

SUNDAY in the PARK with GEORGE

A Musical

Music and Lyrics by
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ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

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A white stage. White floor, slightly raked and extended in perspective. Four white portals define the space. The proscenium arch continues across the bottom as well, creating a complete frame around the stage.

GEORGE enters downstage. HE is an artist. Tall, dark beard, wearing a soft felt hat with a very narrow brim crushed down at the neck, and a short jacket. HE looks rather intense. HE sits downstage on the apron at an easel with a large drawing pad and a box of chalk. HE stares momentarily at the pad before turning to the audience.

GEORGE

White. A blank page or canvas. The challenge: bring order to the whole.

(Arpeggiated chord. A tree flies in stage right)
Through design.

(Four arpeggiated chords. The white portals fly out and the white ground cloth comes off, revealing a grassy-green expanse and portals depicting the park scene)

Composition.

(Two arpeggiated chords. A tree tracks on from stage left)

Balance.

(Two arpeggiated chords. Two trees descend)

Light.

(Arpeggiated chord. The lighting bumps, giving the impression of an early morning sunrise on the island of La Grande Jatte — harsh shadows and streaming golden light through the trees)

And harmony.

(The music coalesces into a theme: "Sunday," as a cut-out of a couple rises at the back of the stage. GEORGE begins to draw, then stops suddenly and goes to the wings and brings on a young woman, DOT. SHE wears a traditional 19th-century outfit: full-length dress with bustle, etc. When HE gets her downstage right, HE turns her profile, then returns downstage to his easel. HE begins to draw. SHE turns to him. Music continues under. Annoyed)

No. Now I want you to look out at the water.

DOT

I feel foolish.

GEORGE

Why?

DOT

(Indicating bustle)

I hate this thing.

GEORGE

Then why wear it?

DOT

Why wear it? Everyone is wearing them!

GEORGE
(Begins sketching)

Everyone . . .

DOT

You know they are.

(SHE begins to move)

GEORGE

Stand still, please.

(Music stops)

DOT

(Sighs)

I read they're even wearing them in America.

GEORGE

They are fighting Indians in America — and you cannot read.

DOT

(Defensive)

I can read . . . a little.

(Pause)

Why did we have to get up so early?

GEORGE

The light.

DOT

Oh.

(GEORGE lets out a moan)

What's the matter?

GEORGE

(Erasing feverishly)

I hate this tree.

(Arpeggio. A tree rises back into the fly space)

DOT
(Hurt)
I thought you were drawing me.

GEORGE
(Muttering)
I am. I am. Just stand still.
(DOT is oblivious to the moved tree. Through the course of the scene the landscape can continue to change. At this point a sailboat begins to slide into view)

DOT
I wish we could go sailing. I wouldn't go this early in the day, though.

GEORGE
Could you drop your head a little, please.
(SHE drops her head completely)
Dot!
(She looks up, giggling)
If you wish to be a good model you must learn to concentrate. Hold the pose. Look out at the water.
(SHE obliges)

Thank you.
(OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY
Where is that tree?
(Pause)

NURSE! NURSE!

DOT
(Startled)
My God!
(Sees OLD LADY)

She is everywhere.
(NURSE enters. SHE wears an enormous headdress)

OLD LADY
NURSE!

NURSE
What is it, Madame?

OLD LADY
The tree. The tree. Where is our tree?

NURSE
What tree?

OLD LADY
The tree we always sit near. Someone has moved it.

NURSE
No one has moved it, Madame. It is right over there.
Now come along—
(NURSE attempts to help the OLD LADY along)

OLD LADY
Do not push me!

NURSE
I am not pushing. I am helping.

OLD LADY
You are pushing and I do not need any help.

NURSE
(THEY cross the stage)
Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY
And this is not our tree!
(SHE continues her shuffle)

NURSE
Yes, Madame.
(SHE helps OLD LADY sit in front of tree)

DOT
I do not envy the nurse.

GEORGE
(Under his breath)
She can read . . .

DOT
(Retaliating)
They were talking about you at La Coupole.

GEORGE
Oh.

DOT
Saying strange things . . .

GEORGE
They have so little to speak of, they must speak of me?

DOT
Were you at the zoo, George?
(No response)
Drawing the monkey cage?

GEORGE
Not the monkey cage.

DOT
They said they saw you.

GEORGE
The monkeys, Dot. Not the cage.

DOT
(Giggling)
It is true? Why draw monkeys?

OLD LADY
Nurse, what is that?

NURSE
What, Madame?

OLD LADY
(Points out front)
That! Off in the distance.

NURSE
They are making way for the exposition.

OLD LADY
What exposition?

NURSE
The International Exposition. They are going to build a tower.

OLD LADY
Another exposition . . .

NURSE
They say it is going to be the tallest structure in the world.

OLD LADY
More foreigners. I am sick of foreigners.

GEORGE
More boats.
(An arpeggiated chord. A tugboat appears)
More trees.
(Two chords. More trees track on)

DOT
George.
(Chord)
Why is it you always get to sit in the shade while I have
to stand in the sun?
(Chord. No response)
George?
(Still no response)
Hello, George?
(Chord)
There is someone in this dress!
(Twitches slightly, sings to herself)
A trickle of sweat.
(Twitch)
The back of the —
(Twitch)
— head.
He always does this.
(Hiss)
Now the foot is dead.
Sunday in the park with George.
One more Su —
(Twitch)
The collar is damp,
Beginning to pinch.
The bustle's slipping —
(Hiss and twitch)
I won't budge one inch.

Who was at the zoo, George?
Who was at the zoo?
The monkeys and who, George?
The monkeys and who?

GEORGE
Don't move!

DOT
(Still)
Artists are bizarre. Fixed. Cold.
That's you, George, you're bizarre. Fixed. Cold.
I like that in a man. Fixed. Cold.
God, it's hot out here.

Well, there are worse things
Than staring at the water on a Sunday.
There are worse things
Than staring at the water
As you're posing for a picture
Being painted by your lover
In the middle of the summer
On an island in the river on a Sunday.
*(GEORGE races over to DOT and rearranges her
a bit, as if SHE were an object, then returns to
his easel and resumes sketching. DOT hisses,
twitching again)*
The petticoat's wet,
Which adds to the weight.
The sun is blinding.
(Closing her eyes)
All right, concentrate . . .

GEORGE
Eyes open, please.

DOT
Sunday in the park with George . . .

GEORGE
Look out at the water. Not at me.

DOT
Sunday in the park with George . . .
Concentrate . . . concentrate . . .
(The dress opens and DOT walks out of it. The dress closes; GEORGE continues sketching it as if SHE were still inside. During the following, DOT moves around the stage taking representative poses as punctuation to the music, which is heavily rhythmic)

Well, if you want bread
And respect
And attention,
Not to say connection,
Modelling's no profession.
(Does mock poses)

If you want instead,
When you're dead,
Some more public
And more permanent
Expression

(Poses)
Of affection,
(Poses)

You want a painter,
(Brief, sharp poses throughout the following)
Poet,
Sculptor, preferably:
Marble, granite, bronze.
Durable.
Something nice with swans
That's durable

Forever.
All it has to be is good.
(Looking over GEORGE's shoulder at his work, then at GEORGE)
And George, you're good.
You're really good.

George's stroke is tender,
George's touch is pure.
(Sits or stands nearby and watches him intently)
Your eyes, George.
I love your eyes, George.
I love your beard, George.
I love your size, George.
But most, George,
Of all,
But most of all,
I love your painting . . .

(Looking up at the sun)
I think I'm fainting . . .
(Steps back into dress, resumes pose, gives a twitch and a wince, then sings sotto voce again)

The tip of a stay.
(Wince)
Right under the tit.
No, don't give in, just
(Shifts)

Lift the arm a bit . . .

GEORGE
Don't lift the arm, please.

DOT
Sunday in the park with George . . .

GEORGE
The bustle high, please.

DOT
Not even a nod.
As if I were trees.
The ground could open,
He would still say "please."

Never know with you, George,
Who could know with you?
The others I knew, George.
Before we get through,
I'll get to you, too.

God, I am so hot!

Well, there are worse things
Than staring at the water on a Sunday.
There are worse things
Than staring at the water
As you're posing for a picture
After sleeping on the ferry
After getting up at seven
To come over to an island
In the middle of a river
Half an hour from the city
On a Sunday.
On a Sunday in the park with—

GEORGE
(The music stopping)
Don't move the mouth!!

DOT
(Holds absolutely still for a very long beat. As

*music resumes, SHE pours all her extremely
mixed emotions into one word)*
—George!

I am getting tired. The sun is too strong today.

GEORGE
Almost finished.

DOT
(Sexy)
I'd rather be in the studio, George.

GEORGE
(Wryly)
I know.

OLD LADY
(Looking across the water)
They are out early today.

NURSE
It is Sunday, Madame.

OLD LADY
That is what I mean, Nurse! Young boys out swimming
so early on a Sunday?

NURSE
Well, it is very warm.

OLD LADY
Hand me my parasol.

NURSE
I am, Madame.
(NURSE stands up and opens the parasol for

the OLD LADY. FRANZ, a coachman, enters; stares at the TWO WOMEN for a moment. HE sees GEORGE, and affects a pose as HE sits)

Oh, no. DOT

What? GEORGE

Look. Look who is over there. DOT

So? GEORGE

When he is around, you know who is likely to follow. DOT

You have moved your arm. GEORGE

I think they are spying on you, George. I really do. DOT

Are you going to hold your head still? GEORGE
(The NURSE has wandered over in the vicinity of FRANZ)

You are here awfully early today. NURSE

Ja. So are you. FRANZ
(Speaks with a German accent)

And working on a Sunday. NURSE

Ja . . . FRANZ

It is a beautiful day. NURSE

It is too hot. FRANZ
(Sexy)

Do you think? NURSE

Where is my fan! OLD LADY

I have to go back. NURSE

Nurse, my fan! OLD LADY

You did not bring it today, Madame. NURSE

Of course I brought it! OLD LADY

Perhaps we will see each other later. FRANZ

Perhaps . . . NURSE

OLD LADY
There it is. Over there.
(OLD LADY picks up the fan)

NURSE
That is my fan —

OLD LADY
Well, I can use it. Can I not? It was just lying there . . .
What is all that commotion?
(Music. Laughter from off right. A wagon
tracks on bearing a tableau vivant of Seurat's
"Une Baignade Asnières")

FRANZ
Jungen! Nicht so laut! Ruhe, bittel
(The following is heard simultaneously from
the characters in the tableau)

BOY
Yoo-hoo! Dumb and fat!

YOUNG MAN
Hey! Who you staring at?

MAN
Look at the lady with the rear!
(The YOUNG MAN gives a loud Bronx cheer)

BOY
Yoo-hoo — kinky beard!

MAN
Kinky beard.

YOUNG MAN and BOY
Kinky beard!

(GEORGE gestures, as when an artist raises
and extends his right arm to frame an image
before him — ALL freeze. Silence. A frame
comes in around them. JULES and YVONNE, a
well-to-do middle-aged couple, stroll on and
pause before the painting)

JULES
Ahh . . .

YVONNE
Ooh . . .

JULES
Mmm . . .

YVONNE
Oh, dear.

JULES
Oh, my.

YVONNE
Oh, my dear.

JULES
(Sings)
It has no presence.

YVONNE
(Sings)
No passion.

JULES
No life.
(THEY laugh)

It's neither pastoral
Nor lyrical.

YVONNE
(*Giggling*)
You don't suppose that it's satirical?
(THEY *laugh heartily*)

JULES
Just density
Without intensity—

YVONNE
No life.
Boys with their clothes off—

JULES
(*Mocking*)
I must paint a factory next!

YVONNE
It's so mechanical.

JULES
Methodical.

YVONNE
It might be in some dreary
Socialistic periodical.

JULES
(*Approvingly*)
Good.

YVONNE
So drab, so cold.

JULES
And so controlled.

BOTH
No life.

JULES
His touch is too deliberate, somehow.

YVONNE
The dog.
(THEY *shriek with laughter*)

JULES
These things get hung—

YVONNE
Hmm.

JULES
And then they're gone.

YVONNE
Ahhh . . .

Of course he's young—
(JULES *shoots her a look. Hastily*)
But getting on.

JULES
Oh . . .

All mind, no heart.
No life in his art.

YVONNE
No life in his *life*—
(JULES *nods in approval*)

BOTH

No—

(THEY giggle and chortle)

Life.

(*Arpeggio. The BOYS in the picture give a loud Bronx cheer. JULES and YVONNE turn and slowly stroll upstage, as the tableau disappears*)

NURSE

(*Seeing JULES*)

There is that famous artist—what is his name . . .

OLD LADY

What is his name?

NURSE

I can never remember their names.

(*JULES tips his hat to the LADIES. The COUPLE continues towards GEORGE*)

JULES

George! Out very early today.

(*GEORGE nods as HE continues sketching. DOT turns her back on them*)

GEORGE

Hello, Jules.

YVONNE

A lovely day . . .

JULES

I couldn't be out sketching today—it is too sunny!
(*YVONNE laughs*)

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GEORGE

Have you seen the painting?

JULES

Yes. I was just going to say! Boys bathing—what a curious subject.

(*YVONNE stops him*)

We must speak.

YVONNE

(*Sincere*)

I loved the dog.

(*Beat*)

JULES

I am pleased there was an independent exhibition.

GEORGE

Yes . . .

JULES

We must speak. Really.

YVONNE

Enjoy the weather.

JULES

Good day.

(*As THEY exit, YVONNE stops JULES and points to DOT*)

YVONNE

That dress!

(*SHE laughs, and THEY exit*)

DOT

I hate them!

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GEORGE
Jules is a fine painter.

DOT
I do not care. I hate them.
(JULES and YVONNE return)

JULES
Franz!

YVONNE
We are waiting!
(THEY exit)

FRANZ
Ja, Madame, Monsieur. At your service.
(FRANZ, who has been hiding behind a tree,
eyeing the NURSE, quickly dashes offstage af-
ter JULES and YVONNE. GEORGE closes his
pad. DOT remains frozen)

GEORGE
Thank you.
(Beat)

DOT
(Moving)
I began to do it.

GEORGE
What?

DOT
Concentrate. Like you said.

GEORGE
(Patronizing)
You did very well.

DOT
Did I really?

GEORGE
(Gathering his belongings)
Yes. I'll meet you back at the studio.

DOT
(Annoyed)
You are not coming?

GEORGE
Not now.
(Angry, DOT begins to exit)
Dot. We'll go to the Follies tonight.
(SHE stops, looks at him, then walks off.
GEORGE walks to the NURSE and OLD LADY)
Bon jour.

NURSE
Bon jour, Monsieur.

GEORGE
Lovely morning, Ladies.

NURSE
Yes.

GEORGE
I have my pad and crayons today.

NURSE
Oh, that would —

Not today!

OLD LADY

GEORGE
(Disappointed)

Why not today?

OLD LADY

Too warm.

GEORGE

It is warm, but it will not take long. You can go—

OLD LADY
(Continues to look out across the water)

Some other day, Monsieur.
(Beat)

GEORGE
(Kneeling)

It's George, Mother.

