

NEM

Or

The Deadline



A Very Short Play
By
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Cast of Characters

Dorothy Barnes

Frieda Ogilvy

Mary Osgood St. Clair

One man playing nine men of various types

(These can be played just as easily by three men tripling or nine different men if available)

Dorothy and Frieda are approximately the same age.

The action takes place in the 30's or 40's of the century past.

THE STAGE IS DARK. LIGHT FROM A BUSY OUTER HALLWAY COMES UP TO ILLUMINATE THE FROSTED WINDOW OF A DOOR FROM BEHIND. THROUGH THE GLASS WE SEE THE WORD 'NEM' WHICH IS ACTUALLY 'MEN' INVERTED, AS IF IT WERE PAINTED ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE WINDOW FACING THE HALL. A PASSERBY OR TWO THROWS A SHADOW. AFTER A MOMENT A KEY SOUNDS AND THE DOOR FLINGS OPEN. THERE STANDS A VERY FEMININE SILHOUETTE. THE FIGURE REACHES INTO THE ROOM AND SNAPS ON A LIGHT. WE SEE A DESK, WITH AN OLD REMINGTON TYPEWRITER ON IT, CHAIR, WALL CLOCK READING 8:40, AND WHATEVER ELSE IS NEEDED TO SIMPLY CONVEY THE LATE 1930'S OFFICE OF DOROTHY BARNES, FAMOUS GADFLY COLUMNIST FOR A GREAT METROPOLITAN NEWSPAPER. THE DOOR, NOW WIDE OPEN INTO THE ROOM DOES INDEED SAY MEN, GIVING THE IMPRESSION FROM OUTSIDE THAT THIS IS THE MEN'S ROOM. PAINTED ON THE WOOD FRAME ABOVE THE WINDOW IS THE ROOM NUMBER 110. DOROTHY ENTERS, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HER, RESPLENDANT IN HER FIGURE FLATTERING OUTFIT, BOTH THE EPITOME AND SUBTLE CRITIC OF THE HIGH-HAUT URBAN FASHION OF THE DAY. SHE IS A SUCCESSFUL CURMUDGETTE, A NUMBER OF YEARS OUT OF COLLEGE WHO THRIVES ON WORDS AND WIT AND DRYLY COMMENTING ON ALL SOCIETY FOIBLES IN HER NATIONWIDE NEWSPAPER COLUMN, MAGAZINE ARTICLES AND HER OCCASIONAL PLAYS. SHE FLINGS HER MATCHING HANDBAG ONTO HER DESK AND NOTICES A NOTE, ROLLED INTO HER TYPEWRITER.

DOROTHY: What fresh Hell is this? (READING) "Dear Dot. We're running Jack's big special article on FDR, the TVA and that whole 'damming the rivers is displacing the rural populace' thing for the Thursday edition. We'll have to 86 your column. Sorry, it's either that or killing Mary's column and we both know how Mary will react. I know you would cherish the night off. You're a peach. Thanks, Henry and the Editors." Cherish time off? I'd even honor and obey it. (SHE SITS, AMAZED) Wow, a whole night off! God bless FDR, TVA...and the WLH...water-logged hillbillies.

(THE DOOR FLIES OPEN, AND MAN #1 ENTERS. HE IS AN AVERAGE JOE IN THE PROCESS OF OPENING HIS FLY, AS MANY MEN DO, UPON ENTERING THE MEN'S ROOM. HE FREEZES IN CONFUSION WHEN HE NOTICES THIS IS NOT THE MEN'S ROOM, HANDS STILL ON HIS ABOUT TO BE OPENED FLY.)

DOROTHY: (CASUALLY) Oh, go right on the floor, we're starting an office pool.

(THE MAN EXITS, EVEN MORE CONFUSED, GLANCING AT DOOR AS HE CLOSSES IT, TO MAKE SURE HE ISN'T CRAZY.)

DOROTHY: (CONTEMPLATIVE) Well, well, a night of no writing...no anxiety, no angst, no agitation...no agony? What's an artist to do?

