the death of the slow 'dying scuba diver

by Matthew Paul Olmos

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Developed in part by terraNOVA Collective
and Ensemble Studio Theatre

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the death of the slow’deying scuba diver

characters
LIBER PEREZ – Male, Hispanic, 30’s/40’s/50’s
VONYA/CARELESS DIVER – Female. 30’s/early 40’s
ASEXUAL SHRIMP – Female, any age
JERRY – Female, minority. Any age
NEPTUNE – Male. 30’s/early 40’s
NOSTALGIA – Female. 30’s/early 40’s
YELLOW TANG FISH – Male, any age
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beginning image...

Flickering lights revealing a scuba diver hanging by the neck.

A rope has strangled him.

He is fully suited up.

Oh, he’s underwater too. Hanging by the neck, with the surface of the ocean a rope’s length above his head. His name is LIBER PEREZ.

Lights dim to the darkness of deepened waters.
The death of the slow’dying scuba diver

First scene...

Lights brighten to the everyday of a bathroom. NOSTALGIA on the toilet, she urinates. In the adjacent kitchen is her husband NEPTUNE; it should be clear they just finished having sex. Kitchen sex.

NEPTUNE

How’s your leg?

NOSTALGIA

Resting.

NEPTUNE

Sorry about that. How’bout your...ear?

NOSTALGIA

Look, I’m peeing and you’re still leaking outta me, can you just...

NEPTUNE

Sorry.

NOSTALGIA

You’ve really got to—with the apologizing.

NEPTUNE

Well, sorry then for...you know, all the sorrys.

NOSTALGIA

Netty, you just had up against the...dish thing, really, I’m good.

NEPTUNE

Did you like when I put your arm behind—

NOSTALGIA

Well, yes. Of course. But if afterwards you’re all...sorry, or—it, well it just wastes it.

NEPTUNE

You got up so quick, I didn’t know if you finished or—
NOSTALGIA
I got up to go to the bathroom. I think that’s a normal part of the process.

NEPTUNE
Fine. (pause) I won’t say anything then.

NOSTALGIA
And I won’t hear anything then. Thank you.

NEPTUNE
Can I just say—

NOSTALGIA
Can we please cut the asking permission from this house, can we do that.

NEPTUNE
We can. But you just asked permission if we could do that. So I don’t know where that leaves us.

NOSTALGIA
I wasn’t asking fucking permission.

NEPTUNE
Are you okay in there?

NOSTALGIA
And if I wasn’t?

NEPTUNE
What’s the matter?

NOSTALGIA
Let’s just say everything, let’s just imagine the entire everything was the matter. With me sitting here trying to mind own post’coital whatever, what if the entire Earth was the fucking matter. What would you do about it, huh? How would that male ego of yours solve that one, huh?

NEPTUNE
I’d probably get up and go into the bathroom with you. Until the Earth was okay again.
NOSTALGIA
And what if that didn’t do a goddamned thing in way of a solution?

NEPTUNE
I’d do it anyways.

NOSTALGIA
Bullshit. You’d ask permission if you could do it anyways.

NEPTUNE
Is the entire everything the matter, is the entire Earth the fucking matter?

NOSTALGIA
No. Me, I’ve never been happier sitting here on this little seat, my little spot. Me, I’ve never been so completely content.

NEPTUNE
Well, I’ll be out here then. When you’re through.

NOSTALGIA
Yes, yes I know exactly where you’ll be when I’m through. But thanks for clarifying...

(NOSTALGIA sops up, then flushes. On the flush, time slows. The flush sound bellows through the space. NOSTALGIA stares into the bowl, transfixed by the turn of the water. She follows the circular movement with her head: hypnotized.

Just as the final gurgle of the flush is being heard, lights shift. Enter from the audience, with her wide charismatic grin, JERRY. Neither NOSTALGIA nor NEPTUNE sees JERRY, she speaks to the audience direct.

JERRY
If one uh you all was to take me up against something. Like you. (finding audience member) Or you over there. Yea, ...could be a chair, refrigerator, anything sturdy, you know; but after I been took like that...I like to—

Oh, c’mon, let’s get this shit intimate, let’s bring it down a level, am I right? Let’s get...right up on each other, oh you know.
JERRY (cont)

So...when I’m laying in that afterwards with some body and I’m feeling just...open as a fucking... convenient store...I like to roll over and just...let them in to what I got going on inside.

And maybe he (pointing to somebody in the audience) think I’m rollin’over cuz I wanna go again, but no, nuh-uh, playtime is closed, oh I’m sorry that it is, but the library is motherfucking open for business, yo. So I lean over, I whisper into her (pointing to somebody) ear’hole...an you ain’t never goin’guess what I’m ‘bout ta whisper. I motherfucking dare one of you motherfuckers to guess. Cuz what I got goin’on inside is... “waste management.”

(JERRY gets more broad)

Oh don’t even be actin’like you don’t know what I’m talkin’about, you naked things you. I’m talkin’about plumbing. Water flow. Sewage treatment plants, by God.

Cuz we all flush that toilet. An don’t it feel good tho’? ‘Specially when you look down at the (disgust sound) sitting in that cute little pool uh water, and with a flick uh your finger on some little lever, you just...disappear it for’ever.

Oh you know what’s the worst tho’? When it stick out the water. Like there’s so much of it that it protrude. And there it is in the same air as you. Y’see, there’s supposed to be a comforting level of water between you and your.... And when there’s not...it’s just too real, am I right? Yea, girl, we want our shit to stay just an idea. Something we know about, but don’t have to ever actually face.

Now, I know most of us prolly just figure our (disgust sound) go out into the pipes, down into the sewer’deal, and basically become somebody else’s fuckin’problem, am I right? Oh c’mon, you know that I am.

And for the most part...you’re true. Pipes take our ... away from where we deposited it, out, out, out, till hits the sewage treatment plant. Where our flushes are, yea, they’re fuckin’treated. But hey, it just wouldn’t be human if there wasn’t a few fuckin’footnotes on that. See, that sewage treatment plant gots its flaws.

And you don’t gotta be no fuckin’environmentalist to know that them flaws result in, yea, fuckin’sewage. Could be decay on their equipment, facility malfunctions,
and dig this, even fuckin’ rain. Yea, if it rain too much the treatment plants can get over fuckin’ welmed.

An then that’s when our flushes, yours and mine, get flushed out direct into, how they say, open waters.

(JERRY looks to NOSTALGIA)

So this bitch over here starin’ into the her toilet bowl like she’s on fucking mushrooms is really like staring into this portal, past her house, past her town, past just everything she know and understand, right directly into them beautiful blue eyes uh what we call ocean. An bitch don’t even know it.

(JERRY exits to another room in the house, judging the style, décor, and items. Focus back to NOSTALGIA staring into the toilet. NEPTUNE bangs on the bathroom door, she jolts up, and opens up)

NEPTUNE

What the hell was that?

NOSTALGIA

What?

NEPTUNE

I’ve been banging on the—

NOSTALGIA

I didn’t hear—

NEPTUNE

Didn’t hear—?

NOSTALGIA

Well, apparently—

NEPTUNE

What the hell have you been—
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‘M in the bathroom—

You been in here almost thirty minutes—

No, I have not—

I almost called the—

I was just talking to you, then I got up to flush and—

Yea, that was almost half an hour ago—

Shut up, it was—

It’s almost 4 o’clock.

(beat)

That’s so weird. I remember us talking, then I turned to flush...and then I hear you banging on the door. That’s honestly all I—

You alright?

Yes, I mean, I—

Was it...I mean, was that why you were so moody before. Were you, I mean were you thinking about—
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NOSTALGIA
What? Oh, no. No, really I wasn’t even—

NEPTUNE
You sure? It’s okay if you are; still thinking about it.

NOSTALGIA
I already told you, I’m not giving anymore thoughts to that.

NEPTUNE
As long as yer open.

NOSTALGIA
I am. Now drop it.

NEPTUNE
Fine.

NOSTALGIA
Hey, Netty...you know what I was thinking about though?

NEPTUNE
That it was weird, that thing with the ear?

NOSTALGIA
Just how much stuff comes out of us. Isn’t it strange? There I am on the toilet, with pee peeing out of me, you seeping out, tears from my eyes, breath from my chest, snot from my nose.

NEPTUNE
You were crying?

NOSTALGIA
And we take all that, all what’s inside us, then just empty it out into this perfect white contraption. We press down on some little silver lever to make it all gone. Our sadness, our fucking, our congestion, our life. It all just...circles off into the...whenever we wish it to.

NEPTUNE
So, did you like hit your head or—
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NOSTALGIA
All of it just away from us.

NEPTUNE

NOSTALGIA
I can stand in our bathroom and think about what my life is, what I’ve done with it, and I can watch these salted drips of liquid just run off of the tip of my nose then disappear into this little pool of water that we keep in our house.

NEPTUNE
Y’know, I think if you get off the pill, you won’t be as emotional. I heard that—

NOSTALGIA
I’m not being fucking emotional, I’m trying to...just...

NEPTUNE
What, trying to just what?

NOSTALGIA
Do you ever think about it, Netty? Do you?

NEPTUNE
I think about a lot of things, so what.

NOSTALGIA
What we waste. What we decide to keep. What we decide to get rid of. What we don’t love or need anymore.

NEPTUNE
Excuse me.? Don’t love what anymore? The hell’s that supposed ta—

NOSTALGIA
What do you suppose it does to the world around us? All that rejection; piling up. All that loss of love just being crammed out into the atmosphere.

NEPTUNE
Alright, look, clearly you need at least check in with a doctor. I’ll call—
(She glares at him)

NEPTUNE (cont)
You just spent an almost half hour in the bathroom without even knowing it.

NOSTALGIA
If that’s true, if that’s what transpired in this bathroom, Neptune, then I just spent almost half an hour looking at what a selfish person I truly have become. Maybe always was.

NEPTUNE
...hey, I never said you were a—

NOSTALGIA
Please, you’re not even convincing, look at you.

NEPTUNE
Look at me what, what am I—

NOSTALGIA
You. There. Pretending that I’m good to you. Make believing that this house is anything but a containment for our collective loneliness. And when it gets too much, when the air in here is just full up, then we empty it. We flush it. Like some goddamned drug addict artery.

NEPTUNE
Nostalgia, look at me. I love you. Whatever all this is, whatever is wrong with you. I love you still. Now, do you wanna at least lie down or—

NOSTALGIA
Whatever is wrong with me. That’s precisely my point. Everything that is wrong with me is somewhere else now. And I’d like to know where.

NEPTUNE
...I can’t even, I don’t even know what the hell you’re—

NOSTALGIA
Everything ugly that I do goes someplace. It has to. It all ends up someplace.
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NEPTUNE
What, what goes someplace else—

NOSTALGIA
Our bullshit.

NEPTUNE
Okay. And you think our bullshit goes where exactly?

NOSTALGIA
I don’t have the first goddamned clue. But, Netty, I think, and I happen to think real, real good, that a place to start is right in this room right here. With this thing.

(She nudges the toilet with her foot)

NEPTUNE
You did not just reference the fucking toilet in the middle of a serious conversation.

NOSTALGIA
Do I look like I just referenced the fucking toilet in the middle of a serious conversation?

NEPTUNE
Sorry, forget I said anything.

NOSTALGIA
No more sorrys.

NEPTUNE
Well, it was the last one then.

NOSTALGIA
Oh, Netty, you know what else?

NEPTUNE
I can’t even think what might come out of you next.
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NOSTALGIA
I am sorry. But I don’t wanna have kids with you.

(Lights out)
With LIBER PEREZ hanging center stage, enter two shrimp: ASEXUAL SHRIMP and VONYA. While ASEXUAL SHRIMP looks quite normal, VONYA is raging with hormones.

They look up at LIBER PEREZ with fascination.

**ASEXUAL SHRIMP**
Vonya, will you keep from gettin’ so close—

**VONYA**
It’s like I *can’t keep* from getting so close.

**ASEXUAL SHRIMP**
We can lookit what happened from here, no need to be all up inside his...perimeter or—

**VONYA**
Perimeter is *not* what I’m wantin’ to be all up inside. Besides, whatever his perimeter...it done washed away.

**ASEXUAL SHRIMP**
Vonya, if one uh them comes by and sees you right close up, they goin’ think you had something to do with—

*(Beat. ASEXUAL SHRIMP notices something)*

Hey. Lookit. He ain’t got no bite marks.

**VONYA**
Yea, an I don’t scent no blood neither.

**ASEXUAL SHRIMP**
Oh, maybe what if maybe he got some land disease, some contagion that—

**VONYA**
Oh please, their contagions ain’t got nothing to do with our contagions.
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Hey, lookit, see that thing wrapped all around his neck—

VONYA
Yea, I like that part.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
That mean one uh them don’t like him.