OLD LADY
(As if it is to be a secret)

Sssh . . .

GEORGE
(Getting up)

Yes. I guess we will all be back.
(HE exits as lights fade to black)

(GEORGE's studio. Downstage, DOT [in a likeness of Seurat's "La Poudreuse"] is at her vanity, powdering her face. Steady, unhurried, persistent rhythmic figure underneath)

DOT
(As SHE powders rhythmically)

George taught me all about concentration. "The art of being still," he said.
(Checks herself, then resumes powdering)

I guess I did not learn it soon enough.
(Dips puff in powder)

George likes to be alone.
(Resumes powdering)

Sometimes he will work all night long painting. We fought about that. I need sleep. I love to dream.
(Upstage, GEORGE on a scaffold, behind a large canvas, which is a scrim, comes into view. HE is painting. It is an in-progress version of the painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte")

George doesn't need as much sleep as everyone else.
(Dips puff, starts powdering neck)

And he never tells me his dreams. George has many secrets.
(Lights down on DOT, up on GEORGE. A number of brushes in his hand, HE is covering a section of the canvas—the face of the woman in the foreground—with tiny specks of paint, in the same rhythm as DOT's powdering)

GEORGE
(Pauses, checks)

Order.
(Dabs with another color, pauses, checks, dabs palette)

Design.
(Dabs with another brush)

Composition.
Tone.
Form.
Symmetry.
Balance.

More red . . . *(Sings)*
 And a little more red . . . *(Dabs with more intensity)*
 Blue blue blue blue *(Switches brushes)*
 Blue blue blue blue
 Even even . . . *(Switches quickly)*
 Good . . . *(Humming)*
 Bumbum bum bumbumbum
 Bumbum bum . . . *(Paints silently for a moment)*
 More red . . . *(Switches brushes again)*
 More blue . . . *(Again)*
 More beer . . . *(Takes a swig from a nearby bottle, always eyeing the canvas, puts the bottle down)*
 More light! *(HE dabs assiduously, delicately attacking the area HE is painting)*
 Color and light.
 There's only color and light.
 Yellow and white.
 Just blue and yellow and white.
(Addressing the woman HE is painting)
 Look at the air, Miss—
(Dabs at the space in front of her)
 See what I mean?
 No, look over there, Miss—
(Dabs at her eye, pauses, checks it)
 That's done with green . . . *(Swirling a brush in the orange cup)*
 Conjoined with orange . . .

(Lights down on GEORGE, up on DOT, now powdering her breasts and armpits. Rhythmic figure persists underneath)
 DOT
 Nothing seems to fit me right. *(Giggles)*
 The less I wear, the more comfortable I feel. *(Sings, checking herself)*
 More rouge . . . *(Puts puff down, gets rouge, starts applying it in small rhythmic circles, speaks)*
 George is very special. Maybe I'm just not special enough for him. *(Puts rouge down, picks up eyebrow tweezers, sings)*
 If my legs were longer. *(Plucks at her eyebrow)*
 If my bust was smaller. *(Plucks)*
 If my hands were graceful. *(Plucks)*
 If my waist was thinner. *(Checks herself)*
 If my hips were flatter. *(Plucks again)*
 If my voice was warm. *(Plucks)*
 If I could concentrate —
(Abruptly, her feet start to can-can under the table)
 I'd be in the Follies.
 I'd be in a cabaret.
 Gentlemen in tall silk hats
 And linen spats
 Would wait with flowers.
 I could make them wait for hours.
 Giddy young aristocrats
 With fancy flats

Who'd drink my health,
 And I would be as
 Hard as nails . . .
(Looks at her nails, reaches for the buffer)
 And they'd only want me more . . .
(Starts buffing nails rhythmically)
 If I was a Folly girl.
 Nah, I wouldn't like it much.
 Married men and stupid boys
 And too much smoke and all that noise
 And all that color and light . . .
*(Lights up on GEORGE, talking to the woman
 in the painting. Rhythmic figure continues
 underneath)*

GEORGE
 Aren't you proper today, Miss? Your parasol so properly
 cocked, your bustle so perfectly upright. No doubt your
 chin rests at just the proper angle from your chest.
(Addressing the figure of the man next to her)
 And you, Sir. Your hat so black. So black to you, perhaps.
 So red to me.
(The rhythmic figure drops out momentarily)

DOT
(Spraying herself with perfume)
 None of the others worked at night . . .

GEORGE
 So composed for a Sunday.

DOT
 How do you work without the right
(Sprays)
 Bright
(Sprays)
 White

(Sprays)
 Light?
(Sprays)
 How do you fathom George?
(Rhythmic figure returns underneath)

GEORGE
(Muttering, trancelike, as HE paints)
 Red red red red
 Red red orange
 Red red orange
 Orange pick up blue
 Pick up red
 Pick up orange
 From the blue-green blue-green
 Blue-green circle
 On the violet diagonal
 Di-ag-ag-ag-ag-o-nal-nal
 Yellow comma yellow comma
(Humming, massaging his numb wrist)
 Numnum num numnumnum
 Numnum num . . .
(Sniffs, smelling DOT's perfume)
 Blue blue blue blue
 Blue still sitting
 Red that perfume
 Blue all night
 Blue-green the window shut
 Dut dut dut
 Dot Dot sitting
 Dot Dot waiting
 Dot Dot getting fat fat fat
 More yellow
 Dot Dot waiting to go
 Out out out but
 No no no George
 Finish the hat finish the hat

Have to finish the hat first
Hat hat hat hat
Hot hot hot it's hot in here . . .
(*Whistles a bit, then joyfully*)

Sunday!

Color and light!

DOT
(*Pinning up her hair*)
But how George looks. He could look forever.

GEORGE
There's only color and light.

DOT
As if he sees you and he doesn't all at once.

GEORGE
Purple and white . . .

DOT
What is he thinking when he looks like that?

GEORGE
. . . And red and purple and white.

DOT
What does he see? Sometimes, not even blinking.

GEORGE
(*To the young girls in the painting*)
Look at this glade, girls,
Your cool blue spot.

DOT
His eyes. So dark and shiny.

GEORGE
No, stay in the shade, girls.
It's getting hot . . .

DOT
Some think cold and black.

GEORGE
It's getting orange . . .

DOT
(*Sings*)
But it's warm inside his eyes . . .

GEORGE
(*Dabbing more intensely*)
Hotter . . .

DOT
And it's soft inside his eyes . . .
(*GEORGE steps around the canvas to get paint
or clean a brush. HE glances at DOT. Their
eyes meet for a second, then DOT turns back to
her mirror*)
And he burns you with his eyes . . .

GEORGE
Look at her looking.

DOT
And you're studied like the light.

GEORGE
Forever with that mirror. What does she see? The
round face, the tiny pout, the soft mouth, the creamy
skin . . .

DOT
And you look inside the eyes.

GEORGE
The pink lips, the red cheeks . . .

DOT
And you catch him here and there.

GEORGE
The wide eyes. Studying the round face, the tiny
pout . . .

DOT
But he's never really there.

GEORGE
Seeing all the parts and none of the whole.

DOT
So you want him even more.

GEORGE
(Sings)
But the way she catches light . . .

DOT
And you drown inside his eyes . . .

GEORGE
And the color of her hair . . .

GEORGE	DOT
I could look at her	I could look at him
Forever . . .	Forever . . .
(A long beat. Music holds under, gradually fading)	

GEORGE
(At his work table)
It's going well . . .

DOT
Should I wear my red dress or blue?

GEORGE
Red.
(Beat)

DOT
Aren't you going to clean up?

GEORGE
Why?

DOT
The Follies, Georgel
(Beat)

GEORGE
I have to finish the hat.
(HE returns to his work. DOT slams down her
brush and stares at the back of the canvas.
SHE exits. Lights fade downstage as the rhyth-
mic figure resumes. As HE paints)
Damn. The Follies. Will she yell or stay silent? Go with-
out me or sulk in the corner? Will she be in the bed
when the hat and the grass and the parasol have finally
found their way? . . .
(Sings)

Too green . . .
Do I care? . . .
Too blue . . .
Yes . . .
Too soft . . .

What shall I do?

(Thinks for a moment)

Well . . .

Red.

(Continues painting; music swells as HE is consumed by light)

(Afternoon. Another Sunday on the island. Downstage right GEORGE sketches a BOATMAN; a cut-out of a black DOG stands close by; NURSE and OLD LADY sit near their tree. CELESTE #1 and CELESTE #2, young shopgirls, sit on a bench stage left)

BOATMAN

The water looks different on Sunday.

GEORGE

It is the same water you boat on all week.

BOATMAN

(Contentious)

It looks different from the park.

GEORGE

You prefer watching the boats to the people promenading?

BOATMAN

(Laughing)

People all dressed up in their Sunday-best pretending? Sunday is just another day.

(DOT and LOUIS enter arm in arm. THEY look out at the water)

I wear what I always wear — then I don't have to worry.

GEORGE

Worry?

BOATMAN

They leave me alone dressed like this. No one comes near.

(Music under)

CELESTE #1

Look who's over there.

CELESTE #2

Dot! Who is she with?

CELESTE #1

Looks like Louis the baker.

CELESTE #2

How did Dot get to be with Louis?

CELESTE #1

She knows how to make dough rise!
(THEY laugh)

NURSE

(Noticing DOT)

There is that woman.

OLD LADY

Who is she with?

NURSE

(Squinting)

Looks like the baker.

OLD LADY

Moving up, I suppose.

NURSE
The artist is more handsome.
(DOT and LOUIS exit)

OLD LADY
You cannot eat paintings, my dear — not when there's
bread in the oven.
(JULES, YVONNE, and their child LOUISE ap-
pear. THEY stand to one side and strike a pose.
Music continues under, slow and stately)

JULES
They say he is working on an enormous canvas.

YVONNE
I heard somewhere he's painting little specks.

JULES
You heard it from me! A large canvas of specks. Re-
ally . . .

YVONNE
Look at him. Drawing a slovenly boatman.

JULES
I think he is trying to play with light.

YVONNE
What next?

JULES
A monkey cage, they say.
(THEY laugh)

BOATMAN
Sunday hypocrites. That's what they are. Muttering
and murmuring about this one and that one. I'll take

my old dog for company any day. A dog knows his
place. Respects your privacy. Makes no demands.
(To the DOG)

Right, Spot?

SPOT (GEORGE)
Right.

CELESTE #1
(Sings)
They say that George has another woman.

CELESTE #2
(Sings)
I'm not surprised.

CELESTE #1
They say that George only lives with tramps.

CELESTE #2
I'm not surprised.

CELESTE #1
They say he prowls through the streets
In his top hat after midnight —

CELESTE #2
No!

CELESTE #1
—and stands there staring up at the lamps.

CELESTE #2
I'm not surprised.

BOTH
Artists are so crazy . . .

OLD LADY
Those girls are noisy.

NURSE
Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY
(Referring to JULES)
That man is famous.

NURSE
Yes, Madame.

OLD LADY
(Referring to BOATMAN)
That man is filthy.

NURSE
Your son seems to find him interesting.

OLD LADY
That man's deluded.
(NURSE *thinks, nods*)

THE CELESTES
Artists are so crazy.

OLD LADY *and* NURSE
Artists are so peculiar.

YVONNE
Monkeys!

BOATMAN
Overprivileged women
Complaining,
Silly little simpering

Shopgirls,
Condescending artists
"Observing,"
"Perceiving" . . .
Well, screw them!

ALL
Artists are so —

CELESTE #2
Crazy.

CELESTE #1
Secretive.

BOATMAN
High and mighty.

NURSE
Interesting.

OLD LADY
Unfeeling.

BOATMAN
What do you do with those drawings, anyway?
(DOT *and* LOUIS *re-enter*)

DOT
(To LOUIS)
That's George.
(ALL *heads turn, first to DOT, then to GEORGE*)

JULES
There's a move on to include his work in the next group
show.

Never! YVONNE

I agree. JULES

I agree. (Pause)

(THEY exit. Music stops)

He draws anyone. CELESTE #1

Old boatman! CELESTE #2

Peculiar man. CELESTE #1

Like his father, I said. CELESTE #2

I said so first. CELESTE #1

(LOUIS escorts DOT to a park bench stage left and exits. SHE sits with a small red lesson book in hand)

DOT

(Very slowly, SHE reads aloud)

"Lesson number eight. Pro-nouns."

(Proudly, SHE repeats the word, looking towards GEORGE)

Pronouns.

(SHE reads)

"What is a pronoun? A pronoun is the word used in the place of a noun. Do you recall what a noun is?"

(Looks up)

Certainly, I recall.

(SHE pauses, then quickly flips back in the book to the earlier lesson on nouns. SHE nods her head knowingly, then flips back to the present lesson. SHE reads)

"Example: Charles has a book. Marie wants Charles' book."

(To herself)

Not Marie again . . .

(Reads)

"Marie wants *his* book. Fill in the blanks. Charles ran with Marie's ball. Charles ran with . . .

(SHE writes as SHE spells aloud)

h-e-r ball."

(To herself)

Get the ball back, Marie.

(LOUISE dashes in upstage)

OLD LADY

Children should not go unattended.

NURSE

She is very young to be alone.

OLD LADY

I do not like what I see today, Nurse.

NURSE

(Confused)

What do you see?

OLD LADY

Lack of discipline.

NURSE

Oh.

OLD LADY
Not the right direction at all.

BOATMAN
Fools rowing. Call that recreation!

GEORGE
Almost finished.
(LOUISE *has come up to pet the dog.* BOATMAN
turns on her in a fury)

BOATMAN
Get away from that dog!
(ALL *eyes turn to the* BOATMAN. LOUISE
screams and goes running offstage crying)

GEORGE
That was hardly necessary!

BOATMAN
How do you know what's necessary? Who are you, with
your fancy pad and crayons? You call that work? You
smug goddam holier-than-thou shitty little men in your
fancy clothes — born with pens and pencils, not pricks!
You don't know . . .
(BOATMAN *storms off.* GEORGE, *stunned, be-*
gins to draw the dog)

CELESTE #1
(To GEORGE)
Well, what are you going to do — now that you have no
one to draw?

CELESTE #2
Sshh. Don't talk to him.

GEORGE
I am drawing his dog.

CELESTE #2
His dog!

CELESTE #1
Honestly . . .

GEORGE
I have already sketched you ladies.

CELESTE #1
What!

CELESTE #2
You have?
(The CELESTES *approach* GEORGE)

CELESTE #1
I do not believe you.

CELESTE #2
When?
(During the above, the OLD LADY and NURSE
have exited)

GEORGE
A few Sundays ago.

CELESTE #1
But we never sat for you.

GEORGE
I studied you from afar.

