

down in the holler

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characters

MAEVE – a woman of an indiscernible age (anywhere from 20 to 30)
a romantic; volatile and beguiling; a local

JUNIPER – a woman in her early thirties
an artist who has worked hard to reinvent herself

BLAKE – a woman in her late thirties
an environmental lawyer; the dyke you need but rarely find; a very capable Taurus

GIN – a woman in her early twenties
Juniper's memory of who she used to be; scrappy, caring; a reluctant local

setting

a cabin off the Appalachian Trail, just far enough from DC

formatting

- / indicates an overlap in dialogue where the next character should begin speaking
- ... indicates a moment of avoidance, trailing off
- indicates where a line of dialogue is interrupted or completed by another character

The inclusion of a name without any dialogue indicates an active silence in which something is communicated or fought non-verbally between the characters:

JUNIPER
MAEVE
JUNIPER

The name indicates whose silence holds the most weight or power in a given moment.

note on design

Throughout the play I describe the house in specific detail not to be prescriptive but to illustrate a clear sense of the feeling I hope the set/setting can evoke. The house need not be designed through strict realism but may be more suggestive. Likewise, moments when the house physically transforms need not be accomplished through fancy, expensive tech gimmicks but can be created through some scrappier theatre magic tricks.

I.

The living room of a cabin just off the Appalachian Trail; it is a manifestation of Juniper's talent and vision — a highly curated, uncluttered sense of shabby chic, spotless, and immaculate. We might believe we are in a catalogue except for some tastefully arranged photos of Juniper and Blake and a shabby, comfy, everything-you-want-from-a-couch pullout sofa that seems out of place. At one end of the room there are two doors, to the bedroom and to the bathroom.

Through the open door to the bedroom we hear breath. We hear sex, Juniper moaning. It is not obscene. It is transportive.

Something in the light is shifting.

As Juniper comes, Maeve appears in the threshold of the living room - ethereal, feral, here and not here - a woman who looks like she just fell off a cliff.

In the subsequent quiet, Maeve limps into the living room. She is mangled and covered in mud. Her boots leave a trail of dirt. She carries a back pack which drops to the floor with a thud as she takes in the room.

She sits on the couch. She smells the couch. She smells herself. She roams about the living room, looking through whatever cabinets and drawers there might be. She sits.

Maeve notices a blazer on the edge of the couch. She smells the blazer. She empties the pockets: phone, wallet, ring of keys. Maeve looks through the keys and finds the one to this house. She removes that key. We hear Juniper laughing. Maeve is startled. She returns the items to the blazer's pockets.

Juniper is still laughing, now with Blake. Maeve smells the couch again. There is something more primal and desperate about it this time. She lifts various pillows to her face. She pulls up the cushions, sticks her head into the opening, and inhales deeply. She is weakened. The couch seems to swallow her.

Juniper appears in the bedroom doorway, pulling on a shirt over her head, saying —

JUNIPER

I want to try this again.

Did you hear me?

I want to come into this place with you again.

BLAKE

(offstage) Are you talking to yourself?

JUNIPER

Are you listening to me?

BLAKE
(offstage) What?

JUNIPER
I said —

BLAKE
(offstage) I can't understand what you're / saying. Come back here and —

JUNIPER
I said I want to come into this place.
With you, for the first time again.
Like with a little more intentionality, as us, as ours...

Blake emerges, disheveled but still mostly in her work clothes. She wraps her arms around Juniper from behind.

BLAKE
Hmm?

JUNIPER
I think it's important how you make a new home with somebody. It's an incredible beginning! It's a celebration, a ceremony of the life soon to be contained within these — you are not even listening to what I'm—

BLAKE
Why don't you hop in my arms and I'll carry you across the threshold while we're at it.

JUNIPER
Well, I guess that's a possi- You're making fun of me, and I just want everything to be —

Blake sneezes.

JUNIPER
—perfect.

BLAKE
I think it is.

Juniper starts rummaging through a suitcase.

BLAKE
Did you pack my—

Juniper hands Blake a bottle of allergy meds. Blake takes one.

BLAKE

All the pine is really messing with my / sinuses.

JUNIPER

Where is the... I know I packed...

BLAKE

Did you make a checklist?

JUNIPER

No, I didn't make a checklist. / I know that I packed it.

BLAKE

I always find it useful to —

JUNIPER

I know you do, honey, but I know it's here somewhere.

BLAKE

I'm just saying if you — oh, these are cute...

JUNIPER

(taking the panties from Blake) That's a surprise.

BLAKE

I thought we agreed we were going to be low-key about this weekend, and that we were going to give ourselves time to relax and talk about —

JUNIPER

I am being low-key!

BLAKE

You think it's acceptable to wear your *cotton*, period-stained underwear inside out when you need to do laundry. These are not /low-key for you.

JUNIPER

I just want this to be special! I feel like I haven't seen you in a month and I really want you to like this house.

BLAKE

I do. I love it already. I love you and—

JUNIPER

I want to make this place ours.

Blake thumbs Juniper's engagement ring.

BLAKE

Does that mean you've made a decision?

Juniper kisses Blake.

BLAKE

You think you can kiss your way out of every conversation you don't want to have?

JUNIPER

What? I just want to kiss you.

Juniper kisses Blake.

JUNIPER

I'm so proud of you.

BLAKE

So marry me.

JUNIPER

You're so good and smart and—

BLAKE

Impatient.

JUNIPER

And watching you tear conservative lobbyists to bits makes me—

Blake kisses Juniper.

BLAKE

What can I do to persuade you?

JUNIPER

You wouldn't want me if I wasn't a challenge.

BLAKE

Well. I never pick a case I can't win.

JUNIPER

You're so sure of yourself.

BLAKE

I've got all weekend to persuade you.

Blake goes to kiss Juniper.

JUNIPER

I thought we decided that we wouldn't surprise each other.

BLAKE

We said whoever wanted to could propose once this case was over.

JUNIPER

Yeah, I didn't think that meant minutes after in front of reporters.

BLAKE

I got excited.

JUNIPER

That's not like you.

BLAKE

Yeah, well, you do something to me.

JUNIPER

Hmm. Are you sure you didn't plan—

BLAKE

You seemed excited too at the time.

JUNIPER

I'm allowed to change my mind.

BLAKE

Yes. You're right. Obviously, yes, of course, you can change your mind as often as you want. But, why do we have to keep putting it off? I've been working on this case for almost two years. You know we're going to get married eventually. We literally moved in together once and then that wasn't enough so now we're moving in together a second time and we're not even engaged.

JUNIPER

Doesn't that just make us better lesbians? Have you seen my sage smudge?

BLAKE

Juniper.

JUNIPER

I must have left it in the car. You're supposed to burn it in every corner of the room. This house has a very present energy, don't you think?

BLAKE

Feels like a house to me.

JUNIPER
I'll be right back.

BLAKE
Here.

She tosses Juniper her keys.

JUNIPER
You know you don't have to lock doors out here.

BLAKE
Habit.

JUNIPER
Where's the house key?

BLAKE
It's on there.

JUNIPER
It's not.

BLAKE
Yeah it is.

JUNIPER
I'm holding the keys and I'm telling you it's not on here.

BLAKE
Juniper, it has to be on—

JUNIPER
It's not on here. So where is it.

BLAKE
It's here somewhere.

JUNIPER
That's the only key.

BLAKE
Why didn't you make a copy of the key?

JUNIPER

Why are you micro-managing me?

BLAKE

Well I'm not gonna lock you out of the house, so why don't you go get your sage and I'll check the bedroom.

Juniper starts searching through the luggage somewhat frantically.

BLAKE

June, calm down. / I'm sure it's here somewhere.

JUNIPER

Don't tell me to calm down. I've been working on this house for months and now you lost the key?

BLAKE

Hey, I can tell you're upset, so let's take—

JUNIPER

I'm not upset, that's just the only fucking / key!

BLAKE

Juniper? I can tell you're upset, so let's take a breath.

JUNIPER

I'm not—

BLAKE

Juniper.

They take a breath.

BLAKE

The key has to be here because we had to have it to unlock the door.

JUNIPER

Well where is it?

BLAKE

Hey, hey, why don't you go to the car and find your sage stick, sorry, whatever it's called, if that will make you feel better and take a walk to clear your head. I know this week has been stressful for you. But I'm going take care of it. Okay, Junebug?

Blake leads Juniper to the door. Juniper goes outside. Blake goes back into the living room to look for the key. Maeve is standing there.

BLAKE

What the fuck?!

Blake freaks, grabs the fire poker.

MAEVE

This is a lovely home.

BLAKE

How the fuck did you get in here?

MAEVE

I crossed over the threshold.

The door?

Why do you have a real fire poker if you don't have a real fire place?

BLAKE

It's a pellet stove.

MAEVE

Exactly.

BLAKE

Who the fuck are you?

MAEVE

I'm Maeve.

Maeve stands and hobbles over toward Blake. It is clear that Maeve is pretty injured and about a foot shorter than Blake. Blake lowers the fire poker. Maeve extends her hand.

MAEVE

I don't bite. Much.

Blake takes Maeve's hand. Maeve shakes a little too long. Just when she's about to let go, Blake grabs a little tighter, surprising Maeve.

MAEVE

Oh, you're / strong.

BLAKE

What are you doing in my house?

MAEVE

I fell off a cliff.

I can barely walk.
I saw the house from above.
You don't have a phone, do you?

BLAKE
There's no service down here. You'll have to drive out of the / valley.

MAEVE
The holler, yeah...
You're not from around here, are you?

MAEVE
BLAKE
MAEVE

BLAKE
What's in your bag?

MAEVE
Nothing.

Blake picks up Maeve's backpack.

BLAKE
It's heavy.

MAEVE
(suddenly desperate) Please.
My entire life is in there.
It's nothing.
It's mateless socks and weapon pieces from Clue and like, a shirt that used to smell like her.
Please don't touch what's mine.

Blake puts down the backpack.

BLAKE
You're not a thru-hiker.

MAEVE
I'm... in between places.

BLAKE
You look a little old to be running away from home.

MAEVE
I'm trying to find my way back.

BLAKE
Are you homeless?

MAEVE
I...

Maeve shifts like she's about to faint. Blake catches her.

BLAKE
You're freezing.

MAEVE
I think I broke my ankle.

Blake helps Maeve to the couch.

BLAKE
I'll get you a blanket. You seem feverish.

MAEVE
Are you a doctor?

BLAKE
No.

MAEVE
Really? You seem very... capable.

Blake looks at Maeve for a while. *She didn't mean that as a compliment.*

BLAKE
I'm Blake.

MAEVE
What if I'm stuck here forever?

BLAKE
That seems a little extreme.
I'm going to look at your ankle.
May I?

Maeve nods. Blake unlaces Maeve's boot, pulls it off, and then peels off the sock from Maeve's ankle. She kneads.

BLAKE
Does this hurt?

MAEVE
Yes. But in a good way. It's... you're... very good.

BLAKE
And engaged.

MAEVE
Lucky gal.

BLAKE
Lucky guess.

MAEVE
An educated guess. Massachusetts?