VONYA
Well then one uh them don’t know how to appreciate, cuz...

(VONYA touches LIBER. ASEXUAL SHRIMP immediately pulls her back)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Vonya!

VONYA
What...?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
We can't be touchin’one uh them just cuz we got a curious streak.

VONYA
*Everything* needs to be touched; ain’t nothing streak about it.

(Beat)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Yer getting strange again, aren’t ya.

VONYA
Yea, maybe I am. An maybe this hanging man is just what I need to get un’strange.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Hey. Look. No weights. With no weights, he supposed ta float back up.
VONYA
It’s like when I’m up’close, I can feel this heat, this urge that I need...something.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You see. His tank. Still reads full. His tubes, perfectly put. An lookit his face, that ain’t a drowned face.

VONYA
What if I could, what if I could take all what he is inside of me, an everything that he could do, I could do. Oh, what if we had the powers like they. What if we could just burst up through the surface of our ocean into where they live. Same way they do us.

(VONYA does something sexual to LIBER, ASEXUAL SHRIMP tries to stop her)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Vonya, stoppit! What’re you doin’touchin’like that—

(VONYA puts her “mouth” on LIBER)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, no, no, no; we’re gone.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP pulls VONYA, who shoves ASEXUAL SHRIMP harsh, then resumes touching LIBER)

...hey. You pushed me. That hurt. We don’t do that. That’s not what we do.

(VONYA is trying to take LIBER’s body over)

Vonya...? (pause) It’s me. (pause) Your friend.

VONYA
Well, do you know something, friend...lately, I been feeling...lonely, is that the word?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
But me I’m here. Right like always.
VONYA
Oh, I know you are, but right here, in the warmth of where we’re at, with the death of this powerful man hanging over us, I don’t know what it is, but something inside me wants to just be...un’lonely.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You stoppit talking like that right now. Come on!

(VONYA grabs ASEXUAL SHRIMP)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
STOP.
(defensive sound)
Vonya, why’re you—

VONYA
Why’re You Getting In My Way.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...cuz you’re my friend and—

VONYA
Me, I got a new friend.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Please let’s us go away from—

VONYA
Please let’s you go away from!

(Lights dim as VONYA thrashes ASEXUAL SHRIMP. Shift)
Lights reveal a second toilet. However, it is a bit muted in color; not quite as bright.

Enter LIBER PEREZ while he was still alive; unsuited. He stands holding a diver’s bag and begins gearing up. This should be done in real time, with real equipment, and real checks.

A wet suit to his body.

A watch and compass to his wrist.

A BCD (Buoyancy Control Device) to an oxygen cylinder.

A regulator to the cylinder and a check of the pressure.

The BCD to his back and fins to his feet.

Diving mask and snorkel from his neck to face.

He checks the time and begins walking.

He holds his mask, regulator, and weight belt, then steps forward into water; a splash.
LIBER PEREZ swims horizontal along the bottom of the ocean. It is tranquil and slowly beautiful.

He stops to look closer at a reef, but he does not touch, only admires; his hands crossed respectfully in front of him.

LIBER stops short, as a cloud of dust, can be seen in the distance.

Enter CARELESS DIVER, played by same actress as VONYA, who walks churning the ocean floor, arms full of corals, lobsters, and a small cage with several brightly-colored yellow fish in it.

CARELESS DIVER motions LIBER to lend a hand, he declines.

LIBER charades that he never touches, only looks.

CARELESS DIVER insists.

LIBER does not approve.

CARELESS DIVER makes fun of LIBER.

LIBER disappoints in CARELESS DIVER.

CARELESS DIVER drops the corals, cage, and lobster, giving a confrontational “What?! What?!”. LIBER moves to pick up the lobster. CARELESS DIVER won’t let him.
LIBER pulls a writing board and pen and begins to write something out, but CARELESS DIVER knocks them out of his hand.

LIBER picks up the pen and writing board, and tries motioning the lobster to come to him.

CARELESS DIVER moves towards him and makes a reach for his regulator tube, but misses, then tries again.

They get into an underwater, slow-motioned entanglement.

CARELESS DIVER yanks LIBER’s mask off, pulling on his tubes.

LIBER restores his mask seamlessly, then pulls CARELESS DIVER’s mask off before safely ascending.

CARELESS DIVER restores the mask, then picks up the corals, cage, and lobster before ascending.
LIBER bursts up from the toilet, quickly pulling himself out and removing his gear. Though hurrying, he still properly turns off his air, and removes his regulator.

CARELESS DIVER splashes up from the toilet, her gear to the floor haphazardly.

LIBER PEREZ
They're gonna run out of air.

CARELESS DIVER
What is it you think you're doing?

LIBER PEREZ
Will you look at them, can't you see their bodies shaking?!

(CARELESS DIVER takes one of the yellow fish from the cage and quickly slices it up the middle. LIBER gasps. CARELESS DIVER motions LIBER to look at the cut fish)

CARELESS DIVER
And can't you see underneath where its body is shaking?

LIBER PEREZ
You people, you set up your studies down there, you—

CARELESS DIVER
No, really. Do you see those growths, just under the skin? Those are tumors. But I bet you couldn't tell that from your snorkel mask.

(CARELESS DIVER tosses the yellow fish, however LIBER catches it with skill; speaks to it)

LIBER PEREZ
(to the fish) It's okay, huh, it's okay. Here we'll just...

(LIBER places the fish back inside the bowl)
CARELESS DIVER
Really, why do people do that? Putting a dead fish into a toilet bowl just because it’s water? Really?

LIBER PEREZ
We were never meant to take them out from their environment, we were never meant to disrupt the balance of the perfect harmony of their world, the pure—

CARELESS DIVER
Yes, magnificent it is. Lucky you are to have taken some water’lessons to get to see it. Most people don’t have the money, time, or proximity. To recreationally scuba dive.

LIBER PEREZ
And now, you look at it, you look at the body! Do you see, do you? Fighting for its life in some strange place, in some—

CARELESS DIVER
The Yellow Tang species are fighting for their lives in every place. You see, Yellow Tang are very susceptible to contamination. Or maybe something like that never occurred to you while you were floating around down there, watching them swirl about. Because what you’ve built your life around is selfish. It’s just about you, isn’t it? Your experience. Your colorful view. (pause) Me, I’m all about others.

(CARELESS DIVER picks up the other fish and her gear. LIBER PEREZ stops her)

LIBER PEREZ
You, you are all about others?

CARELESS DIVER
Congratulations, on your hearing.

LIBER PEREZ
What others are you all about?

CARELESS DIVER
Oh, you know. Human beings for instance.
LIBER PEREZ

What about them?

CARELESS DIVER

You know, for all the time you spend looking at things, for all your sanctuary for the bottom of the sea, you only look at the surface of things.

LIBER PEREZ

And you, you only see things in accumulation, in calculations. In what you can bring back to your...to your lab table or scientific chart.

CARELESS DIVER

Scientific chart???

LIBER PEREZ

But you see no colors. You see no hearts pumping. You see nothing of what our ocean provides for us. It is not data, it is not study, it is a reminder of how we really place in things. How unimportant we truly are, how stupid we—

CARELESS DIVER

Stupid maybe, but my God, SO inspiring.

LIBER PEREZ

When I think of all the waste that you must do away with. Is it a bucket? Or maybe a trash can with a label on the outside marked “waste.” Or maybe it’s even a full dumpster, in the unnamed alleyway outside your laboratories. Full of all the leftover bodies you toss aside, just the piles upon piles of what used to be beautiful, now just all grey. No color, no nothing.

(CARELESS DIVER proudly shows an ID)

LIBER PEREZ

Liber.

CARELESS DIVER

The dumpster is actually back behind the center. There is no alleyway. Just a trash area. You’re welcome by anytime. Personal guest. I’ll even get you a little green an white nametag just like this one. I wouldn’t want anyone to mistake you for a confused custodian or cigarette cook, recreational diver’man.
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CARELESS DIVER
What? Was that English?

LIBER PEREZ
Liber Perez. And I don’t care what your identification reads, every species down there recognizes your careless cloud coming in that ocean for forty meters out, you know how come?

CARELESS DIVER
Your suspense is killing me.

LIBER PEREZ
Because you don’t really care. And the entire ocean knows it.

CARELESS DIVER
If I ever encounter you getting in the way of my research again, I don’t care who knows it, I’m gonna wait till your right in the amazing of your sanctuary, and I’m gonna wrap that regulator around your throat so fucking tight you won’t ever see surface again.

(CARELESS DIVER gears back up and jumps back into the toilet. Lights darken. Shift)
Lights pull up on ASEXUAL SHRIMP, who lays along the ocean floor, then wakes with a gasp. It feels something on its skin, then examines the surrounding sediment and water.

This turns, somehow, sexual.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP begins to notice the beginnings of genitals, of lust and want.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP frightens and swims away hurriedly.
seven

VONYA moves hungrily along the ocean floor, dragging a string of emptied lobster shells, broken crab legs, and opened clams.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP spots her and move closer with precaution.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

...Vonya...?

(VONYA keeps consuming)

...it’s me, your...

(VONYA continues)

I felt it, you know. Like a warmth in your—

VONYA

WARM NOTHING, THIS SHIT IS BURNING UP.

(The thrust of VONYA’s outburst moves ASEXUAL SHRIMP back. ASEXUAL SHRIMP notices all the dead)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Hey, what’re all them...
Hey, we don’t eat them, or them, or them neither.

(VONYA spots something to overtake, ASEXUAL SHRIMP floats into her way)

No, you stop that, Vonya, you just can’t go eating outside of the—

(VONYA shoves ASEXUAL SHRIMP out of the way. ASEXUAL SHRIMP gets right back up and floats back into VONYA’s way)

You can push at me if you wish to, Vonya.
VONYA looks to do something worse to ASEXUAL SHRIMP

ASEXUAL SHRIMP (cont)
You can thrash at me too, I don’t care.

(Beat)

VONYA
So you really think I’m goin’ in the wrong direction with this whole feeding along the bottom thing, huh?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...I do...

VONYA
I’m kinda just makin’ things worse where we live, aren’t it? Part of the problem, so to speak.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You are. But you, you are not the problem, Vonya. I know it that you’re not.

VONYA
Well, lemme lay this idea on you. What about up?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Up?

VONYA
You know, up. Like the other direction of down.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
What about it?

VONYA
See, me, I’m growing. Inside and out. As a matter of fact, is it me, or is this entire ocean grown smaller than what it used to be.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
It’s the same. It’s the same it’s always been, just—
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VONYA

Just what?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Yer eyes. Maybe they don’t look at it the same. But when you get well again, when you’re same like you used to be, why it’ll be just as blue the world what you remember it by.

VONYA

Why, I know what it is.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

What what is?

VONYA

When I look at you, do you know how you look?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Like your fr—

VONYA

Microscopic, is that the word.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Micro’stockpic?

VONYA

An these other ones, every one of these other ones swim’swimming about.

( VONYA looks up, we see various shadows of larger sea life passing overhead)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Yea, what about ‘em.

VONYA

I wonder, I do.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

What’s wonder?
VONYA
I just cannot help this enlarging curiosity of what I could do with’em. In fact, I’ve no idea what sized things I can git inside me now.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
What’re you talkin’like this for, this ain’t how you talk.

VONYA
How large a thing I could overtake.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You don’t need to be overtakin’nothing, Vonya. What we need is just to go back to where we live from, until you’re well again, what we need is our home an that’s all, we don’t need anything beyond that.

VONYA
Like that one right there.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Vonya, you even go near one uh them an they’ll chew you right up. They gots teeth.

VONYA
Oh, but I gots’em too, see...

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Vonya! Where’d ya git them at?

VONYA
Who knows. Maybe I’m just meant.
ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Meant for what.

VONYA

To do whatever...the...fuck...I...want...

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Vonya. Please don’t—

(VONYA ascends, we hear/see water violence)

Vonya, no, how could you, stoppit, stop...!

(VONYA descends, playing with her teeth. She seems larger, more human)

...how...how could you act like that.

VONYA

Y’know what?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

I dunno I wanna know.

VONYA

I can go bigger.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Stoppit, no.

VONYA

One by one, I’ll chew my way up the food chain. Why pretty soon, I’ll be the only one on top an if anything, if anything tries to bring me back down...

(VONYA gnashes her teeth)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

No you won’t. I’ll stop you. I don’t care what you do to me.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP floats into VONYA’s way. VONYA bears teeth. ASEXUAL SHRIMP cowers as VONYA ascends. ASEXUAL SHRIMP calls after her)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP(cont)

Vonya. My friend.
eight

NOSTALGIA stands looking down into the bowl. NEPTUNE watches her.

NEPTUNE
You’re seriously not still in here staring at that thing.

NOSTALGIA
I’m waiting.