No! CELESTE #2

Where were you? CELESTE #1

I want to see. CELESTE #2

Some day you shall. GEORGE

When? THE CELESTES

Good day. GEORGE
(GEORGE moves upstage)

He did not so much as ask. CELESTE #1

No respect for a person's privacy. CELESTE #2

I would not sit for him anyway. CELESTE #1

Probably that's why he did not ask. CELESTE #2
(THEY exit)

Good afternoon. GEORGE
(From across the stage to DOT)

Hello. DOT
(Surprised)

Lesson number eight? GEORGE

Yes. Pronouns. My writing is improving. I even keep notes in the back of the book. DOT

Good for you. GEORGE

How is your painting coming along? DOT

Slowly. GEORGE

Are you getting more work done now that you have fewer distractions in the studio? DOT

It has been quiet there. GEORGE
(Beat; HE moves closer)
(LOUIS bounds onstage with a pastry tin)

Dot. I made your favorite — LOUIS
(HE stops when HE sees GEORGE)

Good day. GEORGE
(HE retreats across the stage. DOT watches him, then turns to LOUIS)

LOUIS
(Opens the tin)

Creampuffs!

(The bench on which THEY are sitting tracks offstage as DOT continues to look at GEORGE. GEORGE, who has been staring at his sketch of SPOT, looks over and sees THEY have left. Music. Lights change, leaving the dog onstage. GEORGE sketches the dog)

GEORGE
(Sings)

If the head was smaller.
If the tail were longer.
If he faced the water.
If the paws were hidden.
If the neck was darker.
If the back was curved.
More like the parasol.

Bumbum bum bumbumbum
Bumbum bum . . .

More shade.
More tail.

More grass . . .
Would you like some more grass?
Mmmm . . .

SPOT (GEORGE)
(Barks)

Ruff! Ruff!
Thanks, the week has been
(Barks)

Rough!
When you're stuck for life on a garbage scow —

(Sniffs around)
Only forty feet long from stern to prow,
And a crackpot in the bow — wow, rough!
(Sniffs)

The planks are rough
And the wind is rough
And the master's drunk and mean and —
(Sniffs)

Grrrruff! Gruff!
With the fish and scum
And planks and ballast —
(Sniffs)

The nose gets numb
And the paws get calloused.
And with splinters in your ass,
You look forward to the grass
On Sunday.
The day off.

(Barks)

Off! Off! Off!
Off!

The grass needs to be thicker. Perhaps a few weeds.
With some ants, if you would. I love fresh ants.

Roaming around on Sunday,
Poking among the roots and rocks.
Nose to the ground on Sunday,
Studying all the shoes and socks.
Everything's worth it Sunday,
The day off.

(Sniffs)

Bits of pastry.
(Sniffs)

Piece of chicken.
(Sniffs)

Here's a handkerchief
That somebody was sick in.
(*Sniffs*)

There's a thistle.
(*Sniffs*)

That's a shallot.
(*Sniffs*)

That's a dripping
From the loony with the palette.
(*A cut-out of a pug dog, FIFI, appears*)

FIFI (GEORGE)
Yap! Yap!
(*Pants*)

Yap!

Out for the day on Sunday,
Off of my lady's lap at last.
Yapping away on Sunday
Helps you forget the week just past —
(*Yelps*)

Yep! Yep!
Everything's worth it Sunday,
The day off.
Yep!
Stuck all week on a lady's lap,
Nothing to do but yawn and nap,
Can you blame me if I yap?

SPOT
Nope.

FIFI
There's just so much attention a dog can take.

Being alone on Sunday,
Rolling around in mud and dirt —

SPOT
Begging a bone on Sunday,
Settling for a spoiled dessert —

FIFI
Everything's worth it

SPOT
Sunday —

FIFI
The day off.

SPOT
(*Sniffs*)
Something fuzzy.

FIFI
(*Sniffs*)
Something furry.

SPOT
(*Sniffs*)
Something pink
That someone tore off in a hurry.

FIFI
What's the muddle
In the middle?

SPOT
That's the puddle
Where the poodle did the piddle.
(*HORN PLAYER rises from the stage. Two horn calls. Music continues under. Enter FRANZ; FRIEDA, his wife; the CELESTES, with fishing poles; and NURSE*)

GEORGE

Taking the day on Sunday,
Now that the dreary week is dead.
Getting away on Sunday
Brightens the dreary week ahead.
Everyone's on display on Sunday —

ALL

The day off!
(GEORGE *flips open a page of his sketchbook and starts to sketch the NURSE as SHE clucks at the ducks*)

GEORGE

Bonnet flapping,
Bustle sliding,
Like a rocking horse that nobody's been riding.
There's a daisy —
And some clover —
And that interesting fellow looking over . . .

OLD LADY
(*Offstage*)

Nurse!

NURSE and GEORGE

One day is much like any other,
Listening to her snap and drone.

NURSE

Still, Sunday with someone's dotty mother
Is better than Sunday with your own.
Mothers may drone, mothers may whine —
Tending to his, though, is perfectly fine.
It pays for the nurse that is tending to mine
On Sunday,
My day off.
(*The CELESTES, fishing. Music continues under*)

CELESTE #2

This is just ridiculous.

CELESTE #1

Why shouldn't we fish.

CELESTE #2

No one will notice us anyway.
(*SOLDIER enters, attached to a life-size cut-out of another soldier, his COMPANION*)

CELESTE #1

Look.

CELESTE #2

Where?

CELESTE #1

Soldiers.

CELESTE #2

Alone.

CELESTE #1

What did I tell you?

CELESTE #2

They'll never talk to us if we fish. Why don't we —

CELESTE #1

It's a beautiful day for fishing.
(*SHE smiles in the direction of the SOLDIERS*)

SOLDIER

(*Looking to his COMPANION*)
What do you think?

(*Beat*)

I like the one in the light hat.
(LOUISE enters, notices FRIEDA and FRANZ,
and dashes over to them)

Frieda, Frieda — LOUISE

Oh, no. FRANZ

FRIEDA
(Speaks with a German accent)
Not now, Louise.

I want to play. LOUISE

Go away, Louise. We are not working today. FRANZ

Let's go throw stones at the ducks. LOUISE

Louise! Do not throw stones at the ducks! FRIEDA

Why not? LOUISE

You know why not, and you know this is our day off, so
go find your mother and throw some stones at her, why
don't you. FRANZ
(HE begins to choke LOUISE; FRIEDA releases his grip)

Franz! FRIEDA

I'm telling. LOUISE

Good. Go! FRANZ
(LOUISE exits)

Franzel — relax. FRIEDA

Ja . . . relax. FRANZ
(He opens a bottle of wine. GEORGE flips a
page and starts to sketch FRANZ and FRIEDA)

GEORGE and FRIEDA
Second bottle . . .

GEORGE and FRANZ
(As FRANZ looks off at NURSE)
Ah, she looks for me . . .

He is bursting to go . . . FRIEDA

Near the fountain . . . FRANZ

I could let him . . . FRIEDA

How to manage it — ? FRANZ

No. FRIEDA

You know, Franz — I believe that artist is drawing us.

Who? FRANZ

Monsieur's friend. FRIEDA

FRANZ
(Sees GEORGE. THEY pose)
Monsieur would never think to draw us! We are only
people he looks down upon.
(Pause)
I should have been an artist. I was never intended for
work.

FRIEDA
Artists work, Franz. I believe they work very hard.

FRANZ
Work! . . . We work.
(Sings)
We serve their food,
We carve their meat,
We tend to their house,
We polish their
Silverware.

FRIEDA
The food we serve
We also eat.

FRANZ
For them we rush,
Wash and brush,
Wipe and wax—

FRIEDA
Franz, relax.

FRANZ
While he "creates,"
We scrape their plates
And dust their knickknacks,
Hundreds to the shelf.
Work is what you do for others,
Liebchen,
Art is what you do for yourself.

(JULES enters, as if looking for someone. No-
tices GEORGE instead)

JULES
Working on Sunday again? You should give yourself a
day off.

GEORGE
Why?

JULES
You must need time to replenish—or does your well
never run dry?
(Laughs; notices FRIEDA and FRANZ)
Drawing my servants? Certainly, George, you could
find more colorful subjects.

GEORGE
Who should I be sketching?

JULES
How about that pretty friend of yours. Now why did I
see her arm-in-arm with the baker today?
(GEORGE looks up)
She is a pretty subject.

GEORGE
Yes . . .
(BOATMAN enters)

JULES

Your life needs spice, George. Go to some parties. That is where you'll meet prospective buyers. Have some fun. The work is bound to reflect—

GEORGE

You don't like my work, do you?

JULES

I did once.

GEORGE

You find it too tight.

JULES

People are talking about your work. You have your admirers, but you—

GEORGE

I am using a different brushstroke.

JULES

(Getting angry)

Always changing! Why keep changing?

GEORGE

Because I do not paint for your approval.

(Beat)

JULES

And I suppose that is why I like you.

(Begins to walk away)

Good to see you, George.

(JULES crosses as if to exit)

GEORGE

(Calling after him)

Jules! I would like you to come to the studio some time. See the new work . . .

JULES

For my approval?

GEORGE

No! For your opinion.

JULES

(Considers the offer)

Very well.

(HE exits. GEORGE flips a page over and starts sketching the BOATMAN)

GEORGE and BOATMAN

You and me, pal,

We're the loonies.

Did you know that?

Bet you didn't know that.

BOATMAN

'Cause we tell them the truth.

Who you drawing?

Who the hell you think you're drawing?

Me?

You don't know me!

Go on drawing,

Since you're drawing only what you want to see,

Anyway!

(Points to his eyepatch)

One eye, no illusion—

That you get with two:

(Points to GEORGE's eye)

One for what is true.
(*Points to the other*)

One for what suits you.
Draw your wrong conclusion,
All you artists do.
I see what is true . . .

(*Music continues under*)
Sitting there, looking everyone up and down. Studying
every move like *you* see something different, like your
eyes know more —

You and me, pal,
We're society's fault.
(*YVONNE, LOUISE, OLD LADY enter. GEORGE
picks up his belongings*)

ALL
Taking the day on Sunday
After another week is dead.

OLD LADY
Nurse!

ALL
Getting away on Sunday
Brightens the dreary week ahead.

OLD LADY
Nurse!
(*GEORGE begins to exit, crossing paths with
DOT and LOUIS, who enter. HE gives DOT a
hasty tip-of-the-hat and makes a speedy exit*)

ALL
Leaving the city pressure
Behind you,
Off where the air is fresher,

Where green, blue,
Blind you —
(*LOUIS leaves DOT to offer some pastries to his
friends in the park. Throughout the song, HE
divides his time between DOT and the others*)

DOT
(*Looking offstage in the direction of GEORGE's exit*)
Hello, George . . .
Where did you go, George?
I know you're near, George.
I caught your eyes, George.
I want your ear, George.
I've a surprise, George . . .

Everybody loves Louis,
Louis' simple and kind.
Everybody loves Louis,
Louis' lovable.

FRANZ
Louis!

DOT
Seems we never know, do we,
Who we're going to find?
(*Tenderly*)
And Louis the baker is not what I had in mind.
But . . .
Louis' really an artist:
Louis' cakes are an art.
Louis isn't the smartest —
Louis' popular.
Everybody loves Louis:
Louis bakes from the heart . . .

The bread, George.
I mean the bread, George.
And then in bed, George . . .
I mean he kneads me —
I mean like dough, George . . .
Hello, George . . .

Louis' always so pleasant,
Louis' always so fair.
Louis makes you feel present,
Louis' generous.
That's the thing about Louis:
Louis always is "there."
Louis' thoughts are not hard to follow,
Louis' art is not hard to swallow.

Not that Louis' perfection —
That's what makes him ideal.
Hardly anything worth objection:
Louis drinks a bit,
Louis blinks a bit.
Louis makes a connection,
That's the thing that you feel . . .

We lose things.
And then we choose things.
And there are Louis's
And there are Georges —
Well, Louis's
And George.

But George has George
And I need —
Someone —
Louis —!
(LOUIS gives her a pastry and exits)

Everybody loves Louis,
Him as well as his cakes.
Everybody loves Louis,
Me included, George.
Not afraid to be gooey,
Louis sells what he makes.
Everybody gets along with him.
That's the trouble, nothing's wrong with him.

Louis has to bake his way,
George can only bake his . . .
(Licks a pastry)

Louis it is!
(SHE throws pastry away and exits. Enter an
American Southern couple, MR. and MRS., fol-
lowed by GEORGE who sketches them. THEY
are overdressed, eating French pastries and
studying the people in the park)

MR.
Paris looks nothin' like the paintings.

MRS.
I know.

MR.
(Looking about)
I don't see any passion, do you?

MRS.
None.

MR.
The French are so placid.

MRS.
I don't think they have much style, either.

MR.
What's all the carryin' on back home? Delicious pastries, though.

MRS.
Excellent.

MR.
Lookin' at those boats over there makes me think of our return voyage.

MRS.
I long to be back home.

MR.
You do?

MRS.
How soon could we leave?

MR.
You're that anxious to leave? But, Peaches, we just arrived!

MRS.
I know!

MR.
(Gives it a moment's thought)
I don't like it here either! We'll go right back to the hotel and I'll book passage for the end of the week. We'll go to the galleries this afternoon and then we'll be on our way home!

MRS.
I am so relieved.
(As THEY exit)
I will miss these pastries, though.

MR.
We'll take a baker with us, too.

MRS.
Wonderfull
(THEY exit)

CELESTE #1
You really should try using that pole.

CELESTE #2
It won't make any difference.

CELESTE #1
(Starts yelping as if SHE had caught a fish)
Oh! Oh!

CELESTE #2
What is wrong?

CELESTE #1
Just sit there.
(SHE carries on some more, looking in the direction of the SOLDIER and his COMPANION, who converse for a moment, then come over)

SOLDIER
May we be of some service, Madame?

CELESTE #1
Mademoiselle.

CELESTE #2
She has a fish.

CELESTE #1
He knows.

SOLDIER

Allow me.

(SOLDIER takes the pole from her and pulls in the line and hook. There is nothing on the end)

CELESTE #1

Oh. It tugged so . . .

SOLDIER

There's no sign of a fish here.

CELESTE #1

Oh me. My name is Celeste. This is my friend.

CELESTE #2

Celeste.

(SOLDIER fools with fishing pole)

CELESTE #1

Do you have a name?

SOLDIER

I beg your pardon. Napoleon. Some people feel I should change it.

(The CELESTES shake their heads no)

CELESTE #2

And your friend?

SOLDIER

Yes. He is my friend.

CELESTE #1

(Giggling, to SOLDIER)

He's very quiet.

SOLDIER

Yes. Actually he is. He lost his hearing during combat exercises.

CELESTE #1

What a shame.

SOLDIER

He can't speak, either.

CELESTE #2

Oh. How dreadful.

SOLDIER

We have become very close, though.

CELESTE #1

(Nervous)

So I see.

(Music)

SOLDIER and GEORGE

(Sudden and loud)

Mademoiselles,

I and my friend,

We are but soldiers!

(Rumble from his COMPANION: SOLDIER raises hand to quiet him)

SOLDIER

Passing the time

In between wars

For weeks at an end.

CELESTE #1

(Aside)

Both of them are perfect.

CELESTE #2
You can have the other.

CELESTE #1
I don't want the other.

CELESTE #2
I don't want the other either.

