

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FL 9529

THE WICK AND THE TALLOW

By Henry Gilfond

Directed by Martin Donegan

Presented by Poets Theatre
in Association with the Actors Company

Produced by Scotti D'Arcy

Actors Company Starring:

IRENE DAILEY

With

John Aspinall

Nancy Howard

Shirley Leinwand

Beverly Shimmin

Del Shorter

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1967
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MUSIC LP

CONTENTS:

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE
INSIDE POCKET

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

"The ethereal quality of poetic drama is reflected in the story of six people searching for understanding. A moment in time, a shuffling in space—and the imbalance of death and birth is resolved. The honesty of the play is similar in nature to the light of a candle in darkness—intense, pure, and awesome. The worth of the writing has been attested in enthusiastic responses of America's prominent critics and producers."

— AETA Recommended Catalogue of New Plays

"It is a most unusual work indeed, reminiscent in ways to Yeats and Lorca (a comparison I mean as a compliment) in its combination of passion and a kind of poetic symbolism."

— Norris Houghton

"... enormously exciting, dramatic ..."

— Joel Schenker

Voice and Speech Consultant/Arthur Lessac

Music For Songs by Nancy Howard and Beverly Shimmin

Production Staff:

Jere Jacob/Poets Theatre

Beverly Shimmin/Actors Company

Notes by Scotti D'Arcy

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IRENE DAILEY and the ACTORS COMPANY

in

THE WICK AND THE TALLOW

by Henry Gilfond

directed by Martin Donegan

PRODUCER: SCOTTI D'ARCY

THE ACTORS COMPANY

"Besides the method, actors must have all the qualities that constitute a real artist: inspiration, intelligence, taste and the ability to communicate, charm, temperament, fine speech and movement, quick excitability and an expressive appearance. One cannot go very far with just the method."

- C. Stanislavski

One of the objectives of the School of the Actors Company (a tax-exempt theatre institute) is The Actors Company. The Wick and the Tallow is the beginning of what the School hopes to achieve: a complete theatre plant in which there would be performances on a regular basis. Productions are designed with the School staff guiding the overall concept, so that each presentation is an harmonious whole incorporating all facets of the School's training: Acting Technique, Speech, Voice and Music Training for Vocal Style and Color, Body Movement for Choreography, and Imaginative Exercises for Awareness of Customs, Costuming and Mis-en-Scene.

With this program, the School of the Actors Company hopes to encourage new playwrights to submit their work for experimentation and presentation by The Actors Company. Young directors can thus be given the opportunity to work on entirely new plays with student actors and designers -- the whole production affording all those concerned a mutual learning and creative experience. In this way, with the total theatre plant functioning as a unit, the School is training young actors who will become members of The Actors Company, a true repertory company formed as an outgrowth and extension of the School's spirit of experimentation and creative energy. The Actors Company will, in turn, become a part of a complete professional producing organization in concurrent operation with the actual School program, and which will be in performance on a regular basis in the Metropolitan Area.

This is The Actors Company's first album and presents members of the staff, students and the Artistic Director, Irene Dailey, in a new play by Henry Gilfond, playwright-in-residence.

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HENRY GILFOND (Playwright)

The works of Henry Gilfond have been familiar to a rather wide variety of readers, viewers, and students for a good number of years. In addition to teaching, he has written radio dramas, television dramas, three series of playlets for school and community groups (PLAYS FOR READING, AMERICAN PLAYS FOR READING, PLAYS FOR NOW) short stories, poetry, book reviews for The New York Times, a variety of juvenile biographies, and an occasional magazine article; at one time he edited a literary magazine, the New World Monthly, at another time the Dance Observer. THE WICK AND THE TALLOW, which followed the publication of a book of verse, JOURNEY WITHOUT END, is his first verse play, and it has been greeted with enthusiastic response by some of our leading critics and producers, and selected by the AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL THEATRE ASSOCIATION (AETA) for its recommended Catalogue of New Plays. In addition to being a member of IASTA (Institute for the Advanced Studies of the Theatre Arts) and ANTA, Henry Gilfond is at present Playwright in Residence with the School of the Actors Company.

MARTIN DONEGAN (Director)

Combining the arts of acting and directing in theatre, Martin Donegan has brought impressively fresh interpretations to such classic roles as: Richmond, Cassio and Richard II. Equally adept in the contemporary field he has shared honors with Irene Dailey in their duologue - "Of Poetry and Power", which The New York Times called the most effective of all the tributes to President Kennedy. In renewing their happy association, this time directing Miss Dailey in "The Wick and the Tallow", Mr. Donegan adds to an enviable assortment of projects which include staging "Sane Supplement" for Dore Schary, assisting Miss Helen Hayes in her one-woman show and a uniquely staged para-concert reading of the controversial play "Red Beard". On records: an unconventional treatment of "Othello" (played by William Marshall - "best Othello of our time" - H. Hobson, London Times.) ...a perceptive and sensitive interpretation of the 16th century Spanish mystic-poet St. John of the Cross and a masterly delineation of evil: - Jay Robinson's Richard III.

JOHN ASPINALL (Father)

Mr. Aspinall started in Children's Theatre doing character parts and then was seen off-Broadway in two short lived productions "Cicero" and "Go Show Me A Dragon". He studied at dance at Graham's and set design with David Hays; and as a result of his study of dance at Martha Graham's School designed the ballet set for "The American Choreographers Workshop". Followed that with two summers of stock. One doing his favorite roles - Jerry in "Zoo Story", Brick in "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof" and Don in "Moon Is Blue"; and the other doing musical theatre - dancing in "West Side Story", singing in "Gypsy" and playing Blake Martin in "Bells Are Ringing". At the present time he is directing at the School of the Actors Company incorporating all the elements of theatre into his productions. Mr. Aspinall is a student at the School of the Actors Company and a teacher in training.

IRENE DAILEY (Mother)

Irene Dailey created the role of Nettie Cleary in the Pulitzer Prize Play "The Subject Was Roses." It was called the "most magnificent realization of the season" by both the New York and Canadian reviewers. Just a few seasons before, Miss Dailey had been very warmly received in London's West End when she opened in "Tomorrow With Pictures" at the Duke of York's Theatre. The English drama critics wrote "Every imitation rose of an English actress should be dragged by the hair of the head to see Irene Dailey".

Miss Dailey won the Vernon Rice Award for the performance in the two one act plays "Better Luck Next Time" and "A Walk In Dark Places" by Stanley Mann. This off-Broadway production will be remembered by last season's audiences as "Rooms". Miss Dailey was among those honored to perform at The White House Festival Of The Arts. She has just returned from Florida upon completing a starring role in the new Ivan Tors Film for Paramount Pictures, "The Unkillables" with Lloyd Bridges. This is Miss Dailey's second album for Folkways Records, the first one "Of Poetry And Power" is an anthology of poems occasioned by the Presidency and by the death of John F. Kennedy. Miss Dailey also recorded the cast album of "The Subject Was Roses" for Columbia Records. Miss Dailey is Artistic Director of the School of the Actors Company in New York City where she continues her studies and is a member of the teaching staff.

NANCY HOWARD (Daphne)

Nancy Howard began her theatrical career with the New England Opera Theatre where she performed in such roles as Mimi in "La Boheme" and Lucy in "The Telephone". On the summer circuit, she has played Bianca in "Kiss Me Kate" and Sarah in "Guys And Dolls". Miss Howard is a graduate of The New England Conservatory of Music. She studied opera with Boris Goldowsky; lieder with Rudolph Schaar and Felix Wolfers. She is a faculty member of the School of the Actors Company.

SHIRLEY LEINWAND (Lucinda)

Miss Leinwand recently toured opposite Jose Ferrer in the musical "Around The World In 80 Days". She won unanimous critical praise for her brilliant portrayal of the Indian Princess "Aouda". On Broadway she appeared in "Music Man" and "I Had A Ball". A semi-finalist in the 1966 Metropolitan Opera Regional Auditions, Miss Leinwand is making her dramatic debut as "Lucinda" in "The Wick and the Tallow". Miss Leinwand has been a member of the School of the Actors Company since 1960. She can be heard on the just released Andre Kostelanetz Album of "Shadow of Your Simile And Other Great Movie Themes".

BEVERLY SHIMMIN (Martha)

Miss Shimmin is a graduate of Shimer College. She was Director of Religious Education at All Souls, New York and had her own radio program in Burlington, Iowa. She starred in "Skin Of Our Teeth", "Joan Of Lorraine" and "The Late George Dillon" at the Cape May Playhouse in New Jersey. Miss Shimmin's Educational Television and Studio Projects include directing "Aria de Capo", "The Dumbwaiter" and "Streetcar Named Desire". Her musical talents are many - she plays the French horn, guitar and piano and with Nancy Howard composed the music for "The Wick and the Tallow". Miss Shimmin is Director of the evening program of acting at the School of the Actors Company.

DEL SHORTER (Adam)

Mr. Shorter is a student at the School of the Actors Company where he is active in studio projects under the direction of Irene Dailey and George Keathley. Summer stock audiences in the Allenberry Playhouse area in Pennsylvania will recall his performances in such plays as "Shot In The Dark" and "Anniversary Waltz". He appeared with the Stardust Players in "Pinocchio" As Wolf and Half Feather. Mr. Shorter has appeared on both Educational and Network Television. "The Wick and the Tallow" represents his first record.

Text Material

IRENE DAILEY and the ACTORS COMPANY
in
THE WICK AND THE TALLOW
by
Henry Gilfond
directed by Martin Donegan

Presented by Poet's Theatre in association with the Actors Company
Producer: Scotti D'Arcy

Voice and Speech Consultant: Arthur Lessac
Music for Songs by Nancy Howard and Beverly Shimmin

Production Staff:
Jere Jacob - Poet's Theatre / D-J Productions
Beverly Shimmin - Actors Company

Notes by Scotti D'Arcy

Cast:
John Aspinall.....Father
Irene Dailey.....Mother
Nancy Howard.....Daphne
Shirley Leinwand.....Lucinda
Beverly Shimmin.....Martha
Del Shorter.....Adam

POET'S THEATRE

Poet's Theatre, founded by Scotti D'Arcy, is designed to showcase the work of outstanding young writers, directors, performers; and to provide exciting cultural theatre for Metropolitan audiences. Poet's Theatre offers the best in theatre and its relative arts based on the moral, spiritual and social principles of the democratic traditions of American culture. Presented in concert, the actor works with the words of the poetry and their value in creating mental imagery. All elements of production are subdued to the actor's interpretation of the poem.

This album represents the first original play in the Poet's Theatre Record Series and is the combined efforts of the Poet's Theatre and the Actors Company.

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

The initial impetus for The Wick and the Tallow, came from a footnote in Robert Graves' THE GREEK MYTHS; an ironic note on the brave effort of Oedipus to break the Theban matriarchy - (which amused and stayed with me). Some months later, a casual remark on the need to visit a mother who had just returned from a mental institution and, accident or design, abruptly, the essence of the play began to take form.
Now The Wick and the Tallow is involved with a matriarchy and with madness, both; this much is obvious; but the matriarchy and the struggles within it contribute scarcely more than a framework for the intelligence of the play; and the madness with which the play is concerned is certainly not the aberration of the mind; rather, it is the crippling of goodness, the stricture of those emotions which relate man to man, the paralysis which will not permit a man to speak the love of which he is possessed, the destruction this paralysis engenders, which constitutes the madness and, I believe, the core of the play.
The Wick and the Tallow began with myth, ancient myth, and has become, I trust, with the aid of the good works of Scotti D'Arcy, Irene Dailey, Martin Donegan and the Actors Company, an experience, not without religious intent and purpose, for today, and for all of us.

Henry Gilfond

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SIDE A

MARTHA: Adam should be here.

DAPHNE: He is not gone long.

MARTHA: He should be here,
in his house,
where the child comes.

LUCINDA: He will be here, Martha.
He will be here, when the child comes.
Find a needle.
Here is thread.

MARTHA: Adam should be here.

DAPHNE: He cannot sew.

LUCINDA: He spreads the news.

MARTHA: And what more does he spread?
I cannot think him
except here,
and the child comes.

LUCINDA: He comes, Martha.
He is a man, Martha.
What can a man with a woman's story?
He celebrates.
He worships.
He talks.
This is the man's play
with the work of God.
He will tire of talking.
He will finish with worship.
He will weary of the celebration.
He will be here.
This is the sum and the whole of it.
He will be here.

Take a needle, Martha.

DAPHNE: I will want my man by my hand.
I will want his eyes on my fingers.
I will want
his breath
on my breath.

MARTHA: You eat too many apples.
The juice seeps in your skin.

DAPHNE: And the apple is beautiful to our fingers
and to our mouths,
and our eyes are wet with it.
Do I not look beautiful on you, Martha?