NEPTUNE
For what?

NOSTALGIA
Something to happen.

NEPTUNE
Well, that’s the thing about shitters, they don’t do a hell of a whole lot like on their own.

NOSTALGIA
No, they don’t.

NEPTUNE
What exactly is it you think is gonna happen here, huh, love?

NOSTALGIA
Please, don’t call me that.

NEPTUNE
If a man wants to call his wife love—

NOSTALGIA
And if a woman tells you that children are out of the picture, I think the word love is pretty close behind.

NEPTUNE
I apologize. I didn’t realize it was be-horrible-to-Neptune-day.
NOSTALGIA
We’re horrible to each other, always have been, even when we hid it behind being sweet. And sex.

NEPTUNE
Whatever. I love you regardless; still. I don’t really give a shit whatever all this is; still. So you can be as ugly as you possibly can be. I’ll still be standing right here for you.

NOSTALGIA
Neptune.

NEPTUNE
Nostalgia.

NOSTALGIA
If you think you might cry, even a little bit, if you can just stand a little closer. I wanna make sure the tears fall directly into the toilet water. (pause) What? I don’t want them wasted on the edge.

NEPTUNE
Keep on, Nostalgia. Ain’t nothing you can do that’s gonna get me to stop feeling for you.

NOSTALGIA
Which is what?

NEPTUNE
Strength.

NOSTALGIA
Strength??? Is that honestly how I make you feel?

NEPTUNE
No. But that’s how I choose to feel because of you.

NOSTALGIA
Anyways.
Do you think maybe you wanna leave the bathroom sometime today?

It...*needs something.*

What *needs something*?

Some sort of...push.

Push what?

Maybe if I prick myself an drop a drop of blood down there, wha’dya think?

What, are we gonna start making sacrifices to our toilet bowl now?

(NOSTALGIA looks up at NEPTUNE excited)

What.

Sacrifices.

If you think I am letting you go get some live chicken or—

Without thinking: what is the biggest sacrifice that you and I ever committed? Quickly!

Committed? We don’t *commit* sacrifices, we’re not a couple of savages from the—
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NOSTALGIA

Our child.

NEPTUNE

Excuse me.

NOSTALGIA

You heard me.

NEPTUNE

What’re you, an asshole?

NOSTALGIA

The life between us, always stopped short, always blockaded.

NEPTUNE

Y’know, you are seriously in some dark shit right now. Even for you, this is—

NOSTALGIA

When you an I have been at our absolute ugliest, what were we ugly about?

NEPTUNE

You. Behaving like this.

NOSTALGIA

Like what?

NEPTUNE

Being selfish as all hell, being—

NOSTALGIA

Exactly! But selfish about what, what is the supreme thing that I have been selfish with you over?

NEPTUNE

I haffta pick just one???

NOSTALGIA

A family. The home you always wanted. The life you secretly longed for and hated me for not letting you have.
NEPTUNE
...fuck you.

NOSTALGIA
Exactly. Fuck me.

(NOSTALGIA hurriedly gets a birth control case from a
drawer, she takes a single pill and looks at it)

Can you even imagine it? One little pill and if I swallow it...

NEPTUNE
Y’know, whatever all this is. If you’re looking for me to start screaming or tearing
the house down? I could do that. Right now. With how you’re acting. But I’m not
going to. So you can just stop.

NOSTALGIA
Look at this little thing. Can barely see I’m holding it an still it has all that strength
inside. Waiting to be released.

NEPTUNE
It’s ain’t the pill keeps me from having a family, y’know.

NOSTALGIA
You’re right. This pill is doing precisely what it was designed to do.

(NEPTUNE’s eyes well up)

NEPTUNE
...what kinda woman talks like this to her—waves one of those things in front of
him just to make some stupid fuckin’point about who the hell knows what—

NOSTALGIA
We could easily have just stopped sleeping with each other all those years ago.
But how could we. It just felt so, so good. Almost every time. How many couples
can say that much? However much you hated me or I pushed you away, we could
always come together in the most...

(She smiles)
NOSTALGIA (cont)

...well, we could always cum together. And how beautiful was that.

NEPTUNE

Y’know, I’ve seen you taking a birth control before, it’s not like me watching you
do it is gonna hurt my heart anymore than—

NOSTALGIA

No. Taking pills is hardly the issue. I mean c’mon, your Viagra was what—

NEPTUNE

Hey, I didn’t have to—

NOSTALGIA

No, but we liked it.

NEPTUNE

We did.

NOSTALGIA

Can you imagine if there was a man’pill that could keep men from getting
women pregnant and it didn’t mess with their...gear, that shit would impact the
fucking population; like of the world.

NEPTUNE

Are you through?

(NOSTALGIA swallows the pill, she takes a large glass of
water and gulps it straight back, letting the overflow go
down her chin, down her body)

Wow. How exciting. You’re really just an impressive scientific explorer over there.

(NOSTALGIA refills her glass and downs another; same
method)

NOSTALGIA

Don’t you see?
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NEPTUNE
Yea. I do. You are clear as a dagger right now.

NOSTALGIA
Daggers aren’t clear, but whatever, I get you.

(NOSTALGIA takes another glass of water)

NEPTUNE
Obvious as a dagger then.

NOSTALGIA
Fine.
What else do you see?

NEPTUNE
An since when do you drink water out the bathroom tap?

NOSTALGIA
Since now.
Well?

NEPTUNE
Well what?

NOSTALGIA
I am going to keep drinking water out the bathroom tap until I have to pee. And afterwards, I am going to get up, turn around and flush this here toilet down with the dead of your future family spinning out to sea. Then you’ll see.

NEPTUNE
Y’know, that you could’ve been this much a lunatic and I am barely figuring it out now—

NOSTALGIA
Promise me though.

NEPTUNE
I ain’t promisin’you shit, look at you.
NOSTALGIA
That you’ll stand here with me when I flush, that you’ll look down at it same as I do.

(NEPTUNE exits. NOSTALGIA drinks another glass of water, then peaks down under her legs into the toilet excitedly. Lights out over her, but up on JERRY in another room)

JERRY
Fucking birth control. How many people have just had it up to here with birth control? I mean, what a world it would be, am I right? What a world where people like you an me could just...un’complicate.

Un’pro’tected sex, oh Lord do I miss me some unprotected sex. Or as every other species on the planet like to call it: living they lives.

Yea, there is just something just completely more real about doin’it like we was meant. The two uh you, just skin against skin; no barriers. Just sweat. Feels...honest, don’t it?

Am I right? Oh, c’mon, you know that I am.

Too bad for children though, huh? They kinda just mess the world right on up, don’t they? Don’t get me wrong, I love fuckin’ and I love bein’fucked, but I do not love it enough to become a parent like right then and there. (pause) Hey, you thought I’s goin’say that I love children, didn’t you? Yea, I know, that would make me a whole lot more humane, but between you an me, I don’t love children. I don’t even like’em all that much. People always be askin’mee when I’m goin’have some of my own, but...gotta go with contraception on that one.

Well, contraception. Let’s be honest, me and many a fuckin’lover have resorted to what they call Coitus Interruptus, more commonly known as the “Pull Out” method.

An yea, that is a fun way ta spend an evening...if you’re playin’percentages. But them percentages seem like the devil slappin’you upside the head when you lookin’at your calendar tryin’to figure out what day of the month it was when last you played.

Which brings us to The Pill, ladies.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

JERRY(cont)
Now most people shrug they shoulders. Yea, The Pill, so what. They been using the pill since two weekends after they first learned ta swallow.

(JERRY looks to NOSTALGIA in the bathroom and NEPTUNE standing absently in the kitchen)

But I dunno. Lookit these two hateful motherfuckers right on over there. Neptune and Nostalgia. One pill makes the both of them oh so happy, for a couple hours anyways. But another pill, just tear them apart.
And I like that.
That’s some poetic shit right there.
Go on, look at’em.
Now, d’you think that Neptune an Nostalgia feel as poetic as we lookin’at’em?
Or, no they prolly so caught up in they own fuckin’ugliness that they have absolutely just no idea no more...what else the world looks at’em.

(JERRY walks into bathroom and begins messing with the pill bottles, various liquids, cleansers, products, etc.)

You want my view, them two is lost an out to fucking sea.
Es like they are so filled to the fucking gills with upset and regret, that I’m surprised they can even breathe. So much upset all over this house and what do they do???
They keep ingesting. Ingesting each other, swallowing each other’s anger so much that look at how they live. Will you just take a fucking look at this place. Even just this one little room.

(JERRY holds up a bottle of Viagra and a birth control case, various prescription bottles)

Can you even, from where you are, believe how much shit is up in here? An ain’t none of it real. They done remedied they marriage, remedied they lives to such a degree will you look at all the synthetic shit they honestly believe they can’t-live-without.
We live by so many products-of-whatever that we actually start believing they necessary. And we just have no idea no more, what our bodies actually need to survive versus what’s just...invention.

(JERRY exits. A moment. Shift)
the death of the slow’dyng scuba diver

nine

LIBER PEREZ looks into the toilet bowl mournfully. He flushes. The flush causes YELLOW TANG FISH to enter, who looks beaten about and cut up.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Yo, that’s real cute that you all think you can just, what, send us back to where we come from an whatever.

LIBER PEREZ
Are...are you, wait, what is this?

YELLOW TANG FISH
Every other kinda life you bury. Respect. But us, you toss us into the same pool of water where you shit. And then, you send us off on some fucked up pipe ride where we prolly fucking disintegrate in all the awfulness before being dumped back out into what was actually where we live.

LIBER PEREZ
I’m...sorry, we didn’t realize it was so...

YELLOW TANG FISH
Fucking unexplainable?

LIBER PEREZ
Disrespectful.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Nah, disrespectful is like ‘Oh, I’m sorry I keep poking around your home, shining lights while you sleep’. But I’d say, that scooping a motherfucker up, then slicing that motherfucker directly across while that same motherfucker was gasping for motherfucking air...that’s downright unbelievable.

(Beat)

LIBER PEREZ
I—
You don’t know me, you don’t know my life. For all you know I got like a family situation going on at home.

At home? Do you mean down there, do you—

Nah, I mean my vacation home up here, motherfucker.

What’s the situation, I mean what is it that’s going on down there, at home?

My home, ain’t none of your business.

Is it...tumors?

Is it tu-wha?

Like growths, under their skin.

What’re you a fuckin’doctor?

No.

Then never you mind what was under our skin.

But your whole family, they have the same—

Well, that’s kinda how family works, isn’t it. What happens to one, happens to the rest.
LIBER PEREZ
What is it though, what’s down there that—

YELLOW TANG FISH
I should be asking you.

LIBER PEREZ
Me?

YELLOW TANG FISH
Whatever it is, you can bet your ass it ain’t come from down there.

LIBER PEREZ
How long was that diver swimming around in your area before—

YELLOW TANG FISH
Before what?

LIBER PEREZ
...

YELLOW TANG FISH
What, now you shy, motherfucker?

LIBER
How did she do it, was she watching you and then—

YELLOW TANG FISH
Do what?

LIBER PEREZ
I mean...how were you caught? If you don’t mind my asking.

YELLOW TANG FISH
...

LIBER PEREZ
Are you okay?
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   Yea, I’m fuckin’okay.

   LIBER PEREZ
   Do you not want to talk about it?

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   …

   LIBER PEREZ
   Whatever it is, you can tell me.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   I might’ve…made a decision that was rather…hasty.

   LIBER PEREZ
   …hasty…?

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   There was this…thing in the water, it was…dangling.

   LIBER PEREZ
   Oh.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   It was all in front uh me, right close to my mouth.

   LIBER PEREZ
   It’s okay.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   Es like not even fair, you put it right close like that, our bodies react. You don’t even give us a chance to consider the likelihood of the situation.

   LIBER PEREZ
   I’m sorry.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   An now lookit me. Stuck here. My body floating like that in this stupid thing.
(YELLOW TANG FISH kicks the toilet)

YELLOW TANG FISH(cont)
Lookit it. It don’t even look like up here. Look like something you’d find down there. The way of smooth it is.

(YELLOW TANG FISH flushes, then jumps startled)

Oh, shit! It just sucks the water down on in, don’t it? Will you lookit that?

LIBER PEREZ

I’ve seen it.

YELLOW TANG FISH

No, I’m tellin’you: look.

(LIBER looks into the toilet)

YELLOW TANG FISH

See that: the water…it don’t wanna go. Keeps circling around, climbing to stay up. “Oh, you can’t just, you can’t just push that lever an…put me with seawater! I’m a freshwater, I’m a water’domesticus, you can’t just….ughhhhh….” (gurgling sounds)

Hey, you know how come it gurgle? Same reason you all do when a wave knocks you on your ass: it’s coughing on the salt.

LIBER PEREZ

Are...are you a ghost?