SOLDIER
And after a week
Spent mostly indoors
With nothing but soldiers,
Ladies, I and my friend
Trust we will not offend,
Which we'd never intend,
By suggesting we spend —

THE CELESTES
(Excited)
Oh, spend —

SOLDIER
— this magnificent Sunday —

THE CELESTES
(A bit deflated)
Oh, Sunday —

SOLDIER
— with you and your friend.
(SOLDIER offers his arm. Both CELESTES rush to take it; CELESTE #1 gets there first. CELESTE #2 tries to get in between the SOLDIERS, can't, and rather than join the COMPANION, takes the arm of CELESTE #1. THEY all start to promenade)

CELESTE #2
(To CELESTE #1)
The one on the right's an awful bore . . .

CELESTE #1
He's been in a war.

SOLDIER
(To COMPANION)
We may get a meal and we might get more . . .
(CELESTE #1 shakes free of CELESTE #2, grabs the arm of the SOLDIER, freeing him from his COMPANION)

CELESTE #1 and SOLDIER
(To themselves, as THEY exit)
It's certainly fine for Sunday . . .
It's certainly fine for Sunday . . .
(Dejected, CELESTE #2 grabs the COMPANION)

CELESTE #2
(As SHE exits, carrying COMPANION)
It's certainly fine for Sunday . . .
(GEORGE is alone. HE moves downstage as FIFI rises. HE sits)

GEORGE
(Leafing back through his sketches. Sings)
Mademoiselles . . .
(Flips a page)

You and me, pal . . .
(Flips)

Second bottle . . .
Ah, she looks for me . . .
(Flips)

Bonnet flapping . . .
(Flips)

Yapping . . .

(Flips)

Ruffl . . .

Chicken . . .

Pastry . . .

(Licks lip; looks offstage to where DOT has exited)

Yes, she looks for me — good.

Let her look for me to tell me why she left me —

As I always knew she would.

I had thought she understood.

They have never understood,

And no reason that they should.

But if anybody could . . .

Finishing the hat,

How you have to finish the hat.

How you watch the rest of the world

From a window

While you finish the hat.

Mapping out a sky,

What you feel like, planning a sky,

What you feel when voices that come

Through the window

Go

Until they distance and die,

Until there's nothing but sky.

And how you're always turning back too late

From the grass or the stick

Or the dog or the light,

How the kind of woman willing to wait's

Not the kind that you want to find waiting

To return you to the night,

Dizzy from the height,

Coming from the hat,

Studying the hat,

Entering the world of the hat,

Reaching through the world of the hat

Like a window,

Back to this one from that.

Studying a face,

Stepping back to look at a face

Leaves a little space in the way like a window,

But to see —

It's the only way to see.

And when the woman that you wanted goes,

You can say to yourself, "Well, I give what I give."

But the woman who won't wait for you knows

That, however you live,

There's a part of you always standing by,

Mapping out the sky,

Finishing a hat . . .

Starting on a hat . . .

Finishing a hat . . .

(Showing sketch to FIFI)

Look, I made a hat . . .

Where there never was a hat . . .

(MR. and MRS. enter stage right. THEY are lost.

The BOATMAN crosses near them and THEY
stop him in his path)

MR.

Excusez, Masseur. We are lost.

BOATMAN

Huh?

MRS.

Let me try, Daddy.

(Slowly and wildly gesticulating with her every word)

We are alien here. Unable to find passage off island.

BOATMAN

(Pointing to the water)

Why don't you just walk into the water until your lungs fill up and you die.

(BOATMAN crosses away from them, laughing)

MRS.

I detest these people.

MR.

(Spotting LOUIS, who has entered in search of DOT)
Isn't that the baker?

MRS.

Why, yes it is!

(THEY cross to LOUIS. GEORGE brings on the HORN PLAYER cut-out. OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY

Where is that tree? Nurse? NURSE!

(Horn call. DOT enters, and suddenly SHE and GEORGE are still, staring at one another. EVERYONE onstage turns slowly to them. PEOPLE begin to sing fragments of songs. DOT and GEORGE move closer to one another, circling each other like gun duellers. The others close in around them until DOT and GEORGE stop, opposite each other. Silence. DOT takes her bustle and defiantly turns it around, creating a pregnant stance. There is an audible gasp from the onlookers. Blackout)

(Music. Lights slowly come up on GEORGE in his studio, painting. DOT enters and joins GEORGE behind the painting. HE continues painting as SHE watches. HE stops for a mo-

ment when HE sees her, then continues working)

DOT

You are almost finished.

GEORGE

If I do not change my mind again. And you?

DOT

Two more months.

GEORGE

You cannot change your mind.

DOT

Nor do I want to.

(Beat)

Is it going to be exhibited?

GEORGE

I am not sure. Jules is coming over to look at it. Any minute, in fact.

DOT

Oh, I hope you don't mind my coming.

GEORGE

What is it that you want, Dot?

DOT

George. I would like my painting.

GEORGE

Your painting?

DOT
The one of me powdering.

GEORGE
I did not know that it was yours.

DOT
You said once that I could have it.

GEORGE
In my sleep?

DOT
I want something to remember you by.

GEORGE
You don't have enough now?

DOT
I want the painting, too.
(GEORGE stops painting)

GEORGE
I understand you and Louis are getting married.

DOT
Yes.

GEORGE
He must love you very much to take you in that condition.

DOT
He does.

GEORGE
I didn't think you would go through with it. I did not think that was what you really wanted.

DOT
I don't think I can have what I really want. Louis is what I think I need.

GEORGE
Yes. Louis will take you to the Follies! Correct?

DOT
George, I didn't come here to argue.
(JULES and YVONNE enter)

JULES
George?

GEORGE
Back here, Jules.

DOT
I will go.

GEORGE
Don't leave! It will only be a minute —

JULES
(Crossing behind canvas to GEORGE)
There you are. I brought Yvonne along.

YVONNE
May I take a peek?

DOT
I will wait in the other room.

YVONNE
(Sees DOT)

I hope we are not interrupting you.

(SHE and JULES step back and study the painting. GEORGE looks at DOT as SHE exits to the front room)

JULES
It is so large. How can you get any perspective? And this light . . .

(GEORGE pulls a lantern close to the canvas)

GEORGE
Stand here.

YVONNE
Extraordinary! Excuse me.
(YVONNE exits into the other room. DOT is sitting at her vanity, which is now cleared of her belongings. YVONNE and DOT look at each other for a moment)

Talk of painting bores me. It is hard to escape it when you are with an artist.

(Beat)
I do not know how you can walk up all those steps in your condition. I remember when I had Louise. I could never be on my feet for long periods of time. Certainly could never navigate steps.

DOT
Did someone carry you around?

YVONNE
Why are you so cool to me?

DOT
Maybe I don't like you.

YVONNE
Whatever have I done to make you feel that way?

DOT
"Whatever have I done . . . ?" Maybe it is the way you speak. What are you really doing here?

YVONNE
You know why we are here. So Jules can look at George's work.

DOT
I do not understand why George invites you. He knows you do not like his painting.

YVONNE
That is not entirely true. Jules has great respect for George. And he has encouraged him since they were in school.

DOT
That is not what I hear. Jules is jealous of George now.

YVONNE
(Beat)
Well . . . jealousy is a form of flattery, is it not? I have been jealous of you on occasion.
(DOT looks surprised)
When I have seen George drawing you in the park. Jules has rarely sketched me.

DOT
You are his wife.

YVONNE
(Uncomfortable)
Too flat. Too angular.

DOT
Modeling is hard work. You wouldn't like it anyway.

YVONNE
It is worth it, don't you think?

DOT
Sometimes . . .

YVONNE
Has your life changed much now that you are with the baker?

DOT
I suppose. He enjoys caring for me.

YVONNE
You are very lucky. Oh, I suppose Jules cares—but there are times when he just does not know Louise and I are there. George always seems so oblivious to everyone.

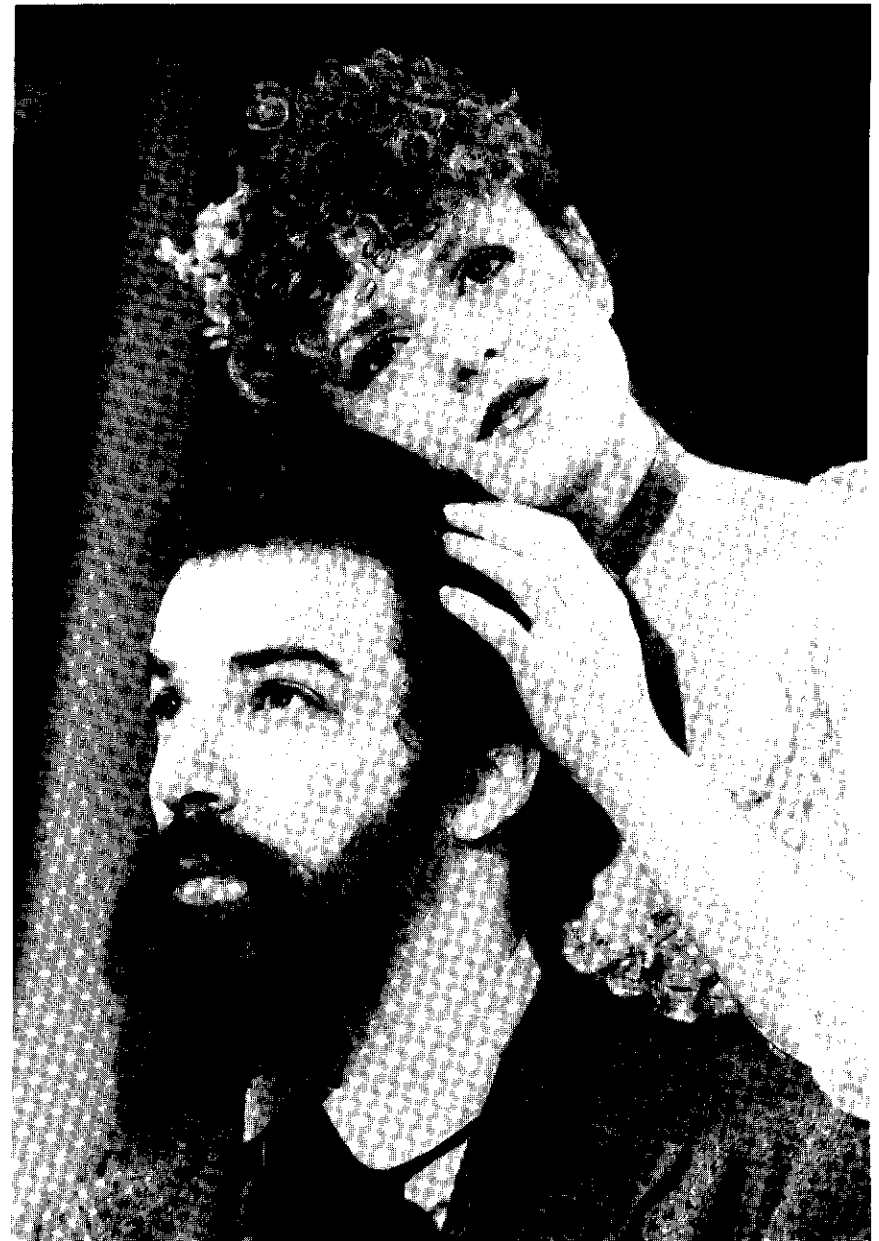
(Lowers her voice)
Jules says that is what is wrong with his painting. Too obsessive. You have to have a life! Don't you agree?
(DOT nods)

JULES
George . . . I do not know what to say. What is this?

GEORGE
What is the dominant color? The flower on the hat?

JULES
Is this a school exam, George?

GEORGE
What is that color?



George and Dot



Frieda and Franz; the Celestes, Nurse, Soldier with Companion, Jules



Mr. and Mrs., an American southern couple

JULES
(*Bored*)

Violet.

(*GEORGE takes him by the hand and moves him closer to the canvas*)

GEORGE

See? Red and blue. Your eye made the violet.

JULES

So?

GEORGE

So, your eye is perceiving both red and blue *and* violet. Only eleven colors — no black — divided, not mixed on the palette, mixed by the eye. Can't you see the shimmering?

JULES

George . . .

GEORGE

Science, Jules. Fixed laws for color, like music.

JULES

You are a painter, not a scientist! You cannot even see these faces!

GEORGE

I am not painting faces! I am —

JULES

Georgel I have touted your work in the past, and now you are embarrassing me! People are talking —

GEORGE

Why should I paint like you or anybody else? I am

trying to get through to something new. Something that is my own.

JULES
And I am trying to understand.

GEORGE
And I want you to understand. Look at the canvas, Jules. Really look at it.

JULES
George! Let us get to the point. You have invited me here because you want me to try to get this included in the next group show.

GEORGE
(Beat—embarrassed)
It will be finished soon. I want it to be seen.
(YVONNE, who has been eavesdropping at the studio door, leans into the room)

YVONNE
Jules, I am sorry to interrupt, but we really must be going. You know we have an engagement.

JULES
Yes.

YVONNE
Thank you, George.

JULES
Yes. Thank you.

GEORGE
Yes. Thank you for coming.

JULES
I will give the matter some thought.
(THEY exit. GEORGE stands motionless for a moment staring at the canvas, then dives into his work, painting the girls)

GEORGE
He does not like you. He does not understand or appreciate you. He can only see you as everyone else does. Afraid to take you apart and put you back together again for himself. But we will not let anyone deter us, will we?

(Hums)
Bumbum bum bumbumbum bumbum—

DOT
(Calling to him)
George!
(GEORGE, embarrassed, crosses in front of the canvas. HE begins to speak. DOT tries to interrupt him)

GEORGE
Excuse me—speaking
with Jules about the painting—well, I just picked up my brushes—I do not believe he even looked at the painting, though—

DOT
You asked me to stay, George, and then you forget that I am even here. George!

DOT
I have something to tell you.

GEORGE
Yes. Now, about “your” painting—

DOT
I may be going away.

(Beat)
To America.

GEORGE
Alone.

DOT
Of course not! With Louis. He has work.

GEORGE
When?

DOT
After the baby arrives.

GEORGE
You will not like it there.

DOT
How do you know?

GEORGE
(Getting angry)
I have read about America. Why are you telling me this? First, you ask for a painting that is *not* yours—then you tell me this.

(Beginning to return to the studio)
I have work to do.
(Chord; music continues under)

DOT
Yes, George, run to your work. Hide behind your painting. I have come to tell you I am leaving because I thought you might *care* to know—foolish of me, because you care about nothing—

GEORGE
I care about many things—

DOT
Things—not people.

GEORGE
People, too. I cannot divide my feelings up as neatly as you, and I am not hiding behind my canvas—I am living in it.

DOT
(Sings)
What you care for is yourself.

GEORGE
I care about this painting. *You* will be in this painting.

DOT
I am something you can use.

GEORGE
(Sings)
I had thought you understood.

DOT
It's because I understand that I left,
That I am leaving.

GEORGE
Then there's nothing I can say,
Is there?

DOT
Yes, George, there is!
You could tell me not to go.
Say it to me,

Tell me not to go.
Tell me that you're hurt,
Tell me you're relieved,
Tell me that you're bored —
Anything, but don't assume I know.
Tell me what you feel!

GEORGE

What I feel?
You know exactly how I feel.
Why do you insist
You must hear the words,
When you know I cannot give you words?
Not the ones you need.