BLAKE
Excuse me?

MAEVE
Are you going to get married in Massachusetts?

BLAKE
No... we'll be married in DC.

MAEVE
Huh.

A lull in conversation. Blake massages up Maeve's leg to see where the pain stops.

MAEVE
I'm told I have great legs.
I used to be a figure model at the community college.
That's where you get naked and people paint you and then a couple weeks later you get a check in the mail unless you refuse to shave your cooch, in which case you get a public fight with the dean and get fired.
You have strong hands.
But they're soft.
It's surprising.
My hands are not soft.
See.
You're actually not interested in me, are you?
That is also surprising.
I think it is because you are in love.

Is your partner beautiful?
Are her hands soft or rough?
When she wakes in the morning does she make tea or coffee? Or doesn't she need caffeine.
Good for her. I like to hold something warm first thing in the morning.
Is your partner home?
Is she coming home.
Ow.
Is my ankle broken?

BLAKE

I don't know. I'm more concerned about your temperature. And you could be concussed. Let me see your eyes. Do you remember how you got here?

MAEVE

No...

BLAKE

When Juniper gets back, I'll drive you to the hospital.

MAEVE

You're very generous.

BLAKE

Well no offense, but you seem like a wreck.
Keep your foot elevated.
I'll get you some ice.

Blake goes into the kitchen.

MAEVE

Is this your Juniper?
In the picture?
The one where her hair is like...

BLAKE

(from the kitchen) Yeah. From our vacation in the Greek Isles.

MAEVE

The Greek Isles.
She's beautiful.
In a way that sneaks up on you.

BLAKE

(offstage) I disagree.

MAEVE
What?

Blake returns with a bag of ice.

BLAKE
I think it punches you in the gut the moment you look at her.
Here. Hold this against your ankle.

Blake notices that Maeve is staring open-mouthed at a painting we can't see, hanging above the hearth.

BLAKE
It's incredible, isn't it? I don't know how she makes the colors look like they're... breathing, or. I don't know how you'd describe it. It's something with the way the uh... what's it called the—

MAEVE
Vanishing point.

BLAKE
Yeah. The vanishing point just sucks you in.

MAEVE
Yeah. Juniper did this?

BLAKE
Yes. She told me she did this last week while the contractors were finishing here. She did this in a week?!

MAEVE
She must be brilliant.

BLAKE
She is she is she is. Amazing. She opened this exhibition a couple months ago. It was— She did this series on, on, uh — opacity and transparency! — where she painted fog coming through a valley, but abstracted over these figures of a woman in various states of agony and bliss. It gave me chills. Just absolutely— I'm not even sure I could do a paint by number, / but June—

MAEVE
(under her breath) I bet you couldn't.

BLAKE
What?

MAEVE

I said you seem really enamored by her.

BLAKE

I get carried away. But she... she's... yeah, she's brilliant.

Blake adjusts a picture of her and Juniper. She picks up the fire poker and returns it to its place. Maeve watches Blake.

MAEVE

So what are you?

BLAKE

What?

MAEVE

Well clearly you're not an artist so what are you?

Like, a banker? A hedge fund manager?

BLAKE

I work in environmental justice.

MAEVE

Like a protester?

BLAKE

A lawyer.

MAEVE

Fancy.

I'm a local.

Is there much call for environmental law in this neck of the woods?

BLAKE

There's a lot of cause, actually.

And a great place to do some extreme fishing.

MAEVE

Extreme fishing?

BLAKE

Like, fishing out of a raft going down / rapids.

MAEVE

Flying into remote ponds.

BLAKE

Sure.

MAEVE

Yeah. Think that's more of a tourist thing.
Us locals are more hook, line, and sinker folk.
Wonder if you've been to my favorite fishing hole.

BLAKE

Actually, this is my first time in this particular / part of the—

MAEVE

Neck of the woods.

BLAKE

Yeah.

MAEVE

You bought a house here and you've never been here before?

BLAKE

I. Well. I've been to the Shenandoah Valley before. Just not this particular— Juniper sort of, this was Juniper's project.

MAEVE

Was it.

BLAKE

Yeah. Uh. But. I'm excited to get to know the place. Is your fishing hole close?

MAEVE

Very.
I'm interrupting something, aren't I?

BLAKE

What?

MAEVE

Your clothes are awful nice...

BLAKE

Well I came straight from work.

MAEVE

...but your belt's undone and you missed a button on your shirt.

BLAKE
Ah. Yeah, guilty.

MAEVE
What's the occasion?

BLAKE
Just an evening together.

MAEVE
Out in the woods. No one around. Sounds romantic.

BLAKE
Yeah.

MAEVE
Too bad you don't have a skylight. The stars are mighty pretty out here.

BLAKE
I'll bet.

MAEVE
You come all the way out here from the city just for an evening together?

Blake gestures to her engagement ring in a way that is both super dorky and effortlessly cool.

MAEVE
Your Juniper's the marrying type?

BLAKE
Well. Yeah.

MAEVE
Obviously. Did you get engaged in Lesbos or wherever you / said you went?

BLAKE
Lesbos isn't exactly... it's kind of going through it's own / refugee crisis.

MAEVE
(a glimmer in her eye) The Greek Isles.

BLAKE
Right. Uh, no. We just got engaged last week.

MAEVE

Ahh... so it's that *kind* of occasion.

BLAKE

Yes.

BLAKE

MAEVE

BLAKE

Blake imagines fucking Juniper. Maeve imagines Blake fucking Juniper.

MAEVE

BLAKE

MAEVE

MAEVE

Who proposed to whom? What was the reaction like?

BLAKE

I'm going to get you a towel.

MAEVE

I'm fine.

BLAKE

I really don't want mud everywhere.

Blake leaves the room.

MAEVE

How did you meet?

Did you know right in that moment?

Or did you hate each other, at first?

Do you hate each other now?

A party! She was intoxicated and irresistible, wasn't she — her neckline just a little too low for the occasion, and smelling inextricably of pine.

BLAKE

(from the bedroom) We met online. Like a match.com for lesbians.

MAEVE

Oh. Really?

That's...

unromantic.

BLAKE

(offstage) Sorry. I have no idea where she put the towels.

MAEVE

In the closet hiding the furnace. That's where I'd put them.

BLAKE

(offstage) Why would she put towels in the—

MAEVE

To keep them warm.

Just a guess.

Blake returns with a towel.

BLAKE

I guess there's not a linen closet.

MAEVE

Guess not.

BLAKE

Here. I would really like this place to be spotless when she comes back.

Maeve takes the towel. Blake begins wiping up the mud Maeve has tracked in. Maeve uses the towel to prop up her head.

MAEVE

So when did Juniper convince you to move back to the holler with her?

Blake freezes.

BLAKE

What?

MAEVE

Weren't you saying that Juniper was a local?

BLAKE

Was I?

MAEVE

Maybe I made some assumptions.

Blake stands.

BLAKE

I can take that towel if you're finished with it. Juniper will be back any minute and then I'll take you into town.

Blake takes the towels into the bedroom.

The sound of the door opening. The smell of burning sage proceeds Juniper.

JUNIPER

(from the kitchen) I couldn't find the key, did you—

Juniper sees Maeve. She drops the sage.

MAEVE

(like someone who hasn't breathed in a long time) Gin.

Blake stands in the bedroom doorway. *How long has she been there?*

JUNIPER

Hi. You're...

BLAKE

You're back.

JUNIPER

Hi. Yes. Hi. *Blake.*

(to Maeve, for Blake) Hi, I'm Juniper.

BLAKE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

BLAKE

BLAKE

This is Maeve.

And this is Juniper.

Juniper and Blake stare at each other.

BLAKE

She fell off a cliff.

MAEVE

Blake tells me I'm lucky to be alive.

JUNIPER
Huh. Which cliff.

MAEVE
Lover's leap.

JUNIPER
That's quite a fall.

JUNIPER
MAEVE
JUNIPER

MAEVE
Here I am.

JUNIPER
Here you are.

MAEVE
JUNIPER
MAEVE
JUNIPER

BLAKE
She says her ankle is hurting her and she seems feverish, so now that you're back I'll drive her / to the hospital -

JUNIPER
The hospital won't open until tomorrow morning.

BLAKE
...but it's a hospital.

MAEVE
We do things different in the holler.

JUNIPER
The hospital is actually not in the holler. It's on the other side of the river.
Closer to town. Obviously.

BLAKE
Okay. So. I'll drive her to that motel we passed, off Route 30, and take her to the hospital in the morning. Or she can stay here.
Up to you.

JUNIPER

I... You don't want to drive all the way to Route 30 and back, do you?

BLAKE

It's whatever you want, Juniper.

JUNIPER

I... Maeve, you must be hungry.

MAEVE

I'm starving.

BLAKE

We ate earlier.

JUNIPER

Well we bought all these groceries. There must be some/thing.

BLAKE

Nothing's prepared.

JUNIPER

There's cake.

BLAKE

That's— (*not for sharing with Maeve*)

Okay. Sure. So we'll see how we feel after dessert.

Make yourself at home, Maeve.

MAEVE

I have.

Blake goes to the kitchen. A long silence as Juniper and Maeve stare at each other.
The following, very quietly.

JUNIPER

JUNIPER

JUNIPER

MAEVE

MAEVE

You changed.

JUNIPER

JUNIPER

MAEVE

At least a little. Maybe a lot.
Come closer, I can't tell.

Juniper takes a step closer to Maeve. A long silence.

MAEVE

Your hair is greying.

Maeve reaches to touch Juniper's hair. Juniper takes a step back.

JUNIPER

What are you doing here?

MAEVE

I saw the house.

JUNIPER

How long have you been here?
Does Blake — ?

Maeve takes Juniper's hand, looks at the ring.

JUNIPER

I haven't said yes yet.

MAEVE

Clearly you haven't said no either.

Juniper takes back her hand.

MAEVE

Blake seems very generous.

JUNIPER

She is.

Blake walks into the room with slices of what is clearly a nice and special cake that you don't share with the stranger who shows up at your door covered in mud.

BLAKE

You don't have any dietary restrictions, do you?

MAEVE

I'll eat anything that doesn't eat me first.

JUNIPER

Well, we're borderline vegan so that shouldn't be a problem.

MAEVE

What are the eating habits of a borderline vegan?

BLAKE

It means that Juniper won't give up cheese.

JUNIPER

And Blake likes cream in her coffee.

MAEVE

Fascinating. How long have / you been -

JUNIPER

It's rude to ask.

BLAKE

Many years.

BLAKE

It only took a month or so to convince Juniper the error of her ways.

MAEVE

Many years.

JUNIPER

Many.

BLAKE

We're working on eliminating all animal products from our diet.

MAEVE

Everything in moderation including moderation.

JUNIPER

You do realize that eating a 1/4 lb beef burger is equal to destroying 55 square acres of rainforest?

MAEVE

Pretty sure that's a myth.

That's a myth, Blake, isn't it?

C'mon, bacon and coffee in the morning.

Don't you, you miss it, don't you.

You do. I can see it in the way your eyes stay the same when you eat this gluten free cake.

JUNIPER

Pretty sure there's gluten in the cake.