YELLOW TANG FISH

Where do you people come up with this shit? No, I ain’t a...ghost. Lookit me. I look like not real to you? Huh? Well, come on, here I am. Go ahead. Hey, you can even look all’up in my insides with like no help.

(YELLOW TANG FISH illustrates the slice across)

That’s what I’m here for, right? For you all to get your glimpse.

LIBER PEREZ

No. That’s not what you are—
YELLOW TANG FISH
What, you’re not interested no more? Huh? This too real for you.

LIBER PEREZ
You’ve no idea how real you are to me, you’ve no idea what it feels like for me to see you like this.

YELLOW TANG FISH
See me like what?

LIBER PEREZ
Those tumors. The ones to your family.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Thank you for bringin’em up again. Asshole.

LIBER PEREZ
They’re not going to stop. And it’s not just your family. It’s in the water. Why I nightmare that that there are so many down there. So many as beautiful, but just as sick as you.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Well that’s just fucking great then. Wonderful to be here.

(Beat)

LIBER PEREZ
Maybe it is though. Wonderful. That you’re here. With me. Maybe together you and I can...

YELLOW TANG FISH
What.

LIBER PEREZ
Do something. Together. Don’t you at least find it curious that here you are standing so up’close in front of me, but your…your body is… (pause) Maybe this is your destiny, to fight back, to find that careless diver and—

YELLOW TANG FISH
What’re you, ridiculous? I’m leftovers. Leftovers don’t do shit.
(LIBER PEREZ touches YELLOW TANG FISH: something happens)

LIBER PEREZ
You are not leftovers.

(YELLOW TANG FISH looks at him differently, then grabs the snorkel mask and places it in front of LIBER’s face)

YELLOW TANG FISH
Hey...I known you.

(YELLOW TANG FISH takes LIBER’S hand)

Lookit that. This is your hand. These are your fingers. I’ve always have been, about you, like, curious.

LIBER PEREZ
You known me?

YELLOW TANG FISH
So gentle. Down there. The way you move, your breaths in an out pumping you horizontal through our waters. And your arms, always crossed in front, never reaching out.

LIBER PEREZ
That’s how you’re supposed to, that’s where you’re supposed to keep your—

YELLOW TANG FISH
I always thought, if any of you were actually capable of knowing us, it’d be you.

LIBER PEREZ
It was me. It is me. I’m the one who—

YELLOW TANG FISH
So this is like, what you feel like...

LIBER PEREZ
Really, you remember me, you—
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

(YELLOW TANG FISH kisses LIBER PEREZ. It stops time. As though worlds are colliding, as though the ocean kissing the sky)
CARELESS DIVER scraping sediment, collecting data along the bottom of the ocean, as the collision of LIBER and YELLOW TANG is felt. CARELESS DIVER looks up.

A light appears from above.

CARELESS DIVER looks at it strangely, then ascends. Shift.
eleven

NOSTALGIA urinates on the toilet. NEPTUNE in another room packing a single bag.

NOSTALGIA
I’m asking you, please, come take a look.

NEPTUNE
I’ve asked you a lot of things. Like to be my wife. Oh well.

NOSTALGIA
Oh, don’t be grumpy.

NEPTUNE
I kinda wanna say: Oh, don’t be alive.

NOSTALGIA
Then you should. If that’s how you feel inside. Then you should say it.

NEPTUNE
Blow me.

NOSTALGIA
Actually, I would. If you wanted to so soon again. I’ve never stopped loving doing that.

NEPTUNE
...

NOSTALGIA
Oh, c’mon, just come watch me flush. And afterwards, I’ll shut up forever.

(NEPTUNE resumes packing. NOSTALGIA listens for him, then wipes and stands over the toilet. She reaches her hand out with meaning and flushes. It sounds regular. She tries looking harder. Nothing. Neptune stands in the doorway)

NEPTUNE
Wow. Thank you for showing me that.
NOSTALGIA
...the fuck...?

NEPTUNE
Anyways, you’re shit is packed. Well, enough for a few days anyways. I’s thinking you can come back for the rest when I ain’t—

NOSTALGIA
Maybe it’s too late.

NEPTUNE
Too late for what?

NOSTALGIA
Between us.

NEPTUNE
What about between us? Last thing between us, for like ever, happened this morning.

NOSTALGIA
Netty, had you noticed lately how much better our sex has been? I mean it’s always been good, but recently, like very recently, it has been just...fucking dangerous. Like anything could happen. You know?

NEPTUNE
Well, pent up frustrations.

NOSTALGIA
Yea, got that...

NEPTUNE
Alright, I’ll rework the whole ear move.

NOSTALGIA
Netty, was a compliment. (pause) I think it’s more than that though. I don’t know what it is, but when I look at you, even right now, I see absolutely no future as your partner, but...God, something just makes me want to get my hands and mouth under those clothes and just...
NEPTUNE

It’s funny you say that, cuz, recently, like very recently...

NOSTALGIA

What...?

NEPTUNE

I started *using* you again.

NOSTALGIA

*Using* me?

NEPTUNE

You know, when I’m alone...house to myself...

NOSTALGIA

Oh, oh! Wait, who do you normally use?

NEPTUNE

I ‘unno, somebody I saw that day. Exes.

NOSTALGIA

Did you *ever* use me?

NEPTUNE

Well, in the beginning, course.

NOSTALGIA

When did you stop?

NEPTUNE

I ‘unno, probably after we—

NOSTALGIA

What?

NEPTUNE

Nah, it ain’t gonna sound too good. Even to you.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NOSTALGIA

Say it.

NEPTUNE

My instinct was to say, after we were in love.

NOSTALGIA

That’s...that’s just...

NEPTUNE

Male?

NOSTALGIA

No, absolutely not. I get it. Do you wanna know who I use?

NEPTUNE

No. Thanks.

(Beat)

NOSTALGIA

I think it’s just situation.

NEPTUNE

What is?

NOSTALGIA

Our hormones.

NEPTUNE

Meaning?

NOSTALGIA

Well, look at us now, we’re not life partners, we’re just somebody we tried’ on along the way.

NEPTUNE

Suck it.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NOSTALGIA
Don’t tempt me.
So, when you’re close to me, my mind has already turned you into a stranger.
And my body gets excited. Excited in a way that it never did when you got close,
the proposed love of my life.

(NEPTUNE pulls his pants down, NOSTALGIA looks surprised,
however he then sits on the toilet and begins to shit)

NEPTUNE
Oh, hey, try not to get too excited or close to me, second’hand splash is the worst.

NOSTALGIA
We have no idea why we need the things we do, but it isn’t up to us to try an
deny what our surroundings, what our body’s reaction. This house is not meant
to be some tradition we fall into, some life we’re supposed to...it’s supposed to
be whatever we wish it to. And now that the pressure of some family life has been
struck from between us...it’s almost like we can be good to each other once
again. And that’s why the toilet didn’t do anything when it flushed. What I put in
it wasn’t ugly anymore. It just was.

NEPTUNE
Well, part of me can almost see what you’re driving at with all your nonsense. But
another part me, do you know what it thinks of all this bullshit?

NOSTALGIA
What?

(NEPTUNE wipes his ass, NOSTALGIA smiles)

See, do you know why I liked that?

NEPTUNE
‘Cuz it was fuckin’funny.

NOSTALGIA
‘Cuz you didn’t pre’plan; you just came up with it in the moment and went
forward. Reaction.
Well, remember it or not, but I used to make you laugh all the time, and guess what?

What?

I used to pre’plan the shit out of it.

Well, it’s not an exact science.

(NEPTUNE turns to flush)

Wait.

What.

I wanna watch.

Shut up.

(She peeks into the toilet)

Do it.

No.

Go on.

Really, you think that tone is gonna get you what you want.
NOSTALGIA
Oh, c’mon, little Netty, just think of all the shit, all the fucking meanness I’ve said to you today. Ever. Think of how many years you’ve just wasted next to me when your real other half, your better love, your actual wife and child are still out there somewhere waiting for you to stop being such a complete apology of a man and go find them. But you won’t. You’ll stay here, in this house, asking permission, until I release you.

(It almost looks as though NEPTUNE is going to do something physical to NOSTALGIA, but he stops. She takes his hand in hers)

Release it, Neptune. Take all what’s inside you and just push it all away. Empty it. What other way can you start new again.

(She kisses his hand sexually. He tries to pull it back, but she holds on. She puts her other hand on his thigh sexually. A moment. Finally he puts his hand to the handle and flushes. Time slows. NOSTALGIA’s eyes light up. Both find themselves transfixed by the turn of the water. A moment. Up from the toilet comes VONYA. NOSTALGIA steps back at first, but then looks closer; they stare at each other. NEPTUNE does not see VONYA, instead stays lost in the bowl. VONYA steps out of the toilet and looks around the room; NOSTALGIA can only watch in disbelief. VONYA walks to NOSTALGIA, and puts her notice up along NOSTALGIA’s entire person. VONYA then stands on the rim of the toilet, motioning for NOSTALGIA to come closer. NOSTALGIA does. NEPTUNE still lost. NOSTALGIA stands up on the rim with VONYA; they stare at each other for another moment before VONYA drops down into the toilet; gone The splash causes NEPTUNE to come’to; he looks around confused)

NEPTUNE
What was that, what happened?

NOSTALGIA
What?
NEPTUNE
I remember putting my hand to flush and then all of the sudden you’re up there. What the fuck are you doing up there, get down.

NOSTALGIA
Oh, it all goes somewhere, Netty! There is someplace, out there, someplace where I can look at all the errs I’ve made, I can look at them and see who I truly am and have been.

NEPTUNE
Will you stoppit talking about you like that. C’mon, let’s go talk in another room; this bathroom is—

NOSTALGIA
What is there left to talk about, Neptune. You and I have talked ourselves unhappy. And we both know the only thing that will make either of us even close to happy again is if we stop talking. I could see it in your eyes, Netty. What you wanted to do to me. Don’t worry, I’ve wanted to do the same to you a thousand times.

And so I’ll go. I’ll circle off. I’ll push down on this little handle. And you can go look for your destined family. Gone will be all our sadness, our ugly, and all the congestion of what we called love; this our failed life. I can make it disappear for you, my Neptune.

NEPTUNE
You’re not gonna kill yourself in a toilet, Nostalgia.

NOSTALGIA
No. Of course not. That would be ridiculous. But if I could see the place where everything-I’ve-ever-done-wrong has been collecting...why that might just be what I need to make it disappear for me too.

NEPTUNE
There is nothing down there, it’s just a—
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NOSTALGIA
Oh, my Netty. You an me. We were...(love sound)... But there has got to be some version of the world where I don’t feel so...where I don’t all the time feel so (lonely sound).

NEPTUNE
Look, goddammit, I’m here, love. Right where I always am. Right where I said I’d be.

(He tries to ease her down)

NOSTALGIA
Maybe I am crazy, Neptune. And maybe this is all just ridiculous. But what I’m willing to do to find out...you have no idea.

(NOSTALGIA steps into the toilet. Sounds of fresh and salt water mixing, sounds of waves crashing into land fill the house. NEPTUNE screams, his hands trying to feel for her in the bowl)

NEPTUNE
Take my hand, can you hear me, take my hand! Nostalgiaaaaa!!!

(Lights dim over NEPTUNE, and focus on JERRY)

JERRY
Getting tested is fucked up. An by tested, I mean more like...c’mon, let’s say it together...Free Fuckin’ Clinic.

Yea, up ass early in the morning, waitin’in line. An that line, I am tellin’you, that ain’t no line, that is a scientific collection uh the population.

All you be doin’is lookin’at all the other specimens thinking to yo’self, What The Fuck Am I Doing Here. This ain’t me. This is them other motherfuckers you see out in the streets on holidays an shit. By they self. No home. No turkey, no fuckin’tree. (pause) The kinda people who scare us into making an effort in this life.
JERRY (cont)

And why most uh they in line? Because they went done the most vile an dangerous thing known to humankind, they went off an rubbed a part of they naked body up against a part of some other naked body; some stranger’s body.

Shit, the way that Petri Dish Line look, you’d think this were the Intravenous Drug User Line. But it ain’t. It’s people like you an me who maybe didn’t make the best decision late at night.

Oh, them fuckin’ decisions late at night. Why they always so difficult to figure out for? Huh? You tell me. Cuz late at night, my decision’making is just...asshole backwards.

Now, dig how backwards this is: in actuality our bodies have been naturally designed an shit to just be naked with some other naturally designed motherfucker. But we can’t do that. No, nuh uh. That shit is crazy. That shit is life threatening. Cuz if you do, if you behave exactly as you was designed for...there you are Saturday morning surrounded by the exact sorta people you wonder how they even get laid. But when you hear’em, in line, two of’em talkin’, you realize they just makin’ fuck with each other.