There's nothing to say.
I cannot be what you want.

DOT

What do *you* want, George?

GEORGE

I needed you and you left.

DOT

There was no room for me —

GEORGE

(Overriding her)

You will not accept who I am.
I am what I do —
Which you knew,
Which you always knew,
Which I thought you were a part of!
(HE goes behind the canvas)

DOT

No,
You are complete, George,
You are your own.
We do not belong together.
You are complete, George,
You all alone.
I am unfinished,
I am diminished
With or without you.

We do not belong together,
And we should have belonged together.
What made it so right together
Is what made it all wrong.

No one is you, George,
There we agree,
But others will do, George.
No one is you and
No one can be,
But no one is me, George,
No one is me.
We do not belong together.
And we'll never belong —!

You have a mission,
A mission to see.
Now I have one too, George.
And we should have belonged together.

I have to move on.

(DOT leaves. GEORGE stops painting and comes from around the canvas. HE is left standing alone onstage. The lights fade)

(The set changes back to the park scene around him. When the change is complete, HE moves downstage right with the OLD LADY, and begins to draw her. THEY are alone, except for the cut-out of the COMPANION, which stands towards the rear of the stage. There is a change of tone in both GEORGE and the OLD LADY. SHE has assumed a kind of loving attitude, soft and dreamlike. GEORGE is rather sullen in her presence)

OLD LADY

(Staring across the water)

I remember when you were a little boy. You would rise up early on a Sunday morning and go for a swim . . .

GEORGE

I do not know how to swim.

OLD LADY

The boys would come by the house to get you . . .

GEORGE

I have always been petrified of the water.

OLD LADY

And your father would walk you all to the banks of the Seine . . .

GEORGE

Father was never faithful to us.

OLD LADY

And he would give you boys careful instruction, telling you just how far to swim out . . .

GEORGE

And he certainly never instructed.

OLD LADY

And now, look across there—in the distance—all those beautiful trees cut down for a foolish tower.

(Music under)

GEORGE

I do not think there were ever trees there.

OLD LADY

How I loved the view from here . . .

(Sings)

Changing . . .

GEORGE

I am quite certain that was an open field . . .

OLD LADY

It keeps changing.

GEORGE

I used to play there as a child.

OLD LADY

I see towers
Where there were trees.
Going,
All the stillness,
The solitude,
Georgie.

Sundays,
Disappearing
All the time,
When things were beautiful . . .

GEORGE

All things are beautiful,
Mother.
All trees, all towers,
Beautiful.
That tower —
Beautiful, Mother,
See?

(Gestures)

A perfect tree.

Pretty isn't beautiful, Mother,
Pretty is what changes.
What the eye arranges
Is what is beautiful.

OLD LADY

Fading . . .

GEORGE

I'm changing.
You're changing.

OLD LADY

It keeps fading . . .

GEORGE

I'll draw us now before we fade, Mother.

OLD LADY

It keeps melting
Before our eyes.

GEORGE

You watch
While I revise the world.

OLD LADY

Changing,
As we sit here —
Quick, draw it all,
Georgie!

OLD LADY and GEORGE

Sundays —

OLD LADY

Disappearing,
As we look —

GEORGE

Look! . . . Look! . . .

OLD LADY

(Not listening, fondly)

You make it beautiful.

(Music continues)

Oh, Georgie, how I long for the old view.

*(Music out. The SOLDIER and CELESTE #2
enter arm-in-arm and promenade)*

SOLDIER

(Noticing his COMPANION)

I am glad to be free of him.

CELESTE #2

Friends can be confining.

SOLDIER

He never understood my moods.

CELESTE #2

She only thought of herself.

(MR. and MRS. enter. HE is carrying a big

steamer trunk. SHE is carrying a number of famous paintings, framed, under her arm. THEY are followed by DOT, who is carrying her BABY bundled in white, and LOUISE)

SOLDIER
It felt as if I had this
burden at my side.

CELESTE #2
She never really cared
about me.

SOLDIER
We had very different
tastes.

CELESTE #2
She had no taste.

SOLDIER
She did seem rather
pushy.

CELESTE #2
Very! And he was so
odd.

SOLDIER
(Angry)
HE IS NOT ODD!

CELESTE #2
No. No, I didn't really mean odd . . .
(THEY exit. LOUISE runs onstage. BOATMAN
rushes after her)

MR.
This damned island
again! I do not
understand why we are
not goin' straight to our
boat.

MRS.
They wanted to come
here first.

MR.
That much I figured
out—but why? Didn't
you ask them?

MRS.
I don't know.

(MR. and MRS. are
stopped by the
SOLDIER's line, "He is
not odd.")

BOATMAN
(Mutters as HE chases after LOUISE)
. . . you better not let me get my hands on you.
(HE chases her offstage)

MR.
Are we ever going to get home?!
(MR. and MRS. exit. DOT crosses downstage to
GEORGE)

GEORGE
(Not looking up)
You are blocking my light.

DOT
Marie and I came to watch.

GEORGE
(Turning towards DOT)
Marie . . .
(Back to his sketch pad)
You know I do not like anyone staring over my shoul-
der.

DOT
Yes, I know.
(SHE moves to another position)
George, we are about to leave for America. I have come
to ask for the painting of me powdering again. I would
like to take it with me.

GEORGE
(HE stops for a moment)
Oh? I have repainted it.
(HE draws)

What. DOT

Another model. GEORGE

You knew I wanted it. DOT

Perhaps if you had remained still — GEORGE

Perhaps if you would look up from your pad! What is DOT
wrong with you, George? Can you not even look at your
own child?

She is not my child. Louis is her father. GEORGE

Louis is not her father. DOT

Louis is her father now. Louis will be a loving and GEORGE
attentive father. I cannot because I cannot look up from
my pad.

*(SHE stands speechless for a moment, then be-
gins to walk away; GEORGE turns to her)*

Dot. *(SHE stops)*

I am sorry.
(DOT and LOUIS exit. GEORGE drawing OLD LADY)

I worry about you, George. OLD LADY

GEORGE
Could you turn slightly toward me, please.
(SHE does so)

OLD LADY
No future in dreaming.

GEORGE
Drop the head a little, please.
*(SHE does so. CELESTE #1 enters and goes to
the COMPANION)*

OLD LADY
I worry about you and that woman, too.

GEORGE
I have another woman in my life now.

OLD LADY
They are all the same woman.

GEORGE
(Chuckles)
Variations on a theme.

OLD LADY
Ah, you always drifted as a child.

GEORGE
(Muttering)
Shadows are too heavy.

OLD LADY
You were always in some other place — seeing some-
thing no one else could see.

Softer light.
GEORGE
(Lights dim slowly)

OLD LADY
We tried to get through to you, George. Really we did.
*(GEORGE stops drawing. HE looks at her.
Looks at the page)*

GEORGE
(Laments)
Connect, George.
(Trails off)
Connect . . .
(FRIEDA and JULES enter. THEY seem to be hiding)

FRIEDA
Are you certain you wish to do this?

JULES
(Uncertain)
Of course. We just have to find a quiet spot. I've wanted to do it outside for a long time.

FRIEDA
Franz would kill you—

JULES
(Panics)
Is he in the park?

FRIEDA
I am not certain.

JULES
Oh. Well. Perhaps some other day would be better.

FRIEDA
Some other day? Always some other day. Perhaps you do not really wish to—

JULES
(Subservient)
I do. I do! I love tall grass.

FRIEDA
Ja. Tall grass. You wouldn't toy with my affections, would you?

JULES
No. No. Of course not.

FRIEDA
I see a quiet spot over there.

JULES
(Pointing where SHE did, nervous)
Over there. There are people in that grove—
(FRIEDA places his hand on her breast. THEY are interrupted by the entrance of CELESTE #2 and the SOLDIER. FRIEDA, then JULES, exits; as HE leaves)
Bon jour.

SOLDIER
Do you suppose there is a violation being perpetrated by that man?

CELESTE #2
What?

SOLDIER
There is something in the air today . . .

CELESTE #1
(To the COMPANION)
Being alone is nothing new for me.

SOLDIER
(Noticing CELESTE #1)
Look who is watching us.

CELESTE #1
Sundays are such a bore. I'd almost rather be in the shop. Do you like your work? I hate mine!

CELESTE #2
I do not care if she never speaks to me again.

SOLDIER
She won't.
(Chord. FRANZ and the NURSE enter as if to rendezvous)

YVONNE
(Entering)
FRANZ!
(NURSE exits. YVONNE goes to FRANZ)
Franz, have you seen Louise?

FRANZ
(Angry)
Nein, Madame.

YVONNE
I thought Frieda was going to care for her today.

FRANZ
But it's Sunday.

YVONNE
What of it?

FRANZ
Our day off!

YVONNE
Oh. But I have just lost my little girl!
(FRANZ shrugs his shoulders and begins looking for LOUISE)

SOLDIER
Let's go say hello to Celeste.

YVONNE
(Calling)
Louise?

CELESTE #2
(Indignant)
I do not wish to speak with her!

SOLDIER
Come. It will be fun!
(SOLDIER takes CELESTE #2 toward CELESTE #1. LOUISE comes running in breathless)

YVONNE
Louise! Where have you been, young lady?!

LOUISE
With Frieda.

YVONNE
(To FRANZ)
There, you see.

Frieda? FRANZ

And with Father. LOUISE

Your father is in the studio. YVONNE

No, he's not. He's with Frieda. I saw them. LOUISE

Where? FRANZ

Over there. Tonguing. LOUISE
(FRANZ exits. Music under, agitated)

Manners. Grace. Respect. OLD LADY

How dare you, young lady! YVONNE
(Beginning to spank LOUISE)

It's true. It's true! LOUISE (SOLDIER and CELESTE #2 reach CELESTE #1)

(JULES enters, somewhat sheepishly) CELESTE #1
What do you want?

Where the hell have you been? What are you doing here? YVONNE
We've come for a visit. SOLDIER

I don't want to say hello CELESTE #1

to her. Cheap Christmas wrapping.

Darling, I came out here looking for Louise. JULES

You came to tongue. LOUISE
(Crying)

Cheap! Look who is talking. You have the worst reputation of anyone in Paris. CELESTE #2

At least I have a reputation. You could not draw a fly to flypaper! CELESTE #1

(BOATMAN enters and begins chasing LOUISE around the stage. MR. and MRS. enter and are caught up in the frenzy. All hell breaks loose, EVERYONE speaking at once, the stage erupting into total chaos)

How dare you, Jules! YVONNE
(SHE goes to him and begins striking him)

Ladies, you mustn't fight. SOLDIER

I seem to be doing just fine. CELESTE #2

Nothing, I swear. JULES

Hah. With a diseased soldier! CELESTE #1

Nothing. Look. YVONNE
(FRANZ drags in FRIEDA)
Have you been with my husband?

Wait just a minute. SOLDIER

FRIEDA
Madame, he gave me no
choice.

FRANZ
What do you mean he
gave you no choice?

JULES
*(Letting go of LOUISE,
who drifts off to the side)*
That is not so. Your wife
lured me.

FRIEDA
Lured you! You all but
forced me—

JULES
You are both fired!

FRANZ
FIRED! You think we
would continue to work
in your house?

YVONNE
Jules, you cannot change
the subject. What were
you doing?

*(EVERYONE has slowly fought their way to the
middle of the stage, creating one big fight.
GEORGE and the OLD LADY have been watch-*

CELESTE #1
Disgusting sores
everywhere.

CELESTE #2
Don't say that about him.

SOLDIER
Yes, don't say that—

CELESTE #1
I'll say whatever I like.
You are both ungrateful,
cheap, ugly, diseased,
disgusting garbage . . .

SOLDIER
Listen here, lady, if in
fact there is anything
ladylike about you. You
should be glad to take
what you can get, any
way you can get it and
I—

CELESTE #2
You think you know
everything. You are not
so special, and far from
as pretty as you think,
and everyone that comes
into the shop knows
exactly what you are and
what—

*ing the chaos. GEORGE begins to cross stage to
exit. Arpeggiated chord, as at the beginning
of the play. EVERYBODY suddenly freezes)*

OLD LADY
Remember, George.
(Another chord. GEORGE turns to the group)

GEORGE
Order.
*(Another chord. EVERYONE turns simultane-
ously to GEORGE. As chords continue under,
HE nods to them, and THEY each take up a
position on stage)*

Design.
*(Chord. GEORGE nods to FRIEDA and FRANZ,
and THEY cross downstage right onto the
apron. Chord. GEORGE nods to MR. and MRS.,
and THEY cross upstage)*

Tension.
*(Chord. GEORGE nods to CELESTE #1 and CE-
LESTE #2, and THEY cross downstage. An-
other chord. JULES and YVONNE cross up-
stage)*

Balance.
*(Chord. OLD LADY crosses right as DOT and
LOUIS cross center. GEORGE signals LOUIS
away from DOT. Another chord. SOLDIER
crosses upstage left; LOUISE, upstage right.
Chord. GEORGE gestures to the BOATMAN,
who crosses downstage right)*

Harmony.
*(The music becomes calm, stately, trium-
phant. GEORGE turns front. The promenade
begins. Throughout the song, GEORGE is mov-
ing about, setting trees, cut-outs, and figures
—making a perfect picture)*

ALL

Sunday,
By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Purple yellow red grass,
Let us pass
Through our perfect park,
Pausing on a Sunday
By the cool
Blue triangular water
On the soft
Green elliptical grass
As we pass
Through arrangements of shadows
Towards the verticals of trees
Forever . . .

(The horn sounds)

By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Orange violet mass
Of the grass
In our perfect park,

GEORGE
(To DOT)

Made of flecks of light
And dark,
And parasols:
Bumbum bum bumbum
Bumbum bum . . .

ALL

People strolling through the trees
Of a small suburban park
On an island in the river

102

On an ordinary Sunday . . .

(The horn sounds. Chimes. THEY all reach their positions)

Sunday . . .

(The horn again. EVERYONE assumes the final pose of the painting. GEORGE comes out to the apron)

Sunday . . .

(At the last moment, GEORGE rushes back and removes LOUISE's eyeglasses. HE dashes back on to the apron and freezes the picture. Final chord. The completed canvas flies in. Very slow fade, as the image of the characters fades behind the painting with GEORGE in front. Blackout)

103

ACT II

Lights fade up slowly, and we see EVERYONE in the tableau. There is a very long pause before we begin. The audience should feel the tension. Finally, music begins.

DOT
(Sings)

It's hot up here.

YVONNE
It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE
I want my glasses.

FRANZ
This is not my good profile.

NURSE
Nobody can even *see* my profile.

CELESTE #1
I hate this dress.

CELESTE #2
The soldiers have forgotten us.

FRIEDA
The boatman *schwitzer*s.

JULES
I am completely out of proportion.

SOLDIER
These helmets weigh a lot on us.

OLD LADY
This tree is blocking my view.

LOUISE
I can't see anything.

BOATMAN
Why are they complaining?
It could have been raining.

DOT
I hate these people.

ALL
It's hot up here
A lot up here.
It's hot up here
Forever.

A lot of fun
It's not up here.
It's hot up here,
No matter what.