MAEVE

Hm. Tastes like it's missing something.

BLAKE

Refined sugar.

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

They eat the cake in an uncomfortable silence. An effort to start again,

BLAKE

Can I get you something to drink?

MAEVE

I'll have what you're having.

BLAKE

I'll see what we have.

Blake goes into the kitchen.

JUNIPER

There should be something in the bag next to the -

BLAKE

(offstage) The—? Oh, found it. I guess if we're having the cake we might as well have the —

MAEVE

I'm surprised you drink.

I associate drinking with people who need to.

JUNIPER

MAEVE

Blake reemerges with a bottle.

BLAKE

Hmm?

MAEVE

I said, most people round these parts drink because they need to.

BLAKE

It's been a long week.

MAEVE

Did the dry cleaners misplace your pantsuit?

BLAKE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

MAEVE

Wow. Champagne! What are we celebrating?

JUNIPER

BLAKE

JUNIPER

BLAKE

BLAKE

You tell her.

BLAKE

JUNIPER

BLAKE

JUNIPER

Blake proposed!

MAEVE

And what did you say?

JUNIPER

Right after she won a case against the state!

(touching Blake) Sometimes she's too much of a good thing.

MAEVE

The state of what?

The state of affairs? The state of being?

JUNIPER

The state of Virginia.

BLAKE

Honey, I doubt Maeve wants to hear / about this.

MAEVE
I really / don't.

JUNIPER
Well I do.

MAEVE
I didn't know you could sue a state.

BLAKE
Thousands of 'folks' 'round these parts' are in danger of having their drinking water chemically poisoned by fracking.

MAEVE
Sounds like you have a pretty high opinion of the 'people' who live 'around here'.

JUNIPER
She was teasing you, Maeve, because you're going out of your way to sound—

MAEVE
How do I sound, Blake?

JUNIPER
Extra local.

BLAKE
I'm sorry if that felt condescending, Maeve. I should have clarified.
(*something she has said many times to many people*) Thousands of people in the Shenandoah Valley face the very real threat of ground water contamination as a result of the hydraulic fracking operations currently being conducted. The natural chemicals released by fracking are poisonous to humans - humans I do care about very much - which is why I'm fighting to regulate fracking and eliminate ground water contamination.

MAEVE
Wow, Juniper. Do you get to experience this conversational *promess* every dinner?
Please, Blake, do tell me more about fracking.

BLAKE
Well, fracking is an alternative mining practice used to release resources under otherwise unmanageable pressure at otherwise impenetrable depths by applying various well stimulation techniques so that the pressure of fluids within the crevice overcomes the effective stress being applied. Does that make sense to you?

MAEVE
No, I don't think I get it yet. Please keep going.

BLAKE

Maybe it would help if I used an example. Hmm. Ah! Got it. Maeve, you know what a dike is, right?

MAEVE

Yes. Clearly I know what a dyke is.

BLAKE

So, we tend to think of fracking as a manmade technique but you can see it demonstrated in many natural examples — such as dikes. Say I'm a conscientious miner and I want to evaluate the stability of a landscape before I interact with it. I can actually infer past states of stress by closely observing the dike's reactions to— sorry, I shouldn't assume you understand how dikes work.

MAEVE

I understand how—

BLAKE

Let's suppose, Maeve, that you want to frack like a real dike, which is to say: naturally. At the very least, you need to understand the relationship between well performances and treatment pressures as well as the importance of how you position yourself for fracking. Put simply, horizontal positioning gives you more contact with the target formation and thus tight sedimentary beds become wetter more quickly. So. When I'm about to frack — you've got the visual in your head? There's the opening and I'm there above it, about to permeate the, great, hold onto that image — at this point I need to consider the fracture gradient — that's the pressure increase per unit of depth relative to density. That way, when the rock splits open, I'm prepared to increase the amount of friction I'm applying in order to extend the opening farther and farther until that hole is gushing. Is this making sense? Basically, the deeper in you are, the higher the pressure needed to complete the fracking and —

MAEVE

Maybe you can tell me why you shouldn't be fracking local land.

JUNIPER

No no no, keep going.

BLAKE

Oh! I haven't even explained tensile stress. This is my favorite part. Maeve, it is *so* important not to ignore tensile stress. That stress is held at the fracture's tip, like a little bundle of stress at a point right above the opening. June, may I?

Blake demonstrates the following on Juniper's hands.

BLAKE

If I'm fracking, I'll apply pressure right here, just above the opening to relieve this tensile

stress and subsequently cause weakness in the joints and bedding planes adjacent to the fracture.

JUNIPER

What do you do if the well's not finished?

BLAKE

Then I get a little more creative. Off the top of my head, I can think of two other completion techniques I could try: "plug and perf" — short for perform, Maeve — and "sliding sleeve" which is pretty self-explanatory. Plug and perform involves more pumping into an isolated region. And then there are a variety of activation techniques I can use to open the sliding sleeve. It's really about paying attention to what the opening wants. Most bores dry up after just a year or two but if I apply some of the aforementioned techniques, I can extend the peak wetness of a well to several decades.

Blake kisses Juniper's hand.

BLAKE

Thanks for letting me demonstrate on you.

They gaze at each other for a moment then remember that Maeve is still in the room.

BLAKE

The dangers of fracking are pretty obvious, so I won't belittle you by going into all that. When I used the phrase 'round these parts' I meant to gently tease your earlier use of the regionalism. Sorry if I offended you. I'm not good at jokes.

Blake uncorks the bottle. She's a pro.

JUNIPER

But she is good at ensuring thousands of people have access to clean drinking water.

Blake and Juniper kiss. Maeve begrudgingly pours herself a glass.

MAEVE

I know a joke.

What do you call a woman who builds her dream house with another woman's bank account but then waffles when that same woman proposes to her?

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

Someone who wants to have her cake and eat it out too.

Juniper chokes on her cake.

BLAKE

I don't get the joke.

MAEVE

I added a preposition.

BLAKE

No. I don't get why you think it's / funny to suggest that—

JUNIPER

I forgot about the peaches! There were these beautiful peaches at this farm stand as we got off the interstate. Do you think they'll pair well?

BLAKE

I think they'll be delicious.

Nobody moves.

JUNIPER

Honey, can you go get them?

Blake exits. Maeve and Juniper stare at each other. Maybe it's so quiet we can hear the water as Blake washes the peaches.

JUNIPER

You're making a lot of assumptions about my relationship with her.

MAEVE

Did Blake use you to explain fracking to the State of Virginia or were you just there to kiss her for the cameras after she won?

JUNIPER

Excuse me?

MAEVE

You think you'll enjoy playing eccentric trophy wife for Blake even when she's not winning cases?

JUNIPER

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

MAEVE

Who picked out the wine? Did Blake? Or is that more of a wifely duty?

JUNIPER

I told you I haven't even said yes yet, you fucking—

MAEVE

'Oh, dear, I hope this pairs well with the/peaches.'

BLAKE

Peaches!

Blake returns with a bowl, peaches, forks, and a knife.

JUNIPER

They might be overripe, but they smelled so good. How could I resist?

Maeve takes a peach. *Clearly she is supposed to cut it and eat it with a fork.* She bites into it. Juice runs down her mouth and fingers. It is shocking. Blake and Juniper are shocked. Maeve continues eating the peach. It is almost obscene.

MAEVE

(taking a final slurp then wiping her mouth) So who's taking whose name?

BLAKE

We haven't really talked about it yet.

JUNIPER

We're keeping our own names.

MAEVE

I see.

JUNIPER

BLAKE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

It's been a busy week.

BLAKE

More like a busy month.

MAEVE

I can imagine! What with saving the good folk of Virginy from their own ignorant mining practices and then completing a million dollar renovation to a house on that otherwise-impooverished land you just saved. AND an unanswered marriage proposal. What a week! Thank goodness you can afford therapy.

BLAKE

MAEVE

BLAKE

Actually, aside from the major stuff like repairing the roof, June fixed up this whole place by herself.

MAEVE

Did she.

BLAKE

It was a wreck when we found it, but Juniper was obsessed.

MAEVE

I'll bet she was.

JUNIPER

It was nothing.

MAEVE

Huh. Well.

I'm sure you spent a lot of time in this fixer-upper, *Junebug*, because it looks... just... well I'm at a loss.

The color especially pairs so well with the sofa.

(before anyone can correct her) Do you play?

The guitar?

BLAKE

I used to. A long time ago. I want June to learn.

MAEVE

Huh. Think she'll do that for you?

Maeve hobbles up and hobbles over to the guitar. She licks her fingers clean. She picks up the guitar.

May I?

She strums. She tunes.

Ah.

She picks. She plays. She sings - if the rights can be acquired, "We Lived Alone" by Connie Converse. (If not, something folksy and reflective of the descriptions below.) A moment. It is clear she has been singing to Juniper.

BLAKE

Did you write that?

MAEVE

No. This mysterious woman wrote it 50 years ago and then disappeared from her life, just vanished.

BLAKE

That sounds like she probably—

MAEVE

Mm.

Love a good high lonesome.

JUNIPER

I think it romanticizes poverty.

MAEVE

It's about being content with simplicity.

JUNIPER

And a job.

What do you do when you're not walking off bluffs?

BLAKE

What's a high lonesome?

MAEVE

And when I set my eyes on you, nothing else would do, nothing else would do.

That's a high lonesome.

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

BLAKE

Well. This has been... something else, but I think it's time to clean up.

Blake starts gathering the plates.

BLAKE

Babe, can you grab the glasses.

Juniper stands and gathers the glasses.

MAEVE

Can you put on an apron and make me a sandwich while you're at it? Babe?

Juniper freezes. She looks at Blake. She looks at Maeve.

JUNIPER

That's not what she said.

MAEVE

It's how she said it.

BLAKE

How did I say it?

MAEVE

There was a certain tone in your voice.

BLAKE

I'm sorry if you think there was a tone, *Maeve*. If there was a tone in my voice it was because I have my hands full and would like to talk to *my* fiancée privately in the kitchen.

JUNIPER

Ew. Don't talk about me like that.

BLAKE

I thought we agreed that we didn't like 'partner'.

JUNIPER

My fiancée. *My*. *Mine*. When I'm standing right here next to you.

BLAKE

OH my god. I am sorry, *Juniper*.

JUNIPER

And anything you want to say to me you can say in front of Maeve.

BLAKE

Um, that's not true and I think you know that.

JUNIPER

It's true when you use that tone you use when you're talking to me like you *expect* me to behave a certain way but you don't *trust* me to behave in that way.

BLAKE

My hands are full. Your hands are empty. What do you want from me?

JUNIPER

Forget it. You wouldn't be acting like this if you weren't peacocking for Maeve.

Juniper attempts to walk past Blake into the kitchen. Before she can get there, Maeve trips Juniper — causing Juniper to spill Maeve’s untouched glass of champagne all over Blake.

JUNIPER
Oh my god. I’m - babe, I’m so sorry.

BLAKE
It’s fine. It’s fine.
It’s fine.

MAEVE
Well now it’s a party.