(THE DOOR FLIES OPEN, MAN #2 ENTERS. HE STOPS ABRUPTLY, MID FLY OPENING, AND LOOKS UP BEWILDERED. HE, LIKE ALL THE OTHERS, NEVER ACTUALLY ACHIEVES FLY OPENMENT.)

DOROTHY: I'm sorry, this is Journalism, you want urinalism...two doors over.

(THE MAN LEAVES CONFUSED.)

DOROTHY: (STANDING AND COLLECTING HANDBAG) Well, no Pulitzer tonight. So, in the grand urinalism tradition, I'll commiserate in the land of the highballs. (LOOKING IN PURSE) Mad money...let's go, we have to anger a white Russian.

(THE DOOR OPENS AND A WOMAN STANDS THERE A LITTLE CONFUSED. SHE IS QUITE RESPECTABLE LOOKING, IN AN UPSTATE KIND OF WAY, AND SEEMS TO BE THE SAME AGE AS DOROTHY.)

DOROTHY: (A GLANCE) 'Women who can't read seminar' on the third floor.

FRIEDA: Dorothy?

DOROTHY: (ASKANCE) Yes?

FRIEDA: (SPEAKING LIKE A GIGGLY, BATTY STEAMROLLER) Oh, hooray!! They said room 110 on the public concourse level above the subway, but I saw "MEN", then silly me, I remembered you write for the newspaper so I thought, must be a typographical error or something, so I barged right in! How are you?

DOROTHY: (WITH A SLIGHTLY MOCKING GIGGLE, HERSELF) Swell...(TO THE POINT) Who are you?

FRIEDA: Frieda...Ogilvy...Vassar?

DOROTHY: (THINKING) Frieda Ogilvy Vassar?

FRIEDA: No, Frieda Ogilvy, from Vassar.

DOROTHY: Of course, Lathrop House.

FRIEDA: Wow, look at you, all these years. And you're so famous!! Wow...Wow!!!!

DOROTHY: (ENDURING THIS)....yes....

FRIEDA: I'm so excited for you!! Just look how life is treating you!

DOROTHY: Life doesn't treat, you have to go Dutch.

(MAN #3 ENTERS, WITH HANDS ON HIS FLY. HE STOPS ABRUPTLY AND LOOKS AROUND CONFUSED. THEN LOOKS AT THE DOOR TO SEE "MEN".)

DOROTHY: Mr. Mendelssohn was fired before the sign painter could finish. Two doors down. (THE MAN EXITS, CONFUSED)

FRIEDA: (GIVING IT MORE SERIOUSNESS THAN IT DESERVES) Oh, is that what happened?

DOROTHY: (PATIENTLY) No, the door hangers, bless their brains, got confused by such big numbers and figured 110 is the same as 112. I just kept it, (FAKE COQUETTISHLY) hoping to meet Mr. Perfect, but apparently Mr. Perfect doesn't have to pee, go figure, so I practice witty lines, forty times a day. Eighty when the beer convention is in town.

FRIEDA: (TRYING TO KEEP UP) Is it the beer convention? Oh dear, I came to see you, but I've really got to rush.

DOROTHY: (FEIGNED SYMPATHY) Ahhhh. (SHOWING HER THE DOOR)

FRIEDA: (CUTESY) Do you remember a boy that we both had a big crush on?

DOROTHY: Now you're talking the daffy talk. I never had a crush on anyone.

FRIEDA: (SLIGHTLY NEEDLING) We sort of had a little rivalry...

DOROTHY: (PURPOSELY HAZY) My only rivalry was with the Wesleyan air of superiority.

FRIEDA: (A HINT) We called him the "it" boy.

DOROTHY: (REMEMBERING, ALL AT ONCE, WITH ALL ITS IMPLICATIONS) Phillip Gobas?! (PRONOUNCED GO-BAZZ)

FRIEDA: (SQUEALING GLEEFULLY) Yesss!!!

DOROTHY: Phillip Gobas. Well he never got "it" from me. Oh, sure, I remember him. (AN ALMOST BAD MEMORY) Ol' tall dark and hands. We called him the wool merchant because he was always in sweaters. That lothario, that...that...(PUTTING TWO AND TWO TOGETHER)...that you married!! Frieda Ogilvy Vassar Gobas?

