was it the guy with the tongue? The liar?

BRADY

Way overblown, Cailin. The media. They lie.

Yeah. I thought so. CAILIN

Anyone say differently? BRADY

No. No, Sir. CAILIN

Fucking A. BRADY

You ever get scared over there? CAILIN

No. BRADY

How? CAILIN

I just don't. Didn't. BRADY

You're not going back, are you? CAILIN

No. BRADY

Would you if you could? You know? CAILIN

BRADY
 Cailin. I would kill every last one of those motherfucking towelhead sand-nigger cunts if they let me pull the trigger. I would set them up on spikes. I would gut the whole region. Palestine. Israel. The whole deal. I would end it. I would rain fire over the whole fucking mess and let God sort it out if I could.

CAILIN
 Suppose that's why you aren't ever going to be president.

BRADY
 What's that supposed to mean?

CAILIN

Just what I said. You don't even want to be president. Who'd want to be president, anyway? They get shot by some nut. Or they die in office from the stress. Or everybody hates them or tries to measure their/

BRADY

Their what?

CAILIN

You know. There are no secrets when you're president. You don't want to be president. You want to keep your secrets.

BRADY

You don't know me. I'd make a great president. Fuck. Stop acting like you know me all of a sudden.

CAILIN

You're my dad. I know you some.

BRADY

You don't know shit.

I used to lower that flag when it needed to be lowered. When a president dies or a soldier from this state who earns it, the flag gets lowered. It's a sign of respect. You know that word, "respect?" R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Seven letters.

CAILIN

Dad.

BRADY

Dad what?

CAILIN

Yes. I know the word "respect." Seven letters.

Fucking A.

BRADY slaps CAILIN.

Jesus.

BRADY

Jesus is goddamned right. Jesus is goddamned fucking right.

CAILIN

Don't hit me.

BRADY

Don't swear. I told you to watch your fucking mouth.

CAILIN

You swear.

BRADY

I'm an adult.

CAILIN

Don't hit me.

BRADY

I'll hit you when I damned well see fit, Cailin. You give me lip, I'm going to smack you. You lip back, I'll smack the shit out of you.

CAILIN

Don't.

I'm sorry.

BRADY

You're sorry what?

CAILIN

I'm sorry, Sir.

BRADY

I'm glad there's a bench here. It's nice to have a bench. You know I got this bench put here?

CAILIN

Yeah. You mentioned. Really... really nice to have a bench.

BRADY

Actually, Ryan got this bench put here. I didn't really get it done. But I asked Ryan to do it, so it's like I did it in a way. So anyway I fibbed a bit. But that's a harmless white lie, isn't it? Nobody's going to die because of that lie, will they?

CAILIN

No. It's a white lie.

BRADY

You know Ryan? Mr. Rexeisen?

CAILIN

Sure.

BRADY

Well he and I go back a ways. We went to school together.

CAILIN

I didn't know that.

BRADY

It's true. We played varsity football.

CAILIN

Huh.

BRADY

You know I was a receiver? Played varsity ball.

CAILIN

Yeah. That's cool.

BRADY

And Rexeisen was our quarterback. Till he broke his leg. That's why he's got that limp of his. High school ball, would you believe it? Things went to shit after he broke his leg. Second string guy couldn't throw a goddamned pass to save his life. That was my senior year.

CAILIN

I heard about that. You were terrible.

BRADY

I could catch but I couldn't throw.

CAILIN

It's tough.

BRADY

I practiced and practiced and practiced. Finally, last game of the season. We didn't even make five-hundred. But I threw this pass. You should have seen it. Like a goddamned angel this ball was. When it left my fingers, I knew it would hit. Last play of the game. You know that. The situation. And we were down by five. You know how often a team's down by five in football? Not often. But we were. I'm not making this shit up. So I take the snap and it's high. Johnson couldn't find his cock in the shower in the red zone. Anywhere else, he's flawless. We'd get under the posts in the clutch and he started to shake like a dog shitting watermelons. But I got the ball from him clean that snap. And there's this blitz coming in. I have to roll out. I want to roll right but there's

BRADY
(cont.)