MARTHA: And I plain.

DAPHNE: And dry.

LUCINDA: If you quarrel, the sheets will not be done.

DAPHNE: We quarrel and the sheets will be done.
We quarrel with our mouths, Lucinda,
not with our hearts.
Here is my needle, Martha.
I will find me another.

MARTHA: Ah, how kind my sister is,
with a needle.

LUCINDA: Enough! Enough, Martha!
The child comes and the sheets are slow.

DAPHNE: Faster, then,
and faster.

(SINGS) Needle and thread,
needle and thread,
a coverlet for the baby's bed.

Stitch and seam,
stitch and seam,
a blanket for the baby's dream.

Cut and sew,
cut and sew,
the angels watch my baby grow.

(SPEAKS) What will it be, Lucinda?
the blossom of a boy?
or the flower of a girl?

LUCINDA: It will be what it will be.

MARTHA: This house leans to women.

LUCINDA: It will be what it will be.

MARTHA: It is the will of God.

LUCINDA: So be it.

MARTHA: It was in woman God was conceived.
This is the purer song,

purer still
untouched, untrammelled.

LUCINDA: (Making sign of cross)
It will be what it will be.

DAPHNE: Its hair will be long
and its mouth a rose.

MARTHA: It will smell of myrrh
and speak of heaven.

DAPHNE: Its eyes will burn
and its feet will dance.

LUCINDA: It will be what it will be.

DAPHNE: What will it be, Lucinda?

LUCINDA: How soon it is born,
so soon will I know.

DAPHNE: What is to know, Lucinda,
except that God is blessed
and you are blessed.
Your needle moves with fixed fingers.
Mine should tremble
and mine should sing
and dance
so the moon would hear me,
and all the birds
fling their wings about,
making their music for my baby.

LUCINDA: I sing, Daphne.
You cannot hear me.
My fingers dance.
You can see them dance,
if you look.
I fear,
and I fear it.

DAPHNE: What is to fear, Lucinda?

MARTHA: The Lord is to fear.

DAPHNE: Ah, Martha! Who fears the Lord?
The Lord is good. He blesses
the coming of children.

MARTHA: The blessed children.

DAPHNE: And what child is without His blessing?

MARTHA: The fruit that falls from the twisted tree.
The devil that is born of the bird and the darkness.
The infant that is dragged from the pit at night,
when the moon is hid
and the sounds of the sea
mingle, in the shadows of the forest,
with the cry and the cry
of the labored curse.

LUCINDA: Sweeter talk, Martha!
My infant trembles in my walls.
Sweeter talk, Martha!

DAPHNE: The Lord loves.
You speak with the serpent's tongue.
The Lord loves.

MARTHA: The Lord loves who walk with love,
where the sun is high
and the shadows run to meet it.

DAPHNE: And who in their hearts
praise His pigeons,
the ribbons of His trees,
the Holy pictures He paints
on the evening skies,
on the evening seas,
He loves.

MARTHA: And those who look
and find their fruit
in the dark grottos?
Them, too, does He love, Daphne?

LUCINDA: Martha!
Hold your tongue, Martha!

DAPHNE: Wherever His fruit is,
we eat it.

MARTHA: And grow fat with monster issue
and the wrath of His Voice
in her belly.

DAPHNE: All are His who hear His Voice!

LUCINDA: She speaks her heart, Martha!
Listen to the sweet of it!

MARTHA: The moon and the birds come too soon.
God watch they come in His kingdom.

LUCINDA: Enough! Enough!

MARTHA: It is enough for me, when my sisters walk
with the light in their hands
and the beast behind them.

DAPHNE: And I walk in the ways He has led me.
He watches over me
Who speaks to the bird on the wing
and to the reed
that bends in the hollow of its grove.

MARTHA: It was His Voice then, Daphne,
in the grotto,
when the stars were His,
and the moon?

His Voice was strange then.
More to a man's throat.

I did not reap the thunder and the lightning of it.

More the hushed break
of the cock in hiding.

DAAPHNE: It was not the dog then.
It was the cat,
the addered cat,
crawling among the brush
ripping the flesh off her knees
so to see what she wished
and could not have!

MARTHA: The Lord wore His witness at His side.

DAAPHNE: A holy skin for the evil that carries it!

LUCINDA: Daphne, Martha, enough!
Enough!
Let there be peace!
I lose the stitch!
For my baby's sake,
let there be peace.

MOTHER: (SINGS, offstage)
The world is a sorrow,
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found....

LUCINDA: Hush! She comes again.

MARTHA: The house is rich with evil.

DAAPHNE: Evil grows where the breast wills it.

LUCINDA: Hush!

MARTHA: We have hushed too long.

LUCINDA: Be kind, Martha.
It was the song she sang
when she curled your hair
and sewed the cloth you wore
before you knew.

MARTHA: The song that grows of madness,
mad and cursed.
Curse and curse that visits in our walls,
settles in our shelves,
destroys our time.

LUCINDA: Gentle. Gentle, Martha.
The curse is not with us
for us to weigh,
the madness.

DAAPHNE: I fear it.

MARTHA: The devil frightens you, Sister.
Whom else do you fear?

DAAPHNE: I would the devil were out of your throat
and bleeding...

LUCINDA: Hush!
She comes.

MOTHER: (SINGING as she enters. She continues to sing as
she places two candles on the chest of drawers and
lights them, in the manner of a ritual.)

The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found,
and this the grief
with which surround
the infant born,
the infant drowned.

Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,

ay lie, ay lie.

Ay lie,
wake and cry.
The infant lives
only to die.

(SPEAKS over candles)

Wherever there is darkness
bring the dark.

(Turns to daughters who have hidden their sewing.)

It is proper you sew the shroud
before the infant is born.
Measure it on the father.
He knows where the wrist ends
and the fear begins.
There is enough darkness here
to light a moon.

(To Lucinda) Dream a while longer.
The water sharpens its knives.
You will soon know
what doors have opened
on the keys of your altars.
Where is that black dream
that delivered you
this penitence?

LUCINDA: His hair is black, Mother.
His eyes.
He has an appetite, Mother,
but blue and gold,
the color of the sea and the setting of the sun.

MOTHER: His appetite is for the ends of a rose.
It chews on his blood.
He runs a fever.
Mark his sleeve.
Mark the hem of his tongue
and the noise he sings with it.
Something he has forgotten.
He cannot find it.
Let him look.

It will discover him
a nail for his mouth,
a stone by the river,
a mountain on his throat.

LUCINDA: There is a needle here, Mother,
and a chair.

MOTHER: My chair is broken.
It waits for me.
The needle draws the blood from my hands.

(To Daphne) Who dances in your eyes, Daphne?
Your hair has the twigs of the forest.
Your mouth wants a ship
to paint it.

DAPHNE: You beat me, Mother.
You wrench the bone from my skin.

MOTHER: Ay, skin and bone and torment.
Suck on the lily.
Feed your eyes to the lip of the hair.
There is wonder yet
in the shape of a night.

DAPHNE: Ay, your voice speaks to me
and I cannot understand it.

MOTHER: Ay, the speech is mine.
But the tongue is not.

Close yourself in the walls you build
with the blood of your hands.

The stones will eat your mouth.
The stones will eat your bone,
daughter of some weak element of time.

There is nothing to believe, nothing to atone,
and the rains will leave you dry.

(To Martha) And you,
without rain, without bone,
what runs where the blood was?

MARTHA: My blood runs in rivers.
There is an endless mouth to drink it.

MOTHER: Ay, if the heart were there to wash it,
if the mouth were wet,
if the unguarded banks gave way
to the heron and the turtle...

It grows cold.
The sack invades us.

(To candles) Burn bright night....
Burn bright night,
burn the suns
out of all the dark mornings.

(She looks vacantly towards street, then SINGS as
she begins to exit right.)

The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found
and this the grief
with which surround
the infant born,
the infant drowned.

Ay loo, ay low,

grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

Ay lie,
wake and cry.
The infant lives
only to die.

(She exits, and song dies offstage.)

LUCINDA: The darkness accumulates its shadows
and she the shadow
accumulating the darkness.

MARTHA: Better the shadow tied to some living thing
than living thing
tied to shadow.

DAPHNE: Speak plain.
I am frightened
and you riddle me riddles.
What do you say?

MARTHA: I say....

LUCINDA: Speak kindly, Martha.
Her voice is not of us,
nor here.

MARTHA: A malady among maladies.
She would destroy us.

LUCINDA: Songs from the dimmed windows of her nursery.
She has forgotten and she would remember.
She sings the webs of an old dream
and we are near to it,
nearer to it than we know.

MARTHA: As we are near to the pot
and the fires melt it.

DAPHNE: Riddles, riddles.
What do you speak?

MARTHA: I speak what I believe.
I wish my sister were less afraid.

DAPHNE: Then say what it is we fear.

LUCINDA: The dark cloak that comes with evening
and sits upon the eye,
the wind that finds the channels in our bones
and blows the strange melodies among us.

MARTHA: And rides the blind madness,
curse and cursing, through all our walls.
She would bury us in our bones.
And she will.

DAPHNE: I am afraid, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Hush.

MARTHA: What shall we hush?
Blasphemy? Shall we hush blasphemy?
The rot of God sits on our house.
It rides in all our windows.
It speaks from her tongue, like an adder.
She poisons our bread.
She poisons the milk in the cup.
She drains the water from the wells of our hands.
I pray she dies before the child is born!

LUCINDA: Ay!

MARTHA: Pray! Pray that her throat dries
and the blood of the anguish dies
before the infant is born!

LUCINDA: Ay, Martha!

MARTHA: Ay! Pray!

DAPHNE: Pray! Pray that it is your throat (To Martha) dries before the infant cries, before the infant is born to sit upon your mouth! Pray! Pray that your bones are not bleached and your tongue wormed before the sad one takes your venom to God! Pray!

LUCINDA: Ay, Daphne! Martha!

MARTHA: The fear has found a courage and married it. The egg spits its head.

DAPHNE: To eat the toad.

MARTHA: With the loose blouse and the blood on it, and your skirts wide and open.

DAPHNE: For men to see what you would show them! For men to want what you would give them!

MARTHA: The curse of God gapes with you! What you have spilled in the grotto nor God nor physician makes whole again, and the curse gapes wide on this house for it!

DAPHNE: Liar!

MARTHA: The truth lies then.

LUCINDA: Martha! Daphne!

MARTHA: Slut!

DAPHNE: Hypocrite!

DAPHNE: (Striking Martha) Ay!

MARTHA: (Turning Cheek) Here! Make your body pure. Wash the black pigeons of your soul. Here! What was the name of the god invested you with wisdom among the briars? What holy flesh was it pierced the hollows of your sanctity?

DAPHNE: (Picking up shears from table, advancing on the retreating Martha) Let these shears pierce you!

LUCINDA: Daphne!

MARTHA: The truth sears.

LUCINDA: The child wakes!

MARTHA: It draws the apple to her mouth.

LUCINDA: Daphne! Daphne! Mercy!

VOICE OF FATHER: (Drunk and singing offstage) Oh handsome is what handsome's for,

DAPHNE: The black fault will find its stallion and its hooves will burn their fires in its throat! (She throws shears back to the table.)

FATHER: (Enters left, drunk and SINGING, continues singing as he enters house and performs for his daughters.)

He asked the riddle, bit and bore,
She answered him by what she saw,

There wasn't time for what she wore,
This is where the petticoat tore,
Come and see my game-o.

(SPEAKS) Ah, my three queens,
my delight, my treasure, my beauties!

(Sobering abruptly) What do you sew?
Is she shriveled then?
Is she taken?

(Down and bitter) No! Ay, Death!
No courage!
You're a mouse.
She's the cat!

Nibble on little cheeses like me!
Take us away!
Hide us in the little pots!
Chew away our bones!

Coward!
Go look in the dark of my woman's face.
There's a murder for you!
Sssssh, little Queens.
She cannot hear me.
Her ears are pinched to her head.
My voice falls like rain on the waters.
It is swallowed up.
It leaves no mark.

I am your father!
My blood lies in your blood!
It runs like rivers through your forests!
Bone for bone!
Face for face!
And fear
and fear.

The churches of your eyes saraband among the vestries.
I hear your confessions in the vespers of your tongues.
It is not for the cat you sew a blouse.
The mouse nibbles my hand.
Speak!
The drum that beats within these buttons beats slow,
and weary of its music.
Is it for me the shroud?

LUCINDA: For the infant's bed, Father,
for its naked arms,
for the bitter speech
it learns to speak.

FATHER: Pray it is a man-child.
Pray the acids are in its arms.
Pray there is fire in its mouth,
a sword in its blood.