FRIEDA: (GIGGLY) No Vassar, just Frieda Ogilvy Gobas.

DOROTHY: Right... (FORCED) Wow!

FRIEDA: My initials are FOG.

DOROTHY: You certainly are. So you two finally got married. I had no idea. How is that bigguy?

FRIEDA: Dead.

DOROTHY: Ohhhh. I'm sorry.

FRIEDA: And he wasn't a Lothario....

DOROTHY: (AFRAID SHE'S OFFENDED, AS ALL WISECRACKERS SOMETIMES DO)
Well I..

FRIEDA: ...he was a Lambda Chi. He was married to me for eleven years then fell off a bridge.

DOROTHY: Oh, dear. Married to you eleven years and jumped off a bridge?

FRIEDA: No, fell.

DOROTHY: Oh...sorry...Freud.

FRIEDA: What? (DOROTHY SHAKES HER HEAD 'NOTHING') That's why I'm here. The burial is tomorrow morning at 10, and I'm so pressed for time. I want you to write the epigram.

DOROTHY: Epigram?

FRIEDA: On the tombstone.

DOROTHY: You mean epitaph? (FORGETTING HERSELF) Oh, I love epitaphs... (REALIZING, THEN SERIOUS)...er... for all that they convey.

FRIEDA: That's right...a witty little saying that sums up his life and spirit. And I figured you knew him...almost as well as I..

DOROTHY: ... almost.

FRIEDA: And you write those big funny plays that are really long...

DOROTHY: ...ouch.

FRIEDA: So I figure a short epigraph about Philip is a cinch. And he always talked about you.

DOROTHY: (CURIOUS) He did? (STILL A SPARK? EXTRA CASUALLY) What did he say?

FRIEDA: Oh...things...all the time...he talked about how famous you are, and how he knew you in college, now a renowned newspaper columnist, social critic, poet, you know, all that you are.

DOROTHY: And all that I'm aint.

FRIEDA: And all that you did.

DOROTHY: And all that I didn't.

(MAN # 4 ENTERS. HIS HAND ON HIS FLY. HE SEEMS MIGHTY SURPRISED TO SEE TWO WOMEN.)

DOROTHY: (TO MAN) Wait till you see what's in the broom closet. (HE EXITS CONFUSED)

FRIEDA: What's in the broom closet? (DOROTHY ROLLS HER EYES) It's funny, Phillip remembered you much better than I did. He said you had beautiful high notes, but I don't remember you in the glee club.

DOROTHY: Uhm...those were howls of protest.

FRIEDA: He must have seen more of you than I thought.

DOROTHY: He didn't see as much as he wanted...and we never dated! I was a tenacious shut-in...like Emily Dickinson...in a Lou Gehrig Iron Horse kind of way.

FRIEDA: (PAUSE) Oh, ha, ha, ha, (NOT GETTING IT). Lou Gehrig...anyway, it's one of those cemeteries that have tours, where celebrities are. I think Grover Cleveland is there, and that gangster, Benny somebody.

DOROTHY: Must need reservations for that tour.

FRIEDA: Anyhow, your epigraph of Phillip will be in stone...forever, so that's something. I've got to run, I have so much to do tonight, before tomorrow. (GETTING OUT HER LIST OF NOTES) The saying will be right under his name, must be two lines or less, 34 letters per line maximum, spaces count as letters, I don't get that...and it must begin with a 'W'.

DOROTHY: Wait...What?

FRIEDA: The monument dealer gave me a bargain if I bought the one with a 'W' already carved into it. And bargains are good right? Because the stone cutter is going to have to work all night. And he's going to charge me an arm and a leg.

DOROTHY: The chiseler. But if the mortician charged an arm and a leg that'd be a bargain, huh?

FRIEDA: What?

DOROTHY: You must've been the perfect couple.

FRIEDA: I've got to go haggle with the florist; he's waiting late for me. I'll pay you 150 dollars. 100 if the florist is difficult. (LOOKING AT WATCH) So I'll be back in 5 minutes.

DOROTHY: 5 minutes?!