no space, so I scramble back. Must be ten yards back I'm running, and I don't know what happens, but all hell breaks loose and I've got a few seconds. Then they're coming at me. Two of them. Two Red Devils from across the river. Our goddamned undefeated rivals. And they're huge. For a minute it's over. You know the feeling. Just defeat. Except I'm in it. I'm the goddamned man with the ball. And I throw it. And it's like it's got wings. The rushers didn't even bother hitting me. I swear to God, Cailin, they turned and watched that ball fly through the air. It wasn't like one of those movies. It was real, and time did stop. Then snap, it's in Wilson's big, dumb hands. He used to play strong safety but had to come over to offense when I got shuffled to quarterback. And there's nobody around him for miles. Other team just stood there in awe. And we scored. Wilson waltzes his big dumb ass into the end zone and we score. And we beat the undefeated team from across the river. My pass was goddamned magic. And it saved the season for the team.

CAILIN

That sounds amazing.

Wish I could have been there.

BRADY

Yeah well. It happened. Anyway Rexeisen sat on the bench and watched me make that play. Then he went on to do business like his daddy. Easy to go into business when your daddy's in business. You've already got capital. "Startup capital" is just another way of saying I know people who've got money, and they're giving it to me to use to fuck over the guy who doesn't know anybody. Nobody in my family knew anybody. And you know what I went on to do. Don't know why I bother to even tell you.

CAILIN

Glad you are.

BRADY

Yeah well. Anyway. Rexeisen got the bench put here. Rexeisen has money. Lots of money. They've always had money, the Rexeizens. Don't lift a finger and it's there. It's in their goddamned fingers. You want to talk about witches. There's witches for you. Witches lift a finger: I'd like that vintage, please. Bang, they've got it. Witches sit around and their money works for them. Interest. I'm interested in how interest works. Nobody's explained that to me. Pretty goddamned supernatural, thanks. Interest. Fuck. You know how glad I was when Rexeisen broke his leg? I really thought it was going to be my season.

Afterwards I thought, "Why didn't I break his leg for him?" And why hadn't I? No imagination. I wouldn't have done it. Not then. But now. Who knows? That's my point. Rexeisen. You've got to realize these guys. They look like they're your friends,

BRADY
(cont.)

but they're not. Not really. They'll put a bench up for you you ask them. But they'll stab you in the goddamned back when you're not looking.

You aren't even listening. You're staring at those crosses down there thinking, "Why am I here right now? Why am I not back home sitting at my computer... or smacked down in front of the television?" Don't lie to me, goddamn it!

You know you're lucky to have a father like me. Really goddamned lucky. All these years I've taken care of you and your mother. I've taken care of the both of you. My work. My money. My goddamned blood.

CAILIN

I know, Dad.

BRADY

Listen. And you're lucky to have a father like me. My father, your grandpa – he used to say, "I should have pulled out and shot you onto the seat. Would have been cheaper."

CAILIN

I'm sorry.

BRADY

Sorry shit. That's what he said. Nothing for you to be sorry about. You're sorry because you have to hear it now. You wouldn't give one damned bit if you'd never heard it.

CAILIN

Yeah. But I know.

BRADY

What do you mean you know?

CAILIN

I mean I know.

BRADY

Never told you before.

CAILIN

Yeah but I know. Is that what we're doing up here? You want to talk about your father?

BRADY

Nah.

What are we doing up here?
CAILIN

Gonna play catch again.
BRADY

In a cemetery?
CAILIN

We're not in the cemetery. We're above the cemetery.
BRADY

Still.
CAILIN

This is my favorite place. Hurry up. Go deep.
BRADY

What's the rush?
CAILIN

No rush.
BRADY

I'm not very good.
CAILIN

Why do you think that is?
BRADY

I don't know. I'm uncoordinated.
CAILIN

And why's that?
BRADY

You tell me.
CAILIN

We never used to play catch. I was always gone.
BRADY

You were home a lot.
CAILIN

BRADY

Yeah. On leave. Did we spend a lot of time together?

CAILIN

I don't remember.

BRADY

Bullshit. There's one thing a boy knows it's how much time he's spending with his father.

CAILIN

We didn't play a lot of catch, no.

BRADY

No. We did not. I'm glad I jarred your memory. Go deep. Six points for a touchdown.