MARTHA: Pray there is peace in its soul
and the love of God
and a woman's body
to hold it.

FATHER: (To Martha)
You would speak with the voice
of the shriveled breast.
Daughter, if you were a man
(and there's the pity)
there were priest at the temple
and blade and sword to put to sleep
the cart, the horse,
the whole stable that rots
beneath the roof.

LUCINDA: None is prophet here, Father.
None is priest.
Father, Father,
where is love among us?

FATHER: Love?

MOTHER: (SINGING offstage) The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow....

FATHER: Love is the flower that wilts before it blooms,
the bird that dies before it spreads its wings,
the corpse that is buried before it is cold.

MOTHER: (Enters, SINGING) Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

Ay lie,
wake and cry.
The infant....

FATHER: Another candle for the dead.
All is dead and dry and rotting
in their shadow she walks.

MOTHER: (Lighting candles and alternately addressing candles
and Father through following scene.)
The old bones reach for an old wisdom,
break on the curbs
at the edge of truth.
Was it the lamp that led you,
sot with the spirit of senilitie's,
or was it with the darkness you discovered the door,
fumbled your old baggage on the floor?

FATHER: You speak with seven tongues.
You prick the air with pieces of the moon.
What do you do with the candles?

MOTHER: Where there is darkness
bring the dark.

I burn the evil you bring with your breath.

Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow.
The smell of the corpse is on your fingers,
and on your mouth.

Ay lie,
wake and cry.

Corpse, with your sack empty
and your teeth full of wailing.

The infant lives
only to die.

Grow angry now.
Lift the wind in your dry sails.

Your bellow whines in my ears.
The barometer of your temper sags in the weight of
your belly.

The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found,
and this the grief
with which surround
the infant born,
the infant drowned.

Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

FATHER: If I had worshipped in strange temples,
if I had seen another face
and left my lips upon it,
if I had welled my arms
around some other wish
or wandered with my breath
upon another forest....

Look on me!
I am the carved ox.
My blood still spills
from the wounds I left on her.
I can make a noise.
I can shout to the eighth heaven,
I have the throat and the hands
and the mallet is in my fist.
I can break these floors,
I fathered these walls,
I raised this house upon its stones,
I cut out its casements
to the night....

My bones grow weary of their flesh.
This tumult tears too much
the peace that's left the wind of the hour.
Cast me down for the offal of some cow!
Sweep me from the door!
What remnant of cloth I wore
still clings to this shriveled skin
shred of what I dreamed.

Lucinda!
The child is sacred!
Nothing more!

I pray it is in the image
of God!

Ay!
Turn your faces!
Turn the innocence of your temples!
My breath contaminates the synagogues of your worship.
The receptacles close their lids on the foul odor.
The priest withers on the doorstep
and the three mirrors
twist against the noise
and tremble.

LUCINDA: The infant trembles, Father.
The infant trembles.

FATHER: Tremble now
and tremble later.
Who inherits the robes of the priestess?
Which of you eats the fire?

My waters are dried.
My banks are stone.
Some other river pours its salts into your valleys.

And the Goddess...
the goddess guards at the gates

with her death and the candle.
 Silence!
 Silence! Sisters!
 Silence!

(He is drunk again. He moves toward the door, left, SINGING)
 Oh handsome is what handsome's for,
 Come and see my game-o.
 All is fair in love and war....

(The door opens, as he reaches it. He staggers and falls to the floor; he lies there inert, as Adam enters.)

ADAM: (Stepping over the body and addressing it.)
 The king is dead!
 Long live the king!

LUCINDA: Pick him up, Adam.

ADAM: We shall lay you out in silk and ermine.
 Five hundred white horses shall carry you
 to the top of the tallest mountain,
 the one you never climbed.
 We shall fix your face to the sun.
 The moon shall sit on your feet.
 In this house
 we bury our dead
 with pity.

He lies in state.
 Let him lie there on the barren floor.
 It is nearer, so much nearer,
 the earth that waits for him.

LUCINDA: Lift him, Adam.
 He drinks too much the bitter herb.
 He dies too soon.
 Do not let him lie there.

ADAM: He blocks the traffic for the living.
 (Lifting him) Here, old man.

MARTHA: Unhappy man.

DAHPNE: (Helping lift Father) I have his feet.

ADAM: And what will you have of me, Daphne?

DAHPNE: Hush your tongue.
 I will have nothing of you.

ADAM: And there rests the error, Daphne.
 You will take what I give you.

LUCINDA: (As Father is deposited on couch)
 Gentle, Adam.
 Be gentle.

ADAM: That I can be. Gentle.
 Gentle as my child in your womb, Lucinda.
 (To Daphne) Gentle as the least wind
 kissing the lily's lips.

MARTHA: How the cock crows!

ADAM: And what more does the cock do, Martha?
 He sings. He dances. He....

LUCINDA: It is enough, Adam.

ADAM: For whom, Lucinda?

Ay, Martha! When the cock crows,
 the sun comes up to look at it
 and all the birds fly to heaven,
 shrieking with such delight....

Have you heard it, Martha?

Daphne, you have heard it.

Is the music not of heaven,
 and of hell, too,
 and all the seventy orbits of the moon
 to hear?

LUCINDA: Enough, Adam.
 I'll have no more.

ADAM: But you have had it, my beloved,
 and you have it,
 the birds, the music and the infant,
 one globe of infamy
 whirling in your womb.

LUCINDA: Adam, you talk....

ADAM: Ay, I talk,
 and testimony, Martha,
 for the crowing of the cock and the waking of the stars,
 while you sleep with your bosom closed
 and your windows sealed, tight,
 against the dreams that knock
 and knock and knock
 and cannot enter.

FATHER: (Not stirring) What door opens?
 And who enters it?

MARTHA: One is dead
 and holds on to his flesh.
 The other makes noise
 to conceal his dying.

LUCINDA: Enough of death.
 Enough of cocks and wind and noise.
 Let there be peace here.

ADAM: Peace wills its own genesis.
 Let there be war!
 (Snatching candles from chest of drawers and
 placing them at the head of Father)
 Candles!
 Candles for the dead!
 For the living and the wounded.
 (He reaches for Daphne who avoids him)
 You are not Martha, Daphne.
 Where do you hide?

DAHPNE: In sweeter hands than callous in their feathers,
 in a mouth that needs no trumpet.

ADAM: Ay, and you've lost your taste for hands and music,
 stretching your waist from these fingers.
 Touch me once, Daphne....

LUCINDA: Adam! Your throat limps
 and you lose your tongue.
 Take this linen to you.

ADAM: Time enough for linens.
 Time enough for shrouds and infants.
 My throat has a hot thirst
 and my tongue speaks it.
 Where is the mad one?

LUCINDA: Adam!

ADAM: She is mad, is she not?

(As Daphne moves to door, left)
 Where do you go, Daphne?

DAHPNE: (At door) To smell the roses.

ADAM: With your lover?

DAPHNE: He smells of sea-water.
My breath is quick for it,
the living
and the sea-water.

MARTHA: Stay, Daphne!

DAPHNE: For what?
For the sand to claw at my throat?
For the carrion bird flapping its wings?

ADAM: Go, Daphne, go.

DAPHNE: For the shadow it makes
and the smell of the wick and the tallow?

ADAM: Go, Daphne.

DAPHNE: For the bells tolling dirge on dirge
and the night weepers
black among the black cloaks
and mourning?

ADAM: Go, Daphne. Go to your lover.
Go.

DAPHNE: The need is not for urging,
not in the weathers of my bone.

MARTHA: The bone is a fickle thing, Daphne.
It changes with the wind.

DAPHNE: Let it change, then.
Now does it sing to the sound of the night bird.
Its tempest is in me.

MARTHA: Let it blow, Daphne.

ADAM: Go. Why do you wait, Daphne?

MARTHA: It carries the tide.
It dries the river.

DAPHNE: And the tides have roared in my blood
so long I remember, Martha,
and the rivers are rich
with gifts for the sea.

MARTHA: And the sea is deep, Daphne.
It drowns you, Daphne.
It drowns you.

DAPHNE: Then I will drown,
with my head in its lap,
and my eyes sealed in the wet folds
of its dreaming.

LUCINDA: Stay, Daphne.

ADAM: Ay, lie in the fallow
and let the fruit rot.

LUCINDA: Stay, Daphne.
How far you run
in the willows and the night,
you return.

However dark
the storm within your portals,
however fierce
the wind against the heart,
this is your house,
and you return, Daphne,
you return.

DAPHNE: Not the willow
to which I run, Lucinda,

but the sound it makes in my throat,
the noise it makes in my throat.

LUCINDA: This is your house, Daphne.

DAPHNE: This is not my house.
Its comfort is foreign to the touch of my hands,
and all that was familiar
grown strange.

LUCINDA: Nothing is that was not.
Nothing was that is not now.
Only our eyes grow older
and our ears forget what they have heard.

ADAM: Ay, deaf and dumb
and our fingers too numb
to make a sign.

DAPHNE: I am drawn to your blood, Lucinda.
I am drawn to the gentle drape of your singing.

I am drawn to the room, Lucinda.
And I am repelled by it.

This was my bed and my fire.
The bed has lost its pillows.
The fire is cold.

ADAM: And the house is cold and dank.

LUCINDA: Yet the bed, no other has slept in.
The room, the fire,
in your coming, in your going,
does not change.

ADAM: Ay, this cradle leaks like a sieve
its wisdom.

DAPHNE: I cannot stay, Lucinda.
Reason makes no speech with me.

ADAM: Nor me.

DAPHNE: The musician of my heart
beats out its measure
and I must dance to it.
Forgive me, Lucinda.
The rivers of my blood are heady.
They must run their course.

LUCINDA: And the course is to the sea, Daphne,
and the sea washes both its lands,
that which is distant, beyond the eye,
and that which is home, close.

DAPHNE: And I must taste of its salt, Lucinda.
And if I am close and to home,
And if I am not and distant,
you will know.

(She kisses Lucinda.)
And I would have you know, Lucinda.
I would have you know. (Begins to exit.)

ADAM: Go, Daphne.
Go.

MARTHA: And where shall she go?
Where shall she go that the dogs do not howl
and the cats whelp their young in the darkness?

ADAM: Let the dogs howl

and the cats whelp.
If I were but half image I speak myself,
my elbow hooked,
the glass in my hand,
I should walk,
leap,
run by her side,
and the sea and the briar and the wind
to drown us both.

MARTHA: And we should lay you both,
side by side,
in the shallow stream,
side by side with the turtle.

ADAM: What do you know of turtles?
What do you know of streams?

MARTHA: I go to study them,
your turtles.

SIDE B

ADAM: Candles and dirges,
This house stinks of death.
I have walked into a mortuary
and I cannot know
am I corpse or keeper.

Lucinda, there is no need for me here.

LUCINDA: I would have you stay, Adam.

ADAM: I cannot sew.
I cannot stitch.

LUCINDA: Yet I would have you stay, Adam.

ADAM: For what?

LUCINDA: To be at my side.

ADAM: To die at your side!
To rot!
(Points to Father.)
To rot like the carcass
waiting the spade and the shovel.

I stay too long. (Begins to exit.)

LUCINDA: Stay, Adam.
The father is with the house.

ADAM: Is this my house then?
Does it go by my name?

LUCINDA: How else do you reckon?
Is it another room that has you?

ADAM: What other room?
What other room will have me?
Where do I find me another?
Roof and windows to look on,
glass for the rising sun
and glass to set in?

LUCINDA: (Pointing)
In that window the sun rises, Adam.
In that window the sun sets.

ADAM: And casts no shadow the crone does not eat
before it warms a wall.

LUCINDA: We were warm here, Adam.
You have forgotten.

ADAM: If I have forgotten,
it is not because I willed it.

LUCINDA: You will remember, Adam.

ADAM: I have not forgotten, Lucinda!
I remember!

LUCINDA: Then where do you walk from me?
Where do you go?
Have I grown so foreign to the blossom you plucked
that you cannot know the flower?
Or is it the flower of another hue
turns you from it,
and you look to other gardens
for the song, the lute,
and the singer?

ADAM: Sing to me once, Lucinda.
Remember an old song.
See how much your voice may please me.
Sing as your voice came to me once,
like birds out of the winds of water.

I have not forgotten.
I do not forget.

It is the memory,
the remembering,
bites the flesh
and stings the blood to burning.

The wings flutter and the sheen of the petal pales.
I cannot, in dark, in sun, in shadow,
look on the dead hands of it.

Even now there is the distance of mountains in
your eyes.
Your voice carries the hollow of its echoes.
What was heart beating in the darkness between us
sand that has lost its rain,
silt in the dried rivers.
What was sound,
what was drum,
what was music,
still as the star
that dies in the night.