There's not a breath
Of air up here,
And they're up here
Forever.

It's not my fault
I got up here.
I'll rot up here,
I am so hot up here.

YVONNE
(To LOUISE)
Darling, don't clutch mother's hand quite so tightly.
Thank you.

CELESTE #1
It's hot up here.

FRIEDA
At least you have a parasol.

SOLDIER, NURSE, YVONNE, and LOUISE
Well, look who's talking,
Sitting in the shade.

JULES
(To DOT)
I trust my cigar is not bothering you — unfortunately, it
never goes out.
(SHE pays him no attention)
You have excellent concentration.

SOLDIER
(To COMPANION)
It's good to be together again.

CELESTE #2
(To CELESTE #1)
See, I told you they were odd.

CELESTE #1
Don't slouch.

LOUISE
He took my glasses!

YVONNE
You've been eating something sticky.

NURSE
I put on rouge today, too . . .

FRIEDA
(To BOATMAN)
Don't you ever take a bath?

OLD LADY
Nurse! Hand me my fan.

NURSE
I can't.

FRANZ
At least the brat is with her mother.

LOUISE
I heard that!

JULES
(To DOT)
Do you like tall grass?

FRIEDA
Hah!

YVONNE
Jules!

BOATMAN
Bunch of animals . . .

DOT
I hate these people.

ALL
It's hot up here
And strange up here,
No change up here
Forever.

How still it is,
How odd it is,
And God, it is
So hot!

SOLDIER
I like the one in the light hat.

DOT
Hello, George.
I do not wish to be remembered
Like this, George,
With them, George.
My hem, George:
Three inches off the ground
And then this monkey
And these people, George —

They'll argue till they fade
And whisper things and grunt.
But thank you for the shade,
And putting me in front.
Yes, thank you, George, for that . . .

And for the hat . . .

CELESTE #1
It's hot up here.

YVONNE
It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE
I want my glasses!

FRANZ
This is not my good profile.

CELESTE #1
I hate this dress.

(Overlapping)

CELESTE #2
The soldiers have forgotten us.

CELESTE #1
Don't slouch!

BOATMAN
Animals . . .

JULES
Are you sure you don't like tall grass?

NURSE
I put on rouge today, too . . .

FRIEDA
Don't you ever take a bath?

SOLDIER
It's good to be together again.

OLD LADY
Nurse, hand me my fan.

DOT
It's hot up here.

YVONNE
It's hot and it's monotonous.

LOUISE
He took my glasses, I want my glasses!

FRANZ
This is not my good profile.

ALL
And furthermore,
Finding you're
Fading
Is very degrading
And God, I am so hot!

Well, there are worse things than sweating
By a river on a Sunday.
There are worse things than sweating by a river

BOATMAN
When you're sweating in a picture
That was painted by a genius

FRANZ
And you know that you're immortal

FRIEDA
And you'll always be remembered

NURSE
Even if they never see you

CELESTE #2
We never posed for him!

CELESTE #1
Certainly we did! We are in a painting, aren't we?

CELESTE #2
It's not as if he asked us to sit!

CELESTE #1
If you had sat up—

SOLDIER
Will you two just keep QUIET!
(HE steps downstage. The CELESTES exit)
I hardly knew the man. I would spend my Sundays here, and I would see him sketching, so I was surprised when he stopped showing up. Of course, I did not notice right away. But one day, I realized, something was different—like a flash of light, right through me, the way that man would stare at you when he sketched—I knew, he was no longer.

(SOLDIER exits. LOUISE breaks away from her MOTHER and dashes downstage)

LOUISE
I am going to be a painter when I grow up!

BOATMAN
If you live.
(LOUISE runs off)

FRIEDA
Honestly!

BOATMAN
Keep your mouth shut!

FRIEDA
It is my mouth and I shall do as I please!

FRANZ
Quiet! George was a gentleman.

FRIEDA
Soft spoken.

FRANZ
And he was a far superior artist to Monsieur.

FRIEDA
George had beautiful eyes.

FRANZ
Ja, he—beautiful eyes?

FRIEDA
Ja . . . well . . . eyes that captured beauty.

FRANZ
(Suspicious)
Ja . . . he chose his subjects well.
(THEY exit)

DOT
I was in Charleston when I heard. At first, I was surprised by the news. Almost relieved, in fact. Perhaps I knew this is how it would end—perhaps we both knew.
(SHE exits)

OLD LADY
A parent wants to die first. But George was always off and running, and I was never able to keep up with him.

NURSE
No one knew he was ill until the very last days. I offered

to care for him, but he would let no one near. Not even her.

(OLD LADY and NURSE exit)

JULES
(*Too sincere*)

George had great promise as a painter. It really is a shame his career was ended so abruptly. He had an unusual flair for color and light, and his work was not as mechanical as some have suggested. I liked George. He was dedicated to his work — seldom did anything but work — and I am proud to have counted him among my friends.

YVONNE
George stopped me once in the park — it was the only time I had ever spoken to him outside the company of Jules. He stared at my jacket for an instant, then muttered something about beautiful colors and just walked on. I rather fancied George.

(JULES looks at her)
Well, most of the women did!
(JULES and YVONNE exit)

BOATMAN
They all wanted him and hated him at the same time. They wanted to be painted — splashed on some fancy salon wall. But they hated him, too. Hated him because he only spoke when he absolutely had to. Most of all, they hated him because they knew he would always be around.

(BOATMAN exits. The stage is bare)
(Lights change. Electronic music. It is 1984.
We are in the auditorium of the museum where the painting now hangs. Enter GEORGE. HE wheels in his grandmother, MARIE [played by DOT], who is ninety-eight

and confined to a wheelchair. DENNIS, GEORGE's technical assistant, rolls on a control console and places it stage right. An immense white machine rolls on and comes to rest center stage. Our contemporary GEORGE is an inventor-sculptor, and this is his latest invention, Chromolume #7. The machine is post-modern in design and is dominated by a four-foot-in-diameter sphere at the top. It glows a range of cool colored light. MARIE sits on one side of the machine, and GEORGE stands at the console on the other. Behind them is a full-stage projection screen)

GEORGE
Ladies and gentlemen, in 1983 I was commissioned by this museum to create an art piece commemorating Georges Seurat's painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." My latest Chromolume stands before you now, the seventh in a continuing series. Because I have a special association with this painting, the museum director, Robert Greenberg, suggested I assemble a short presentation to precede the activation of my latest invention. I have brought my grandmother along to give me a hand.

(Introducing her)
My grandmother, Marie.
(What follows is a coordinated performance of music, text [read from index cards by GEORGE and MARIE], film projections of the images referred to, and light emissions from the machine. The first section is accompanied by film projections)

MARIE
I was born in Paris, France, ninety-eight years ago. My grandson, George.

GEORGE

I was born in Lodi, New Jersey, thirty-two years ago.

MARIE

My mother was married to Louis, a baker. They left France when I was an infant to travel to Charleston, South Carolina.

GEORGE

Georges Seurat.

MARIE

Born: December 2, 1859.

GEORGE

It was through his mother that the future artist was introduced to the lower-class Parisian parks. Seurat received a classical training at the Beaux Arts.

MARIE

Like his father, he was not an easy man to know.

GEORGE

He lived in an age when science was gaining influence over Romantic principles.

MARIE

He worked very hard.

GEORGE

His first painting, at the age of twenty-four, "Bathing at Asnières," was rejected by the Salon, but was shown by the Group of Independent Artists.

MARIE

They hung it over the refreshment stand.

(Ad-libbing)

Wasn't that awful?

GEORGE

On Ascension Day 1884, he began work on his second painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte." He was to work two years on this painting.

MARIE

He always knew where he was going before he picked up a paint brush.

GEORGE

He denied conventional perspective and conventional space.

MARIE

He was unconventional in his lifestyle as well.

(Ad-libbing again)

So was I! You know I was a Florodora Girl for a short time — when I left Charleston and before I was married to my first husband —

GEORGE

(Interrupting her)

Marie. Marie!

(SHE looks over to him)

The film is running.

MARIE

Excuse me.

(SHE reads)

They hung it over the refreshment stand.

GEORGE

Marie!

(HE reads)

Having studied scientific findings on color, he developed a new style of painting. He found by painting tiny particles, color next to color, that at a certain distance the eye would fuse the specks optically, giving them greater intensity than any mixed pigments.

MARIE

He wanted to paint with colored lights.

GEORGE

Beams of colored light, he hoped.

MARIE

It was shown at the Eighth and last Impressionist Exhibition.

GEORGE

Monet, Renoir, and Sisley withdrew their submissions because of his painting.

MARIE

They placed it in a small room off to the side of the main hall, too dark for the painting to truly be seen.

GEORGE

The painting was ridiculed by most. But there were also a handful of believers in his work.

MARIE

He went on to paint six more major paintings before his sudden death at the age of thirty-one. He never sold a painting in his lifetime.

GEORGE

On this occasion, I present my latest Chromolume —

MARIE

— Number Seven —

GEORGE

— which pays homage to “La Grande Jatte” and to my grandmother, Marie. The score for this presentation has been composed by Naomi Eisen.

(NAOMI enters, bows, and exits)

MARIE

(SHE reads a stage direction by mistake)

George begins to activate the Chromolume machine as . . .

GEORGE

Don’t read that part, Grandmother.

MARIE

Oh . . . don’t read this . . .

(Music begins to increase in volume and intensity. Strobe lights begin emitting from the machine along with side shafts of brilliant light. Colors begin to fill the stage and audience, creating a pointillist look. Just as the sphere begins to illuminate, producing various images from the painting, there is a sudden explosion of sparks and smoke. The lighting system flickers on and off until everything dies, including music. There is a moment of silence in the darkness)

GEORGE

(Under his breath)

Shit.

(Calling out)

Robert Greenberg?

GREENBERG

(From the back of the house)

Just a minute, Georgel

(Some light returns to the smoke-filled stage)

DENNIS

(Offstage)

It's the regulator, George.

(Lights come up on GEORGE, who is looking inside the machine. HE steps downstage toward the audience)

GEORGE

My apologies, ladies and gentlemen. For precise synchronization of all the visual elements, I've installed a new state-of-the-art Japanese microcomputer which controls the voltage regulator. I think that the surge from the musical equipment has created an electrical short.

(Beat)

Unfortunately, no electricity, no art. Give us a moment and we'll be able to bypass the regulator and be back in business.

(After "no electricity, no art," GREENBERG has entered and stands to the side of the apron. DENNIS enters and joins GEORGE at the Chromolume)

GREENBERG

I am very sorry, ladies and gentlemen. We seem to be having a little electrical difficulty.

(NAOMI has entered and rushed to the machine)

NAOMI

There's no juice!

GREENBERG

You must realize this is the first time we have had a collaboration like this at the museum and it has offered some extraordinary challenges to us here.

(NAOMI and DENNIS exit arguing)

Now, I hope to see all of you at the reception and dinner which will follow the presentation. It's right down the hall in the main gallery, where the painting hangs. And we have a very special treat for you. As I am sure you have noticed, in order to raise additional funds we have chosen to sell the air rights to the museum — and some of the twenty-seven flights of condominiums that stand above us now will be open for your inspection after dinner. You may even wish to become one of our permanent neighbors!

GEORGE

We're ready, Bob.

GREENBERG

Well . . . proceed. Proceed!

(HE exits)

GEORGE

(Into his headset)

Dennis! Lights.

(Lights dim and the presentation continues. Music gathers momentum. The Chromolume begins before the speaking resumes, with images from the painting projected on its sphere, illustrating the lecture)

MARIE

When I was young, Mother loved telling me tales of her life in France, and of her work as an artist's model.

GEORGE

Her mother showed her this great painting and pointed to this woman and said that it was she.

MARIE

And she pointed to a couple in the back—they were holding an infant child—and she said that was me!

GEORGE

Shortly before my great-grandmother's death, she spoke of her association with the artist of this painting. She told Marie that Seurat was her real father.

MARIE

I was shocked!

GEORGE

My parents never believed this story. After all, there was no proof. I do not —

MARIE

(Produces a red book, unbeknownst to GEORGE)
My mother gave me this small red book.

GEORGE

Marie!

MARIE

Oh, George, I wanted to bring the book and show it.
(To audience)
In the back are notes about his great-grandfather, the artist.

GEORGE

Actually, this book is really just a grammar book in the handwriting of a child, and though there *are* notes in

*Soldier with Companion
and the Celestes*



Louis and Dot





DOT: Anything you do,
Let it come from you.
Then it will be new.
Give us more to see . . .

the back which mention a Georges—they could be referring to anyone.

MARIE

But they do not.

GEORGE

I do not know that there is any validity to this story.

MARIE

Of course there is validity!

(To the audience)

He has to have everything spelled out for him!

GEORGE

The facts are sketchy. The tales are many. I would like to invite you into *my* "Sunday: Island of Light." It will be on exhibition here in the upstairs gallery for three weeks.

(Music crescendos, as laser beams burst over the audience. When they complete their course, the sphere begins to turn, sending out a blinding burst of light. The painting flies in)

(We are now in the gallery where the painting hangs and in front of which the reception is beginning. HARRIET and BILLY enter, closely followed by REDMOND, GREENBERG, ALEX, BETTY, and NAOMI. Cocktail music under)

BILLY

Well, I can't say that *I* understand what that light machine has to do with this painting.

HARRIET

Darling, it's a theme and variation.

BILLY
Oh. Theme and variation.

GREENBERG
(To REDMOND)
Times change so quickly.

REDMOND
Lord knows.

GREENBERG
That's the challenge of our work. You never know what
movement is going to hit next. Which artist to embrace.
(*Rhumba music*)

NAOMI
I thought it went very well, except for that electrical
screw-up. What did you guys think?

ALEX BETTY
Terrible. Terrific.
(*Short embarrassed pause*)

HARRIET
(*Sings*)
I mean, I don't understand completely —

BILLY
I'm not surprised.

HARRIET
But he combines all these different trends.

BILLY
I'm not surprised.

HARRIET
You can't divide art today
Into categories neatly —

BILLY
Oh.

HARRIET
What matters is the means, not the ends.

BILLY
I'm not surprised.

HARRIET and BILLY
That is the state of the art, my dear,
That is the state of the art.

GREENBERG
It's not enough knowing good from rotten —

REDMOND
You're telling me —

GREENBERG
When something new pops up every day.

REDMOND
You're telling me —

GREENBERG
It's only new, though, for now —

REDMOND
Nouveau.

GREENBERG
But yesterday's forgotten.

REDMOND
(Nods)

And tomorrow is already passé.

GREENBERG

There's no surprise.

REDMOND and GREENBERG

That is the state of the art, my friend,
That is the state of the art.

BETTY

He's an original.

ALEX

Was.

NAOMI

I like the images.

ALEX

Some.

BETTY

Come on.
You had your moment,
Now it's George's turn—

ALEX

It's George's turn?
I wasn't talking turns,
I'm talking art.

BETTY
(To NAOMI)

Don't you think he's original?

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NAOMI

Well, yes . . .

BETTY
(To ALEX)

You're talking crap.

ALEX
(Overlapping with NAOMI)

But is it really new?