CAILIN does. Running, HE stays facing
BRADY.

BRADY

No no no. That's no way to fucking take a pass. Fuck, what are you? Some kind of a retard?

CAILIN

I'm not a retard.

BRADY

Then fucking run a goddamned motherfucking route, Cailin. No son of mine. Jesus.

CAILIN

Whatever.

BRADY throws the ball. CAILIN lets it sail
past him.

BRADY

What are you doing?

CAILIN

You want to say something to me? Just say it.

BRADY

No son of mine. No fucking son of mine misses that pass. No fucking son of mine is a goddamned faggot vegan ballerina.

I know. CAILIN

You know what? BRADY

I know I'm not your son. CAILIN

A pause

I know you know. BRADY

Oh. CAILIN

BRADY
And I know how you know. And we're going to have a little conversation. You think we're up here for a goddamned tea party? No. We're up here to have a little conversation, Cailin. A little conversation that's way, way the fuck overdue.

End Scene

SCENE 4

Out of darkness. CAILIN is curled on the bench. THEE there.

THEE & CAILIN

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
morientem, desolatum,
cum emisit spiritum.⁸

THEE

He is your father. He isn't your father.

CAILIN

Yes. I know.

THEE

He's a good man.

CAILIN

I know. I know it's so, Mom.

THEE

He's a bad man. He's a very bad man.

CAILIN

It's all true. I know I know.

THEE

He's a soldier. He's a civilian.
He's a warrior. He's a pacifist.
He loves cats. He hates cats.
Dogs, dogs he can't deal with. And he loves them more than anything.
He's a knife. And he's a gun. He's a human, and he's inhuman.
He's a wizard and he's a saint.
He'll save your soul and he'll damn you.
He'll cut you down and lift you up.
He owns you and he sets you free.
He owns you and he sets you free.
He owns you and he sets you free.

And I. I seethe.

And I mourn. And I grieve.

⁸ UNSPOKEN: She saw her sweet Son
dying, forsaken,
while He gave up His spirit.

CAILIN

He's inhuman. He's human. He's both and he's neither. He's more than a man. He's less than a god and more than a man. And he's more than a god and less than a man. And I hate him. And I've never loved him. Because I've never seen him. Because he's each of everything.

THEE

He's both. Yeah. Yeah. Now you're getting it, Cailin. Now you're beginning to see. He beats you and he doesn't beat you. He beats you but he doesn't touch you. Not one bit he doesn't touch you.

CAILIN

A hand can wave hello.

THEE

A hand can make a fist.

CAILIN

A man can say goodbye.

THEE

A hand can pen a poem.

CAILIN

I'm dying.

THEE

I know.

CAILIN

He's killing me.

THEE

I know. We're looking for you.

CAILIN

He's going to shoot me.

THEE

He doesn't have a gun.

CAILIN

And he might have a gun.

THEE

Yes, he might. Both are possible. Both could be true.

CAILIN

I don't want to die.

THEE

But you do.

CAILIN

No, no I don't. I simply don't. That is whole. That is a whole thing. That's not a lie. I want to live a long life. I want to grow up and get past him. I want to do better. I don't want to die.

THEE

He thinks you do. So it must be so somewhere. In some world it must be so.

CAILIN

No. I want to live.

THEE

He thinks you have a death wish, though.

CAILIN

No. I don't. If he kills me, I'll come back. If he kills me, I will rise up. He can't kill me.

THEE

Your father is a monster.

CAILIN

Yes.

THEE

Your father is not a monster.

CAILIN

Yes. Yes it's all true. And he's killing me, but he's not killing me.

THEE

You know your name. Your name wasn't always Cailin.

CAILIN

I know this story.

THEE

Your name's Collin. From the Irish Coilin. Means "dove." But you couldn't pronounce it. Kept saying "Cailin." So you became Cailin.

CAILIN

I know, Mom. I know I'm Collin. Not Cailin.

THEE

Cailin. Cailin means "girl," they say. Kind of funny.

CAILIN

It is funny.

THEE

We're coming.
 You hold on, Cailin. Hold on.
 Momma loves you very much.
 Momma will always love you.
 And keep you.
 And protect you.