An, whoa, how the fuck did some sticky’ass piece of rubber or some pill, or whatever, become what’s a good person versus what’s a bad person?

Ask me honest, I think most of us bad person. Even if we strut otherwise. We all wanna do as we was designed for, but we too scared. So we walk upright an look down on anything that don’t.

But none of us want to.

Even right now, in this room. All of us have the urge maybe to tell me to shut the fuck up. Maybe look over at the person next to us an tell them all the dumb’fucked things they done with they life. Just get up, walk out to that street and keep walking till nothing from our current life can even get to us no more.

How many of us just daydream upon daydream about all the crazy behavior we wish we could just adopt that’d change our entire existence from upright to downright? Like swerving our car over into the opposite lane for no other reason except to have an impact. Like letting some stranger talk us into going someplace
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

JERRY(cont)
we know we really shouldn’t be, but what the fuck, its late, its night, it kinda sound good.

And how many of us, right now, wanted Nostalgia to just flush the life she created away so she could jump into a fucking toilet bowl. Just so we could glean onto the adrenaline of what might happen to her. Just we could later judge the living fuck out of her eventhough we all watched an practically dared her to press that flush button.

(Shift)
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

twelve

LIBER PEREZ and YELLOW TANG FISH sit in the bathtub; seemingly post-coital. They look embarrassed.

YELLOW TANG FISH
So...that didn’t work.

LIBER PEREZ
No, it really didn’t.

YELLOW TANG FISH
I was maybe nervous.

LIBER PEREZ
Yea, me too, my leg was—

YELLOW TANG FISH
Oh, I know, my—

(A moment of awkwardness)

I could feel it though?

(LIBER embarrasses, crosses his legs)

LIBER PEREZ
...uh, feel what? I’m sorry.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Nah, like how close we was. Eventhough, lookit us, how far we are, I guess.

LIBER PEREZ
Yea. I wasn’t gonna say anything. .

YELLOW TANG FISH
Shit was like unmistakable.

LIBER PEREZ
I’ve never had it like that before.
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YELLOW TANG FISH
I should fucking hope not.

LIBER PEREZ
I mean us.

YELLOW TANG FISH
What about us?

LIBER PEREZ
I know you’re a deceased Yellow Tang an all that, but I’ve never known a home more than I know you.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Down there I was struggling to breathe. I couldn’t reproduce. But now, look at me, I can breathe in an out. I still can’t reproduce, but now I got you and the world maybe looks okay again.

LIBER PEREZ
I’m gonna help your family.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Nah, let them be. They’ll be at rest soon enough.

LIBER PEREZ
Not with that careless diver down there. She has no intention of letting anything rest until she gets what she needs, until she’s put her hands on every single living being down there.

YELLOW TANG FISH
The system will swallow her up when it needs to.

LIBER PEREZ
No, not this it won’t. What’s going on with your family is not something even the entire Earth can swallow, not ever.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Yer such a human. That ocean can spit out whatever kinda mess that she needs to—
LIBER PEREZ
It’s not just the ocean. It’s up here too. Getting worse all the time.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Up here? This place is a shithole, how can you tell?

LIBER PEREZ
It’s in embedded in our dirt, contaminated in our air, its broken through our atmosphere, and pummels us with the catastrophe of weather. The Earth is coughing up on people like her, choking on their righteousness. And now, with you in my heart, I am a passive recreational diver’man no more.

YELLOW TANG FISH
You are a sexy motherfucker when you talk like that.

LIBER PEREZ
When I come back up...

(They touch/kiss/connect)

YELLOW TANG FISH
But if you don’t come back up. What do I do then? Just sit here in this strange place, surrounded by all these strange things. What do I do then?

LIBER PEREZ
I’ll be back. For you. Us.

(YELLOW TANG FISH puts the snorkel mask to LIBER’s face. A romantic moment of remembrance before YELLOW TANG FISH helps LIBER PEREZ suit up.

Zipping him into his wet suit.

Strapping his watch and compass to his wrist.

Wrapping his BCD to his oxygen cylinder.

His regulator to the cylinder and a check of the pressure.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

YELLOW TANG FISH helps the BCD to his back, strapping him in and puts his fins onto LIBER’s feet.

Pulling the diving mask and snorkel from neck to face.

LIBER checks his time)

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   Take this.

(YELLOW TANG FISH pulls a rather large wrap of thick rope from a diving bag, ties the rope around the base of the toilet, then hands LIBER the remainder of it, which he drops into the toilet)

   LIBER PEREZ
   I’ll secure it soon as I touch down.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   If anything happens...I know it won’t do much, but if it do, bang on the rope. Pull on it. And if I see it...

   LIBER PEREZ
   You won’t be able to do anything.

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   And if I see it, then at least I’ll know.

   (LIBER sits on the toilet bowl, YELLOW TANG FISH places LIBER’s hands on his mask and regulator)

One thing.

   LIBER PEREZ
   (with regulator in mouth)
   Yea?

   YELLOW TANG FISH
   That other diver, she doesn’t look around when she’s down there. She’s so focused on collecting her whatever she’s collecting she never bothers to look up. So when you spot her, if you keep above...
the death of the slow’dy ing scuba diver

(LIBER removes the regulator)

LIBER PEREZ
The world is on my side, love, don’t you worry. Besides, I’ve spent half my life down there, and she, she’s just a resort diver.

YELLOW TANG FISH
She’s a scientific.

LIBER PEREZ
Same thing.

YELLOW TANG FISH
But you live by the rules, she don’t.

LIBER PEREZ
I’m in love with a fish, Yellow Tang variety, just what kinda rules do I live by, huh?

(YELLOW TANG FISH puts the regulator back in LIBER’s and stamps it with a kiss over glass. YELLOW TANG FISH takes LIBER’s fins and lifts them up, sending him backwards into the toilet with a splash. Lights out)
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

thirteen

CARELESS DIVER floats close to the surface, confused in a beautiful flash of light blinding her. She looks up at it, scared to get too close.

A splash.

CARELESS DIVER moves quickly out of the way, pulling a knife from her leg holster.

LIBER PEREZ floats gracefully through the light, as though the heavens have sent him to the sea.

He is bursting with love as he descends. Through a burst of ocean colors, he gets a hero’s welcome; a swirl of Yellow Tang fish greet him; the seaweed does a little dance and he reciprocates. LIBER PEREZ is a king returning to his kingdom.

At the bottom, LIBER begins looking for something to secure the rope to, however at each rock or coral formation he simply cannot bring himself to tie the rope around.

LIBER PEREZ instead begins looking around the sediment, he notes a few contraptions and measuring devices, he begins collecting them and putting them into a pouch. LIBER then, with great reluctance, begins purposefully picking up various sea life and pushing them out into the open water. He uneartths schools of fish and forces them to flurry; he chases out bottom feeders, forcing them to find another place to
dwell. He continues trying to clear the area.

From above descends CARELESS DIVER, she stays a moment watching LIBER PEREZ. After a few moments, CARELESS DIVER reaches into the crevice of a nearby rock, delicately pulling out a sea urchin, she holds it up in admiration.

LIBER PEREZ turns and sees her holding it up. He asks her nicely to pass the urchin to him. CARELESS DIVER shakes her head.

CARELESS DIVER pulls a small clear plastic container and her diving knife.

LIBER PEREZ makes a grab for the shears, but CARELESS DIVER holds out the sea urchin causing LIBER PEREZ to stay back.

CARELESS DIVER cuts a spine off the urchin. LIBER gives an underwater shriek.

CARELESS DIVER places the spine into the plastic container, then drops the sea urchin.

LIBER PEREZ goes to his knees, gently places the sea urchin in a nearby coral.

CARELESS DIVER looks around for another bottom dweller, LIBER PEREZ gets up to block her.

CARELESS DIVER warns LIBER PEREZ to get out of her way. LIBER PEREZ crosses his arm that he is there to protect the
ocean. CARELESS DIVER is not impressed.

LIBER PEREZ orders CARELESS DIVER to leave the area. CARELESS DIVER clarifies: "Me??" LIBER PEREZ confirms.

CARELESS DIVER orders LIBER PEREZ to leave. LIBER PEREZ motions that this is his home. CARELESS DIVER motions: "You've left me no choice." CARELESS DIVER picks a birth control case and several pill bottles from her gear. LIBER PEREZ confuses.

CARELESS DIVER releases the pills, then reaches into the water pinching those that float around her.

A small hazy cloud of water begins to form. LIBER PEREZ quickly begins gathering any pills he can.

CARELESS DIVER releases a flurry of pills, LIBER PEREZ frantically tries grabbing as many as he can, going to his knees picking them out of the sand.

CARELESS DIVER grabs the rope and begins to tie it into a noose.

CARELESS DIVER floats above LIBER PEREZ and ropes him by the neck.

Though choking, LIBER PEREZ does not try to help himself; instead he continues collecting the pills.

CARELESS DIVER strangles LIBER PEREZ, then begins ascending, pulling him by
the noose back towards the surface; leaving a cloudy wake.

Towards the surface, LIBER PEREZ’s ceases to float up, he instead hangs bathed in that beautiful light, a rope’s length in stop’motion. Almost as though the surface had him hanged. CARELESS DIVER fills his BCD with air, removes weights, but LIBER’s body stays in the ocean. Soon the light begins to fade. Seemingly satisfied, CARELESS DIVER leaves LIBER behind and descends, leaving the body hanging as it had at the beginning of the play.
the death of the slow’dyng scuba diver

fourteen

YELLOW TANG FISH is frantically pulling on the rope, trying to get some sort of movement from it. Finally, tiring out, YELLOW TANG FISH flops to the floor and begins to fish’weep.

The sounds of the weeping drown out, as we see YELLOW TANG waiting. And waiting. Time is passing. We see a fast-forward of YELLOW TANG waiting, then weeping while holding onto the toilet bowl, then repeatedly flushing waiting for something to happen, to looking around the bathroom at all the strange devices and water sources, back to waiting and crying by the toilet bowl.

Finally, YELLOW TANG sings...

YELLOW TANG FISH
Yo, I guess I’ll just sit here then,
in this strange place,
surrounded by all these strange things...
that he called home’to
Yo, I guess I’m just stuck here then,
in this strange place,
while he...
just stuck down there,
in that strange place,
surrounded by all those beautiful things,
that I called home’to.
Yo, how the fuck long I been here for anyways...

(Lights fade over YELLOW TANG keeling and falling to sleep next to the toilet bowl)
ASEXUAL SHRIMP swims mournfully around the bottom of the ocean, it hums a song similar in loneliness to what YELLOW TANG was humming.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP comes to a halt as it spots CARELESS DIVER is steadily working along with several measuring instruments and contraptions lodged in the sediment.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP floats into CARELESS DIVER’s view.

They stare at one another.

CARELESS DIVER waves.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP waves back.

CARELESS DIVER offers some food.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP motions that eating doesn’t sound very appetizing right now.

CARELESS DIVER kindly pulls a net.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Y’know, I know what a net is.

(CARELESS DIVER pretends the net is a nice place to be)

Um, are you really doing that right now?

(CARELESS DIVER gives up with the net. ASEXUAL SHRIMP and CARELESS DIVER look at one another)

You know, you’re dressed just like your friend.
(CARELESS DIVER looks around confused: “What friend”)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP(cont)
Well, okay, that’s a good point, maybe ‘friend’ was the wrong word choice. I only said friend because he was dressed same like you. (pause) So, was he?

(CARELESS DIVER confuses: “Was he what?”)

Your friend.

(CARELESS DIVER shakes her head)

I didn’t imagine so. That would be a weird friendship.

(CARLESS DIVER motions: ‘Running out of oxygen’)

Oh, I see, you’re running out of oxygen.

(CARELESS DIVER: “What? I don’t understand.”)

And if you stay down here, why you’ll:

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP motions Die)

My friend, she’s the same way. If she doesn’t get better soon, why I imagine she’ll:

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP motions Die)

Then there’s that man. Hanging. Dressed same like you. Why he already:

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP motions Died)

Yea, that is a whole lotta:

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP motions Dying)

And I’d just like to know why.

(CARELESS DIVER motions: we may never know)
ASEXUAL SHRIMP(cont)
You know, now that I’m getting an up’close at you, you certainly seem like a very motivated human to me. Dedicated. In our ocean at all hours. With all sorts of contraptions. So focused.

(CARELESS DIVER gives an ‘I love the ocean’ gesture)

No, I don’t think that’s it.
I don’t think you’re here for nice things.
I think there is something floating down to the bottom of where we live and I think that you know what it is. That you know what happened to that man hanging, that you know what’s happening to my friend. And...