FRIEDA: Oh, yes, the stone cutter's got to start right away. Sorry, I used up some of your time reminiscing. I have to work it all out tonight 'cause tomorrow I'm going to be so sad. I'm going a thousand ways at once. Phillip had to die during homecoming week, right? And I'm hospitality co-chair!! 5 minutes, two lines, 34 letters each max, starts with 'W', goodbye.

DOROTHY: But the epitapher needs more than five.... (SHE IS GONE) Okay, can do. Five minutes...an easy 150 bucks, 100 if the florist is thorny.....Epitaph...(STARTING TO PACE AND GET THE FREE-FLOWING CREATIVE JUICES STARTED)...the man was a pig...not a problem...would that oink began with a "W" ...epitaph for a pig...(THINKING AND SOUNDING IT OUT)"w-w-w-well, th-th-th-that's all folks!" No, be positive, that was a long time ago. He was personable; I'll give him that. "W-w-w-wish you were here?" "W-w-w-w"....I can't do this. Too constricting. I'm just going to stare at the clock, when I should be thinking. (GLANCING AT CLOCK ONCE OR TWICE, THEN DEJECTEDLY) Well, I'm dead....hey not bad. "Well, I'm dead!" Funny how life imitates death. Think, think, Phillip Gobas' Tombstone...his spirit, what his life lead him to... "W-w-w-warm down here."

(MAN # 5 ENTERS: HE LOOKS ABOUT CONFUSED.)

DOROTHY: (DRYLY GLANCING UP) I'm writing a book on quizzical looks, can I use you for the cover? (THE MAN LEAVES) "W-w-w-w won't you pardon my dust?" Wait...(SHE GETS OUT A PIECE OF PAPER, INSERTS INTO TYPEWRITER AND TYPES "W". SHE LOOKS A MOMENT AND TEARS OUT PAPER TO CRUMPLE IT UP. SHE INSERTS ANOTHER, TYPES "W" MORE DYNAMICALLY. SHE FINDS IT TOO HARD TO LOOK AT, USING HER PURSE TO COVER IT, STILL IN TYPEWRITER). Think, 34 letters, including the spaces...(TRYING TO COUNT IT OUT) "Where I am, all I feel is dirt, But at least from here....I see up your skirt". "Went to the other side...uh...on my own terms, Spending eternity....seducing worms". Arghhh! "W-w-who knew that here in Hades, I'd run into so many hot-to-trot ladies." This isn't fair. This needs composing. Can't compose in five min...Compose?...compost? (THINKING) "Wiser as fertilizer." (SHAKING HEAD) That's no good, but it's good. "W-w-weary...Weary!" Good word. "Weary am I as I face the gloom!!! (UNABLE TO RESIST WITTY BUT USELESS ENDINGS) Want to come down and see my room?" Noooo!!! "When I was laid in this cold, cold ground, it cut down sharply on my sleeping around." No, come on, come on. (SHE IS RACKING HER BRAIN.)

(THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND A THIRD WOMAN ENTERS BRISKLY. SHE IS THE TYPE WHO REVELS IN HER SELF- ACCLAIMED LOVELINESS, AND QUEENS HER CONDESCENSION ON EVERYONE. THIS IS THE AFOREMENTIONED MARY. SHE SEES DOROTHY POUNDING HER HEAD)

MARY: Hi Dot.

DOROTHY: (STOPPING, WITH VEILED CONTEMPT) Hi, Mary...

MARY: Writer's block? (SACCHARINELY SYMPATHETIC) I know. Can I use your Remington? My Underwood's under the weather. Get it. Underwood, under weather. (LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY AT THIS NON-JOKE, SHE SITS AND TYPES A MILE-A-MINUTE, AS SHE TALKS.) Maybe the next time you do a piece compiling quips other people wrote, you can use that little Underwood joke.

DOROTHY: Sure, for kindling.

MARY: I just thought up a great opening for my column...oh, (WITH DRIPPING SINCERITY, STILL TYPING AWAY, ANNOYINGLY) sorry about your column getting bumped, Dorothy, but I told Henry I was doing an expose on those dams in Kentucky. He seemed to agree it was much better than whatever you would come up with. It will be a nice complement to Jack's piece. I'm investigating how they're ruining that river.

DOROTHY: I can just see you getting to the bottom of that river, Mary.