LUCINDA: And the child in my womb, Adam?
What of the child in my womb?

ADAM: Whose child, Lucinda?
Whose child in the womb?

LUCINDA: Your child, Adam,
and mine.

ADAM: Mine and not mine.
The corpse that walks the shadow has claimed it,
the rituals performed.
Baptised before it knows the waters,
dedicated and doomed,
doomed and done,
wed to the waning candle,
the breast dried of its milk,
and the house it will cover with mourning
the house it will inherit.

Sew, Lucinda.
Sew the shroud.

I have heard her sing it.
You will sing it too.
For the infant

ringed before its finger is crooked to an altar,
ringed and hollowed
to the wick and the wax
and all the seventy orbits of the dead and the dying,
and death. (He moves to exit.)

LUCINDA: Stay, Adam! Stay!

ADAM: Too long.
I stay too long.

LUCINDA: The child beats in my veins, Adam!
The child comes!
It is your child, Adam!
It was you who filled me with its yearning
and its wanting,
and its willing.
Your child, Adam.
Yours to take.
Yours to hold.
Your child, Adam.

ADAM: I will return.

LUCINDA: Stay, Adam.
What we have lost,
the child may bring.
It comes soon, Adam.
Stay, Adam.
For the child.

ADAM: Ay, stay and never go.

LUCINDA: Stay, Adam.
The child is for the house,
and the father.

ADAM: Ay, for the house,
and for the father.
And the child will come, father or no.
It will look on its father's face,
and again it will look on its father's face,
and again and again.

It will sicken of his face,
and of his speech, too.

LUCINDA: You are bitter, Adam.

ADAM: Ay, I am bitter.
I have eaten too much of the bread
that bakes in these walls.

I go to sweeten my tongue. (Exits abruptly.)

LUCINDA: Adam!

Ay, this idiot race!
Beginning and ending rolled
in a sphere
a grain of dust!

How does a man pour his mold into such a cup?
To stiffen,
grow brittle,
powder too coarse to wing a bird,
too brittle for burning?

MARTHA: (Who has moved to door) Is he gone?

LUCINDA: Gone and not gone.
Neither the root nor the flower
nor the earth that holds them.
A word in the wind,
echoing among the shafts of the mountains.

MARTHA: And where shall he be anchored, Lucinda?
The mountains are tall and the sea deep.
Where does he find harbor,

if it is not here
he lodges his ship?

LUCINDA: The mountains are tall
and the sea deep
and it is here,
he lodges his ship,
if he is captain.

MARTHA: Strange harbor,
dark harbor,
even to those who live on its shores.
Who pilots the captain and his boat
the safe journey?

LUCINDA: I had thought he could find the way,
among the reefs,
in the darkness.

I shall pilot him, Martha.
I shall pilot him.

MARTHA: (Indicating Father) As Father was,
to wreck the hull of his flesh,
and his soul,
on the shoals of the delivery?

No captain needs pilot
for such journey.

LUCINDA: You know another journey?
You know a better pilot?

MARTHA: Adam is yours.
Through you he becomes.
With him you build a house.

This house crumbles.

Find, with Adam,
another stone,
another roof,

or the stone of this rubble
and its roof
buries us all.

LUCINDA: Your wisdom leans from love, Martha.
There is a venom eats in you.

MARTHA: What love was here to learn from?
The venom grows
as it was planted, waxed and spread
to canopy the heart.
It chokes the garden in its soil.
This is the wisdom that grooms my temples.
I would it were the wisdom
to turn my sister
the love she leaves
to wither on the dried vines
of an old mourner.

LUCINDA: There is wisdom rises in our soils, Martha.
Its fruit grows large upon us.
We can neither eat of it
nor can we deny to it
its dominion.
And we ourselves
become of it
part, and whole.

MARTHA: And nothing.
And deny the face of God,
and the face of man,
both.

LUCINDA: Deny,
and yet not deny.
Somewhere must be a love in it.

I will learn.
I will learn.

MARTHA: Love is in compassion,
in the pities,
not in the nameless rush of the brush,
not in the tangled skein of the mind,
(She covers Father with blanket.)
not in the vacant places,
where the dream is dried
and shriveled
and dead.

MOTHER: (Offstage)
The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found....

MARTHA: The rains come again to drown the night
with its candles.
Such love was born of hell, Lucinda.
It breeds
a pestilence!

LUCINDA: Compassion, Martha.
You speak of compassion.
You speak of pity.

MARTHA: (Putting on shawl and moving to exit, left.)
For such there is neither pity nor compassion
but the sword the Lord gave us
to cut the living from the dead.

LUCINDA: Ay, Martha!
Your tongue is much
with living and dead,
but the sword is not for us.

Where do you go, Martha?

MARTHA: To find you Adam.
To bring him back.
To let him look on you.
The Lord knows what miracle yet
may cast His light on the blackness.

LUCINDA: The miracle is here, Martha,
In the walls of my womb.

Adam comes back.
He needs no messenger
from me
or the Lord.

MARTHA: How still your voice grows.
How dark.
You speak in her tongue.
And in her wisdom, too.

I will bring him back.

LUCINDA: For whom?

MARTHA: For who shall want him.
For you, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Or for another?

MARTHA: He is yours, if you have him.
For me:
I love neither the cock that crows at day
nor the loon that shrieks at night.
But I will not see this torment grow
without I put my hand to it.

LUCINDA: Ay, and it is your torment, too.
I have seen it in your fingers,
and in the eye that does not look

straight on it.

Where do you find him?
You know where he goes?

MARTHA: I know where Daphne goes,
and I find him. (Exits.)

FATHER: (Not stirring)
Who scorches the roof of my house?

LUCINDA: (Straightening Father's blanket)
Sleep, Father. Sleep.
All catastrophe be in your sleep.
Let the sun wake on a better morning.

MOTHER: (Enters with candles, SINGING)
Ay lie.
Wake and cry,
the infant lives
only to die.
The earth is...
(Sees candles at Father's head)
Asleep or dead?

FATHER: Dream and dream
and let the chariot take you
among the shaven mountains.

MOTHER: (Returning candles to chest of drawers)
Not ripe yet.
Soon. Soon.
When the infant comes,
then will be time enough.

LUCINDA: Mother,
there are enough candles,
are there not?

MOTHER: Enough for the dead.
Another for the coming of winter.

LUCINDA: It comes soon, Mother.
Not winter.

MOTHER: Winter, my daughter,
and the mercy.
They have deserted you.
They will desert you again,
with their blood.

FATHER: Who drinks at my springs
and taints my waters?

MOTHER: Sleep, Old Cloth.
There is sometimes wisdom in sleep,
even for the dead.

LUCINDA: Mother, is there another wisdom,
for those who live
and walk among the signs of day?

MOTHER: Ay. For them, too, is a wisdom,
Another wisdom. (She examines linens on table.)

It is well you sew the shroud before the infant.
Measure it on the father,
the living and the dead.
They know where the wrist ends and the fear begins.
(She kisses Lucinda. Looks at Father. Exits,
SINGING)
Ay loo, ay lie,
wake and cry,
ay lie, ay lie.

Ay lie.

FATHER: (Abruptly stands and screams)
Who murders the roses in my garden?
(He looks about absently, and lies back on the couch.)

LUCINDA: Oh, my Lord!
My Lord, what evil is it
sits among us,
that the child will not be born
but in blood?

How many houses do you look on, my Lord,
how many lonely hands,
how many days,
how many nights,
the infant stirs unborn,
unnamed, unknissed
among the walls of our agonies.
Have mercy, Lord,
have mercy on our house.

MOTHER: (Enters, right.)
Too much stirs within the night,
shapes and shadows.

The shrouds are done,
or nearly done.
They wait for the infant.

LUCINDA: (Becoming aware of stirring in the house.)
Mother?

MOTHER: What other apparition walks in this light?
What do you find in the darkness?
A thimble for the infant?
A horse to ride on?

LUCINDA: I caught a star
before it fell
among the elms.

MOTHER: The stars do not fall.
It is the eyes that fall --
to hide their weeping.

LUCINDA: I do not like the loneliness
of the skies.
I grow cold with their spaces,
with the lodgers that wander,
endlessly wander,
in the dry and empty waters.
I weep for them.

MOTHER: You weep for the soul
and it is the soul that is empty,
the breath that invades the blood,
the blood that courses lonely
among the lonely rivers
of the heart.

LUCINDA: My heart was mated.
I remember the drums I heard
and their wedding.

Now this drum,
this drum beneath the drum.
It flutters,
wings of loneliness.
I feel the pity of it.
My gladness is not confined to joy.
Anguish eats at its center
and I am afraid its face
will be mine.

MOTHER: Be glad for the anguish.
Be glad for the pity.
Pity and anguish -- these will stay,
these will look with you
on the cradle,

on the noises in the garden,
on the lonely table.

All else is with the shadow at noon.

LUCINDA: And what of the shadow of the moon?
What of the shadow of the moon, Mother?

MOTHER: The dance before the cock crows.
The music of the dream.

Carry the cup of your loneliness.
This much you will have.
None will wish it,
nor touch his lips to the rim.
This much you will have:
the cup and the loneliness.

Be jealous of it.
Drink it.
The singers, the dancers,
the weavers of the webs of the moon,
empty souls, empty mouths,
no less alone, the weariness
in their throats,
stumbling blindly in their pace,
seeking some idiot race
to bear their breaking faces
from the mirrors of their solitudes,
reach their fevering fingers
upon this fragile
and burning lace of time;

and the cup,
that will not slack a thirst
except the knowing,
will rest in the marble of your hands
and feed the marble of your mouth,
for the marble of your lips
and the marble of your heart.

LUCINDA: I would my heart were softer, Mother.
Stone is for walls
and house
and street to walk upon.

MOTHER: And you are all.

Walls against the winds of time.
House for the house you carry,
house for house in the breach of your womb,
and street
for who it is
will walk upon it.

All these things you speak:
walls and house and street.

LUCINDA: But it is not to sacrifice, Mother,
that I am given.
I am not given to tears.
I am not shaped for the cross or the pyre.
I am not for sacrifice, Mother.
I am a woman.

MOTHER: Sacrifice
and woman
and tears to wash the blood of the wound.
Sacrifice and tears and woman.
Woman, and not the cross and not the pyre.
Woman and woman,
as I was woman.
Woman and woman,
as I am woman,
and your daughter,
still warm in the womb,
is woman,
and knows.
Woman
and woman.

LUCINDA: And if I say No, Mother?
And if I say No
and turn my face against it,
my hands,
my mouth,
my blood?

MOTHER: Turn the sun upon a robin's head.
Carry the moon in a basket of cabbages.
Dry the cornfield with the rain.
Wash the tears from your face
with the sand the wind brings it from dried
mountains.
(Noise as if someone is in the brush offstage)
Who comes?
Who comes out of the darkness?

LUCINDA: Some dog in the brush.
Some cat.

MOTHER: There is noise among the sleeping.
Some tomb stirs in its stone.
See who comes.

LUCINDA: (Moving toward door, left.) I hear it no more.

MOTHER: The breath crowds my throat with the flowers
and the weeds of dying timbers.
Open the door.
Yet, do not open it.
I will fetch the candles to light the morning.
There can be no visitor I did not reckon.
(Noise again in brush offstage.)
Ah, the furies announce the advent
with the broken twig for their calling.
See who comes.
I will fetch the candles.
There is darkness still
which does not find
the coming.
(Mother exits, right. Lucinda exits to
porch, visible, left.)

LUCINDA: Who comes?

MARTHA: I...Martha.
(She enters porch, hot, dishevelled.)

LUCINDA: Martha?
Do you come alone?

MARTHA: The sun just comes up.
You rise early.

LUCINDA: Who sleeps in this house?
The noise rattles in all its corners.
Memory wakes on all its torments.
Remembering reams the mind
and the heart
is pruned on the screws of its doubt and yearning.
Does Adam come?

MARTHA: I looked for Daphne.

LUCINDA: Ay, Martha.
You looked for Daphne.
Does Adam come?

MARTHA: He comes not with me, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Unless he be a ghost.
What game do you play with me, Martha?
It is too soon for riddles.
With whom does Adam come?

MARTHA: I know no riddle, Lucinda,
no rune or rhyme.
I did not wait to look.

LUCINDA: Something is, Martha,
something is you do not wish to speak.

MARTHA: I speak what I say.
The wish is with you, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Your speech limps, Martha.
You dress a wound.
Something is with Adam.

MARTHA: Nothing is that was not,
except the weather,
and that returns.

LUCINDA: Weather and wise, Martha,
what do you dress?
Your speech is lame.
It halts and gives no comfort.
What is with Adam?