BLAKE
BLAKE
MAEVE

JUNIPER
Honey. I’ll clean up. (*an attempt to placate*) I thought the cake was really good.

She kisses Blake’s cheek on the way back to the kitchen.

BLAKE
MAEVE
BLAKE
MAEVE
MAEVE

Blake goes into the bedroom, slamming the door behind her. Maeve picks at the guitar. We can hear Juniper doing dishes in the kitchen. Maeve picks some more, stands, walks into the kitchen, humming and then singing.

MAEVE
Hmm hm hmm...

The living room is empty and, for a moment, silent. We see the empty living room for a moment before Maeve and Juniper return. Juniper is holding Maeve away, pressing a dishwashing brush into Maeve’s chest.

JUNIPER
(*quietly*) Don’t. Touch me.

Maeve slides the guitar around to her back. She unzips her pants. She waits. She takes Juniper’s hand. Juniper pulls her hand away. So Maeve slides her own hand down her pants. Juniper is trying very hard not to move. Maeve stares at Juniper. Juniper can’t look away.

Somewhere in the room, a picture of Blake and Juniper falls. The glass shatters. Maeve zips up her pants. Maeve wipes her fingers on her pants.

JUNIPER

Go wash your fucking hands.

By the time Blake emerges from the bedroom in clean clothes, Maeve is in the kitchen washing her hands, and Juniper is picking up the shattered glass of the fallen picture.

JUNIPER

Careful, the glass. It fell.

BLAKE

Juniper, get a broom, you'll cut your fing— where's your ring?

Maeve emerges from the kitchen, limping, playing the guitar and singing.

MAEVE

*I had a job, My wants were few
They were until I wanted you
And when I set my eyes on you
nothing else would do, nothing else would do.*

JUNIPER

Oh I
...must have taken it off to do the dishes.

BLAKE

(quietly) Well why don't you go get it.

MAEVE

You know, Blake, maybe she doesn't want to marry you.

BLAKE

I think it's time for you to leave.

MAEVE

What happened to giving Juniper whatever she wanted.

BLAKE

I think it's pretty obvious that giving Juniper whatever she wants doesn't include letting her emotionally abusive ex-girlfriend sleep in this house tonight.

JUNIPER

What?

BLAKE

Drop it. I'm not fucking stupid.

MAEVE

Your emotionally abusive ex-girlfriend?

Is that how you describe me to your fiancée - partner - patron - whatever you fancy dykes call each other.

JUNIPER

It's not that simple.

BLAKE

Actually, it is. And you have overstayed your welcome, Maeve. So it's time for you to leave.

BLAKE

MAEVE

BLAKE

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

MAEVE

No.

BLAKE

Excuse me?

MAEVE

You can't make me leave this house.

JUNIPER

Maeve.

MAEVE

That is not something you have authority to do.

JUNIPER

Maeve.

BLAKE

Actually, I have a lot of authority to—

MAEVE

I'll leave when Juniper tells me to leave.

BLAKE

Juniper wants you to leave.

MAEVE

You don't get to put words in her mouth.

JUNIPER
Neither do you!

MAEVE
So then tell me to leave.

BLAKE
Do you want her to *stay*?

JUNIPER
Of course I don't want her to— *what?* Why are you both looking at me like that.

BLAKE
What do you want, Juniper?

MAEVE
Just tell us what you want, and I'll standby and watch Blake make all your dreams come true.

Blake picks up Maeve's bag and throws it to the doorway.

BLAKE
(*to Juniper*) Why aren't you defending me?

JUNIPER
(*quietly*) Maeve.

Juniper gestures toward the door. Maeve limps across the room. She's pathetic.

BLAKE
(*to no one in particular*) *Jesus Christ.* This is my fucking competition?

MAEVE
I don't have any money for a motel, so I will be finding a cozy bit of moss.
Hopefully I don't encounter whatever got stuck up your ass.

Maeve hobbles out of the living room into the kitchen. We hear her struggle to open the kitchen door.

MAEVE
(*offstage*) It's stuck.

JUNIPER
BLAKE

BLAKE
What?

MAEVE

(offstage) The door. It won't open.

JUNIPER

(quietly) Oh no.

Blake goes into the kitchen to help Maeve. We hear her struggle against the door.

JUNIPER

Sometime the door sticks. I got locked in this house about three times while I was repairing it. I think it's something with how the pressure changes down here when dusk comes.

Blake and Maeve return to the living room.

BLAKE

What do you mean the pressure changes when dusk comes?

JUNIPER

I don't know you're the scientist.

BLAKE

That's not science, Juniper.

MAEVE

Maybe it has something to do with tensile stress.

BLAKE

You know what, Maeve, you look like you'd fit through a window.

JUNIPER

The windows don't open.

BLAKE & MAEVE

What?

JUNIPER

I had the windows sealed because one time you told me it's more environmentally conscious to have your windows sealed so I sealed them and now they don't open. The windows can't open the door's the only way out.

BLAKE

I said that *old* houses with *old* windows should get their windows sealed *in the winter*.

JUNIPER

I guess I misunderstood.

MAEVE

Oh boy, really hope there's not a fire.

BLAKE

We're leaving at 8:30 tomorrow for the hospital.

MAEVE

That seems kind of early, doesn't it?

BLAKE

7:30.

Blake goes into the bedroom.

MAEVE

Sure hope the pressure changes by then.

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

Well, are you going to help me?

JUNIPER

You know how it works.

Juniper enters the bedroom and closes the door.

Maeve looks at the sofa. She looks at the door. She goes to her bag and finds an oversized teeshirt to sleep in. She returns to the sofa. She attempts to pull out the mattress. The hinges are old and it really requires two people to get the right angle to pull out the mattress. But Maeve gives it a valiant effort, knocking over something in the process.

Juniper emerges from the bedroom, wearing some kind of nightwear that suggests this weekend was supposed to go differently — again, not obscene just special. She watches Maeve struggle for a moment, then goes to help her. They make the bed in silence. It is a ritual they know very well. By the end of it, they are still — startled momentarily by their muscle memory.

Juniper goes toward the bedroom. Maeve sits on the mattress.

MAEVE

You kept the sheets.

JUNIPER
I didn't — did I?
I guess I never changed them after you left.

Maeve smells the sheets.

MAEVE
Oh. Wow.

JUNIPER
You're disgusting.

MAEVE
No, no. You have to smell this.
It smells just like—

Juniper complies.

JUNIPER
Oh my god.

MAEVE
I'm surprised you didn't wash them. You're so particular.

JUNIPER
I wasn't myself when I left.

Juniper moves from the sofa. She rights the thing that Maeve knocked over.

MAEVE
This house is very clean now.

JUNIPER
I like it that way.

MAEVE
And... (*wrinkling her nose*) sparse.
Why is there nothing in your drawers or cabinets?

JUNIPER
What were you doing looking / through our—

MAEVE
It's like no one lives here.

JUNIPER

It's a weekend home.

MAEVE

And what are the drawers and cabinets of your weekday home like? Do you have an odds and ends drawer? Are there unflattering photos? Takeout receipts? Stale rubber bands and eraser crumbs? Old chapstick and key rings?

JUNIPER

Blake doesn't like clutter.

MAEVE

We used to have so many pointless, beautiful things.

JUNIPER

But never the things we needed.

MAEVE

We made do.

JUNIPER

Maeve. We used a sports bra for a pot holder.

Juniper is moving around the living room, adjusting things, assessing the place.

MAEVE

This painting is really good.

JUNIPER

(surprised) Thank you.

I feel pretty proud of how this one turned out.

MAEVE

You should have heard the way Blake bragged about you. She's really smitten.

JUNIPER

I don't trust you as far as I can throw you.

MAEVE

How far can you throw me?

JUNIPER

Apparently not far enough.

a moment

MAEVE

The contrast's not exactly right, if you want my opinion.

JUNIPER

I didn't.

MAEVE

You should have kept the skylight.

JUNIPER

We didn't have a skylight. We had / a hole in the roof.

MAEVE

And this furniture is so—

JUNIPER

Midcentury.

MAEVE

Ugh. It makes me want to kill myself.

JUNIPER

Blake likes it!

MAEVE

Do you like it?

JUNIPER

Well. Yeah. Sure. It's— no, it's uncomfortable and cold and you have to be way too careful with it. But you know what, Maeve, sometimes we make compromises for the people we love.

MAEVE

“The people we love.”

JUNIPER

Yes.

MAEVE

You love Blake?

JUNIPER

Why do you find that so hard to believe?

MAEVE

Because she's rich and boring.

JUNIPER

She's actually only one of those things, and you never worried about money so don't pretend to now just because you think you can use it against me.

MAEVE

I'm sorry.

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

Really?

MAEVE

Yes, about this. I don't know what else you expect me to apologize for but I'm sorry I called your fiancée boring. Even if she is.

JUNIPER

MAEVE

JUNIPER

You know exactly what I want you to apologize for.

MAEVE

Oh Gin. Oh Juniper.

Gin Juniper Juniper Gin Gin Juniper

JUNIPER

You ran away from home. My home ran away from me.

MAEVE

I tried to come back! But I couldn't find the house. I couldn't find my way / home.

JUNIPER

Nope. I am not going to listen to this.

MAEVE

How much did you have to change to be with Blake?

JUNIPER

You're not allowed to talk about her anymore.

MAEVE

How did you get like this?

JUNIPER
I am happy.

MAEVE
No, I mean. How'd you end up with some fancy lawyer who wants to marry you just so she has a loyal little arm piece by the time she announces her run for state senate or the Supreme Court or whatever? You're not fancy, Junebug. You got all these dreams and that's what's great about you, but you're not fancy. Your mom didn't even graduate high school and sometimes you forget to pronounce the "g" on words like cryin' and laughin' and fuckin'.

JUNIPER
Why don't you shut up about shit you don't know. You never even met / my mother.

MAEVE
I know she weren't no scholar.

JUNIPER
She got her G.E.D. two years after she had me. Jesus. I'm not complete trash.

MAEVE
Well I'll be...

JUNIPER
People change! People are allowed to change!

MAEVE
Yeah, but usually people change over time, by accident, by fate.
You changed yourself. And it's 'distasteful'.

JUNIPER
Go fuck yourself.

MAEVE
I do. Every day. And every time, I think about you panting *Maeve Maeve Maeve*.

Juniper slaps Maeve. Maeve grabs Juniper's wrist and twists it behind her back.

JUNIPER
Kiss me and I swear I'll bite your fucking tongue out of your mouth.

MAEVE
That sounds hot.

JUNIPER
I hate you.

MAEVE
Say it again.

JUNIPER
I hate you.

MAEVE
Again.

JUNIPER
I hate—

Juniper bursts into tears. Maeve is startled. She pulls away.

MAEVE
You cry now?

Juniper cries silently.

JUNIPER
Hold me.

She does.

JUNIPER
This is my shirt.

MAEVE
My shirt. You just wore it more.

Juniper buries her face in Maeve's shirt.

JUNIPER
Why did you leave me?

MAEVE
You told me to.

Maeve holds Juniper. Juniper takes Maeve's hand and holds it to her face. The house cries with Juniper, trembling. Time passes. Outside, the wind whistles through the holler.