CAILIN

Until you can't anymore, yeah. Just until that day comes. And that day has come quick.

THEE

Can't always be there, Cailin.
 I'd love to always be.
 But it wouldn't be right.
 Only God's always there.

CAILIN

Until He's not.

THEE

Until He's not. Yeah. And that is the dark night of the soul.

CAILIN

It's here.

THEE

It's here now, but it passes.

CAILIN

It passes.

THEE

It passes. Yes. You just hush now. Just hush and close your eyes, and you'll see. I'm going to show you something. Something you've got to see, and once you've seen it, you're going to... It's...

What? What, Mom?

CAILIN

Shh.

THEE

You're not even here.

CAILIN

But I am here.

THEE

But you're not here.

CAILIN

But I am. I'm always here. Hush now. Hush now and close your eyes.

THEE

End Scene

SCENE 5

THEE's house. SHE sits at the table and silently prays the Rosary. RYAN is there.

BRADY

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
da per matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae. Amen.⁹

THEE

Amen.

RYAN

What is it?

THEE

It's Brady.

RYAN

What about Brady?

THEE

I think he knows.

RYAN

How?

THEE

I don't know. It doesn't make any sense.

RYAN

Calm down and tell me what happened.

THEE

I just got off the phone with Dr. Berg. Dr. Berg says Brady's got PTSD. Says he's delusional.

RYAN

Right. More than usual?

⁹ UNSPOKEN: Christ, when it is henceforth in need to pass away, grant that through your Mother I may come to the palm of victory. Amen.

THEE

Shut up and listen. She says “Brady’s been talking for months about Cailin. About how Cailin...”

RYAN

He knows then.

THEE

No, no he doesn’t know. How can he? But he knows somehow. Do you know what I’m saying? Dr. Berg says Brady’s not giving any proof. He’s talking about snakes in the desert and liars’ tongues and... gibberish. But no proof. Never anything proving it.

RYAN

He could have had a blood test done.

THEE

With what blood?

RYAN

Anything. Any blood. Cailin never gets a nosebleed?

THEE

Oh Jesus. Yeah. Brady hit him with a football. And he kept the towel.

RYAN

What else did Dr. Berg say?

THEE

Just that. Oh Jesus.

RYAN

Shh.

THEE

We should have told him.

RYAN

But we didn’t.

THEE

Because you wanted to fuck your wife. And you wanted to fuck me. And you had the money to get away with it. You made me a whore, Ryan. And you made the whore a mother. And then you didn’t want to face up to it. Too damned afraid of Brady and what he’d do.

RYAN

Thee. Come on.

THEE

No. That's why. I didn't want to keep lying. I didn't. But you wanted it. And you always get what you fucking want. Rexeisen's always do. My dad warned me. I ever tell you that? He warned me about your fucking clan.

RYAN

Thee, shut up. Theona!

THEE

No! I'm not going to shut up. Brady's got Cailin right now. They're gone and I don't know where they're at.

RYAN

I know.

THEE

How do you know?

RYAN

I just do.

THEE

Go then. Just fucking go.

RYAN

I'm going to.

THEE

You have a gun?

RYAN

I always have a gun.

THEE

What?

RYAN

If you pretend you don't, people won't expect it when you have one. It's like poker.

THEE

Yeah, except this isn't a game.

It's not?	RYAN
Not anymore it's not.	THEE
You coming with me?	RYAN
Where?	THEE
The hill. That's where they're at.	RYAN
No.	THEE
Why not?	RYAN
I'm already there.	THEE
	End Scene

SCENE 6

On a hill beneath the flagpole. Summer dusk. There is a red bench. Heat like suffocation. Dry, insomniac air.

BRADY
 Flammiss urar ne succensus,
 per te, Virgo, sim defensus
 in die iudicii.¹⁰

CAILIN
 I know.

BRADY
 You know what?

CAILIN
 I know I'm not your son.

BRADY
 I know you know.

CAILIN
 Oh.

BRADY
 And I know how you know. And we're going to have a little conversation. You think we're up here for a goddamned tea party? No. We're up here to have a little conversation, Cailin. A little conversation that's way, way the fuck overdue...

CAILIN
 How do I know then? You tell me.

BRADY
 She told you.