(CARELESS DIVER tries to swim off, but ASEXUAL SHRIMP blocks with ease)

Oh, I’m not gonna pretend I know what it is I’m doing. This is all fucking freshwater to me.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP grabs CARELESS DIVER by the oxygen tank and pulls her in too close. CARELESS DIVER nervously pees her wetsuit. A small cloudiness appears between her legs. ASEXUAL SHRIMP instinctively puts its notice to the cloud)

It’s from you, isn’t it? It’s from you that my...that my friend isn’t well.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP grabs CARELESS DIVER’s Buoyancy Compensator and fills CARELESS DIVER’s BCD with air, they both float up)
sixteen

NEPTUNE lays wiped out next to the toilet.

NEPTUNE

(lonely sound)

(After a few sad moments, NEPTUNE gets up; he takes one last look in the toilet, then exits the bathroom. He moves to another room in the house, picks up the phone dials 9-1-1, but cannot believe he is doing so)

(into phone) Uh, hi.  (pause) Actually, no you can’t. Nevermind, this was stupid.

(He hangs up and stares at the phone helpless. He drops the phone and begins looking around the house for something long, a broomstick perhaps, a wire hanger maybe. Lights dim over NEPTUNE searching about his home.

In NEPTUNE’s bathroom, CARELESS DIVER comes up from the toilet, rips off her mask and breathes with relief onto the bathroom floor.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP comes up from the toilet, onto the bathroom floor, and watches CARELESS DIVER remove her gear.

NOTE: Throughout the scene, ASEXUAL SHRIMP will dunk its head into the toilet for “air.”

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Well.

CARELESS DIVER

What?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

You better start ‘splaining yerself.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

CARELESS DIVER
But first. How are you feeling?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
How am I feeling?! How do I feel?!

CARELESS DIVER
Inside.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Cut the small talk, lady. The only talk I care to talk is what was between those legs.

CARELESS DIVER
You seem upset.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
What was it, that...stuff?

CARELESS DIVER
Synthetic estrogen.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Synthetic estro-wha?

CARELESS DIVER
In your water. Synthetic estrogens. And your friend. Her intake has been multiplying at an alarming rate. It’s the bottom feeders, you see. The more she takes in—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
The worse she gets.

CARELESS DIVER
Where is she might I ask.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

CARELESS DIVER
Are you two...not talking?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
She went up.

CARELESS DIVER
Up?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Yea, up.

CARELESS DIVER
And what does up mean exactly?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Like the other direction of down.

CARELESS DIVER
Wow. Her appetite must be—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You bet your ass must be.

CARELESS DIVER
An it doesn’t matter if it’s away from her natural habitat. Everything she sees, everything she comes into contact with, she just ...wants. Without even knowing why. It’s just something you feel inside. An emptiness what needs to be filled, a dry what needs to be wet.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
How would you know, how would you know what Vonya’s going through, unless you two are like—

CARELESS DIVER
Oh, we very much are. Your friend an me, we’ve so many things the same brewing inside us.
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
So you stop peeing then. You stop your peeing where we live then our home can be our home again.

CARELESS DIVER
Oh, it’s not me—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
But you just said that it is.

CARELESS DIVER
Trust me, I am not the one who is—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, yes you is, I seen it coming from yer middle area there!

CARELESS DIVER
No. My body would never...you see it takes populations. It takes regularity. It takes an entire way of thinking, of seeing the world, to have this sort of impact.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, and what the hell does that mean then?

CARELESS DIVER
It means that sometimes people, we ingest things. So many things, for so many needs.

(CARELESS DIVER looks around, then holds up the a bottle of Viagra and a birth control case, various prescription bottles just as JERRY had)

And all of this, is running through all of us. Pouring out of us. And your friend, is a living result.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Well, so stoppit then.

CARELESS DIVER
We couldn’t even if we wanted to.
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
But you put all that stuff there, why can’t you just take it out?

CARELESS DIVER
We can’t do anything until we understand it better. Until we can comprehend the effect.

(Just as ASEXUAL SHRIMP is responding, NEPTUNE walks into the bathroom with a funny, handmade contraption for sticking into a toilet, rubber dishwashing gloves, and a raincoat)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
I can show you the effect, I can show you a sea monster if you wanna see one!

(NEPTUNE stares)

CARELESS DIVER
Nothing changes until even people like him can comprehend what’s happening to your friend.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
So tell him then, geez!

NEPTUNE
Uh....tell me what exactly?

CARELESS DIVER
I can’t.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
WHY NOT.

NEPTUNE
(to ASEXUAL SHRIMP) I’m sorry, but are you a—

CARELESS DIVER
The only way to move forward, my asexual shrimp, is to let it keep happening, for me to keep watching it keep happening. Until I can prove that it keeps happening.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NEPTUNE
(to himself) This isn’t happening, nothing is happening —

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...well, what more proof do you need than my friend not being my friend no more...

CARELESS DIVER
We need time.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Vonya doesn’t have hardly any time!

CARELESS DIVER
It’s not your friend’s time we need.

(Lights out)
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seventeen

NOSTALGIA swims with wonder, taking ecstatically all that is ocean; a few moments of awe and vastness.

This is broken as NOSTALGIA startles. She looks around her as though something has touched her underwater. She begins to swim away, but again something touches, turning her awe into fright. She begins swimming as fast as she can; away.
Lights back to ASEXUAL SHRIMP and CARELESS DIVER; NEPTUNE is trying to formulate a sentence in their silence.

NEPTUNE
...can I ask...a question? (pause) Did you two happen to come up through the uh...see, cuz my wife, she—

CARELESS DIVER
What about your wife?

NEPTUNE
She...she flushed herself down the toilet.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Wha?

NEPTUNE
Please help me, I need help, I don’t know what to—

CARELESS DIVER
Well, do you know why?

NEPTUNE
No, sorry, I didn’t have a chance to ask.

CARELESS DIVER
Yes, but what did she say before she did it. Did she say she was feeling anything; inside? Maybe an emptiness, maybe a—

NEPTUNE
She said...she said a lot of things.

CARELESS DIVER
Tell me.

NEPTUNE
Please, I just want some help. Can you help me, can either of you—
CARELESS DIVER
I am trying to help, so maybe instead of standing there questioning all that I do, you could just answer the fucking question.

NEPTUNE
I’m sorry.

CARELESS DIVER
What are you apologizing for?

NEPTUNE
I…I don’t know. I just—

CARELESS DIVER
No wonder she jumped in.

NEPTUNE
Look, she said about wondering where it all went. About wanting to see where about all the horrible things ended up. About wanting to start all over. She said about feeling so (lonely sound).

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, (lonely sound).

CARELESS DIVER
What kind of horrible things?

NEPTUNE
I don’t know, all of them. Please, she can’t breathe down there, we need to—

CARELESS DIVER
What kind.

NEPTUNE
Like not having kids, or—

CARELESS DIVER
How long has your wife been on the pill?
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... NEPTUNE

CARELESS DIVER

How long?

NEPTUNE

The whole time.

CARELESS DIVER

And the Viagra?

NEPTUNE

Not that long.

Why?

CARELESS DIVER

Just curious.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Was she kinda moody lately?

NEPTUNE

She’s always moody.

Look, she’s been down there awhile.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Yea, but was she real moody lately?

NEPTUNE

Yes, she was real moody, so what!

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

What about hot? Like in temperature. Like in...

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP makes a sexual gesture)

NEPTUNE

I don’t think we have time for this.
(NEPTUNE tries reaching his device into the bowl. CARELESS DIVER and ASEXUAL SHRIMP watch him sympathetically)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

OR, we could just go down there.

NEPTUNE

Down where?

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP removes the device from the bowl and puts its head in for a breath. NEPTUNE is taken aback, he looks to CARELESS DIVER)

NEPTUNE

...can we really do that?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

I am sorry about your wife, but I have to go to my friend that she’s okay.

NEPTUNE

(to CARELESS DIVER) Well, can we?

CARELESS DIVER

There’s only one way to find out, isn’t there. I guess it depends on you. How curious are you to—

NEPTUNE

I’m not fucking curious, I’m trying to save my—

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP steps up on the rim)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

And I’m trying to save my—

(NEPTUNE stands up on the rim)

NEPTUNE

(to CARELESS DIVER) Please, just tell me though. Please. Do me an my wife really have a hope?
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
An what about Vonya? Does she have a—

CARELESS DIVER
Lookit my eyes, the both of you, I’m in the business of hope.

(CARELESS DIVER flushes the toilet, both NEPTUNE and ASEXUAL SHRIMP drop down into the water. Time slows. CARELESS DIVER stares into the bowl, transfixed by the turn of the water. When the flush is done, CARELESS DIVER continues staring into the bowl)

(she tries out the lonely sound)

(From across the stage, lights come up softly over YELLOW TANG FISH, who hears the lonely sound and sends it back)

YELLOW TANG FISH
(tries out the lonely sound)

(Lights full on the two toilets with YELLOW TANG FISH staring at CARELESS DIVER)

YELLOW TANG FISH
You.

(CARELESS DIVER looks up; fascinated)

CARELESS DIVER
You.

(A stare’off between YELLOW TANG FISH and CARELESS DIVER. Lights out)
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nineteen

NEPTUNE splashes into the surface; it is clear he cannot swim. The ocean feels turbulent and swallowing. ASEXUAL SHRIMP splashes in next to him.

NEPTUNE
Help me, hey, I can’t...I can’t swim.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP grabs hold of NEPTUNE, then grins at the feel of his arm)

...where...are...they...?

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP puts its notice to the water)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
C’mon, we can follow the temperature.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP speeds off, towing NEPTUNE along)
twenty

NOSTALGIA swims with speed and looks in control, however is thrown off course as she is pulled under. She surfaces easily and resumes swimming, but is pulled under again. She surfaces and begins looking around trying to find her assailant. Of course, wherever she is not looking, we see something begin emerge.

It is VONYA, pulsating with heat.

NOSTALGIA
Omigod, that was you. I’m sorry, I didn’t know what that was down there.

VONYA
Oh, it was me down there alright. Watching you. That kick. That stroke.

NOSTALGIA
Where is it?

VONYA
Where is what?

NOSTALGIA
Everything. All of it. I wanna swim through everything I’ve ever—

VONYA
Well, I don’t know where you think you are, but this where you’re swimming through is open ocean. Or as I like to call it...my bedroom.

NOSTALGIA
But—

VONYA
You’re trembling. What happened? Up there you were so full of...heat

NOSTALGIA
It’s kinda colder than I thought it’d be. I wish I had like—
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

VONYA

A little suit? A little tank?

NOSTALGIA

What were you doing down there in my legs?

VONYA

Why, I wasn’t doing anything with your legs, it’s what you’re legs were doing with me.

NOSTALGIA

Could you like...scent me? What comes out? What I get rid of?

(VONYA stares at NOSTALGIA)

...why’re you...why do you keep looking at me like that?

VONYA

Because you’re absolutely accurate: you’re leaking and I’m thirsty as hell.

NOSTALGIA

...oh fuck...

(VONYA pulls NOSTALGIA in violently: a kiss: an earthquake of vibrations: fault lines move the ocean floor: waves begin to threaten: a confusion of body parts)
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

twenty one

LIBER PEREZ swims through the ocean beautiful. He is unsuited. The happiness on his face can be seen from space.

He slows down, his happiness pauses.

He swims up to his fully suited body hanging by the neck. He circles it.

He realizes he is breathing underwater without help.

He looks under the mask, then pulls back disturbed. He looks again, reaching in and touching.

He looks up towards the surface of the ocean, then down at the darkness below.
twenty two

YELLOW TANG FISH walks across the stage to CARELESS DIVER, dripping water along the way. As this happens, the second, mute-colored toilet bowl fades into the darkness of the past.

YELLOW TANG FISH
What happened to him? How long have I been here?

CARELESS DIVER
Him?

YELLOW TANG FISH
Hey, my family was terminally fucking infected, I was knifed to death with a cut so big it exposed every one of my insides, still I stood upright and met the love of my life, who was a human by the way, and now after all that...I’ve been left here to die for who knows how long completely alone. Stuck in this world I was prolly never meant to be in. And now, standing in front of me is the fucking scientific who caused all that.
You don’t wanna fuck with me, diver’lady.

CARELESS DIVER
Your friend—

YELLOW TANG FISH
Lover.

CARELESS DIVER
...really?

YELLOW TANG FISH
Yea, that’s right, bitch, it happened, it was, move on.

CARELESS DIVER
Well, whatever happened, I’m sorry.

YELLOW TANG FISH
What happened to him? How long have I been here?
the death of the slow‘dying scuba diver

CARELESS DIVER
Again, I am sorry. He seemed…like a very nice scuba diver. If it does anything for you, for your family, Mr. Perez died…so quickly, so painlessly. In fact, I seem to recall that his last sentiment, you know, beyond the bubbles an such, was about you. Your family. Wishing them a well future. Wishing you a comfort in death.