MARTHA: I cannot say what is with Adam.
The stranger knocks
and the door is unanswered.
The wound grows large, Lucinda,
and open.
It festers
and the healer will not bind it.

LUCINDA: You do not read the signs, Martha.
The wound is mine.
Do not think because my bed is cold
I do not think on him
who should warm it.
The pain is mine,
the barb of it,
and the arrow, too,
and I would know
what other bow
shafts the dart,
the hand that touches the string.
Speak of Adam, Martha.
I would know.
And the knowing drown me
in the gall of my own prescription,
I would know.
Speak, Martha.
Speak of Adam, Martha.

MARTHA: The way clouds with the mist of reason.
Passion holds the corners of the wood
and the sea burns
against the logic of its argument.

LUCINDA: You lose yourself in dream, Martha.

MARTHA: Not in dream, Lucinda.
In the passage of a season.

LUCINDA: What passage, Martha?
What season?

I ask of Adam.
Speak of Adam.

MARTHA: Hear then!

I came upon a grove.
The grove was dark.
I approached
and there was light,
not light common to the day,
nor to the common light of the sun,
some other light,
strange and burning,
burning an old sin
new!

LUCINDA: I care nothing for what is new,
nor what is old.
I would hear of Adam.

MARTHA: I tell you what I came on.

LUCINDA: And the kernel of the nut
you keep from me.

MARTHA: I tell you what I saw.

LUCINDA: And what you would conceal
rides up in me like a torrent.

And what you reveal
you speak in tangled phrase.

Speak plain, Martha,
and let there be no blood between us.

MARTHA: Nothing is between us
that is not blood.

LUCINDA: Say what it is that passed
in the darkness.

MARTHA: I have said.

LUCINDA: Ay, you have said,
and your tongue twists east and west,
yet I know what you have said.

MARTHA: I am weary, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Ay, you are weary, my sister,
and your throat sounds an old song,
your hair loose,
your cloth torn,
your eyes burned to coal
and the primrose
flush in your face.
Was it for Daphne your mouth turned?
Or was it his coat,
Adam's coat you followed,
like a briar that would not be loosened?

MARTHA: You do me wrong, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Ay, I do you wrong.

Go wash your face
and mend your dress.
It does not become a wife
to greet her sister
fresh from the warm
of her husband.

MARTHA: Nor your husband,
not any husband
holds me warm.

Do not put on me
the sin that freshens out this house
with scarab
and scorpion.

Your ears echo with the witch of sounds
that seams our roof.
Your mouth speaks the tongue
of the cry
that drowns it.
If my hair is loose
and my cloth is torn
and my face is flushed,
it is all of the night's consuming,
nothing more.

What was Adam
is yours,
what will be yours.

You do me wrong, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: I do you wrong, Martha.
I do you wrong.

The time comes soon.
It brings all roads,
those I know and those I do not know,
close.
I am torn; which journey
must I travel.

I do you wrong, Martha.
Forgive me.
(Noise in the brush offstage.)

What noise was that?

MARTHA: I hear no noise.

LUCINDA: Forgive me, Martha.
I am over-wrought.
The child is soon.
My passions surface quickly.

Forgive me, Martha.

MARTHA: Let them who wander in the woods
ask it.
Let them who lie in their obscenities,
naked and shameless,
let them ask it.

LUCINDA: You saw then, Martha?
You saw?

MARTHA: Shapes and shadows.
I looked no further.
May the Lord forgive them.

LUCINDA: May the Lord untwist their souls!
May the Lord unwind their flesh
and leave the flesh
to rive in agony
upon the flesh!

MARTHA: Compassion, Lucinda.
Compassion.

LUCINDA: Ay, compassion!
From whom compassion, Martha?
From the child that comes
rent and hollow and dead from me?

MARTHA: No, Lucinda, No!

LUCINDA: Let it come then dead.
I bury it in his bosom.

No!
In the bowels I dig with these fingers,
in the fouled soil that grows beneath his belly!

You saw him
and you will not say.

You are good, Martha.
Forgive me.

You are good
and it is true:
the sins of the house disorganize my senses.
My passions burn beyond the marrow
of all my judgement.

Forgive me, Martha.
Pray for me, Martha.
Pray that the nails of my fingers
fever some strange and awful compassion
in their murder!

MOTHER: (SINGING offstage.) The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found.

LUCINDA: Too much black blood
flows through my veins.
It stops the wind in my throat,
the joints of my eyes are joined
some craven tomb.
The callouses of my hands,
the callouses of my soul,
suffer the death she wears
for all the hours
the suffering and the distorted hours
of all our waking.

MARTHA: Think less on death, Lucinda.
It is the Lord who gives,
and the Lord who takes.

LUCINDA: The Lord forgets this house.
He has marked it off.

MARTHA: There is no house unmarked, Lucinda.
(Leading Lucinda toward Exit, right)
Come.
Your eyes are hot with the anguish you have stored
in your bosom.
(Adam is heard SINGING offstage)

LUCINDA: Do I hear singing?

MARTHA: It is the morning lark.

LUCINDA: Not Adam?
I thought it was Adam I heard.

MARTHA: The morning lark.
Its voice is sweet
and beckoning.

LUCINDA: Ah, to have the fluttering song of the bird
where I carry the sorrow.
Ah, to have its wing, its knowing,
where I carry the grief.

MARTHA: You carry the song, Lucinda.
You carry the wing.

LUCINDA: I shall be the eagle!
I shall sink my talons
into the flesh of the lamb.
I shall soar
above the land and the water,
and my beak shall be full

and drip of its venom.

MARTHA: You are fevered.

LUCINDA: Ay, I am fevered with a murderous passion!

MARTHA: Still, Lucinda. Still.
Your tongue does not know what it speaks.

LUCINDA: It speaks the ashes of my soul, Martha.
It speaks the wind that carries it
to the darkness of the heart.

MARTHA: Still, Lucinda. Still.
The sky lights with the sun.
The day is on us.

LUCINDA: And the child comes soon.
The child comes soon. (They exit, right.)

FATHER: (He stirs, wakes slowly, sits up, examines himself.)
Still a piece.
Sagging flesh, cloth that will not fit.
Still a piece.

Ay, sweet dream of noise and tumult,
better I had stayed with you
and all your dyed dissension
than wake on this unfinished scene
and silence.

The candles have burned themselves down.
The shroud waits for the wearer.

How long does a man suffer his death
before he lose it?

ADAM: (Entering.) What will a man that he cannot have?
Winter's snow and the summer leaf.
What will a man that he cannot have?
Sorrow, tears, and a woman's grief.

FATHER: Lie in the water.
It is morning.
The fish do not know
the river.

ADAM: What's that?
What do you say?

FATHER: I say the fish do not know the river.

ADAM: Ay, it was a monster,
a school of monsters,
you took last night.
They stay with you
and trip your tongue.

FATHER: And what did you take last night, Adam,
that you are so full of mournful singing?
Don't say.
I know.

The brush is still in your hair.
But your head?
How close to the heart is your head, Adam?
Have they folded hands, one with the other,
or do they walk separate,
and idiot,
and apart?

ADAM: So close, Old Man,
so close the head and the heart,
they do not speak,
and one is deaf to the other.

FATHER: And each grows stone

and one against the other.
Do you think you escape it?

ADAM: Stone?
That we all come to.
But my flesh moves against time,
my blood runs to circles
and my desire is to the living.

FATHER: It is an old story.
It repeats itself;
the flesh, the blood,
the desire and the living.

And the walls and the roof
and the melted candles;
this is an old story, too.

ADAM: For a season.
I choose for a season.
What is so impermanent as a season, Old Man?

FATHER: Nothing,
and nothing more fixed.

Is it your own winds you bring, Adam?
Is it you know how to wet a river?
Dry a soil?

ADAM: Ay, wet a river, dry a soil;
wet a soil, too, when the wetting is in the wind;
or does Lucinda look to you
unwombed?

FATHER: Ay, you have wet a soil.
And another and another,
and not the man that wets the soil
but the fear.

ADAM: Fear of what?

FATHER: Do not shout, Adam,
except if there is anger,
and the anger stirs not for me
but for what lies naked and afraid
in your bosom.

ADAM: I am neither naked nor afraid,
nor think me in your image.
I shall not die in this house.

FATHER: In whose house, Adam?

ADAM: In mine!

FATHER: These windows are not yours, Adam.
I built them and they are not mine.
How do you propose
they shall be yours?

ADAM: I do not propose this old tomb.
Let it collapse of itself and its candles.
The land does not shrink so fast to the waters
and the hands are willing.

FATHER: The speech is good.
I will be convinced.
Do you convince
she who bears the child?
or another?

ADAM: If I do not convince
who bears my child,
I convince another.

FATHER: Better it were Lucinda.
Too much of the Mother moves in her.

Ay, if that small touch of her
remaining mine were sounded....

If you were my son, Adam,
I could not speak
so humbly.
There is a difference in our flesh.
Yet there is something of the same.

Move the difference.
Let the same die.

In this house
it is all the same.
Whichever woman please you,
whichever promise you make,
it is all the same.
Each bosom buries you deeper.

Do I speak to myself, Adam?
You speak to me, Old Man,
and I hear you.

FATHER: Ay, good.
And now I speak to the hills,
ask how soon they come,
and the winds and the water.

The hills have a way of knowing
a man has not.

I would some part of it
were mine. (He exits, left.)

SIDE C

MARTHA: Who was it closed the door?

ADAM: The Old Man.

MARTHA: Where does he go?

ADAM: He says he goes to the hills,
to consult some oracle there.
I think he goes to find another place to forget.

MARTHA: He has too much to remember.
He will not find it.

Lucinda sleeps.

ADAM: Good.

MARTHA: She knows where you go.

ADAM: Oh?

MARTHA: She knows and she does not know.

ADAM: And it is all the same with her.

MARTHA: The same and not the same.
The Old Woman works on her bones,
but the blood stirs in her,
the woman,
and the wife.

ADAM: There is small noise of it.

MARTHA: There will be more.

ADAM: The Old Woman will make short of it.
Does she prepare her candles?

MARTHA: It was still where she sleeps.

ADAM: The cock has yet to crow in her dreams.

MARTHA: What do you do, Adam?

ADAM: My eyes weigh down on me.
The Old Man has warmed the bed.
I sleep, while there is peace in the house.

MARTHA: There is no peace in the house,
in sleep or in waking.

What do you do, Adam?

ADAM: Consult with the wise men who come
when the lids are closed and the night
splits a hair for wisdom.

MARTHA: Do not turn your back, Adam.
The wisdom was in your mouth
and in all your fingers,
where the moon cut through the grass
and hung to its darkness.

Does it run from you now,
like a hare from a hound?

What is it you say now, Adam,
now it is the time for saying?

ADAM: I say I would sleep, Martha.
I am weary with the night
and I would sleep.

MARTHA: Sleep then!
Already you take to the sodden shape of the Old Man,
and to his speech, too!
How brave were your words in the dark!
How warm your tongue!
Ay!
The beast is warm in the wood,
and under the moon.
And the beast cowers
and hides behind the skirts of day.

ADAM: The beast has run long and far into the night, Martha.
It neither cowers nor hides.
It rests its loins for another night.

MARTHA: And when comes that night?

ADAM: So soon the sun sets and the moon rises.
Sit by me, Martha.

MARTHA: I have already sat with you.

ADAM: Then lie with me.
I will warm you in sleep
and the dream will be warm.

MARTHA: Time to sleep
and time to dream.
Now it is time for neither,
sleep nor dream.

What do you do, Adam?

ADAM: And what do I do, Martha?

MARTHA: If a woman says,
then it is said.
The woman has already spoken.

ADAM: She is with child, Martha,
my child.
Does she sing another song
when the child comes?

MARTHA: You ask and you know.

Sleep, Adam. Sleep.
You are already eaten.

ADAM: Not eaten.

MARTHA: Chewed, then.

ADAM: The hems of my sleeves.
No more.

MARTHA: Look closer, Adam.
Look close.
Look at the flesh and bone,
what is left of it.

ADAM: I look, Martha.
I look and I see the whole:
the head, the heart, the hands...

MARTHA: Ay, and your eyes.

ADAM: Eyes that hear the shadows fumbling in their corners,
Ears to see them.
And feet and legs that do not frighten,
frighten and run with the feeble fright
from the sounds they make.

MARTHA: Running is for boys
and the infant who cannot walk.
It is not that race which dwells with me, Adam,
the race for the young in blood
who cannot know which way they go.

It is the ruin that runs in me,
it is ruin, the rabid coal that burns my soul
and heats the kettle of my purpose.

ADAM: What purpose?
Ruin enough
in this brooding furnace.