CAILIN
 Yeah. Yeah she told me.

¹⁰ UNSPOKEN: Lest I be destroyed by fire, set alight, then through you, Virgin, may I be defended on the day of judgment.

BRADY

Well she didn't fucking tell me. She didn't fucking tell me, Cailin. I had to find out myself. Do you even know what that's like? You can't even imagine what that's like. You've got no perspective. You've lived just as many years as the lie. Think about it. All of you. A lie. All these years. All this energy I spent. All these memories. There is a black, black thing over all of it. And I already had my own shit to deal with. Already had my own. Now it's multiplied. God damn it. God damn her. And God damn you.

CAILIN

I'm sorry.

BRADY

And I found out. I found out and I didn't say anything to her. I pretended I didn't know. And I've been pretending with you, too. And here we are now, and until just a moment ago we were lying. And you know what? I can't stand a liar. All my life. All my life I've tried to live honest. And I've said it now, so now we can be honest people. It's out in the open. God damn it, Cailin. You're just a fucking child. And I want you to know that I know. God damn it.

CAILIN

I'm sorry.

BRADY

Nothing to be sorry about. You didn't do anything except get fucked into existence.

CAILIN

Is that why we're here, to talk about this?

BRADY

No.

CAILIN

What are we here for then?

BRADY

Just want to look at you. Just want to take a good long look at you and see in you who it is been fucking your mother all these years.

CAILIN

I'm leaving.

BRADY

Just wanted to look you over. That's all. Nothing serious.

CAILIN

Let me go.

BRADY

Just wanted to see God's own handiwork. My you're just precious. Real precious.

CAILIN

Fuck you. I'm gone. Get off me.

BRADY

You're not fucking leaving.

CAILIN

Stop me.

BRADY draws a knife.

Jesus.

BRADY

Nah. He's pretty well left the building by now. He's pretty well goddamned gone. Your slut Mom did a good job making sure of that.

Bitch.

CAILIN

Let's talk about this, Brady. Come on. Dad.

BRADY

What?

CAILIN

It means something.

BRADY

Fuck you. You got her goddamned lying, deceiving tongue. You know what I do with a lying tongue. You want that, Cailin? So God help me. So God be my witness. I swear I will do it if you say that word again.

CAILIN

Dad. Stop.

BRADY punches CAILIN.

BRADY

Nope. We're not here to talk, Cailin. I'm here to ask a question. It's going to sound a little bit funny, Son. It's going to sound like it's not me talking. You know?

Yeah. CAILIN

“Yeah” what? BRADY

Yeah yes. CAILIN

“Yes” what? BRADY

Yes, Sir. CAILIN

BRADY
My question is: did you ever love me? Ever once in all these years?

You think about it. You think about it really hard. I want to see blood drip from your ears and brow from thinking so hard. And then you open that mouth of yours. And you spit it out. Because you’re not leaving until you say one way or another. And I’m going to look into your eyes. And I’ll see if you’re lying.

And I’ve never been able to stand a fucking liar.

A pause

CAILIN
I have always loved you.
Both sides of you.
And I’ve never loved you.
Neither side of you.
And both are true.
And both are false.
So you might as well choose
which you believe.
That’s your privilege
as a man. That’s your freedom.
You get to choose.
Right now.
This is your moment, Brady.
It’s up to you
to decide what you believe

I am at your mercy.
Truly.

CAILIN
(cont.)

But if you kill me/

BRADY

What?

CAILIN laughs.

What happens if I kill you?

CAILIN laughs and laughs and laughs.
BRADY kicks CAILIN. CAILIN laughs.
BRADY kicks CAILIN again and again until
the laughing stops.

There we are. There we are now. That's better. All quiet, little baby. Little baby boy. Quiet quiet quiet. Five letters. Five times three is fifteen. And fifteen is. Fifteen's... well it is what it is.

HE drags CAILIN's body to the foot of the pole.
BRADY lowers the flag and removes it.
BRADY drapes the flag over CAILIN's
shoulders like a cape. BRADY hooks
CAILIN's corpse's hands to the pole. BRADY
lifts CAILIN's corpse into the air, hands over its
head. BRADY lifts CAILIN's shirt. HE cuts
CAILIN's side open and tears off a small rib.
HE sits on the bench and holds the rib. HE
takes a bite. THEE approaches and kneels at
her son's feet. SHE lets his blood run over her
hands.