YELLOW TANG FISH
And his body? What happened to it? Did you cut it open like me, or did you leave just lost at the bottom of my ocean?

CARELESS DIVER
I have no recollection, I have no idea what I did with his body. As a matter of fact, your love feels…lifetimes ago.

YELLOW TANG FISH
No. You’ve no idea about my—

CARELESS DIVER
Anyways.

YELLOW TANG FISH
My heart. If you could see it.

CARELESS DIVER
Well, since I am here, and you’re still here, for whatever reason, may I get a glimpse? Your heart.

(YELLOW TANG FISH closes his slice)

YELLOW TANG FISH
Oh you wouldn’t like it.

CARELESS DIVER
Well, it’s not a matter of like.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Because my heart…my heart is surging. My heartbeat completely synched.
CARELESS DIVER
I seriously doubt that. See, you’ve been dead for, how long? Plus your endocrine
system was chemically fucked. So as for your heart surging, even when it was
alive it didn’t have the adrenaline to do anything quite so...romantic.

YELLOW TANG FISH
So, what, you like know me? Is that what you think—Y’know what, that’s it, get
over here.

(YELLOW TANG makes a move for CARELESS DIVER)

CARELESS DIVER
Zebrasoma flavescens. Yellow Tang. Sometimes called a Surgeonfish. Now
though, with my research, people will call you physical proof that your cancer was
only a byproduct; that the reason your family could no longer reproduce was,
and still is directly related to your endocrinal activity.

YELLOW TANG FISH
What about my family?

CARELESS DIVER
Or, put another way, your entire species remains suffering. Still vulnerable to
toxins you all are. And while just about every other kind of human shrugs their
shoulders and goes about their day, I have been alone, studying the bottom of
your ocean, analyzing what I collect at the bottom of your ocean. At all hours. At
any cost to my own life and happiness.

YELLOW TANG FISH
What, you want I should thank you?

CARELESS DIVER
No. Thank you is not what I was put on this Earth for.

YELLOW TANG FISH
Well I thank you anyways. For what I got inside me now.

CARELESS DIVER
Inside you now? I don’t quite follow—
the death of the slow‘dying scuba diver

YELLOW TANG FISH
Even if you could get a look my heart, even if you could get your hands all the way up inside, you wouldn’t be able to comprehend it. Your hand wouldn’t recognize the shape, your eyes the color, your careless fucking mind wouldn’t be able to wrap around the pump of my heart now.

CARELESS DIVER
How do you know unless you let me get a—

(With a splash up comes LIBER PEREZ, still unsuited. He pulls out of the toilet, shakes himself off like a dog. CARELESS DIVER watches as YELLOW TANG FISH and LIBER PEREZ gaze at one another. Long last)
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

twenty three

Amidst the beginnings of waves, ASEXUAL SHRIMP halts.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Wait, don’t look, maybe you don’t wanna see.

NEPTUNE
See what.

(NOSTALGIA’s body floats into view. NEPTUNE rushes to her)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Wait, you can’t swim—

(NEPTUNE stays afloat perfectly, holding his wife, but still coughing on the saltwater as it crashes into his mouth.

NEPTUNE
Hey, hey, can you hear me. Nostalgia, can you...?

(He breathes what little air he has into her mouth)

Goddamnmit, you are stronger than me and I am telling you to get yourself up, go on, Nostalgia...c’mon you do this...please, Love, for me...

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP puts its notice to NOSTALGIA)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
She’s so cold. Her skin. Es like all of her heat not there no more.

(NEPTUNE begins to cry)

I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have said about the heat not there no more. That wasn’t a very... (pause) K. Well, I’m just gonna be down below with...

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP descends. NEPTUNE pulls NOSTALGIA into his arms, tries to have a moment with her, however the waves keep them off balance. He looks out at the vast and awesome of the ocean, then back to his wife)
NEPTUNE
Nostalgia, you either cough yourself to life right now, or I'm gonna tear this entire ocean apart, every last life, everything that moves, everything that...

(NEPTUNE lets out a thunderous roar)

...BREATHESS!!!!

(Underwater. VONYA floats alone, only puts her head up at the sound of NEPTUNE’s roar. ASEXUAL SHRIMP speeds to her)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, oh, Vonya.

VONYA
Who's that, what's there?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
It's me, yer friend.

VONYA
What was that sound? Was that him coming for me? The husband.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
What are you talking about, what husband.

VONYA
After he sees what I done to her.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
She drowned, Vonya, of course she drowned. She didn't have no business even being down here—

VONYA
I thought that if I could get what she has inside of her inside of me—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
We don't have to talk about it.
VONYA
But she was so strong. She put up such a fight that...

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...that what...

VONYA
I didn’t care anymore about wanting to be strong like her, about wanting to feel what would happen. I just wanted her to stop going against me. So I broke the rules. I broke them in so many different places.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...how’dya’...how’dya mean, Vonya?

VONYA
I didn’t need to close her neck. I just did. Because it was too loud. I didn’t need to make her arms go limp. I just did. Because they were in my way. And I didn’t need to stop her heart, I only did it because it was so warm in there and I wanted it for my own.

(Lights out)
twenty four

CARELESS DIVER staring as YELLOW TANG and LIBER finish their kiss. When they do, they stand gazing at each other; locked in; in synch with the world.

...what is this?

CARELESS DIVER

This is us.

LIBER PEREZ

Tol’you. It’s on.

YELLOW TANG FISH

So?

LIBER PEREZ

So?

CARELESS DIVER

I’m here.

LIBER PEREZ

We’re here.

YELLOW TANG FISH

I see that.

CARELESS DIVER

So what part of your research are we now?

LIBER PEREZ

The sexy as hell kind.

YELLOW TANG FISH

(to YTF) Later, huh.

LIBER PEREZ
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

YELLOW TANG FISH

Love you.

LIBER PEREZ

Love you.

CARELESS DIVER

...I wonder if you two will get into arguments, and...annoy each other an stuff.

LIBER PEREZ

And what if we did. What would that tell you? What would it mean to you scientifically if this Yellow Tang and I were locked. With no expiration. Just two heartbeats pumping right with every part of the world.

CARELESS DIVER

You two are indeed very...cute together, I will give you that but—

YELLOW TANG FISH

We’re both fucking no longer living, we’re a different species, but all that still ain’t stopped us. What’re you, fuckin’hard to impress?

CARELESS DIVER

Yes. I am.

LIBER PEREZ

So teach us then. Explain us to us.

CARELESS DIVER

Mr. Perez, I understand your need to see things this way. People yearn for their lives to mean more than they actually do. However, I’m sorry, but what I’m looking at is simply a man who really was just incredibly lonely. And when a person is lonely, they find attachment. It doesn’t really matter to what, so long as they have something they can affix themselves to. It makes the future seem more bearable. Because in truth, what scares a lonely person most is the impending future that they know has no place for them. And so they come to detest change, because they themselves were not capable to create it.

(to YELLOW TANG) And...Yellow Tang, I know what it is to be looked at a certain way. To be stared at and judged. To be treated like some artifact or receptacle. Hands always reaching out at you. And yes, I know all that so well because I was
CARELESS DIVER (cont)

literally the one treating you that certain way, staring, judging; it was in fact my hands always reaching out at you. So by contrast, I get it that this other diver seems like the pull you’ve always been pulled towards, but please, keep in mind your station in life: you are a fish. Your pull is to maintain feeding, submit to the food chain, and to school with your family. Of which, you are doing none at this moment. With this man.

YELLOW TANG FISH

This man. With whom death is slow. With whom life is ever’lasting.

LIBER PEREZ

I saw it, you know?
My body.
Left hanging in the ocean.

Why couldn’t you pull it up?
Why couldn’t you sink it down?

YELLOW TANG FISH

The ocean keeps what she need. Always have. Y’know, to keep the balance. But know what, it also spit out what it don’t need. Fact, sometimes it spit out so angry, so...motherfucking turbulent; is that the word?

(Waves begin to crash against the side of the house, against the windows we can see water rising outside. The house begins to move from its base, as though a boat being pushed onto water. LIBER and YELLOW TANG keep their stare at CARELESS DIVER waiting for a response)
twenty five

NEPTUNE rips at the water, it almost looks as though he is the one causing the crashing and rolling waves. NOSTALGIA opens her eyes.

NOSTALGIA
Well my, my, I haven’t seen this part of you for I dunno how long.

NEPTUNE
Omigod, you’re...you’re alive.

NOSTALGIA
Well, I wouldn’t go that far. I’ll tell you what I am though.

NEPTUNE
What, what is it? Are you okay?

NOSTALGIA
M’turned on as fuck.

NEPTUNE
...

NOSTALGIA
Waking up with you thrashing about like...by God, I wish it you would just thrash me instead.

NEPTUNE
Are you even—

NOSTALGIA
Alive? Oh, I don’t know, but will you please just get over here and put your mouth on me like I remember you by.

(She pulls him into her)

...oh, I know you hate the name, but...
NEPTUNE
What, say it.

NOSTALGIA
...I want you to take me like the sea god that you are!

(NEPTUNE takes NOSTALGIA with crashing waves crashing over them. With each push and grunt, the waves grow and grow.

At the ocean floor, ASEXUAL SHRIMP and VONYA are thrown about by the intense movement of the water)

VONYA
This is it, I can feel it. The ocean is through with me.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
No, it ain’t us she’s through with. This it’ll pass, Vonya. And you an me will be good again. C’mon, I know your eyesight is getting heavy. Let’s just let it go to darkness, and when you come to light, the ocean will be ocean again.

VONYA
I’ve been hideous.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
A little. But in growing way.

VONYA
I’m scared. I don’t wanna go to darkness, I don’t know what’ll happen. I can’t feel my insides anymore. Will you take me away from this place, can you do that? Can we go somewhere far off, just you and me? Just like we used to do.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
No. We can’t.

VONYA
Please.
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
If I could, I would take you so far that you wouldn’t even be able to remember a thing about all this. But it’s not just us no more. There is so much ugly in every part of our ocean, Vonya, that we need to let her clean her entire everything.

(NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA make love while descending. ASEXUAL SHRIMP watches them in awe. VONYA feels their vibrations.

On the ocean floor, NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA reposition themselves and begin towards a climax)

VONYA
...what is that...it feels like the floor is quaking?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...no...that would be the husband and the wife.

VONYA
The husband? He’s here?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, he is. The husband is very fucking much here.

VONYA
Where is the wife? Is her body—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, she’s here with him. Pulling him into her. Driving him just completely wild. They keep turning each other over, holding on to each other, just pressing themselves, rubbing themselves into the other’s body like—

VONYA
Oh, I can imagine it. Their shaking our entire sea, pretty soon a crack will open up the ocean floor and all the ugly things will just stay there buried forever. Oh, I can feel it, I can...

(VONYA pulsates)
ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Omigod, Vonya, are you okay? Vonya?

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP begins fanning the water around VONYA. As NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA convulse into orgasm, VONYA convulses into a pink hue, her body floats motionless)

Omigod. Are you...cooked?

(NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA hold each other tight, like one person. ASEXUAL SHRIMP whimpers. NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA look over, the humans and shrimp looking at one another)
An enormous wave envelops the house, lifting it up. From the windows we see only water as the house begins to sway and float about.

CARELESS DIVER

...are we...

(In the window, a baby jellyfish propels past; a small sea snail circles; a little lobster peeks in)

YELLOW TANG FISH

In the water.

(CARELESS DIVER goes to the window)

CARELESS DIVER

How is this even—

LIBER PEREZ

What are you afraid of, this is where you wanted to be, no? This is where you wanted to make yourself comfortable. Well congratulations. How far deep in the ocean would you like yourself to be?

(A young starfish attaches)

YELLOW TANG FISH

Love, do you see this?

(LIBER goes to the window)

LIBER PEREZ

Look at all of them, they're okay, huh.

CARELESS DIVER

This house wasn't even on the fucking coast.

YELLOW TANG FISH

Look closer.
LIBER PEREZ
What is it?

CARELESS DIVER
It isn’t happening, it’s just...

(CARELESS DIVER begins putting on her gear and suit)

YELLOW TANG FISH
All of them, they’re all young.

(Crowds of young sea life crowd at the windows of the house. YELLOW TANG goes from window to window looking more frantically)

LIBER PEREZ
What d’you mean?

YELLOW TANG FISH
I mean like...they all dead.

LIBER PEREZ
Dead?

YELLOW TANG FISH
Not like are dead. But were dead. Have been dead. Still are dead.

LIBER PEREZ
No, they’re—

YELLOW TANG FISH
They the disappeared. The collected.

LIBER PEREZ
All of them?

(YELLOW TANG and LIBER look out the window)

YELLOW TANG FISH
They’re looking in here.
LIBER PEREZ

What’re they staring...