MAEVE
Gin. Listen to the wind!

But Juniper is asleep. Maeve does not sleep. The lightbulb in the lamp illuminating the living room blows. Darkness stretches across Juniper and Maeve, safe for a pale

beam of moonlight. Juniper shifts in her sleep, intertwining her body around Maeve's. Maeve is still as a statue, a fixture of the house. We are like this for some time until first light aches, pulls the room to morning.

MAEVE

(a quiet gasp) The first light through those pines is still so...

Juniper stirs sleepily, then sees she is entangled with Maeve and jolts awake.

JUNIPER

Fuck.

MAEVE

Good morning.

JUNIPER

Fuck. How did I fall asleep here?

Juniper begins to get up.

MAEVE

Don't go.

JUNIPER

You need to leave.

MAEVE

You and I both know that isn't so.

JUNIPER

No, you need to leave now. You need to be gone by the time she wakes up.

MAEVE

Blake is going to drive me to the hospital.

JUNIPER

I can't deal with you and her in this house at the same time again. Get your stuff together, and I'll drive you into town if you really can't / walk.

MAEVE

Why am I here?

JUNIPER

This weekend was supposed to be— everything was going to fall into place and—

MAEVE

Why am I here now?

JUNIPER

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. Stop asking me—

MAEVE

I wouldn't still be here if you really wanted me gone.

JUNIPER

Maeve. I don't love you anymore. I can't. I've lost that part of who I was.

MAEVE

Then let me help you find who you were.

JUNIPER

No. No. You do not get to talk to me like you have any say over who I am. I am going to marry Blake and be happy.

MAEVE

JUNIPER

MAEVE

I never thought you were the type to settle.

JUNIPER

This is me doing what's best for me. This is not about you. This is not about who I used to be or who you thought I would be. I was terrified of falling in love with Blake. Okay? I didn't want to give myself to another person. There was nothing left to give. But Blake... The first morning I woke up next to Blake, she asked me if I could do anything in the world with nothing stopping me what would I do. I told her I would paint something truthful. And she said, I want to get rid of the things that are stopping you. Let me have this. Let me be happy with Blake. Okay? I paint almost every day now, Maeve. I am closer to being who I wanted to be with her than I was with you.

MAEVE

Then why am I here, Gin?

JUNIPER

Because you trespassed! Don't try to make this something cosmic. I lost everything when you ran away from me. I lost you. I lost this house. I lost the parts of me I put in you and in this house. There was nothing left of me. Do you have any idea how it feels to lose a home?

MAEVE

Yes.

JUNIPER

No you don't. After you left, I sat in this house for for— I must have watched an entire season pass without moving from this place. I was barely going to work, just letting the money run out and the lights turn off, waiting for you to come back. And then one day there was a knock at the door. A man, with a badge and a gun, who asked me if I was you. I told him I was your girlfriend. He laughed. Told me I had to vacate immediately or face imprisonment because I was squatting on state property. I thought you were dead.

MAEVE

I'm here.

Maeve undoes the knot on Juniper's robe. It falls open. Maeve takes inventory of the changes to Juniper's body. The house trembles like a heart.

MAEVE

You're older now. This scar is new.

Do you want to see how I've stayed the same for you?

Maeve lifts her shirt. Juniper stares, then slowly searches her hand up Maeve's torso. She holds her hand against Maeve's heart. There's no heartbeat. An eerie stillness in the house.

JUNIPER

I don't want you in this house anymore.

Maeve leans in closer to Juniper. She hovers over her mouth.

MAEVE

I will leave as soon as you want me to leave.

Their mouths are open. Juniper breathes for the both of them. Something in the house shatters.

Blake opens the bedroom door. Juniper pulls her hand away.

MAEVE

Morning, Blake. Reckon the pressure's changed enough to open that door of Juniper's?

JUNIPER

Blake, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I fell asleep, nothing / happened.

BLAKE

Get out of my house, Maeve.

MAEVE

Your house?

JUNIPER

Maeve, please—

MAEVE

Gotta tell ya, Blake, these walls is mighty familiar to me. Come to think on it. I seem to recall fuckin' Gin on the threshold of this here house with the hinges squeakin' open and shut on account we couldn't wait long enough for the door to shut.

That's probably why it sticks.

Blake swings to punch Maeve in the face, but Maeve dodges. Maeve chuckles darkly. Juniper grabs Blake, but Blake lunges at Maeve. They fight. Blake clearly outmatches Maeve, but Maeve is scrappy — clawing, biting, spitting — until Blake grabs the fire poker and clubs it against Maeve's skull, hard, knocking Maeve to the ground. Juniper screams. Blake immediately drops the fire poker and recoils.

BLAKE

Oh my god are you okay?

But Maeve stands, completely unfazed. Blake is dumbstruck. Maeve picks up the fire poker backs Blake into a wall. Juniper unfreezes, goes toward Maeve.

JUNIPER

No, no, no, Maeve, no.

Juniper throws her body between Maeve and Blake, grabbing the fire poker and kissing Maeve on the mouth. They drop the fire poker.

The house expels Blake from itself.

What began as a diversion becomes real. Juniper & Maeve stagger toward the couch. Their hands tear at each other's clothes, stripping back ten years.

Maeve goes down on Juniper.

As Maeve and Juniper fuck, the house undoes itself. The fancy walls disintegrate to reveal shabby walls that are in the process of being painted some ridiculous, lurid color that tasteful people would never paint a living room but you would want to be bold enough to pick when you are looking at paint swatches.

Juniper and Maeve are tussling, in and out of each other, and in the disorientation of limbs and ecstasy, Juniper becomes Gin. Gin fucks Maeve.

Home, Gin and Maeve's life together in this house, falls from the heavens: mateless socks, the weapon pieces from Clue, a hideous crocheted blanket from the 70's, a pair of slippers, puzzle pieces, dirty tissues, pretty clippings from magazines, tea bags, a pride flag, a game of Sorry!, etc. etc. etc.

MAEVE
Gin... Gin...
You're home.

end of act one

II.

[Note: Act II interrupts the chronological flow of time in Act's I & III of the play. The vignette's of Act II are the memories that Juniper conjures of her life with Maeve ten years ago. Juniper both orchestrates and falls victim to her memories of this house with Maeve. Transitions should occur fluidly. The beginning of a new vignette is indicated thus *.]

*

It is midmorning in Gin and Maeve's living room. Gin spackles some small and large nicks in the living room walls. The place is notably shabbier than the place where Juniper resides. But look at the breeze blowing through the open window. It is home. In the kitchen, Maeve sings loudly. We can smell that she is cooking bacon and brewing a pot of coffee. She emerges and sings to Gin. They dance clumsily, splashing coffee and smearing spackling.

They kiss.

GIN

The bacon—

MAEVE

I like it crispy.

She kisses Gin.

They kiss a little longer.

They lose track of time.

The smoke detector goes off.

GIN

Hey look! The smoke detector works.

Maeve runs to the kitchen.

GIN

Oh, wow, listen to the locusts!

Mom always said that's how you know you're at the end of a summer: 'cause it's hot as shit and you can't hear yourself piss over the damn locusts.'

MAEVE

(offstage) I think those are cicadas.

GIN

Cicadas only come around every 13 or 17 years.

Maeve returns with a strip of bacon, offers it to Gin.

MAEVE

Locusts are a plague. Cicadas are good luck. Might be our lucky year.

GIN
Perfect.

Gin returns to spackling. Maeve cracks open a beer.

MAEVE
What? It's bread in liquid form.

GIN
It's rude not to share.

Gin drinks after Maeve. Maeve opens the can of paint and looks for a stirring stick.

GIN
I'm not finished spackling.

MAEVE
I'll work around you.

She settles on a spoon sitting in an old teacup.

GIN
It'll look blotchy.

MAEVE
There's not enough color in this room.

GIN
I know, but I really want to do it right—

Maeve brushes a streak of paint on the wall. It is a ridiculous color.

MAEVE
Huh. It looked different in the hardware store.

GIN
No, that's the color you picked out.

MAEVE
Did I?

GIN
Yep.

MAEVE
I think it brings out the wildfire burning behind your eyes.

GIN

You're full of shit.

MAEVE

Oh, we should have chosen gold paint! We could have had a sunset room like in that book, about the hideout in the woods, how they paint the one room that catches the late day sun, they paint it golden so that every day when the sun sets the room radiates with golden light. What's it called?

GIN

The one where the girl dies cause the rope breaks and the water's high?

MAEVE

Well she wouldn't have died if they hadn't left Terabithia in the first place. [*That's what it's called.*] This is our Terabithia.

GIN

Then we can never leave.

Imagine how this room will be in the summer, warm with the windows always open; the smell of pine trees and campfires. We can host a different thru-hiker on our porch each night. And we'll catch fish and rub lemons into lemonade and that looks like a blackberry bush by the front steps. We'll make pie!

MAEVE

We'll make love under the stars! We'll light candles in empty beer bottles and make our own stars.

GIN

You make everything seem possible.

MAEVE

Gin! Gin! Gin! Everything *is* possible!

GIN

How?

MAEVE

We'll bank every wish, every eye lash, every shooting star. We'll lift our legs crossing railroad tracks and seek out dandelions to blow a wish on. You'll never tell me and I'll never tell you but we'll both wish until one warm day in June, you'll peer over your fresh-squeezed lemonade and say, "Pardon me, mister or missus thru-hiker, it's been swell but I really want to fuck my lover right now on this here porch. So you can watch or skidaddle or heck you can join in. But this thing that I want is gonna happen."

GIN

This thing that I want is gonna happen.

*

Gin sits on the couch. Maeve enters from the storage room with paint supplies and a blindfold.

MAEVE

Is this what you wanted?

GIN

Yes, now, blindfold me.

Maeve ties a blindfold around Gin's head.

MAEVE

Okay. Now what?

GIN

Just sit there.

Hand me a paint brush.

Well, dip it in whatever color you want, first.

Maeve hands Gin the brush.

GIN

Show me where the canvass is.

Maeve does.

MAEVE

Now what?

Gin reaches her other hand to Maeve's face and gently traces her thumb across the slope of Maeve's forehead, the hard ridge of her nose, her soft lips. Gin paints Maeve onto the canvass as she feels her.

*

Gin works on some household repair in the living room. Maeve enters from outside.

MAEVE

Gin Gin Gin!

Guess what I found at the dollar store!

GIN

More spackling putty?

MAEVE

Huh?

Oh right, yeah I got some of that too.

But look... at... THIS!

Maeve reveals a rainbow flag. It's not quite a pride flag. It's more like a flag that has a rainbow with two clouds on either end and both of the clouds are smiling.

MAEVE

For the flagpole!

I know you wanted to get it removed, but now we don't have to!

I also got this—

Maeve reveals a flag featuring a skull and cross bones.

—so that we can alternate the flags depending on how hospitable we're feeling.

Gin is speechless. Maeve grabs Gin's hand and pulls her outside.

MAEVE

C'mon, c'mon.

GIN

(offstage) Wow, Maeve. It's so —

MAEVE

(offstage) I *know*.