BRADY

Now tell me: what's so funny, Collin? What are you laughing at now, huh? Nothing. Nothing at all. And still no fucking wind. No wind to blow the flag. No birds. No rain. And fifteen is still fifteen. You're fifteen now, right? And your mother's still a goddamned tramp. She's a goddamned whore. This doesn't change that. This makes that right. The whole world will know it. The whole world will know the truth now.

BRADY stands at CAILIN's side. RYAN
enters.

RYAN
What truth, Brady?

What truth?

BRADY
That Thee's a liar.

RYAN
You kill your son to prove that?

BRADY
Whose son?

RYAN
Yours.

BRADY
Yours.

RYAN
Maybe. Maybe mine. Maybe not.

BRADY
What the fuck do you want, Rexeisen?

RYAN
Thee sent me.

BRADY
How's the old lady doing?

RYAN
She's here, Brady. Why don't you ask her?

BRADY
Yeah. I don't see her.

RYAN
That's your business.

BRADY
Yeah. Well. You know now that you've seen this...

RYAN

What?

BRADY

You've got to die too. I'm sorry. But it's a rule I have with myself. I don't let people live might compromise my future. I learned that sweating blood for your tired ass. Compromise...

RYAN

Ten letters.

BRADY

Ten letters. That's right. Something I do not do.

RYAN

What if I don't let you?

BRADY

I'm faster than you. Your limp.

RYAN

You're going to stab me?

BRADY

I'm going to stab you.

RYAN

Who do you think they'll blame?

BRADY

I don't know. Some vagrant. Maybe an Indian. Get a little drink in them and they go crazy. Not like us white folk. Anyway, I'm a war hero.

RYAN

You were discharged, Brady. You cut off a kid's tongue. It led to that massacre. They told me.

BRADY

It won't change the way people see me. They know I'm a hero.

RYAN

It did for me, Brady. It changed the way I see you.

BRADY

Doesn't matter. If they catch me I can always blame it on the PTSD. But that's not it at all. That's a fancy phrase for demons. I've got demons. But now the demons are out. And I'm going to rain fire now. A cleansing fire upon the earth. In bullets. Then waves. And sheets and sheets of fire will rain down on you. I raise my hand and make it so. I raise my hands to the sky. I hold my fingers up: one, two, three, four, five/

RYAN

What if I told you I have a gun?

BRADY

I'd say you're lying.

RYAN

I do, though.

BRADY

Any bullets in it?

RYAN

You want to find out?

BRADY

Fuck it.

BRADY lunges at RYAN with the knife.

End Scene

SCENE 7

Darkness over the hill. CAILIN is now COLLIN. COLLIN speaks from where HE hangs. BRADY is curled up on the bench. RYAN stands to his right. THEE kneels before him. The sound of gunshots accompanies **bold** words.

COLLIN & RYAN

Quando corpus morietur,
fac ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria. **Amen.**¹¹

COLLIN

There was a girl with golden hair.
Fine golden hair. **She** loved me.
She threatened to kiss me once.
Right there behind the counter
where **she** worked
slinging coffee.
I think you've met **her**.
You must have met **her** somewhere.
She's everywhere.
But it isn't going to happen
since he's come home
and he brought back
with him what he did.
Some devil. It's going to stop time.
And that's true.
I used to think one day he'd get better.
And since he was the root cause
of everything. Of all our problems
his changing would change the world.
We used to think that if we ignored it
for long enough it would go away.
That time would change him.
But it's not true.
That's not how the world works.
The world.
The world. The world. The world.
Five letters.
In the world things
come in bursts,
then they come in waves.

¹¹ THEE: When my body dies,
grant that to my soul is given
the glory of paradise. Amen.

COLLIN
(cont.)

Even time comes that way
and it doesn't always come
the way you'd like it to.
And the waves are never what they seem, either.
Waves happen to us.
But we get to make waves of our own.
We have the choice and the power.
And if we're still enough
The only waves
are our breathing
and our beating hearts.
And there, whispering...
Let me give you some examples.
A person can wave hello.