(YELLOW TANG and LIBER follow the eyes of the sea life and turn back at CARELESS DIVER just as she finished putting on all her gear except her mask and regulator)

It’s you.

CARELESS DIVER

Me what?

YELLOW TANG FISH

See, the ocean know all about you. Yer like, famous an shit.

(The windows now full of sea life of all types against the glass. CARELESS DIVER walks to the windows, looks out, takes them all in)
twenty seven

NEPTUNE and NOSTALGIA clean each other off; they have sand in places, seaweed on their backs, etc.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
So...that was some good slamming into.

NEPTUNE
Yea, it fuckin'was.

NOSTALGIA
Um, love?

NEPTUNE
On, I'm sorry, this is the Asexual Shrimp that helped me come after you. Asexual Shrimp, this is my wife.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Hi, how are ya?

NOSTALGIA
I'm good. Thank you.
I feel so...cleansed down here.

NEPTUNE
Oh no, what happened, is that your friend?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
...it is. Was.

NOSTALGIA
I'm sorry.

NEPTUNE
Is there anything we can—

NOSTALGIA
Hey, love, how is it you’re standing at the bottom of the ocean and still talking? Breathing?
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Yea, you couldn’t even swim earlier.

(NEPTUNE stretches out, cracks his knuckles)

NEPTUNE
I don’t know. When I saw Nostalgia, I didn’t think, I just went to her, I just—

NOSTALGIA
I opened my eyes and there you were.

NEPTUNE
I felt like if I wanted, I could’ve held her tight and leapt out of the ocean all the way up to the atmosphere. Nah, further.

NOSTALGIA
And when you took hold of me, I just…I just wanted you to shake me in all directions, just earthquake all the bad things out from inside of me. I feel like you could. Do that. (pause) I wish I could’ve done that.

NEPTUNE
You could’ve anything that I could. We could’ve together.

NOSTALGIA
Maybe. Before everything got so…stupid.

NEPTUNE
(to NOSTALGIA) Hey, you wanna know a secret?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
From you, hell yea I do.

NEPTUNE
I don’t know what it is, but…down here, with you looking at me like that, with us so close together like we used to be…I feel like the strongest motherfucker in this bitch.

NOSTALGIA
You are. Right now, Neptune, you all the way absolutely are.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NEPTUNE
I feel like if I...

(He stomps the ocean floor: it reacts)

...I feel like I can shake shit up from here through to the other side of the Earth. Nah, further.

(He roars and body slams the ocean floor. The suited body of LIBER PEREZ descends to the bottom of the sea, the rope from around his neck still floating above his head, it almost looks as if God is lowering him through the ocean. NEPTUNE catches the body)

NOSTALGIA
Omigod, did you just—

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Oh, no, he'd been hanging up there for awhile.

NEPTUNE
Who is he, I wonder.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Funny, almost felt like he been watchin’over us.

(NEPTUNE lays LIBER's body down, next to VONYA's)

Guess maybe now we don’t need him, we got you.

NEPTUNE
Got me what?

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP spots something; points. All look)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Is that...

NOSTALGIA
Our house?
ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Gonna be a shattered house if it keep going down like that.

NOSTALGIA
What is this, Netty?

NEPTUNE
I...I don't know.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
Ain't ya gonna go after it, keep it from—

NEPTUNE
Me?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
You the strongest motherfucker in this bitch.

NEPTUNE
I guess...

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
That don't sound like the strongest motherfu—

NEPTUNE
No, you’re right. I am. And I’ll just...

(NEPTUNE begins to swim towards it)

NOSTALGIA
I guess I this is what I was looking for, huh? The bottom of the ocean. Y’know, I almost thought when I got down here I would find artifacts, from my life, just settled along the sediment. Keepsakes from when I was young, from when you an me first met. I thought I would find myself shipwrecked under all the terrible things I did, and I could just clean myself off, get back who I could’ve been. But instead of all that, this is just where I’ll decompose, I guess. More shit for you all to haffta deal with. I’m sorry.

(NEPTUNE stops short, turns)
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NEPTUNE

No apologies. Remember.

NOSTALGIA

I wish I could go back there. With you.

NEPTUNE

What would you like me to do, Nostalgia? Carry you back up, to our sunken bedroom where you an me died too many years ago?

NOSTALGIA

Even after death, an I still don’t know what I want. Maybe I never have.

NEPTUNE

That ain’t true. There was some years in there, when we just...

I remember.

NOSTALGIA

Wish we could go back.

NEPTUNE

Before we let it go to waste.

I think I have to go.

NOSTALGIA

I know it. I know you do. Lookit you. My Neptune, you look like a god if ever I’ve seen one.

NEPTUNE

Oh, is that all I had to do for us all this time? Just...be a god?

NOSTALGIA

Is this all I had to do? Just...be a memory?

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Um, I hate to get between a human’couple, but—
NOSTALGIA
So...?

NEPTUNE
What.

NOSTALGIA
You’re gonna go wreck shit up and I wind up like some missing body sunken in the sea? It’s okay. You go find that family of yours. I’ll be here with...all this. I did love you, you know.

NEPTUNE
And me, you.

NOSTALGIA
It was all my other shit I couldn’t figure out.

NEPTUNE
I wanted to *feel like this* with you.

NOSTALGIA
We didn’t know.

NEPTUNE
We didn’t know.

(NOSTALGIA motions NEPTUNE go do what he has to. NEPTUNE says goodbye then swims off. NOSTALGIA doesn’t watch him go, rather she looks around in awe at the surrounding sea, she feels the ocean floor with her toes and looks at LIBER’s body. She lifts the mask, then puts it back respectfully.

NOSTALGIA looks at ASEXUAL SHRIMP who is floating with VONYA, holding her)

ASEXUAL SHRIMP
She didn’t mean it, you know? Killing you violently.
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

NOSTALGIA

It’s okay. I kinda asked for it.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

She really was the most wonderful friend. My only friend, you know?

NOSTALGIA

I do.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

I don’t know what now cuz what’re you supposed to do if you don’t got no friends, you know?

NOSTALGIA

Well, there’s always this guy.

(NOSTALGIA motions to LIBER’s body)

And I’m here now, I guess.

ASEXUAL SHRIMP

Yea, I thought about that. That maybe you two could be my two new friends, but...well, prolly in not that long some of the local types are gonna come and begin eating what’s left of your bodies, you know? So...what I could really use are some alive friends, I guess.

(ASEXUAL SHRIMP looks up towards the surface, NOSTALGIA does too)
All watch as CARELESS DIVER stands in the middle of the room, she drops the tank from her back, letting it slam into the floor of the sinking house. She removes her mask.

Focus on JERRY and the audience, with CARELESS DIVER removing her suit as the backdrop.

JERRY
So like...if you was about to die, like death is in the fucking room. Like you can scent that motherfucker out. Feel it in your stomach an shit. What go through that mind uh yours?

People always be talkin’about how like if they plane started an unintended descent, they’d wanna like get up on the closest fucking human and just...go out like they came in. Naked an with some stranger’s hands all over’em. Oh, some stranger’s hands, just sayin’that shit get me hot. Am I right? Don’t it tho’? Oh, you know that I am.

But strangers’ hands aside, I think what you’d really find yerself going over is what did you create. Yea, yea, yea, lotsa annoying motherfuckers is gonna say kids. Children. And alright, I’ll give ya that one.

But what if you ain’t created no kids? What if that weren’t your lot in life? What is it that we put down during our time here, that we would look death straight ahead and think...yo, wheneva you ready, sucka, I’m bone ready to be out this bitch.

(CARELESS DIVER seemingly speaks to everyone)

CARELESS DIVER
That’s the truly lonely fact about people who spend their lives surrounded by progress.

JERRY
What is?
the death of the slow’dying scuba diver

CARELESS DIVER
Of what I am most proud, I will never know. I simply have no way of finding out if in years from now something I proposed, something I created, will get proven to be categorically toxic. A person may well win the Nobel Prize, only to never know that decades later, that very achievement proved to be the most lethal contaminant known to humankind the last half-century.

So I have no choice but to accept how you all look at me. To stand beside what I have done. Because anything I have to show for myself has yet to stand the true trial that is time.

(CARELESS DIVER looks to JERRY)

JERRY
Know what’s a thing? When think you like know all about something. You ever see a motherfucker jump into a conversation and say all like “Nah, nah, es like this see.” I hate those bitches. An that weren’t a dig at females, or female dogs neither. Men do that shit all the cussin’time. Like you can’t even tell a man one little disappointment you had before they up tell you how to fix that disappointment. Even if that weren’t the point, man always got a solution. Don’t they.

But what the fuck am I talkin’. I do that shit all the time too. Fact, I spend the majority of my thinking thinking how stupid the rest of the fuckin’planet be. Why don’t they do like me. Why don’t they see what I does. An eventhough sometimes it’s fun to take your clothes off with a stupid person, it’s always sad after. Cuz there they are in your house, or you in theirs, and they stupid. They stupid and you smart. That shit just don’t synch, you know?

But that don’t keep me from replaying thangs. Replaying the taking clothes off part, sure. But more than that, I replay how much they’ll get it one day. How when they brain evolve to my level just how much they’ll retroactively appreciate me. Tha’s something I hope the rest of the population do, cuz I do it all the muh’fuckin’time.
Waiting for the world to catch up to me. To my genius.

Ooh, I especially like replayin’it like after I’m gone. How much my lifeless body and legacy people will be like “Whoa, fuck was she off the fuckin’charts.”
CARELESS DIVER
...uh, which charts?

JERRY
Ex’cuse me?

CARELESS DIVER
You said you’d like to be off the...charts. I’m just curious which.

JERRY
Shit, I didn’t even know you was there listening.

CARELESS DIVER
I’m standing right next to you.

JERRY
Yea, but you was all serious an shit about your trials uh time an whatever all that was.

CARELESS DIVER
You don’t know which charts, do you.

JERRY
The fuckin’life charts.

CARELESS DIVER
Are there, life charts?

JERRY
You see, this bitch is exactly the kinda bitch I was on about. She come in here tellin’me what it is, what it not.

CARELESS DIVER
I’m sorry.

JERRY
Your face is sorry.

CARELESS DIVER
It is.
the death of the slow‘dying scuba diver

JERRY
Don’t be agreeing with me.

CARELESS DIVER
I don’t, in general. Just about that. My face.

(Beat)
JERRY
...I don’t know what kinda charts. Sometimes when I’m not sure where I’m going with something, I just...move forward without thinking it through.

CARELESS DIVER
Me too.

JERRY
An then I get all mad when somebody find it out.

CARELESS DIVER
Me too.

JERRY
I ain’t mad at you though.

CARELESS DIVER
No?

JERRY
I mean I am, but...now you got me thinking all about the charts an whatever.

CARELESS DIVER
That’s okay, I’m thinking about all those species in those windows that are going to murder me in a few moments.

JERRY
Yea, but...

CARELESS DIVER
What.
JERRY
I dunno, I was gonna say you kinda deserve it. But then I felt bad.

CARELESS DIVER
It’s okay. I do kinda deserve it. And thank you for feeling bad.

JERRY
I ain’t sure of what I was saying anymore.

CARELESS DIVER
You were saying about your lifeless body and the legacy it will leave behind you.

JERRY
Oh. Yea. That.

CARELESS DIVER
I think I’d better—

JERRY
What, go an die?

CARELESS DIVER
Yes.

JERRY
When I die...

CARELESS DIVER
Go on.

JERRY
I want that shit to be fast. Like a fuckin’light switch fast. Just turn me out.

CARELESS DIVER
No more charts?

JERRY
Maybe, I dunno. Maybe not if I got to die all slow’like. That shit sound painful. What about you, think you’ll go pretty fast or them fish an shit goin’take they time with you?
CARELESS DIVER
I can scientifically say, I have not the first damn clue...

(CARELESS DIVER returns to the window. JERRY returns
towards the audience. NEPTUNE’s fist punches through a
window and reaches in looking for a place to get a hold, the
entire ocean rushes in. The house begins to swell with the
ocean and several hundred different species. All watch in
horror as CARELESS DIVER’s body fills with ocean and is
swarmed by all the sea life.

NEPTUNE now has a grip on the interior of the house and
begins pulling. CARELESS DIVER’s now lifeless body floats
among the various bottles, containers, plastics, pills, and
liquids that cloud the situation. The sea’life swim in and out
of the house from the broken window.

NEPTUNE begins to ascend, lifting the house back towards
the surface. All watch as some of the cloudiness seeps out
from the shattered window. Swirls of extinct ocean life pass
in and out of the structure. LIBER and YELLOW TANG hold
each other. NEPTUNE lets out a seemingly triumphant roar
as hepropels the entire of them upwards, we watch the
darkness of deepened waters begin to give way to some sort
of light. END OF PLAY)