Now you'll be able to tell it's our home from miles above.

*

Maeve sits on the sofa, picking a guitar. She addresses Gin through an open window.

MAEVE

Hey, Gin.

Gin.

Hey, Gin.

I want to tell you a funny joke.

GIN

I'm cleaning the fish.

MAEVE

This is relevant.

Because it's about a fish.

And it'll gut you.

GIN

...was that the joke?

MAEVE

No. The joke is:

What did the fish say when it ran into the cement wall?

GIN

Really, Maeve?

MAEVE

Dam!

GIN

Can you bring me the knife that's sitting next to the toaster?

MAEVE

Wasn't that funny?

Didn't you think that was funny?

GIN

Maeve, it was so funny I can barely move. Can you please bring me the knife.

MAEVE

Why do you need a knife?

GIN

To gut the fish...?

Maeve runs outside to Gin. We hear:

MAEVE

We said we were going to release them.

GIN

Yeah if they were too little.

MAEVE

Gin, we cannot eat those fish.
We named them.

GIN

You named them.

MAEVE

You said you were cleaning them!

GIN

Cleaning means gutting, Maeve.

MAEVE

That's barbaric! You're a barbarian!

GIN

I don't see where the ethical dilemma is.
You love bacon.

MAEVE

I did not first cultivate a relationship with the pig prior to meeting it in bacon form.

GIN

You're being absurd.

Maeve renters the living room with the bucket of fish. She goes to the bathroom. We hear her fill up the bath tub and plop the fish into the tub.

*

Maeve is in the bathroom, pooping. Gin sits on the sofa, reading through job postings in a newspaper.

MAEVE

(she is 22 and the first person to have this thought) Capitalism only works because we tell it to work. If everyone stopped buying things, capitalism would stop. And money... doesn't even exist. It is just a concept. And why do we try to make money off of fucking everything. Who decided that they could make money off of roses?! Or land? Why must we pay taxes on the earth!?

GIN

This is what you think about while you're pooping?

MAEVE

I am not pooping.
I am defecating on the capitalist ideology.
Why? What do you think about when you're pooping?
Upon what do you defecate?
The housing crisis? Global warming? The income gap? The fact that people in America go hungry when some people pay \$100 a person for one fucking meal?

GIN

Half a semester of community college make you a pro on American economics?

MAEVE

YUP. And I ask you, upon what do you defecate?

GIN

When I'm pooping, I think about pooping.

Maeve flushes the toilet and walks out.

GIN

Wash your hands.
We haven't paid property taxes.

MAEVE

Hmm?

GIN

You were shitting on the fact that we have to pay to live on land. But we haven't paid our property taxes yet. So you can't complain about paying them.

MAEVE

We are expected to pay property taxes.

GIN

We will get in trouble if we don't / pay-

MAEVE

I will get in trouble.

Technically you are a guest on this land.

GIN

Well, until we pay those taxes we're both guests on this land.

MAEVE

Um, we'll always be guests on this land because a) you can't own Mother Nature, bitch and b) because our ancestors stole this land from the Native Americans via genocide anyway and c) cause I ain't got no money.

GIN

You don't have a job. If you had a job you would have money.

MAEVE

I *had* a job at a *university* and I still barely had money.

GIN

You barely had a job at a *community college* and now instead of barely having money you have no money.

MAEVE

And lots of scruples.

GIN

Oh don't try to make that about scruples. You didn't get fired because of scruples. You got fired because you didn't know how to negotiate the terms of your contract.

MAEVE

Because I didn't have a college education.

GIN

Because you dropped out.

MAEVE

Because I ran out of money.

GIN

Because you don't have responsible spending habits.

MAEVE

Because I was raised by an out-of-work-miner-turned-alcoholic.

GIN

(a joke, sort of) Who drank because his daughter was a dyke.

MAEVE

And his wife was propped up on pain meds, that's the spirit.

GIN

Say, here's an idea: why don't you become a lawyer, you're so good at bullshitting your way through an argument.

MAEVE

But then I wouldn't have my darling Gin, because you have scruples too, my darling Gin.

GIN

Is that so?

MAEVE

I don't have a job.

I don't have a car.

I don't have a tv.

I don't have a bed.

But I do have a pullout sofa and the title to a fixer-upper and you, you, you, Gin.

And a guitar. Some scruples. And a scar, from when you threw that plate of spaghetti at my head last week.

I have so much what more could I possibly want?

GIN

A job.

MAEVE

I am looking.

GIN

No. I am looking. For you.

MAEVE

I will look.

Gin hands her the newspaper.

MAEVE

These are not the jobs I seek.

I want to be an astronaut. A cartographer. A poet!

GIN

You're already a poet and it isn't making us any money.

MAEVE

A butcher! A baker! A candlestick maker!

GIN

Maev, cut it out.

Have you looked at these estimates?

MAEVE

Is that what this is about?

GIN

MAEVE

They're just estimates.

GIN

MAEVE

Maybe we're thinking about this the wrong way. Maybe instead of thinking about what has to be done we should consider what doesn't have to be done. Reprioritize.

GIN

Reprioritize?

Maeve takes the list of repair estimates from Gin.

MAEVE

For example, until we get the kitchen sink working we can wash dishes in the bathroom.

GIN

Except that we don't have a broken sink; we don't have a sink period.

MAEVE

Potato, tomato.

GIN

Didn't your uncle ever check on this place?

MAEVE

I don't know, he lived in Montana for like the last ten years of his life.

He probably assumed this place housed squatters and he didn't want to disturb their peace.

GIN
That's weird.

MAEVE
My uncle was a weird dude. Probably gay.
I wonder if that's why he left me / this place.

GIN
Why would squatters take a sink?

MAEVE
If you saw a free sink right now wouldn't you take it?

GIN
Okay. Well a sink would be like 200 bucks.
But \$3000 to repair the roof?

MAEVE
Oh, I don't think it's that bad...

GIN
That hole is the size of a small child.

MAEVE
A sunroof! A skylight! Look, you can almost see the moon through it now.

GIN
What happens when it snows?

MAEVE
Gin, relax. It's September.

GIN
It's October.

MAEVE
Oh shit! We need to get some Halloween decorations!

GIN
Utilities are due / in four days, and I won't get paid for another five days.

MAEVE
I know. I know!
And we will have a payment due after that and after that and after that.
And it will all be fine.

GIN

Yes. Because I will figure it out.

MAEVE

Because you will figure it out.

GIN

God, I hate you.

MAEVE

I am complimenting your endless resourcefulness.

GIN

Maeve. You are lazy.

MAEVE

I'm not lazy.

I have / scruples.

I am not going to participate in a capitalist system that profits from my disenfranchisement.

GIN

If you say that word one more time I swear to god—

You're lazy.

MAEVE

I'm not.

GIN

Prove it. Get a job and stop living off me.

MAEVE

Stop living off you.

GIN

Yes.

MAEVE

Hmm. Pretty sure I'm the reason we're living here.

GIN

For now. Maeve, this house is two repair bills away from being condemned.

At this point we're basically squatting.

MAEVE

I am happy with the life we're starting.

Fuck getting a job that'll ruin that.

Maeve crumples up the newspaper. She goes and flushes it down the toilet.

GIN

That will ruin the plumbing.

MAEVE

(from the bathroom) Good. Then you can fix that too and lord it over me. Oooh, I'm Gin, I'm the capable lesbian. Oooh, I'm so good at being an adult. Oooh, look at me I'm so responsible!

GIN

Damnit, Maeve! I didn't ask to be the capable one.

MAEVE

God you'd look so hot with a wrench in your hand bent under some pipes.

GIN

(ignoring Maeve) 'Gin! Take care of your brothers! Gin! Take care of your mother! Gin! Take care of / your lover.'

Maeve is basically doing a lap dance on Gin, and Gin is doing her best to ignore Maeve's crotch in her face.

MAEVE

Hey, Gin? Want to check out my plumbing?

GIN

No thanks, I already know you're full of shit.

MAEVE

Gin! Gin! Fix my plumbing; I think I sprang a leak.

Gin grabs Maeve's ass and screams into Maeve's crotch.

GIN

(muffled) ARGH! Why am I so attracted to you and your leaky plumbing?!

Gin unzips Maeve's pants and tries to yank them down, but it doesn't go smoothly. So Maeve sits on the back edge of the couch and Gin tries to pull off Maeve's pants but Gin is really impatient and flustered so the minute Maeve's underwear are visible, Gin abandons the pants to kiss Maeve's face and finger Maeve's pussy... but the force of the kiss knocks them both over the back of the couch.

MAEVE

Ow. Fuck.

GIN

Wait wait wait don't move. Your cunt's at the perfect angle right now.

MAEVE

...you want to paint me like this?

GIN

No, dumbass. I want to figure out where this leak of yours is coming from.

*

Leaves fall through the hole in the roof. Golden light tumbles around Gin who ushers the leaves into a tidy pile with a rake. Maeve watches Gin. Gin catches Maeve watching her. The intensity of Maeve's gaze makes Gin bashful.

MAEVE

You are so beautiful.

GIN

MAEVE

MAEVE

I wish you could paint yourself right now.
With the sun and the earth caught between your hair.

Maeve removes a leaf from Gin's hair.

GIN

Can you make a wish on a fallen leaf?

MAEVE

What's there to wish for?

Gin and Maeve look at each other. Maeve offers the leaf to Gin. Gin closes her eyes.

GIN

I wish this pile was big enough to jump in.

When she opens her eyes, Maeve has left the room. Gin continues raking. Maeve returns with a large armful of leaves. She tosses them into the air.

GIN

Maeve!

Maeve collapses in a fit of laughter. She makes snow angels in the leaves. Gin makes a show of burying Maeve's chest in a pile of leaves. Maeve's giddiness settles. The leaves rise and fall with her chest. A stillness.

MAEVE

Jump.

*

Gin comes home from work, dressed for a diner. She tosses her house keys and bike helmet onto the coffee table. Maeve, who prior to this was asleep on the couch, wakes with a start.

MAEVE

Fuck! You scared me.

(stretching) Mm. Love your butt in restaurant khakis.

GIN

You said you were going to clean.

MAEVE

I dusted the coffee table.

C'mere.

GIN

Maeve, no, get up.

MAEVE

C'mere.

GIN

Maeve. Get / up.

MAEVE

Okay okay.

Maeve gets up. They start making a space for the pullout.

MAEVE

Did you bring home leftovers?

GIN

(under her breath) I'm so fucking tired of playing fort just to make our bed.

MAEVE

One day we'll have a real bed.

GIN

When?

MAEVE

One day.

GIN
When is one day?

MAEVE
I dunno... soon, I guess, right?

GIN
This mattress has been killing my / back.

MAEVE
I'll rub it.

They heave the mattress out of the couch frame. It thuds into place.

GIN
Where did you put the sheets?

MAEVE
What do you mean.

GIN
The sheets. For the bed.

MAEVE
I thought you were picking them up.

GIN
AGH. Really, Maeve?

MAEVE
Sorry. Guess I misunderstood.

GIN
That was the only thing I asked you to do today. I asked you to pick up the sheets and clean the living room.