THEE

Hello.

COLLIN

A person can wave goodbye.

THEE

Goodbye.

COLLIN

Good. Bye.
But it's never really very good, is it?
Is it, Mom?

THEE

It can be, Collin. Sure it can. Everything has a goodness. Even devils have some good in them. It must be so. Even those born of man. Those we must endure especially. Because they hurt the most.

Let me help you down.

THEE removes the flag from COLLIN's shoulders. SHE hands it to RYAN. RYAN folds it unceremoniously. THEE releases COLLIN's hands from where they are tied to the pole and lowers him into her arms. A moment passes before HE stands slowly. SHE remains kneeling.

RYAN

The flag's ruined, isn't it?

COLLIN

Yeah. Red where there should be white. Way too much red.

RYAN

We should burn it. That's what you do when a flag's no good anymore. That's what Brady said. And he'd know, wouldn't he?

COLLIN

Yeah. He was the patriot.

RYAN

You have a lighter?

COLLIN

No. He will, though. Always had a lighter with him.

RYAN hands the flag to COLLIN, then goes to BRADY.

BRADY

So you had a gun after all.

RYAN

I had a gun after all.

BRADY

And it was loaded.

RYAN

And it was loaded, yeah.

BRADY

You goddamned liar
I'm going to lay down now
Wish me a long sleep

RYAN

I wish you a long sleep, Brady. I really do. And may it be peaceful. And please don't come back as a ghost, if you can help it.

BRADY

Check to see if I've shit myself. That's how you'll know I'm dead. And this is really happening.

RYAN

You can't die, Brady. Remember?

Brady?

BRADY is dead. RYAN reaches into BRADY's pocket and withdraws a lighter.

(to COLLIN)

Drape it over him.

COLLIN drapes the flag over BRADY's corpse. COLLIN kneels beneath the bench. HE holds the lighter beneath the flag.

COLLIN

It's true.

RYAN

What?

COLLIN

He has shit himself.

A pause

RYAN

Can't do it?

COLLIN

Can't or won't.

RYAN

You tell me.

Rain's coming.

THEE stands.

COLLIN

Fucking A.

It's about time we had some rain.

A gust of wind blows out the flame. Darkness.
The sound of the wind blowing mingles with the
sound of chanting prayer. The rain begins to
fall. First a drop. Then a steady flow. Then
waves. The sound rises. And rises. And rises.
And rises. Until all else is swept away.

Play end

The Stabat Mater: A 13th Century Poem¹²

From the Office

Stabat Mater dolorosa
iuxta crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

The grieving Mother stood
beside the cross weeping
where her Son was hanging.

Cuius animam gementem
contristatam et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

Through her weeping soul,
compassionate and grieving,
a sword passed.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta
mater Unigeniti!

O how sad and afflicted
was that blessed
Mother of the Only-begotten!

Quae maerebat et dolebat
pia mater cum videbat
nati poenas incliti.

Who mourned and grieved,
the pious Mother, with seeing
the torment of her glorious Son.

Quis est homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Who is the man who would not weep
if seeing the Mother of Christ
in such agony?

Quis non posset contristari,
piam matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

Who would not be have compassion
on beholding the devout mother
suffering with her Son?

Pro peccatis suae gentis
vidit Iesum in tormentis
et flagellis subditum.

For the sins of His people
she saw Jesus in torment
and subjected to the scourge.

Vidit suum dulcem Natum
morientem, desolatum,
cum emisit spiritum.

She saw her sweet Son
dying, forsaken,
while He gave up His spirit.

Christe, cum sit hinc exire,
da per matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae. Amen.

Christ, when it is henceforth in need to pass away, grant
that through your Mother I may come to the palm of
victory. Amen.

From the Evening Prayer

Flammis urar ne succensus,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die iudicii.

Lest I be destroyed by fire, set alight,
then through you, Virgin, may I be defended
on the day of judgment.

Quando corpus morietur,
fac, ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria. Amen.

When my body dies,
let my soul be granted
the glory of Paradise. Amen.

¹² Latin (Public Domain)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stabat_Mater
English Translation:
<http://www.shrinesf.org/stabatmater.htm>