MARTHA: Enough and not enough.
The keener edge it lacks,
to cut the rot in its core,
to flood us clean in the Lord's face.

ADAM: What do you speak, Martha?

MARTHA: The Lord rains His Word on us
to wet us His pastures.
He brings us a sword
to till the soil.

ADAM: Where do you lead with this passion?
There is more.
I would hear it.
Something kindles in my flesh to it.

The sword divides.
Whom does it divide?

MARTHA: Not the sword, but the blade,
the blade for the slayer,
the edge for the slain.

ADAM: And there would be blood on it.

MARTHA: Water where the Old Man wanders,
among the hills.

ADAM: (Face to face with Martha.)
And red in the hands of a lover.

MARTHA: You begin to speak.

ADAM: Say it plain, Martha.

MARTHA: I speak plain.

ADAM: Is it for this your eyes followed me?

MARTHA: For this, and more.

ADAM: Is it for this
you caught my arm in the brush?

MARTHA: For this and more.

ADAM: Is it for this you asked my mouth?
For this you bent with me
in blood and burning?

MARTHA: For this.

ADAM: Say it plain, Martha.
I would know.
I would know.

MARTHA: For what it was my eyes followed,
for what it was I took your sleeve,
for what it was I leaned to you,
and bent with blood and burning.

ADAM: Your voice is like a rod in me.
It turns to serpents.
It coils a venom in my throat.

When came this on you, Martha?

MARTHA: In your face.
In your hands.
In your fingers.

ADAM: Ay!

MARTHA: Ay, Adam, ay!

Do you run then, Adam
and do you die?

Does the hilt in your bowels
retch for your hands?
Or do you take the blade, Adam,
and slay with it?

ADAM: You are mad.
You are madder than all.
And I love you for it.

MARTHA: Then will you take the sword?

ADAM: Ay!

MARTHA: The Lord's sword?

ADAM: Ay! The Lord's sword!

MARTHA: And you will know where to place it.

ADAM: And I will know where to place it.

MARTHA: Then in God's name,
I love the fingers of you,
and the lips of you,
and all the flesh you can pour on my body.
Adam!

(They embrace as Daphne enters.)

DAPHNE: Draw me aside.
I have seen nothing.

ADAM: What is to see?

DAPHNE: I have seen nothing.

ADAM: Sister and brother embrace.
Who frowns on it?

DAPHNE: I neither frown on it,
nor will I sing on it,
I have seen nothing.
Draw me from it.

ADAM: Ay. Then we draw you from it.

DAPHNE: God sits on our house!
The curse is in all our windows!

MARTHA: The windows are shut.
The house crumbles.

DAPHNE: Ay! And the storm wings in the rafters

and the house shakes!
The Lord releases the winds in His throat
and my sister trembles!

MARTHA: Not for the storm
and not for the wind;
for the Word of God
and His promise.

DAPHNE: What promise does the Lord make
that you cannot look on me?

MARTHA: I look on you.

DAPHNE: Or is it Adam promises
and you fold your breast in his hand?

MARTHA: I speak of the Lord,
not Adam.

DAPHNE: And the Lord, my eyes have heard,
relinquishes His passion,
and Adam's calloused fingers
have found it.

ADAM: I made no promise.
Your eyes have heard nothing!
Deaf with the wood and the river in your hair!

DAPHNE: And in my belly, too, the wood and the river!
The river and all the springs that well in it!
And not of my brother!
And not of the husband
to my sister's blood!

My love grows fresh on the vine
and not in the bed of another!

ADAM: It is all the same.

MARTHA: Not the same.

DAPHNE: And now are we spawned pious.

MARTHA: Not pious.

DAPHNE: Penitent, then.
Pious or penitent!
How good to rest the sin
on the flesh that's seared and mortified!
How comforting
the cover of its mercy!

MARTHA: Nor penitent, nor is it
mercy I ask.

DAPHNE: You ask no more.

You have received your plenty!

MARTHA: Did it dream in you, Daphne,
the tongue of wrath were still,
and turned, in stillness,
to God to shield it?

ADAM: You speak too much.

MARTHA: Do not listen.
I speak to Daphne.

DAPHNE: Ay, speak to me, Martha.
 Speak to me of wrath.
 I will listen.

MARTHA: And I have spoken.

DAPHNE: Ay. You have spoken.
 Wrath that is still
 and wrath that turns to God to shield it.
 But of my wrath, Martha?
 What do you say of my wrath?
 Of the wrath that seals the venom in my mouth
 and spits upon my breath
 and holds these fingers fast,
 my flesh clawing?

MARTHA: I say that the hand would rest with the mouth
 and the fingers clutch at what is clawed,
 and all the world you would destroy,
 the evil is there
 and you leave it whole,
 and you know only the skin that covers it.

DAPHNE: You are born to speeches, Martha,
 and your speech removes me in a contortion of journey.
 I am confused in the direction,
 and in the destination
 I am confused.

MARTHA: I speak plain.
 It is the passion confuses,
 not the speech,
 the senses,
 imprisons the mind,
 returns the understanding
 blind to its center.

DAPHNE: What is there to understand then, Martha?
 Except what I see,
 and I cannot see what passion
 wields the whip.
 There is an insanity
 breeds here its madness.
 It broods a cataclysm,
 a holocaust.

MOTHER: (SINGING offstage) The world is a sorrow
 around, around,
 in which who follow
 the sootheless sound...

(She continues singing in the background)

MARTHA: Madness and madness.
 This house looks to blood
 to spin its weave on.

DAPHNE: The blood is in your eyes, Martha.
 It blinds you.

MARTHA: Aside, Daphne,
 or the blood fountains
 where you stand.

DAPHNE: I stand where I stand.

MARTHA: Aside!
 Look to you, Adam!
 Look to your anger!
 Move it once!
 Move it once and let the light
 pour down its glorified hemisphere!

DAPHNE: Madness and madness!
 What do you do, Martha?

MARTHA: Aside!
 This is no hour for babes and infants!
 Adam!
 You know what there is!
 and what will be done!

ADAM: (Clutching shears from table.) I know.

DAPHNE: Adam!

ADAM: Away!

DAPHNE: Martha!
 (As door, right, opens.) Mother!

LUCINDA: (Enters, right. She carries two candles and
 continues Mother's song.)
 Ay lie,
 wake and cry.
 The infant lives
 only to die.

The world is a sorrow,
 around, around....

ADAM: Lucinda!
 God grant us mercy!
 The madness has seeped into her bones.

DAPHNE: Into your bones
 the madness!

MARTHA: Be still, Daphne.

DAPHNE: And you excite to murder!

MARTHA: You will have it yet!
 Wait on it!

DAPHNE: Patience waits!
The blood cries against it!

MARTHA: Look to the eyes of Lucinda, Daphne.
She does not hear you.
The tallow seeps in her skin.
The wick burns its moles
in the rings of her fingers.

DAPHNE: Ay!

ADAM: Ay!
What do you do with candles, Lucinda?
What ghost of darkness
looses the white streams
of your gentle mind?

LUCINDA: (Has continued singing, placing candles on the
chest of drawers.)
Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie....

ADAM: What shadow, unenvied shadow,
muddies your clean waters?
What ferment festers
the green grass of your gentle season?
(He gently takes the candles from Lucinda.)
No candles, Lucinda.
No candles.

LUCINDA: I bring darkness for the light.

ADAM: The light is gone, Lucinda.
Let the day walk into your eyes.
Spill the night that draws them to, Lucinda.
Candles for the dead, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: (Retrieving candles, returning them to chest.)
Candles for the infant.
(CHANTS)
A candle is
for the infant born.
A candle is
for the infant drowned.

ADAM: (Snatching candles, smashing them to the floor.)
For the old crone that turns the blood to sand and stone!
For the old crone who sits on us like a mountain!

LUCINDA: The stone is with us
in the hollow of the breast.
It rides from the mountain.
The sound is white as bone.

ADAM: Tallow
is for the infant.

ADAM: Who speaks these words, Lucinda?
Whose tune do you carry?

LUCINDA: (Stooping for the candles.)
Dark is the light
and the darkness dissolves it.

ADAM: (Restraining Lucinda, crushing candles with his feet.)
Enough of darkness! Enough of dark!
No more!

LUCINDA: More and again.
Again and more.
The walls rise and the doors climb
on the tides of the wind.

ADAM: How shall the darkness
light on the tree
and the mountains be born
on the closing sea?

ADAM: The devil's jargon!
What evil spins the mourner's cloth?

LUCINDA: Mourning and the sabbath,
the going and the coming.
The will is to wither
and who is to child,
where the well dips clean
its waters.

DAPHNE: Ay!

ADAM: Ay!

LUCINDA: (Picking up candles.)
Brave candles,
burning the sun and the stone,
dripping the night across our walls.

ADAM: Lucinda....

LUCINDA: (SINGING) Ay loo, ay low....
(She begins to light the candles.)

ADAM: (Staying her hand.)
Lucinda...
I speak with you, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Weep now where the cloth seams the drowning.
Weep for the eyes that sing it.

ADAM: I would speak with you, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Let the voices ring the chariot.
The shadows spill on the carpet.
The race begins among the far-leafed hyacinths.

ADAM: How can I speak with you,
you cannot hear me.

LUCINDA: Who stays my hand?

ADAM: Separate lands,
and yet we are joined.

LUCINDA: To the end that begins,
to the hem of all our anguish.

ADAM: Where do I find the lock between them?

LUCINDA: Unlock the stones in the river.
Look where the carriage runs amok
and the blind horse
stumbles in its stable.
Unloose my hand.
I light the candles.

ADAM: Light the candles.
Wiser than death
I cannot be.

LUCINDA: Death, give birth
to the black soil.
(She lights candles and SINGS)

ADAM: And the sorrowed child. Bed for bed
and wall for wall.

LUCINDA: (Singing)

The world is a sorrow,
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found.....

FATHER: (Enters and takes in scene)
Ah, the old voice descends,
the new voice rises.

ADAM: Another needle to prick me?

FATHER: None to prick you.
Memory,
and the remnants of desire.
These are the thorns
remain long after
the promise spring has
made its winter.

ADAM: Lucinda has the proper key.
Listen to her sing.
Listen!

FATHER: I have an ear to it.
It is new
and it is old,
strange and familiar,
the variation on an old air.

LUCINDA: (Singing)
Ay loo, ay low,
grief and glow.....

ADAM: Where is the peace that rests the mind
against such music?

LUCINDA: Ay loo, ay low!

ADAM: (Smothering candles in his hands)
I will have no more of it.

FATHER: Ay, sweet rebellion!

LUCINDA: What sacred flame do you diminish?

ADAM: No More! No More!
We are finished with candles!
We are finished with the dark!
and we are finished with the light!

LUCINDA: What sacred flame do you diminish?
What fires do you burn?

ADAM: The sacred fire is not lit on a wick, Lucinda!
The flame does no wax on candles!
Not for us the candles, Lucinda!
Not for us!

MOTHER: (Who has entered during Adam's speech)
For whom the candles?
For whom the pointed arrows?
and the wound they lead to?

ADAM: For the ghou! that walks between the walls!
for the shade that wraps a roof about her loins!
for the night that comes down black
on the toads of all your lamentations!

FATHER: Ah, sweet rebellion,
sweet rebellion.

MOTHER: And for this your throat shouts
and your mouth bleeds
and you wake the wind with your small banners?

ADAM: For me!
For Lucinda!

For what is mine!
I shout!

FATHER: Shout, brave diction! Shout!

ADAM: My mouth bleeds!
and my throat knots!
and do you cut it or not,
the small pebbles rolls down the mountain
and there will be a river!

MOTHER: Ay! See it flow then,
feeble in its feeble territories.
See how the mountain quakes to its banners.
Loosen the knot in your throat, Adam.
Drown the small pebbles.
The colors of your flags
touch on a strange tent;
the colors fade in your hands,
the poles bend
and break.

ADAM: Dark lexicon.
It rattles and whets the weather of my purpose.

MOTHER: What weather, what purpose,
it shrivels with time,
and not one stone do you turn,
not one mark do you leave,
except as it comes from another.

ADAM: Yet it is a shadow that speaks.

MOTHER: And the shadow more flesh
than the flesh
that fits your bone.

ADAM: Then my bone will speak,
speak for the flesh that meets it
and, dark or shadow, cankered meat or mountain,
what is mine, of blood and stone,
is mine!
and neither ghost nor shade nor incantation
separates us!

MOTHER: What is yours, Adam,
is marked.
Take it!

ADAM: (Moving to Lucinda)
The walls do not bury us, Lucinda.
The door swings to and fro on its hinges.

MOTHER: It is the house, then, your design,
that your talk soars and your hands tremble?