MAEVE
That's two things.

GIN
GIN
GIN

MAEVE
Okay, I'll go get the sheets.
They're open till 10.

GIN

But I want to go to sleep now.

MAEVE

It's only 9:15.

GIN

You didn't work a double today.

You don't have to be up at 6 tomorrow.

What the fuck did you do today if you didn't get the laundry?

MAEVE

I figured out the comma placement in the last line of my poem, calm down.

GIN

You figure that out with your eyes closed?

MAEVE

No. I fixed the comma. And then I *started* to clean the living room, but then I had a panic attack. So I took a nap.

GIN

You had a panic attack.

MAEVE

Yes. I literally couldn't move off of the couch all day.

GIN

You've been on the couch all day?

MAEVE

Yeah. It's been really bad.

GIN

Okay.

Gin sits on the edge of the pullout and kicks off her shoes.

MAEVE

Okay what.

GIN

Nothing.

It just seems like you've been having a lot of panic attacks lately.

MAEVE

Yeah... because I'm anxious.

GIN

What do you have to be anxious about?

MAEVE

What?

GIN

What are you anxious about?

MAEVE

The same things you are.

GIN

Really?

MAEVE

Yeah.

GIN

I'm anxious about what's going to happen when November ends and we still have a hole in our roof, so I work.

MAEVE

Do you really thinking working 14 hours a day makes you less anxious?

GIN

God. Fuck. I can't even tell you to sleep on the couch, because we literally sleep on a couch every. single. night. Fuck! I can literally see my breath.

MAEVE

For the record, I don't think the sheets were that dirty.

GIN

Are you kidding me?

MAEVE

Sorry I'm not bothered by how we smell.

GIN

We haven't washed them in like two months.

MAEVE

Cause you're so cheap you sweat over spending five bucks on laundry.

GIN

Because I am the only one who sweats over anything in this house.

MAEVE

Okay... so maybe like calm down.

GIN

Go get the fucking sheets.

Here.

Guess you'll need these.

Gin throws a handful of change at Maeve's receding form.

*

Gin is sick and surrounded by tissues. Maeve enters from the kitchen carrying a grocery bag.

MAEVE

Oh good, you're still alive.

Look what I got you...

Blue gatorade.

And crackers.

And chicken noodle soup with stars, because you're a star.

And a thermometer that works.

And sour gummi worms for when you feel better.

GIN

Thank you.

Maeve kisses Gin.

GIN

You'll get sick.

MAEVE

Shh...

Maeve kisses Gin again. Gin starts coughing. Maeve takes off her scarf and wraps it around Gin.

MAEVE

I'll go make you some lemon tea.

*

Maeve and Gin enter with groceries. Maeve is mid-rant, quite flustered, clearly this has been going on for some time. She makes it to the center of the room, bags still in hand throughout the following. While Maeve rants, Gin has time to change the toilet paper, change a light bulb, put away groceries, etc.

MAEVE

— and in line at a fucking Food Lion? Like what are you supposed to do, not purchase your tampons and eggs? It's because they fucking *know* that they're only going to get the time of day by taking it from you. And like, we literally got tampons, basil, and nail clippers. Which we then put in our reusable bag from Banned Books Week at the public library. If that doesn't tell you something about your clientele from the start then maybe you're dumber than you look. Which, buy the way, is pretty dumb. Good LORD I could have ripped that stupid mustache off his smug mouth. I mean. Has this ever worked for him before, propositioning women over produce? God, I could have— if he hadn't called security. Man, though, did you see his face? Like he's never had some five foot three dyke from the holler threaten to strangle him with his own lanyard. Probably peed his pants. Hopefully. What a pussy. He didn't know what he was messing with till I came back with those jars of buy-one-get-one pasta sauce and I saw him looking at you like that and holding his phone out to you like it's his dick he wants you to touch and you're all slightly bemused because sometimes you forget men exist in this world and then there they are comparing your tits to whatever ripe fruit you put in your basket like please I shit better lines than that. Like damn, get the fuck away from my woman because she's nobody's girl. You can't have her. She's busy. Fucking me. In our house. With this cucumber you just sold us. Fuck.

By this point, Gin is sitting on the sofa, smiling at Maeve.

MAEVE

What?

GIN

Come and give your helpless damsel a kiss.

MAEVE

I'm angry!

GIN

I know. You're cute when you're flustered.

But you come near me with that cucumber and we're over.

*

Gin rolls a tube of paint between her hands. Maeve clips her toenails. They are bundled up in knit hats, scarves, etc. Rogue snowflakes fall through the poorly-repaired hole in the roof. Gin tries to squeeze out some paint, but it is frozen. She throws the paint across the room.

GIN
Fuck!

Maeve picks at some dirt between her toes. Gin gets up, paces around the room.

GIN
If we get them half the money, do you think they'd turn on half the electricity?

MAEVE
I like it. It feels like camping.

GIN
My paint is literally frozen, Maeve. I cannot paint. Because my paint is frozen. Because it is below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. In this house.

MAEVE
Huh. Maybe you should try oil paint. That probably won't freeze because there's / oil in it.

GIN
I can't afford enough electricity to plug in the space heater which we are using to heat the house because the heat is broken and I can't afford to fix that. So I definitely can't afford oil paint.

MAEVE
Probably for the best. I knew a girl in high school who got drunk and fell asleep with her space heater on and it short-circuited and a spark hit her can of hairspray and come to find there was a gas leak and the explosion blew out her entire exterior wall. She got amnesia.

GIN
GIN
GIN

MAEVE
I didn't think they'd actually –

GIN
I know you didn't.

MAEVE
They'll have to turn it back on –

GIN
If we pay.

The sound of Maeve clipping her toenails fills the silence.

*

Maeve and Gin play a game of Sorry!

Maeve is losing.

At some point it becomes clear that Maeve can't win.

Maeve flips the board.

Maeve does not say sorry.

*

Maeve and Gin eat spaghetti without sauce, by candlelight. It's unclear if the candlelight is romantic or if the electric bill is late.

GIN

No, I get what you're saying it's just that— Can you pass the salt? — What you're saying isn't possible.

MAEVE

You're not listening. What I'm saying is that we let the machines do all the work and give everyone the same amount of points, then people don't have to work.

GIN

Like your dad.

MAEVE

My dad didn't lose his job cause of machines. He lost it cause they started blowing up entire sides of mountains.

GIN

I don't think that's how it works.

MAEVE

Yeah? Then how does it—

GIN

I don't know just not like—

MAEVE

They take the thing, ram it in the hole and then BOOM!

GIN

You told me your dad lost his job cause he drank.

MAEVE

No. He drank because he lost his job.

GIN

So not having a job didn't make him happier.

MAEVE

Because he didn't have any money.

GIN

Because he didn't have a job.

MAEVE

Gin, you're not listening to me. I'm saying if the government can afford to build machines to literally blow up mountains, then they can afford to pay my dad.

GIN

Whom you hated.

MAEVE

Who I hate.

Don't give me that l— you didn't win this argument, okay?

Gin. Goddamnit.

Gin! No one deserves to go hungry!

GIN

Maeve. Hey. I'm on your side.

I'm one hundred percent on your side. I just.

We don't live in that world.

MAEVE

But we could.

GIN

But we don't. And it's killing me. Look at me.

MAEVE

Yeah you look like shit.

GIN

So I need your help.

Okay. Okay?

MAEVE

Okay!

They eat in silence.

MAEVE

We got fire insurance.

GIN

MAEVE

GIN

Maeve.

MAEVE
I'm serious.

GIN
I know and I'm telling you—

MAEVE
We could burn it down and start from the ground up.

GIN
You say one more word about lighting this house on fire, I swear to god—

MAEVE
You and this fucking house. You know, if it could lick your pussy I bet you'd marry it.

Gin throws a handful of spaghetti at Maeve.

GIN
I just want one nice thing, goddamnit. Let me have one nice thing. I work my ass off. I try so fucking hard. I left that shithole—

MAEVE
The day after your brothers turned 18, I know, I get it.

GIN
Because I wanted something better! I thought I could get out. Then what do I do but fall for the first dyke who shows off her tits in Drawing 201 at the community college. God. Fuck! Different address, same shithole holler. Goddamnit, Maeve. All I want is a roof over my head that doesn't leak and a girlfriend who helps me hold up that roof.

Maeve picks up the spaghetti, plops it back on Gin's plate.

MAEVE
That's two nice things.

Gin takes her plate and switches it with Maeve's. Maeve takes a bite.

GIN
You disgust me.

MAEVE
Waste not want not.

*

Gin and Maeve sleep on the pullout. The windows are open, we can hear sounds of a still spring night. Gin bolts up, a huge intake of breath. Panting, panic. Maeve sleeps.

GIN

Maeve. Maeve.

Gin hovers, but cannot bring herself to touch Maeve. She is like this for a long time.

Gin begins to weep quietly at the edge of the pullout.

Maeve stirs. Gin wipes her tears.

MAEVE

Gin?

Gin...? What's wrong?

GIN

MAEVE

MAEVE

Gin. Hey— what's wrong?

Gin, you're scaring me, say something.

GIN

Everything is about to change, isn't it?

MAEVE

What? It doesn't have to. I won't let it... I won't let you. I love you.

Maeve falls asleep with her arms around Gin.

Gin weeps silently.

*

Maeve and Gin play a game of Sorry!

Gin is losing.

At some point it becomes clear that Gin can't win.

Gin flips the board.

Gin does not say sorry.

*

Gin and Maeve asleep on the pullout. A warm breeze blows through an open window. Gin smiles and squirms sleepily as Maeve does something to her under the covers. Gin bolts up with a start, panicked.

GIN

Fuck. What day is it?

MAEVE

Saturday?

GIN

Fuck!

She begins to clean in a flurry. Maeve is still a lump underneath the covers.

MAEVE

Come back to bed.

GIN

We have a showing at ten.

It's 9:45.

MAEVE

A showing of what.

GIN

Of the house.

Maeve emerges.

MAEVE

You didn't tell me about that.

GIN

Would it have made a / difference to you?

MAEVE

Yes. Geeze.

Maeve takes off her shirt. She wanders around the space, invariably getting in Gin's way.

GIN

What are you doing?

MAEVE

I'm looking for a clean shirt.

GIN

Can you put a dirty shirt on in the meantime?

MAEVE

What's the problem.

GIN

If the buyers walk up and see / you -

MAEVE

These tits will definitely up the property value, don't you think?

I mean wouldn't you buy a house if you knew this piece of ass / once roamed among these walls.

GIN

Put your pants back on.

MAEVE

I'm looking for pants!

Gin is trying really hard to concentrate on cleaning.

GIN

I can't concentrate when you're—

MAEVE

When I'm what.

GIN

You are so—

MAEVE

I'm so what?

GIN

Get your pussy off my ass.

This is not consensual.

MAEVE

Which of us doesn't want this?

GIN

Goddamnit. You are so irre—

Maeve cuts off Gin with a kiss. Maeve pulls away ever so slightly. Gin begins ripping off her clothes.

GIN

You have two minutes.

Maeve flounces away.