NAOMI

Well, no . . .

ALEX
(To BETTY)

His own collaborator—!

BETTY
(Overlapping with NAOMI)

It's more than novelty.

NAOMI

Well, yes . . .

BETTY
(To ALEX)

It's just impersonal, but—

ALEX
It's all promotion, but then—

ALEX and BETTY
(To NAOMI)

That is the state of the art,
Isn't it?

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Well . . .

NAOMI

BILLY
(To HARRIET)

Art isn't easy —

HARRIET
(Nodding)

Even when you've amassed it —

BETTY

Fighting for prizes —

GREENBERG

No one can be an oracle.

REDMOND
(Nodding)

Art isn't easy.

ALEX

Suddenly —
(Snaps fingers)

You're past it.

NAOMI

All compromises —

HARRIET
(To BILLY)

And then when it's allegorical —!

REDMOND and GREENBERG

Art isn't easy —

ALL

Any way you look at it.
(Chord, fanfare. GEORGE makes a grand entrance with MARIE and ELAINE. Applause from GUESTS. GEORGE and MARIE move towards the painting. Lights come down on GEORGE, who sings)

GEORGE

All right, George.
As long as it's your night, George . . .
You know what's in the room, George:
Another Chromolume, George.
It's time to get to work . . .
(Music continues under)

MARIE

George, look. All these lovely people in front of our painting.

GREENBERG
(Coming up to GEORGE)

George, I want you to meet one of our board members.
(HE steers GEORGE over to BILLY and HARRIET)

This is Harriet Pawling.

HARRIET

What a pleasure. And this is my friend, Billy Webster.

BILLY

How do you do.

GREENBERG

Well, I'll just leave you three to chat.
(HE exits)

BILLY
Harriet was so impressed by your presentation.

HARRIET
This is the third piece of yours I've seen. They are getting so large!

BILLY
What heading does your work fall under?

GEORGE
Most people think of it as sculpture.

BILLY
Sculpture . . .

GEORGE
Actually, I think of myself as an inventor as well as a sculptor.

BILLY
It's so unconventional for sculpture.
(*Lights down on GEORGE*)

GEORGE
Say "cheese," George,
And put them at their ease, George.
You're up on the trapeze, George.
Machines don't grow on trees, George.
Start putting it together . . .
(*Lights up*)

HARRIET
I bet your great-grandfather would be very proud!
(*THEY are joined by MARIE and ELAINE, who have been nearby and overheard the conversation*)

MARIE
Yes. He would have loved this evening.

BILLY
How do you know?

MARIE
I just know. I'm like that.

HARRIET
Hi. I'm Harriet Pawling.

BILLY
Billy Webster.

MARIE
How do you do. This is Elaine — George's former wife.

ELAINE
(*Embarrassed*)
Hello.

MARIE
Elaine is such a darling, I will always think of her as my granddaughter. I am so happy that these children have remained close. Isn't that nice?

BILLY
Yes. Harriet has just gone through a rather messy divorce —

HARRIET
Bill!
(*Awkward pause*)
What a fascinating family you have!

MARIE
Many people say that. George and I are going back to

France next month to visit the island where the painting was made, and George is going to bring the Lomochrome.

(Music)

GEORGE
Chromolume. I've been invited by the government to do a presentation of the machine on the island.

MARIE
George has never been to France.

GEORGE
(Front)
Art isn't easy —
(HE raises a cut-out of himself in front of BILLY and HARRIET and comes downstage)
Even when you're hot.

BILLY
(To cut-out)
Are these inventions of yours one of a kind?

GEORGE
Advancing art is easy —
(To BILLY, but front)
Yes.

Financing it is not.

MARIE
They take a year to make.

GEORGE
(Front)
A vision's just a vision
If it's only in your head.

MARIE
The minute he finishes one, he starts raising money for the next.

GEORGE
If no one gets to see it,
It's as good as dead.

MARIE
Work. Work. Work.

GEORGE
It has to come to light!
(Music continues under. GEORGE crosses to center)
I put the names of my contributors on the side of each machine.

ELAINE
Some very impressive people!

HARRIET
Well, we must speak further. My family has a foundation and we are always looking for new projects.

GEORGE
(Front)
Bit by bit,
Putting it together . . .

MARIE
Family — it's all you really have.

GEORGE
Piece by piece —
Only way to make a work of art.
Every moment makes a contribution,
Every little detail plays a part.

Having just the vision's no solution,
Everything depends on execution:
Putting it together —
That's what counts.

HARRIET
(*To cut-out*)

Actually, the Board of the Foundation is meeting next
week . . .

GEORGE
Ounce by ounce
Putting it together . . .

HARRIET
You'll come to lunch.

GEORGE
Small amounts,
Adding up to make a work of art.
First of all, you need a good foundation,
Otherwise it's risky from the start.
Takes a little cocktail conversation,
But without the proper preparation,
Having just the vision's no solution,
Everything depends on execution.

The art of making art
Is putting it together
Bit by bit . . .

(*The cut-out remains, as BILLY and HARRIET
talk to it; GEORGE is cornered by CHARLES
REDMOND. Music continues under*)

REDMOND
We have been hearing about you for some time. We

haven't met. Charles Redmond. County Museum of
Texas.

GEORGE
Nice to meet you.

REDMOND
Your work is just tremendous.

GEORGE
Thank you.

REDMOND
I don't mean to bring business up during a social occa-
sion, but I wanted you to know we're in the process of
giving out some very sizable commissions —

GREENBERG
You're not going to steal him away, are you?
(*GEORGE signals and another cut-out of him-
self slides in from the wings. HE leaves his
drink in its hand, then steps forward*)

GEORGE
Link by link,
Making the connections . . .
Drink by drink,
Fixing and perfecting the design.
Adding just a dab of politician
(Always knowing where to draw the line),
Lining up the funds but in addition
Lining up a prominent commission,
Otherwise your perfect composition
Isn't going to get much exhibition.

Art isn't easy.
Every minor detail

Is a major decision.
Have to keep things in scale,
Have to hold to your vision —
 (Pauses for a split second)
Every time I start to feel defensive,
I remember lasers are expensive.
What's a little cocktail conversation
If it's going to get you your foundation,
Leading to a prominent commission
And an exhibition in addition?
(The GUESTS promenade briefly, working the room)

ALL
 (Except MARIE)
Art isn't easy —

ALEX and BETTY
Trying to make connections —

ALL
Who understands it — ?

HARRIET and BILLY
Difficult to evaluate —

ALL
Art isn't easy —

GREENBERG and REDMOND
Trying to form collections —

ALL
Always in transit —

NAOMI
 (To whoever will listen)
And then when you have to collaborate —!

ALL
Art isn't easy,
Any way you look at it . . .
 *(Chord. Cocktail piano. GEORGE is ap-
 proached by LEE RANDOLPH with MARIE)*

MARIE
George, you have to meet Mr. Randolph!

RANDOLPH
Hello! Lee Randolph. I handle the public relations for
the museum.

GEORGE
How do you do.
 (NAOMI joins them)

NAOMI
There you are, George! Hi, Marie.
 (To RANDOLPH)
Naomi Eisen.

RANDOLPH
Delighted. You kids made quite a stir tonight.

NAOMI
You see, George — that electrical foul-up didn't hurt
our reception.

RANDOLPH
There's a lot of opportunity for some nice press here.
 *(GEORGE gestures; a third cut-out of himself
 rises in front of NAOMI and RANDOLPH.
 GEORGE steps forward and sings)*

GEORGE
Dot by dot,
Building up the image.

(Flash. PHOTOGRAPHER starts taking pictures of the cut-out)

Shot by shot,
Keeping at a distance doesn't pay.
Still, if you remember your objective,
Not give all your privacy away —

(Flash. Beat; HE glances at the first cut-out)

A little bit of hype can be effective,
Long as you can keep it in perspective.
After all, without some recognition
No one's going to give you a commission,
Which will cause a crack in the foundation.
You'll have wasted all that conversation.

(Music stops suddenly as DENNIS comes over, disheveled and apologetic. DENNIS is something of a nerd)

DENNIS

I am really sorry, George.

(Cocktail music)

I spoke with Naomi in great detail about how much electricity her synthesizer was going to use—I computed the exact voltage —

GEORGE

Dennis! It's okay.

DENNIS

The laser was beautiful, George.

GEORGE

It was, wasn't it? Now go get yourself a drink, Dennis. Mingle.

DENNIS

George. I have one more thing I wanted to talk to you about. I was going to wait — no, I'll wait —

GEORGE

What?

DENNIS

I'm quitting.

(Music stops suddenly)

GEORGE

Quitting?

DENNIS

I'm going back to NASA. There is just too much pressure in this line of work.

GEORGE

Dennis, don't make any rash decisions. Relax, sleep on it, and we'll talk about it tomorrow.

DENNIS

Okay, George.

GEORGE

(Front. Music under)

Art isn't easy . . .

(ALEX and BETTY approach)

BETTY

Hey, it's the brains.

GEORGE

Even if you're smart . . .

ALEX

Little technical screw-up tonight, Dennis?

(DENNIS exits)

GEORGE
You think it's all together,
And something falls apart . . .
(Music continues under)

BETTY
I love the new machine, George.

GEORGE
Thanks. That means a lot to me.

ALEX
We saw you talking to Redmond from Texas.

GEORGE
Yeah.

BETTY
Did you get one of the commissions?

GEORGE
We talked about it. You guys?

ALEX
Her. My stuff is a little too inaccessible.

GEORGE
I love your work, Alex. I'll put in a good word for you.

ALEX
(Defensive)
He knows my work!

GEORGE
(Uncomfortable)
It's all politics, Alex. Maybe if you just lightened up
once in a while.

BETTY
(Mollifying)
Texas would be fun!
*(GEORGE beckons and a fourth cut-out slides
in and heads toward BETTY and ALEX)*

GEORGE
(Front)
Art isn't easy.
(Gesturing towards ALEX)
Overnight you're a trend
You're the right combination—
*(Behind him, cut-out #1 begins sinking
slowly into the floor)*
Then the trend's at an end,
You're suddenly last year's sensation . . .
*(Notices the cut-out, goes to raise it during the
following)*
So you should support the competition,
Try to set aside your own ambition,
Even while you jockey for position—
*(Cut-out #4 has slid in too far, and BETTY
and ALEX have turned away; GEORGE, unflus-
tered, spins it back around towards BETTY
and ALEX, who resume talking to it)*
If you feel a sense of coalition,
Then you never really stand alone.
If you want your work to reach fruition,
What you need's a link with your tradition,
And of course a prominent commission,
*(Cut-out #1 starts to sink again; GEORGE has-
tens to fix it)*
Plus a little formal recognition,
So that you can go on exhibit—
(Getting flustered)
So that your work can go on exhibition—
(Loud promenade, very brief, during which

cut-out #1 starts to go again, but stops just as GEORGE reaches it. As HE does so, BLAIR DANIELS, an art critic, comes up to him. Chords under)

BLAIR
There's the man of the hour.

GEORGE
Blair. Hello. I just read your piece on Neo-Expressionism —

BLAIR
Just what the world needs — another piece on Neo-Expressionism.

GEORGE
Well, I enjoyed it.
(Chords continue under, irregularly)

BLAIR
Good for you! Now, I had no idea you might be related to nineteenth-century France.

GEORGE
It's a cloudy ancestral line at best.

BLAIR
I'm dying to meet your grandmother. It was fun seeing the two of you onstage with your invention. It added a certain humanity to the proceedings.

GEORGE
Humanity?

BLAIR
George. Chromolume Number Seven?

GEORGE
Be nice, George . . .
(Gestures for a cut-out; it doesn't rise)

BLAIR
I was hoping it would be a series of three — four at the most.

GEORGE
You have to pay a price, George . . .
(Gestures again; nothing)

BLAIR
We have been there before, you know.

GEORGE
You never suffer from a shortage of opinions, do you, Blair?

BLAIR
You never minded my opinions when they were in your favor!

BLAIR
I have touted your work from the beginning, you know that. You were really on to something with these light machines — once. Now they're just becoming more and more about less and less.

GEORGE
They like to give Advice, George —
(Gestures offstage; nothing)
Don't think about it Twice, George . . .
(Gestures again; nothing)

GEORGE
I disagree.
(Music. BLAIR turns briefly away from him,

rummaging through her purse for a cigarette. GEORGE takes advantage of this to rush off-stage and bring on cut-out #5, which HE sets up in front of her during the following)

BLAIR

Don't get me wrong. You're a talented guy. If you weren't, I wouldn't waste our time with my opinions. I think you are capable of far more. Not that you couldn't succeed by doing Chromolume after Chromolume — but there are new discoveries to be made, George.

(SHE holds up her cigarette and waits for a light from the cut-out)

GEORGE

Be new, George.

They tell you till they're blue, George:

You're new or else you're through, George,

And even if it's true, George —

You do what you can do . . .

(Wandering among cut-outs, checking them)

Bit by bit,

Putting it together.

Piece by piece,

Working out the vision night and day.

All it takes is time and perseverance,

With a little luck along the way,

Putting in a personal appearance,

Gathering supporters and adherents . . .

(Music stops. BLAIR, getting impatient for her light, leaves the cut-out to join another group.

GEORGE notices. Beat)

HARRIET

(To BILLY)

. . . But he combines all these different trends . . .

(Beat. The cut-out with HARRIET and BILLY falters)

GEORGE

(Moving to it smoothly as music resumes)

Mapping out the right configuration,

(Adjusting it)

Starting with a suitable foundation . . .

BETTY

. . . He's an original . . .

ALEX

. . . Was . . .

(During the following, all the cut-outs falter sporadically, causing GEORGE to move more and more rapidly among them)

GEORGE

Lining up a prominent commission —

And an exhibition in addition —

Here a little dab of politician —

There a little touch of publication —

Till you have a balanced composition —

Everything depends on preparation —

Even if you do have the suspicion —

That it's taking all your concentration —

(Simultaneously, with GEORGE)

BETTY

I like those images.

ALEX

Some.

BETTY

They're just his personal response.

ALEX
To what?

BETTY
The painting!

ALEX
Bullshit. Anyway, the painting's overrated . . .

BETTY
Overrated? It's a masterpiece!

ALEX
A masterpiece? Historically important maybe —

BETTY
Oh, now you're judging Seurat, are you?

ALEX
All it is is pleasant, just like George's work.

BETTY
It's just your jealousy of George's work.

ALEX
No nuance, no resonance, no relevance —

BETTY
There's nuance and there's resonance, there's relevance —

ALEX
There's not much point in arguing.
Besides, it's all promotion, but then —

BETTY
There's not much point in arguing.
You say it's all promotion, but then —

GREENBERG
It's only new, though, for now
And yesterday's forgotten.
Today it's all a matter of promotion,
But then —

REDMOND
Nouveau.
And yesterday's forgotten
And you can't tell good from rotten
And today it's all a matter of promotion,
But then —

HARRIET
You can't divide art today.
Go with it!
What will they think of next?

BILLY
I'm not surprised.
What will they think of next?