ADAM: (To Lucinda) Take my hand, Lucinda.
This house is not for us, Lucinda.
Nor for you, nor for the infant, Lucinda.
(Taking Lucinda's hand) Take my hand.

MOTHER: (Chanting)
Ay, Lucinda,
take his hand.
Take him from my house.
Take the child.

ADAM: I would hold you, Lucinda.
I would hold the infant.
We are not for here, Lucinda.
(Moving Lucinda towards door)
We are not for here.

MOTHER: (Chanting)
Dark, dark, are the walls in the windows.
Dark, dark, is the door.

(Lucinda halts and looks back to Mother)

ADAM: The walls are broken, Lucinda!
The door swings on its hinges!
Hold my hand, Lucinda!
Hold my hand!

LUCINDA: (Releasing her hand)
This my house,
the windows and the walls.

ADAM: Not here, Lucinda!

LUCINDA: This is my house, and here is my child.

ADAM: No, Lucinda! No!

MOTHER: I look on the wake of darkness.
I wait on the end of the tree and the night.

LUCINDA: Wait no more.
Wait no more, Mother.

ADAM: Lucinda!
Where do you take your flesh?
Where do you take my bone?

MOTHER: I turn my face.

LUCINDA: Light the wick!
Let the candle burn!
Turn back your face, Mother.
Look back on the child.
This is my house
and here is my child,
and the wick
and the tallow.

ADAM: Then damn this house!
Damn this house!
Damn the child and the woman that bears it!
and damn the throat that smothers,
with its shrouds and its candles,
the walls I would build with my flesh and my blood!
(He picks up the shears)
God put my hand to it!

DAPHNE: Mother!

ADAM: Ay, Mother!
Call on all the heavens for her!
Call on all the darkness!
Call on the candles!

LUCINDA: Adam!
What do you do?

DAPHNE: The shears, Mother!

MOTHER: My bosom is open for it.

ADAM: And the vinegar that rusts in its milk!

LUCINDA: No, Adam!

ADAM: I cannot hear you, Lucinda!

LUCINDA: I go with you, Adam!

DAPHNE: She goes with you, Adam!

ADAM: My ears are deaf with the blood in them!

FATHER: Not for blood, Adam!
Not for blood!

LUCINDA: I go with you, Adam!
I go!

ADAM: It pours white!
It scours the floors!

FATHER: Not blood, Adam!
Not blood!

DAPHNE: (Trying to stop Adam)
She goes with you, Adam,
She goes with you, and the child!

LUCINDA: With the child, Adam!

ADAM: (Shaking off Daphne)
The Lord give me strength!

MOTHER: My heart waits on it.

ADAM: And Crusts no more!

LUCINDA: Adam....

FATHER: Idiot!

ADAM: The Lord be praised!

LUCINDA: Adam!
(Adam strikes...and the old man receives the blow.)

LUCINDA: Ay!

FATHER: Ah!
What evil work comes to an end
this evil hour?

DAPHNE: Oh, Father!
What calamity is this that falls on you?

MARTHA: Clumsy!
Clumsy heart!
and clumsy fingers!
Whose work have you finished?

DAPHNE: Speak to me, Father!
Speak to me!

ADAM: He is dead.

DAPHNE: And you it is
has murdered him!

ADAM: Dead.

MOTHER: Not dead.

MARTHA: Clumsy.

MOTHER: Not dead
and not murdered.
There is blood in him yet.
Lift him to his couch.

DAPHNE: They murder!

MOTHER: Not murder.
Train your tongue.
Lift the old bones to their couch.

DAPHNE: MURDER!
(To Martha as she helps lift Father to the couch)
Plead with the wounds to wash your hands!
Plead with the dumb blood to wash your sins!

MOTHER: You will bind your mouth
You will still your tongue.
I will hear no more of it.
Take Lucinda.

She is faint.

DAPHNE: Ay, I take Lucinda.
But I bind no mouth!
and I still no tongue!
They have taken between them!
and they shall give!

MOTHER: All give, all take,
as the day is measured
and the night counts out its hour.
Take you Lucinda now.

DAPHNE: Ay, I take Lucinda.
And I count the night
and I measure the day
and I will not let unhealed
the wound they have opened.

LUCINDA: Ay! Ay! Ay! (They exit)

MOTHER: He breathes.
There is still breath in him.

MARTHA: What breath he had
you took,
not the shears.

MOTHER: He breathes still.
(To Adam) Fetch a physician, Adam.
The flesh is slow to yield to time.
Yet it yields.
Yet it yields.
(To Adam) Fetch a physician.
We say he fell upon the blade.
He falls much.
(To Adam) Why do you wait?
Fetch a physician.

ADAM: It was not my purpose,
Old Man,
to run you blood across my hand.
I go. (He exits)

MARTHA: He comes not back.

MOTHER: He comes.

MARTHA: To die again?

MOTHER: He comes again.

MARTHA: He comes not.
Fool he is!
and clumsy!
but he comes not.

MOTHER: And if he comes not ...
(She moves to candles, lights them.)
Yet he comes.
Man comes to the arrow,
as woman to the wound.
He comes.
(Sings) The world is a sorrow,
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found.....

(Lucinda screams off stage)

DAPHNE: (Enters) Lucinda calls.

MOTHER: Ay, The child is soon.
Look you to the old bones.
Look you to his comfort, (Exits)

DAPHNE: There is need of word between us.

MARTHA: What word has not been said?

DAPHNE: I am slow to the wheel,
but the road turns.
I begin to understand the wet and the warp of it.

MARTHA: You understand the ripple in the water,
the pink of the petal.

DAPHNE: And the roots that move in the dark
and the deep sea of the tide.
There is more bride of love
than I had fathomed.
I will think on it. (She begins to exit)

MARTHA: Where do you go?

DAPHNE: There are some I think would know
there has been a murder. (She exits)

SIDE D

(Father still lies on the couch. Martha stands at door left,
looking out toward street. Two candles burn on the chest
of drawers.)

(In the following scene, Father speaks for the most part out
of delirium, Martha rather to herself.)

MARTHA: The noises are all made.
They wait in the small crevices they niche for
themselves,
In the tall grass, in the small rivers,
dumb as the beast.

Father, Father,
what sensuous sealing breed poured this
transient mold,
it stamps itself, frame and fever,
in the wax of your face.

Yet it were I loved the face
the more it breathed.
Some promise concealed in the wages of its colors
churned some fat in me,
thickened in the course of my veins,
hardened.

Now it dies, like all else,
the sparrow, the eagle, the wind upon the waters,
nor love nor pity flex the stem,
and I, too,
am become indifferent,
indifferent to the wound,
to the wound and the sorrow, both.

You look on me, Father.
What is it the eye sees?

FATHER: I look on Martha.
What the eye sees?
for that I have never had the speech,
or the courage.
How long do you sit, Martha?

MARTHA: The candles burn
and I wait for Adam.
Time draws its nets slowly
on the waiting hour.

FATHER: Ay! The waiting begins at the crest of the river.
The tides bring it down.
Martha!
When does this pain cease?
Martha...
Martha...
My blood runs cold.
Cover it.

MARTHA: I cover it.

MOTHER: (Enters with two candles. She looks at Father. Does not look but speaks to Martha, as she moves to the chest of drawers, replacing old candles, lighting new ones)

Did you look to the wound?

MARTHA: It bleeds.

MOTHER: It washes the soils.
It prepares the bud for burning.

The infant born
The infant drowned.

His sleep is not broken?

MARTHA: Soon it breaks.
Soon he neither sleeps
nor wakes.

MOTHER: Ay, he has wept enough.
The cry is hoarse in his throat.
It begs for wearing.

The world is a sorrow
around, around ...

MARTHA: And for whom do you sorrow with your singing?
And for whom do you cry?
And for whom do you weep?

MOTHER: The wells of my eyes are long dry,
my mouth too old.
I neither cry
nor call on anguish.

MARTHA: Too old.
Too dry.
Ay!
The old hulk sinks among the fish,
scatters its hollow,
and the shouting of the gulls
is on the dead beak
and the broken sands
cover them.

MOTHER: Yesterday is the tumult,
the sun the morning,
the virgin naked on its shores.

Ay lie,
wake and cry....

MARTHA: Cry once!
Shout!
I would know one break of sorrow
in your cracking skin,
one wrath of pain!

MOTHER: Then do you cry!
And do you shout!
There is noise enough in your anger
for two,
and more than two.

MARTHA: And for all the anguish that settles in this house
and worms its walls.

(Indicating Father)
Was it once you loved him?
Did you love him once?
Was there ever love
in the solemn mass you practice,
in the rended fat and the wick?
Was there ever love in you,
in the walls, in the windows,
that did not whirl
about some dead thing?

MOTHER: I loved you, Martha.

MARTHA: Ay, in some baleful dream.

MOTHER: Before your small mouth made its first sound
I loved you.
When you were still round in my womb
and you were round at my breast
and slept in the cradle I rocked you.

MARTHA: And the cradle and the rocking
you forgot,
and the dirge seeps up
from the darkness
of all your wrinkled wells.

MOTHER: Dirge and cradle
seam the one cloth,
and I counted the days,
each setting of the sun,
and you grew, not within the orbit
of my reckoning,
but like some flower as yet unborn,
away from the sun,
toward some light
the darkness of my fingers
could not touch.

Yet it was mine,
this petal
and I loved it.

MARTHA: The petal, the flower,
the image,
nor flesh, nor blood,
for the flesh and blood,
and the hollow of the empty cove
for the winds that blow through it.

MOTHER: Those, too!
yesterday
and the day before it morned on us;
and now the sun settled and the fire around it
black with burning,
my love still storms against the wiser wisdom
and leaves a hollow
where fear and trembling
were better resident.

MARTHA: Who sleeps in the mountains
fears for the river.
Who sleeps in the hollow
wears the fear
for the high places.
Who chooses to fear
finds his bed, high or low,
where the fear and the trembling
knit in his pillow.

MOTHER: You do not sleep me with your speech,
nor with the calloused mouth
you find to give me.

MARTHA: I give you what you seek,
If the fear grows in it,
that, too, I give you.

MOTHER: Ay, there is to fear
whose heart is grown to it.

Do not think
because my lips are dumb on it,
I have not reasoned Adam's cause,
nor read the bread of her
who baked it.

MARTHA: And if you read it,
what is there to spell
that I cannot hear it?

MOTHER: Clumsy!
The word quick to shape,
and the blood
spouting from the wrong breast.

Do not think
because I moved my hand
to Adam's hand,
and turned my face,
I did not know
who soiled the ferment.

Anger does not come unnested.
It sucks at the root,

and the anger, and the root,
in the skin of your tumult,
and the will that moves it
from its restless centers,
is mine,
the skin, the root and the tumult.

For more are you daughter
to the whip of my blood
than the rest:

more than she who leaps
from wide to whirl
and does not know
the ends and center meet;

more than the child and the coming,
and she I dress
in, tongue and tongue,
lament and mourning,
in the frock and the shroud
of this unrelieved
and unrelenting agony.

Mirror and mirror!
Look on me!
The love that bitters your tongue
and leaves to marble
heart and heart,
quarried at the milk of my breast,
cradled in the hands of my stilled weeping.

Look on me!
Look on me once
through crystal eyes
and leave to the bowels
the passions stirring your fingers.

See how the fruit is the tree's echo,
seed for the tree,
tree in its own dominion.

Then ask your inheritance,
and who it is that warps it
from its depots,
the stations of its triumph
and its defeat.

There is order in this alphabet.
We do not change its course,
nor its orbit.

You will find the proper dress,
in time,
in the fix of the constellations.

You are still.
You count the words I speak.

MARTHA: I read the calculation.

MOTHER: You will not hear me.

You are my daughter,
and more daughter than the rest.

Whom does Adam, fumbling,
put to sleep
upon the second rising?

He does not find my breast.

Or will it be your hand
strikes
in futile and desperate
delivery?

MARTHA: Nor aye nor nay
will I say.
Too many tides have washed the land between us.
The river is wide
and the stream swift.

MOTHER: Yet we know, both
its waters.

MARTHA: And its waters cold,
and the tread leaves the feet
on the shore.

MOTHER: Ay! Cold and fear.

You will wait on Adam,
and he will come.

This line does not break.
It has a long and willing history.

MARTHA: And if he comes not,
the means do not build their straw
in the one nest,
the meat
in the rock of the one lair.

MOTHER: Ay, cub to the whelp.
You will measure the love till the milk is dry;
then is yours the lair
or the mane of the lion,
the hair in your teeth.

I will not say I had not known.
I have already said.

Look you to your father.
Something of the gift he brought you
you must rid,
sweet bones I must have touched in warming once
and long have since forgotten.

Look to him.
I go look to the child.

Ay, Martha,
that I loved you less
or the columns of your flesh
more supple.