MAEVE

Two minutes to what?

Maeve is bent over, searching through a pile of clothes. *Fuck, her ass looks great.* Gin screams, runs across the room at Maeve who laughs wildly and runs into the storage room. Gin tears after her. There is a series of crashes, Maeve laughing, Gin cussing.

Maeve darts out, hurtles over the pullout, runs into the kitchen. Gin bursts out, wearing less clothes, screaming:

GIN

You are such a fucking—

MAEVE

(offstage) I'm a what?

Gin clangs into the kitchen.

GIN

(panting, offstage) A fucking— a fucking—
What the fuck are you doing up there?
God, fuck me, your ass is—

A cascade of pots and pans as Gin clamors to pursue Maeve.

MAEVE

(offstage) Ow, fuck! Watch the burnerAH.

Maeve's protest is lost in a series of muffled gasps. There is a knock at the door. The place is a wreck. Gin and Maeve are naked on the stove top.

GIN

(offstage) God, you make me so irresponsible.

*

From the kitchen, we hear shattering as Maeve pulls plates, saucers, anything fragile from the kitchen cabinet and begins to toss them onto the floor.

GIN

(offstage) Why are you doing this?

MAEVE

(offstage) I'm gonna show you what's left when all your beloved shit disappears.

GIN

(offstage) You told me we could build a life together!

MAEVE

(offstage) A house isn't a home, Gin. It's just four walls and a roof.

GIN

(offstage) Half a roof. Half a roof when you told me you would take care of me!

MAEVE

(offstage) You told me you loved me.

GIN

(offstage) Fair enough.

MAEVE

(offstage) Fuck you.

GIN

(offstage) No thanks.

MAEVE

(offstage) I'm serious. Fuck you. And your cynical— god you're so fucking superior, aren't you. You think you're too good for this place. Just— fuck your stupid face, don't look at me like... don't look at me... don't...

Silence, then the thud of a violent kiss hitting a solid surface.

GIN

(offstage) You don't know how to leave me, do you?

Do you know how I will leave you?

Through that door. Simple as that.

Maeve comes into the living room, shoving objects into her bag.

MAEVE

You won't leave me. You're too in love with this fucking house.

She looks around the living room. She slams the bag to the ground. Gin watches from the threshold.

GIN

That isn't fair.

MAEVE

This isn't fair. None of this is fucking fair.

GIN

What's supposed to be fair about losing a home?

MAEVE

I don't care about the house. I feel like I'm losing you. God, it's just a house, Gin. But you... you are my home.

GIN

Yes. I am a place that you own. I am the place you come home to.

You wipe your dirty shoes on me. You stack your dirty dishes in my sink and leave your leftovers in my fridge. You paint me any color you like. You rearrange my furniture. You open my windows and forget to close them when it begins to rain. You store your junk in my spare room. You forget to pay my electrical bill. You leave coffee stains on my counter tops. You use up all my hot water while touching yourself in my shower. You never make my bed. You lock me up before you leave me.

MAEVE

That's not what I meant.

You keep me warm. You keep me safe.

GIN

I do not want to be your keeper.

MAEVE

GIN

MAEVE

MAEVE

I will run away from you before I ever let you leave me.

GIN

Oh grow up, I'm right here.

MAEVE

Yeah? For how much longer? You're changing right before my eyes.

GIN

Quit being dramatic. I'm rising to the occasion.
Somebody has to.

MAEVE

I don't know who you are anymore.

The foundation of the house begins to tremble. Gin trembles. From wherever she is watching, Juniper trembles.

GIN

You don't know who I am?
I don't know who I am without you. You take too much—
You took so much of me and then took up space in the hole you created inside of me.
Who am I supposed to stay for you, Maeve?
I didn't ask to love somebody this much.

Gin begins gathering objects and throwing them into Maeve's bag.

I didn't want to want any of this this much. Get out of me.
Get out of my life.

Gin shoves the bag into Maeve. Maeve lets the bag fall to the ground. A breath.
Maeve leaves. Gin picks up the bag and throws it at Maeve. The door slams. The house is eerily still. Juniper waits for Gin to go after Maeve. But Gin doesn't move.
Gin doesn't move.
Gin doesn't—

JUNIPER

No. No. *No no no no no no no no no no no no no no*— MAEVE!

Juniper runs, yanks open the door and screams for Maeve.

JUNIPER

MAEVE! MAEVE!

The holler is still.

JUNIPER

Fuck.

Juniper walks into the living room, a ghost of herself.

GIN

(to herself) She'll come back. She'll come back.

Gin sits on the sofa and waits.

III.

Dawn again in the living room of Juniper & Blake. Juniper stands in the middle of the room, looking at the place where Maeve was.

A knock on the door. Gin jumps up to answer the door.

JUNIPER
Maeve?

Blake walks into the living room.

JUNIPER
Blake?
Blake, where is Maeve?
Blake?
Where did you go?

BLAKE
I left. I got as far as the interstate.
Then I came back.

JUNIPER
Where did... Did you take Maeve?

BLAKE
I left her here.

JUNIPER
But she's not here. Where is she?
Were— are you cry—

BLAKE
We're going to start today over again.

Blake goes to the bathroom. She brushes her teeth. She washes her face.
Juniper stands immobilized in the living room.
Blake exits the bathroom, walks the length of the living room to the kitchen. She grinds some coffee beans.
She returns to the living room with toast and coffee. She sits in a chair and faces it toward the windows. The sky is just changing colors and the sun is peering through the pine needles, through the windows, into the living room. The mid-morning sun rises on Blake.
Blake and Juniper exist in the living room together for some time without talking.

BLAKE

There's more coffee in the Chemex.
I can make you toast, if you want me to make you toast.

JUNIPER

Where is Maeve?

BLAKE

If you ask me that again I will leave.

JUNIPER

She left?
Did you drive her into town?

BLAKE

I'm giving you and us both the chance to try this again.

JUNIPER

But she was just here.

BLAKE

You can't say it's unlike her to disappear without notice.

JUNIPER

You can't say that.

BLAKE

I'm sorry.

JUNIPER

Never mind.

BLAKE

You could say sorry too, if you want, and I will accept your apology.
It can actually be that simple. We don't have to drag this out all day.

JUNIPER

Yes we do.

Juniper gets herself coffee and toast from the kitchen. She sits in a chair on the opposite side of the room.

BLAKE

Did you sleep well?

JUNIPER

I didn't sleep with Maeve last night.

BLAKE

That's not what I asked.

JUNIPER

You weren't curious?

You don't have an opinion on it?

You're mad at me?

You're mad at me.

BLAKE

(a lie Blake wants to believe) I'm not mad at you.

JUNIPER

Are you sure you're not mad at me?

Because your rising sign is Taurus.

BLAKE

JUNIPER

BLAKE

Blake is close to exploding - the way leaves rattle a storm's warning. Blake picks up her dishes and Juniper's.

BLAKE

Are you finished?

Juniper doesn't respond. Blake takes the dishes to the kitchen. Juniper stares out the window.

We hear Blake wash the dishes by hand. The garbage disposal growls.

She returns to the living room with the New York Times. Juniper goes to the bathroom and brushes her teeth.

Blake begins to work on the crossword puzzle.

BLAKE

Eleven letter word for a person who might suit you well?

First letter "H".

Juniper washes her face.

JUNIPER

Let's fuck.

BLAKE
Hmm?

Juniper dries off her face, stands in the bathroom doorway.

JUNIPER
I said let's fuck.

BLAKE
I'm busy.

JUNIPER
I want to fuck you.

Blake sets down the puzzle.

BLAKE
I want to know when you were planning on telling me that you used my money to fix up the house you shared with your ex-girlfriend before she killed herself or disappeared or whatever version of the story you want to tell me this time.

BLAKE
BLAKE

JUNIPER
Our money.

BLAKE
Excuse me?

JUNIPER
You said your money,
but we share joint accounts,
so this was a mutual investment.

BLAKE
This is absurd.

JUNIPER
On our first date when I asked beach or mountains, you said mountains and these are the best mountains I know.

BLAKE
Do you realize how insane you sound?
This. This, all of this, is psychopathic.
How long have you been—

Did you think— what were you thinking?
What did you think would happen? What did you want to happen, Juniper?
What do you want?
I want to give— I have given you anything you want from me. I want to share a life with you.
So why the fuck did you take advantage of me?
Do you have any idea how ridiculous this makes me feel?
I trusted you. I didn't pry. I don't ask you about your past or who you were before we met,
because you want to keep something for yourself. Fine. I respect that because I respect you.
But don't fucking use that privacy to take advantage of me. You made me go through the
whole evening with Maeve needling me and knowing that all she had to do was wait for me
to turn my back and you would fuck her. *Fuck*, Juniper. You just sat there and watched that
smug little cunt smirk in my face.

JUNIPER

I love this house. I wanted you to love it too.

A moment in which they both contemplate accepting this as the truth.

BLAKE

We have to leave.

Blake goes to the bedroom and begins to pack.

BLAKE

(offstage) Put some clothes on. We're leaving in ten minutes.

JUNIPER

I want you to fuck me.

Like. Not gently.

Like. Pin me to the floor and ram your dick into me. Slap my ass. Pull my hair.

Like. Reclaim me.

BLAKE

Juniper, I am processing whether or not I can continue being in a relationship with you.

Pack your things. Don't test me any further.

JUNIPER

But that's what I want.

BLAKE

I'm not playing that game.

JUNIPER

What game.

BLAKE

I find it belittling when you want me to play jealous. I sat through an entire evening of your ex lover making lewd comments at you because I *trusted* that you loved me.

I love you, Juniper. I *love* you.

Can't you understand how this hurts me?

JUNIPER

You don't think it would be hot?

Blake rushes to the bathroom. We hear her retching.

JUNIPER

Fuck.

Eventually, Blake emerges.

BLAKE

I don't know what possessed you to do... any of this.

I am going to wait in the car and give you time to say goodbye to this place.

JUNIPER

It's too hot to wait outside.

BLAKE

Juniper, I cannot be in this house.

JUNIPER

Suit yourself.

Blake looks at Juniper. She kisses Juniper's cheek.

BLAKE

Haberdasher.

Juniper looks at Blake.

JUNIPER

What?

BLAKE

A person who might suit you.

JUNIPER

Who's a person who might suit me?

BLAKE

It was the answer for four across.

JUNIPER

Oh.

Blake waits for Juniper to kiss her. Juniper doesn't move.

BLAKE

I love you, and am willing to unpack this situation, back at our home.

JUNIPER

House.

Blake leaves. She leaves the door open behind her.

Juniper is still for a long time. She begins to throw some belongings in a suitcase. She abandons the suitcase to walk around the living room, touching the house she has built for herself. It is reverent and searching.

Gin unpacks Juniper's suitcase.

The sun pulls shadows across the living room, an entire day passing in the quiet of the house. Juniper walks to the windows. She presses her hands to the pane. The sun sets on Juniper. She walks to the door Blake has left open for her. She closes the door and locks it behind her.

Juniper turns around to face her dark house, just as she is silhouetted by its shadows.

Juniper and Gin see each other.

end of play