OTHERS
Most art today
Is a matter of promotion, but then —

GEORGE
The art of making art
Is putting it together —
Bit by bit —
Link by link —
Drink by drink —
Mink by mink —
And that
Is the state
Of the

ALL
That is the state of the
art . . .

And art isn't easy.

ALL

Art!

(GEORGE frames the successfully completed picture with his hands, as at the end of Act I. As soon as HE exits, however, the cut-outs collapse and disappear. MARIE and ELAINE are over at the painting; THEY are joined by HARRIET and BILLY)

GREENBERG

Ladies and gentlemen, dinner is served.
(Most of the party exits)

HARRIET

(To MARIE)

Excuse me, could you please tell me: what is that square form up there?

BLAIR

(Who has been standing nearby)

That is a baby carriage.

MARIE

Who told you that?!

BLAIR

I'm sorry to butt in. I'm Blair Daniels and I've been waiting for the opportunity to tell you how much I enjoyed seeing you on stage.

MARIE

Why, thank you. But, my dear, that is not a baby carriage. That is Louis' waffle stove.

BLAIR

Waffle stove? I've read all there is to read about this

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work, and there's never been any mention of a waffle stove!

MARIE

(Indicating red book)

I have a book, too. My mother's. It is a family legacy, as is this painting. And my mother often spoke of Louis' waffle stove!

BLAIR

Louis. Yes, you mentioned him in your presentation.
(GEORGE re-enters; stays off to one side)

MARIE

Family. You know, it is all you really have.

BILLY

You said that before.

MARIE

I say it often.

HARRIET

Excuse us.

(HARRIET and BILLY exit)

MARIE

You know, Miss Daniels, there are only two worthwhile things to leave behind when you depart this world: children and art. Isn't that correct?

BLAIR

I never quite thought of it that way.
(ELAINE joins them)

MARIE

Do you know Elaine?

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BLAIR
No. I don't believe we've met. Blair Daniels.

ELAINE
I've heard a lot about you.

BLAIR
Oh, yes.

MARIE
Elaine and George were married once. I was so excited. I thought *they* might have a child. George and I are the only ones left, I'm afraid.

(*Whispers*)
I want George to have a child — continue the line. You can understand that, can't you, Elaine?

ELAINE
Of course.

MARIE
Are you married, Miss Daniels?

BLAIR
Awfully nice to have met you.
(*SHE shakes MARIE's hand and exits*)

MARIE
Elaine, fix my chair so I can see Mama.
(*SHE does. ELAINE crosses to GEORGE*)

ELAINE
George. I think Marie is a little too tired for the party. She seems to be slipping a bit.

GEORGE
I better take her back to the hotel.

ELAINE
I'll take her back. You stay.

GEORGE
Nah, it's a perfect excuse for me to leave early.

ELAINE
George. Don't be silly! You're the toast of the party. You should feel wonderful.

GEORGE
(*Edgy*)
Well, I don't feel wonderful.

ELAINE
Poor George. Well . . . tonight was a wonderful experience for Marie. I don't remember seeing her so happy. It was very good of you to include her.

GEORGE
She is something, isn't she?

ELAINE
Yes, she is . . .
(*ELAINE begins to leave; GEORGE stops her; THEY embrace. Then SHE exits. The preceding has been underscored with the chords from Act I. MARIE has been staring up at the painting*)

MARIE
(*Sings*)
You would have liked him,
Mama, you would.
Mama, he makes things —
Mama, they're good.
Just as you said from the start:

Children and art . . .

(Starts nodding off)

Children and art . . .

He should be happy—

Mama, he's blue.

What do I do?

You should have seen it,

It was a sight!

Mama, I mean it—

All color and light—!

I don't understand what it was,

But, Mama, the things that he does—

They twinkle and shimmer and buzz—

You would have liked them . . .

It . . .

Him . . .

(Music continues)

Henry . . . Henry? . . . Henry . . .

GEORGE

(Coming over)

It's George, Grandmother.

MARIE

Of course it is. I thought you were your father for a moment.

(Indicating painting)

Did I tell you who that was?

GEORGE

Of course. That is your mother.

MARIE

That is correct.

(Sings)

Isn't she beautiful?

There she is—

(Pointing to different figures)

There she is, there she is, there she is—

Mama is everywhere,

He must have loved her so much . . .

GEORGE

Is she really in all those places, Marie?

MARIE

This is our family—

This is the lot.

After I go, this is

All that you've got, honey—

GEORGE

Now, let's not have this discussion—

MARIE

Wasn't she beautiful, though?

You would have liked her.

Mama did things

No one had done.

Mama was funny,

Mama was fun,

Mama spent money

When she had none.

Mama said, "Honey,

Mustn't be blue.

It's not so much do what you like

As it is that you like what you do."

Mama said, "Darling,

Don't make such a drama.

A little less thinking,
A little more feeling — ”

GEORGE

Please don't start —

MARIE

I'm just quoting Mama . . .

(Interrupting, indicates LOUISE)

The child is so sweet . . .

(Indicates the CELESTES at center)

And the girls are so rapturous . . .

Isn't it lovely how artists can capture us?

GEORGE

Yes, it is, Marie.

MARIE

You would have liked her —

Honey, I'm wrong,

You would have loved her.

Mama enjoyed things.

Mama was smart.

See how she shimmers —

I mean from the heart.

(ELAINE enters and stands off to the side)

I know, honey, you don't agree,

(Indicates painting)

But this is our family tree.

Just wait till we're there, and you'll see —

Listen to me . . .

(Drifting off)

Mama was smart . . .

Listen to Mama . . .

Children and art . . .

Children and art . . .

(She falls asleep and ELAINE crosses to her and wheels her off. As THEY go:)

Goodbye, Mama.

(GEORGE looks at the painting for a moment)

GEORGE

Connect, George. Connect . . .

(GEORGE exits; the painting flies out)

(The island is once again revealed, though barely recognizable as the trees have been replaced by high-rise buildings. The only tree still visible is the one in front of which the OLD LADY and NURSE sat. DENNIS kneels, studying his blueprints. GEORGE enters, camera in hand)

GEORGE

Are you certain this is the best place for the Chromolume?

DENNIS

George, this is the largest clearing on La Grande Jatte.

GEORGE

Where's the still?

DENNIS

It has been built and should arrive tomorrow morning a few hours before the Chromolume. I wanted it here today, but they don't make deliveries on Sunday.

GEORGE

And fresh water for the cooling system?

DENNIS

We can draw it from the Seine. As for the electricity —

GEORGE
Did you see this tree?

DENNIS
No.

GEORGE
It could be the one in the painting.

DENNIS
Yes. It could.
(GEORGE hands DENNIS the camera and goes
to the tree. DENNIS takes a picture of him in
front of it)

GEORGE
At least something is recognizable . . . Now, about the
electricity?

DENNIS
The wind generator's over there.

GEORGE
You have been efficient, as always.

DENNIS
Thank you.

GEORGE
I will miss working with you, Dennis.

DENNIS
Well, I can recommend some very capable people to
help you with the Texas commission.

GEORGE
I turned it down.

DENNIS
What?

GEORGE
Dennis, why are you quitting?

DENNIS
I told you, I want —

GEORGE
I know what you told me! Why are you really leaving?

DENNIS
George. I love the Chromolumes. But I've helped you
build the last five, and now I want to do something
different.

GEORGE
I wish you had told me that in the first place.

DENNIS
I'm sorry.

GEORGE
Why do you think I turned down the commission? I
don't want to do the same thing over and over again
either.

DENNIS
There are other things you could do.

GEORGE
I know that. I just want to do something I care about.
(Beat. GEORGE puts camera in pocket and
pulls out DOT's red book)

DENNIS

I see you brought the red book.

GEORGE

Since Marie has died, I thought I would at least bring something of hers along.

DENNIS

Marie really wanted to make this trip.

GEORGE

I know.

DENNIS

I hope you don't mind, but I took a look at the book. It's very interesting.

GEORGE

It's just a grammar book, Dennis.

DENNIS
(*Imploring*)

Not that part. The notes in the back.

(*GEORGE leafs through it to the back*)

Well, we just have to wait for it to get dark. I'm not certain about the ambient light.

GEORGE

You go, Dennis. I'd like to be alone actually.

DENNIS

Are you sure?

GEORGE

Yeah. I'll see you back at the hotel.

(*HE sits on the ground*)

DENNIS

(*Begins to exit*)

George. I look forward to seeing what you come up with next.

GEORGE
(*Smiling*)

You're not the only one, Dennis.

(*DENNIS exits. Music. GEORGE sings, leafing through the book, reading*)

"Charles has a book . . ."

(*Turns a page*)

"Charles shows them his crayons . . ."

(*Turns back a few pages*)

"Marie has the ball of Charles . . ."

(*Turns the book to read writing in the margin*)

"Good for Marie . . ."

(*Smiles at the coincidence of the name, turns a page*)

"Charles misses his ball . . ."

(*Looks up*)

George misses Marie . . .

George misses a lot . . .

George is alone.

George looks around.

He sees the park.

It is depressing.

George looks ahead.

George sees the dark.

George is afraid.

Where are the people

Out strolling on Sunday?

George looks within:

George is adrift.

George goes by guessing.

George looks behind:

He had a gift.
When did it fade?
You wanted people out
Strolling on Sunday —
Sorry, Marie. . . .

(Looks again at the name in the book)

See George remember how George used to be,
Stretching his vision in every direction.
See George attempting to see a connection
When all he can see
Is maybe a tree —

(Humorously)

The family tree —
Sorry, Marie . . .

George is afraid.
George sees the park.
George sees it dying.
George too may fade,
Leaving no mark,
Just passing through.
Just like the people
Out strolling on Sunday . . .

George looks around.
George is alone.
No use denying
George is aground.
George has outgrown
What he can do.
George would have liked to see
People out strolling on Sunday . . .

*(DOT appears. GEORGE looks up and discovers
HER. HE stands)*

DOT

I almost did not recognize you without your beard. You
have my book.

GEORGE

Your book?

DOT

Yes.

GEORGE

It is a little difficult to understand.

DOT

Well, I was teaching myself. My writing got much better. I worked very hard. I made certain that Marie learned right away.

GEORGE

(Looks at the book)

Marie . . .

DOT

It is good to see you. Not that I ever forgot you, George.
You gave me so much.

GEORGE

What did I give you?

DOT

Oh, many things. You taught me about concentration. At first I thought that meant just being still, but I was to understand it meant much more. You meant to tell me to be where I was — not some place in the past or future. I worried too much about tomorrow. I thought the world could be perfect. I was wrong.

What else? GEORGE

 DOT
Oh, enough about me. What about you? Are you working on something new?

 GEORGE
No. I am not working on anything new.
 (Music begins)

 DOT
That is not like you, George.

 GEORGE
 (Sings)
I've nothing to say.

 DOT
You have many things . . .

 GEORGE
Well, nothing that's not been said.

 DOT
 (Sings)
Said by you, though, George . . .

 GEORGE
I do not know where to go.

 DOT
And nor did I.

 GEORGE
I want to make things that count,
Things that will be new . . .

 DOT
I did what I had to do:

 GEORGE
What am I to do?

 DOT
Move on.
Stop worrying where you're going —
Move on.
If you can know where you're going,
You've gone.
Just keep moving on.

I chose, and my world was shaken —
So what?
The choice may have been mistaken,
The choosing was not.
You have to move on.

Look at what you want,
Not at where you are,
Not at what you'll be.
Look at all the things you've done for me:

Opened up my eyes,
Taught me how to see,
Notice every tree —

 GEORGE
. . . Notice every tree . . .

 DOT
Understand the light —

 GEORGE
. . . Understand the light . . .

DOT
Concentrate on now—

GEORGE
I want to move on.
I want to explore the light.
I want to know how to get through,
Through to something new,
Something of my own—

GEORGE and DOT
Move on.
Move on.

DOT
Stop worrying if your vision
Is new.
Let others make that decision—
They usually do.
You keep moving on.

DOT
Look at what you've
done,

(Simultaneously)

GEORGE
(Looking around)

Then at what you want,
Not at where you are,
What you'll be.

Look at all the things
You gave to me.

Let me give to you
Something in return.
I would be so
pleased . . .

. . . Something in the
light,
Something in the sky,
In the grass,
Up behind the
trees . . .

Things I hadn't looked
at

Till now:
Flower on your hat.
And your smile.

GEORGE
And the color of your hair.
And the way you catch the light.
And the care.
And the feeling.
And the life
Moving on.

DOT
We've always belonged
Together!

GEORGE and DOT
We will always belong
Together!

DOT
Just keep moving on.

Anything you do,
Let it come from you.
Then it will be new.
Give us more to see . . .

You never cared what anyone thought. That upset me
at the time because I wanted you to care what I
thought.

GEORGE
I'm sure that I did.

DOT
I am sure that you did, too.

GEORGE
Dot.

(HE takes book to DOT)
Why did you write these words?

DOT
They are your words, George. The ones you muttered
so often when you worked.

GEORGE
(Reads slowly)
"Order."
(Chord. OLD LADY enters)

OLD LADY
George. Is that you?
(GEORGE turns to her. HE looks back to DOT,
who smiles, then back to the OLD LADY)

GEORGE
Yes.

OLD LADY
Tell me! Is this place as you expected it?

GEORGE
What?

OLD LADY
The park, of course.

GEORGE
Somewhat.

OLD LADY
Go on.

GEORGE
Well, the greens are a little darker. The sky a little
greyer. Mud tones in the water.

OLD LADY
(Disappointed)
Well, yes, I suppose —

GEORGE
But the air is rich and full of light.

OLD LADY
Good.
(Chord. As the OLD LADY leaves, GEORGE
reads the next word:)

GEORGE
"Design."
(Music begins: "Sunday." The downstage
right building begins to rise. The CELESTES
appear and begin to cross the stage)

"Tension."
(Two buildings rise stage right and left. More
CHARACTERS from the painting appear and
begin to promenade)

"Composition."
(Building rises)

"Balance."
(Buildings rise. The stage is filled by the
CHARACTERS from the painting)

"Light."
(The large building in the back rises)
Dot. I cannot read this word.

DOT
"Harmony."

Sunday,
By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Purple yellow red grass,
As we pass
Through arrangements of
 shadows
Towards the verticals of
 trees
Forever
 (ALL bow to GEORGE)
By the blue
Purple yellow red water
On the green
Orange violet mass
Of the grass

GEORGE
(*Reading again, struggling with the words*)
"So much love in his words . . . forever with his colors . . . how George looks . . . he can look forever . . . what does he see? . . . his eyes so dark and shiny . . . so careful . . . so exact. . . ."
(DOT *takes* GEORGE *by the arm and turns him to the group*)

GEORGE
Made of flecks of light
And dark,

ALL
(*Except GEORGE and DOT*)
And parasols . . .
People strolling through the trees
Of a small suburban park
On an island in the river
On an ordinary Sunday . . .

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Sunday . . .
(DOT leaves GEORGE, crossing upstage into the park; SHE turns toward GEORGE. The white canvas drop descends)

GEORGE
(Reading from the book)
“White. A blank page or canvas. His favorite. So many possibilities . . .”
(HE looks up and sees DOT disappearing behind the white canvas. Lights fade to black)