(She exits)

LUCINDA: (Offstage.) Ay!

MARTHA: Ay, that the stone were more brittle
and the sands less gone to the sea.

(She looks to Father and speaks to him.)

Do you wake from this sleep
or is it at last
you have torn the veil between us,
dark veil
and the darkness between us?

(She moves to the lighted candles.)
What is this shape
in pity?

My blood leaves the natural climb of its orbit;
it moves to center.
I hear the noise of their turning,
small metal against the hub of their marble.
And my hands grow thick
and the walls and the roof
of this mourning house
lean to them,
like children, tired,
come to the apron.

DAPHNE: (Enters.) His face is white.
You have not covered it.

MARTHA: The time is not yet.

DAPHNE: I looked for Adam.

MARTHA: And you could not find him.

DAPHNE: I could not find him.
Ay, I spoke!

And no one would hear me!
Murder -- I cried!

MARTHA: To the wind you spoke,
to the shadows on the trees.

DAPHNE: I could not say.

And I love him not!

And yet,
I could not say!

(To Father.) How does my father?
Who forgives me?
Whom shall I ask?

MARTHA: He will not answer.

DAPHNE: He is dead then!
Dear, naked, cold face.

Cover him!

MARTHA: He will be covered.
He goes slowly,
as he came and went.
He makes no theatre of it.

DAPHNE: As I make a theatre
of my coming,
my going.

How small has all my purpose grown,
how lame the singing of my lute.

I have grown old, Martha.
All the certainties of my skin
are wrinkled.
Do I do my gratitude justice, Martha,
and take your hand
and plead my penitence
before some altar you would show me?

I had burned to sear you, Martha!
As you have seared this house with dying.

The insanity invades us all,
and I grow meek.
Whom shall we love,
if we love not the sinner?

And that, too,
the cloak to shield
the fear and the fearing.
I looked for him, Martha.
At each physician's house I knocked.

Where is Adam?
Where does he hide?

I looked for him where the roads meet
and where the roads bend and break,
where the sky lies naked on the water
and where it is concealed
among strangers.

And why do you look,
I asked of myself,
and I shut my ears
to what my mouth spoke plainly.

Look at me, Martha!
You are older than I.
If you have not walked this way,
you have seen it,
and heard it,
whispered,
shouted,
and you have cursed it!

Does the heart reach out for murder?
Or does the blood,
running its last course
from the punctured heart,
turn its wet face
to warm the hands
it washes?

(To Father.) Forgive me.
Forgive me, Father.
I would turn your blood to sorrow
among their jealous throats,
and I weep for them
and plead with them for mercy.
Forgive me, Father.

FATHER: (Opening his eyes)
Is it you, Daphne?
What woods do you bring with you?
I hear the birds in your hair,
but I cannot see them.

And you have torn your frock.
We must mend it.
Your mother has a passion for order.

MARTHA: He is fevered.
His words run through time,
yesterday more close to his memory
than this unseemingly hour.

DAPHNE: Ay! Ay!

Sleep, Father.
Sleep gently.
I make too much sound
with my tumult.
Sleep gently.

(To Martha) All my blood runs to weeping.
Is it the dying, Martha,
that bends the love?

Then what passion seizes on us
and turns the love
to Him who fashioned
the dying?
and I pursued him,
and, God help me,
I feared for him.

LUCINDA: (Entering hysterically, followed by Mother)
Where is Adam?
I ask you!
Where is Adam?

MOTHER: He comes, Lucinda.
He comes.

LUCINDA: I see him not.
Oh, my father!

MOTHER: Lucinda....

LUCINDA: My father!

MOTHER: The time is now, Lucinda.
The time is now.

LUCINDA: How shall he know
we loved him?
How shall he know....

MOTHER: The time is now, Lucinda.
We must lie in our bed.
We must lie in our bed, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: How pale his face.
How white his blood.

MOTHER: Now, Lucinda.
The time is now.

LUCINDA: Ay, Martha,
you!
You holy one!
How do you bring on us
calamity?
How do you shred our skins
with your fire?

MOTHER: Lucinda!

LUCINDA: My father!
How sweet are your eyes
closed down on us.
How gentle are the lips
on your mouth.
Ay!
Not Adam!
Not Adam, Father!
It was not Adam struck you!

MOTHER: Time, Lucinda.
Time.

LUCINDA: (To Martha) Ay! You wretched one!
You multiplier of evil!

MOTHER: Daphne, take her hand.

DAPHNE: Ay, Mother.

LUCINDA: Ay, Daphne!
Leave my hand!
Time! Time!
Leave my hand to its purpose!

DAPHNE: Come, Lucinda, Come.

MOTHER: It is time, Lucinda.
Lie you down on your bed.

LUCINDA: Ay, I lie down on my bed.
It is time.
It is time, Father.
Time for the child to your house.
(To Martha.) And you!
Venom on venom!
Curse on curse!
Murder on murder!

MOTHER: Lucinda....

LUCINDA: (To Martha.)
Stand on the stones of your aspersions!
Stand!
Stand unmoved!
Marble on marble!
Corrupt and corrupt and....

MOTHER: Time, Lucinda. Time.

LUCINDA: (To Martha)
Cut the veins in your hands!
They will not bleed.

DAPHNE: Lucinda....

LUCINDA: Split your tongue!
It will not weep.

DAPHNE: Come, Lucinda.
Come gently.

LUCINDA: Ay, I come.
Adam!
Where do you hide, Adam?
Where do you run?

MOTHER: Come, Lucinda.

DAPHNE: It is time, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Ay, it is time.
The time is now.
Ay, I am torn, Mother.
And I ache, Mother.
And my body will not stay with me.
Father!
He speaks,
he calls to me
and I
without comfort for him.

MOTHER: Come, Lucinda.
He finds his comfort.
Come, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Ay, Mother.
I come, Mother.
I come,
and you lead me.
Daphne,
hold my hand.
I curse you, Martha!
I curse you for my sister!
And for the blood which runs black
between us!

Ay, Mother.
 I am not made for stone.
 I cry for my child,
 and I cry for its father.

MOTHER: Ay, Lucinda. Ay.

LUCINDA: Ay.
 (To Father.)
 And ay, Father.
 Ay, my Father.
 I lay what sorrow
 leaves of my heart
 on your poor heart,
 your poor, wounded heart.

ADAM: (Enters, torn and bloody.)
 I found no physician.

LUCINDA: Ay, Adam!
 (She cannot move to him, and Adam is fixed.)

 You are torn, Adam!
 There is blood on your face!

MARTHA: (Aside)
 I have not lost
 entire the thread
 I needled.
 I will find yet
 its proper seam.

LUCINDA: Ay, Mother,
 take me!
 The father is home!

 Home, Adam!
 You are home!

 Give me your lips, Adam.
 The child comes.
 The child comes, Adam.
 Give me your lips.

 (There is no movement on the stage.)

 Ay!
 Ay, Mother.
 The child comes
 and the father is home.
 Take me.

MOTHER: Come, Lucinda.
 Come.

LUCINDA: I come, Mother.
 I come,
 and the child.... (They exit.)

 (For a moment the stage is still again.)

ADAM: He is dead.

DAPHNE: He is not dead.

MARTHA: He dies.

ADAM: He is dead.

 I found no physician.

 Your eyes burn on me!
 Your voice shouts in my ears!

 I found no physician.

MARTHA: You did not look.

DAPHNE: Your clothes are torn.
 The thorns are in your hair.

ADAM: I did not look.

DAPHNE: You looked.
 You looked, Adam,
 and you could not find him.

ADAM: I did not look.
 Why do you leave his face unveiled?
 There is no breath in him!

 I did not look.
 I ran.
 I ran. I fell.
 I ran again.

 Brush and hill
 and water.

 I was afraid,
 and I ran.

 There is no end to the running.

 This my hands did not tell me,
 nor the blood on my feet.

 And I came back.

MARTHA: To die again.

ADAM: To murder!

DAPHNE: Adam....

ADAM: Whom do I murder now?

 In this house must I murder.

DAPHNE: You are weary, Adam.
 You are run with torment.

ADAM: Whom do I murder, Martha?

DAPHNE: Enough of murder, Adam.
 Peace, Adam.

ADAM: I do not die again, Martha.

 Once I have destroyed myself.
 Twice the heart will not be taken.

 Whom do I murder, Martha?
 Invent the victim, Martha!
 Lay out the corpse!
 Is it you I put my hand to, Martha?
 Is it you?

DAPHNE: You are torn, Adam!
 You are weary!
 Your tongue speaks
 against your mouth!

ADAM: How have you laid me low, Martha,
 and buried me in this house,
 I would rid it
 of the voice
 that cries out against its walls
 in envy.

MARTHA: Rid it, then!

ADAM: Ay, rid it.

DAPHNE: Adam....

ADAM: Give me your throat, Martha.
I would have your throat,
the hoarse and the rasp of it.
I would rinse my fingers in your breath
and I would hear the last whisper
in the phlegm of your venom!

MARTHA: (Moving back.) The water boils
and the kettle whistles.

Whose fire burns you now?

It was your ashes came here
and settled in the shape of a man.

In a woman's house.

ADAM: Clever, Martha.
Clever.

MARTHA: Voice and bone,
the wind carries them
and makes a dust about us.

ADAM: Ay, Martha!

MARTHA: Take your hands to their proper task!
Discover your name among the obituaries
of your impotence.

ADAM: Ay, how quick is your tongue to acid.
How near to truth it gets,
and falls away.

DAPHNE: Adam!
Let there be peace here, Adam!
Respect for the dead and dying!
Respect for the child that comes
and the mother who bears it!

ADAM: Ay! Respect for the dead and the dying,
for the child that comes,
for the mother.

Here, Martha.
(He reaches for her throat.)

MARTHA: (Trying to free herself.) Your hands!

ADAM: They press upon your waters.
They dam the stream!

DAPHNE: Adam!
Blood enough
has spilled among us!

ADAM: (Seizes Martha's throat, firmly.)

DAPHNE: Adam!

ADAM: I make this sacrifice....

DAPHNE: Adam! Blood enough....

ADAM: For God....

DAPHNE: For God's sake, Adam!

ADAM: And in penitence...
the Lord give me heart!

DAPHNE: The Lord give you mercy, Adam!
We are of one house!
The love and the hate of it!

ADAM: The hate and the love are joined
in the fingers and the throat!

DAPHNE: The murder is with us, Adam!
Each at the ends of his own fingers!

Adam!
We must hold it!

ADAM: Ay, till she perish!

DAPHNE: Perish no more!

The house falls
and we are all done!

LUCINDA: (Offstage, sharply.) Ay!
Ay! Ay!

FATHER: I do not wish it.
I do not wish it,
the world is dark. (He falls back, dead.)

DAPHNE: He is dead!

ADAM: (Releasing Martha.) He is dead!

DAPHNE: God have mercy on us.

ADAM: Amen.

LUCINDA: (More sharply, offstage.) Ay!

MOTHER: (SINGING, offstage.)
Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

Ay lie,
wake and cry.
The infant lives
only to die.
(She enters with new-born child.)

DAPHNE: I am on my knees, Lord,
have mercy.

(Adam reaches out his hand for the child, then
slumps back into a chair.)

MOTHER: (Above the action)
The world is a sorrow
around, around,
in which tomorrow
is found, is found....
(To Martha)
Martha!
Take you the candles!

MARTHA: Father is dead.

MOTHER: The omens are good!
Light the candles!
(Mother continues her chant through rest of scene.)

and this the grief
with which surround
the infant born,
the infant drowned.

Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

(Martha through the song, veils Father's face, then slowly moves to the chest of drawers, places two new candles in the candlesticks, lights them.)

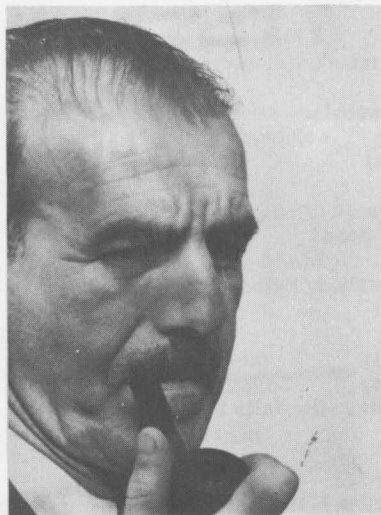
MARTHA: (Joining Mother's chant, as she is fixed by the candles.)
Ay loo, ay low,
grief and grow,
ay lie, ay lie.

MOTHER:

(And the song continues as the curtain comes down slowly.)

Ay lie,
wake and cry.
The infant lives
only to die.

A girl child!
Glory is to us!
And to our house
is glory!



HENRY GILFOND



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