MARY: Done, thanks. (SHE PULLS OUT PAPER AND STARTS TO GO)

DOROTHY: Wait, there was a "W" on that page.

MARY: I know I used it. (JUMPING AT THE OPENING) Wanna hear? (BEFORE DOROTHY CAN SAY "NO", MARY READS.) " 'What in tarnation!,' cried Mr. Bumpkin, as waves lapped his bare, ramshackle feet, the water rising ever so ornery toward his cornhusked wife. 'Either this is Noah's second coming or you can't, dang it, spell federal without FDR!' " (PROUDLY) Gripping huh? Grabbing!

DOROTHY: Clutching. The things you do with truth, Mary.

MARY: Well, writing is just my gift, to improve civilization.

DOROTHY: (TO HERSELF) Or end it.

MARY: Sorry, did you need that "W"?

DOROTHY: For a little two-line epitaph I'm writing, for a fella...who now finds himself dead. Shouldn't take me long to type another "W", though.

MARY: Ooooh, some ex beau, who dashed himself on the rocks for you?

DOROTHY: It's a long story.

MARY: And you only write long plays. Let me try, I'm really good at epitaphs. Begins with a 'W'? (A MICRO-PAUSE OF THOUGHT, THEN GOING TO THE TYPEWRITER, INSERTING PAPER AND TYPING QUICKLY, SPEAKING WHILE TYPING) See Dot the secret of creating is letting go...don't let your brain get in the way of your talent. That's the hallmark of a Mary Osgood St. Clair piece. (LEAVING THE PAPER IN SHE READS:) "Walk on, oh noble warrior, We are brighter for your light." Ta da...Ta, ta. (SHE IS GONE)

DOROTHY: (PAUSE) Shut up. (LOOKING AT CLOCK) Shut up!! (SHE GOES TO TYPEWRITER PULLS OUT MARY'S SHEET, TOSSES IT ASIDE.) Well, I'm no judge of talent but I'm a judge of no talent. (SHE INSERTS A NEW SHEET. SHE TYPES A 'W'.) Okay...never missed a deadline...dead line. Ha, ha, ha, the irony is thick tonight, but the stonery is thicker...noooo, bad puns...don't get stuck in bad puns, (PANICKY) there's nothing worse, call a hearse, no not rhyme...wasting time..... Arggggh! (PAUSE) ...why does society hate artists? Five minutes, not a chance. Cornhusked wife? And she doesn't even know how awful...and she makes four dollars a week more than me! More this week 'cause my Thursday column got pulled...for ramshackle feet?!!! (SHE GLANCES OVER AT MARY'S PAPER, PICKS IT UP AND COUNTS THE LETTERS IN MARY'S SENTENCE) ...fits. SHUT UP!!!!

(THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND MAN #6 ENTERS, FLY HALF-OPENED, NONPLUSSED)

DOROTHY: I'm sorry Mr. Bumpkin, but can't you see I am having enough trouble with the damn epitaph that I can't think up a witty remark...you're in the wrong place. (WHOOOPS, A GOOD LINE)...that's not bad.... urine the wrong place. Thank you....leave. (HE DOES). Okay. (SHE DELIBERATELY CROSSES THE ROOM, EXTRICATING HERSELF FROM WHERE SHE STOOD, IN A CONTRIVED EXERCISE TO INDUCE INSPIRATION) That is a bad, unfunny, pun-rhyme place. And this spot is where wonderful words and wit well up. "W-w-w-w- whose"...good.". "Wh-whilst"...good!!! "Wh-wh-whence"...excellent! "Whereas...wistful" ...all right, good words. Now good points. Phillip Gobas had good points...he did... (CONCEDING WITH A DEEP SIGH) oh, he did...(PAUSE, REMEMBERING, WITH FONDNESS SWELLING)...the softest eyes...lips too warm for lies....a voice made for moonlight. No, not from beyond...don't you dare seduce me again. (PAUSE) What did he see in Frieda, that he didn't see...? (SHE IS SOMEWHERE ELSE COMPLETELY NOW. WITH WISTFUL EYES SHE GLANCES AT THE CLOCK) This is way too complicated for the time allotted. (FORCING HERSELF AWAY) Be brief. Be Frieda, who can even schedule grief. Use your time, wisely...Time is the artists only enemy. Brevity is the soul of(EXPLODING) brevity has no soul!! Or she wouldn't treat me like this...brevity you whore!! Whore? (A POSSIBILITY?) No good.

(THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND MAN # 7 ENTERS)

DOROTHY: Piss off!! (HE DOES. DOROTHY STARTS WORKING ON HER EXCUSE) Save your last bullet for yourself, save your last minute for your excuse. I'm sorry Frieda, it's just I needed more time. The creative process is delicate...Frieda....Frieda....(PRACTICING HER FRIEDAS)...Frieda...

FRIEDA: (BURSTING IN. EXPECTANTLY) Well?

DOROTHY: (WITH BACK TURNED, VEHEMENTLY) What?

FRIEDA: (SURPRISEDLY) What?

DOROTHY: (REALIZING IT IS FRIEDA THEN CALMLY) Well...Frieda....Uhm...you see...

FRIEDA: (PUPPY DOG EYES) Oh, I hope it's good.

DOROTHY: Oy. How's this...(A PAUSE FULL OF POTENTIAL, AS SHE LEANS BACK, GAZES UP AND THINKS, HOPING FOR A MIRACLE INSPIRATION...NOTHING...THEN RESIGNEDLY PICKS UP MARY'S PAGE.) "Walk on, oh noble warrior, We are brighter for your light." (PAUSE AS DOROTHY EXPECTS THE WORSE)...It's not, really...

FRIEDA: It's wonderful! Oh, Dot, that's is so terrific!! That is so Phillip. Oh, Dot, (GIVING HER A BIG HUG AND KISS). He would have loved this! You captured him. Phillip was so right about you.

DOROTHY: He was? (WEAKLY) What...what did...?

FRIEDA: Got to run. (TAKING PAPER) Get this to the stone cutter's. Carved in stone, oh, it will be the hit of the cemetery tour, and all because the great Dorothy Barnes wrote it! That wasn't so bad was it? I actually gave you six minutes. I'm so late...Oh, of course you'll come to the burial. 10 AM, Oak Park, right up on the ridge, very sunny.

DOROTHY: If I don't make it, I'll remember Phillip in my own way.

FRIEDA: Of course, you probably have something famous to do. (REMEMBERING) Oh, here's forty dollars. I hope that's okay. That florist is a crook. (SHE IS GONE.)

DOROTHY: (RESIGNEDLY) Well, it's only for several hundred years. It'll wear down... eventually...with bad weather. (SHE PICKS UP THE MONEY) Mary...oh, the gloat she'll pitch when I give her this. (SHE TOSSES IT DOWN LISTLESSLY.)

(THE DOOR FLIES OPEN AND MAN #8 ENTERS. HE DOES WHAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES.)

DOROTHY: (LOOKING UP, MAKING NO EFFORT.) Waiter, waiter there's a fly in your suit. Sorry... (TRYING AGAIN) I knew consolidated tinkle would take off, once prohibition ended...no...I've lost it. (THE MAN TURNS TO GO BUT IS MOMENTARILY TRANSFIXED BY THE SINCERITY OF DOROTHY) See, the muse strikes at the unexpected hour, the odd minute, the distracted second. Forcing creation is like...like trying to get hiccups on purpose. (HE LEAVES, BEWILDERED) We artists breathe life into what never existed, and for our trouble? Critics declare it dead, and claw away at the carrion. And amazingly,

everyone is a critic, it seems. Oh, to be satisfied, and not just mollified. But we keep going. So we can say at the end, we tried our hardest...(A STREAM OF FEELINGS.) At the end. “W-w-w-Welcome to my grave. Walk softly o’er my remains. Where silence reigns. Where sky meets Earth. Weep not for me. Why, I’m where Time is my everlasting friend. We all owe the debt of life...Wisely did we spend it? Well, we did our best. W-w-w-words failed me.” (PAUSE. AS SHE GATHERS HER BELONGINGS) “W” was hard anyhow...maybe “H” or “R” would have been easier. What was that first epitaph going to say, anyway? And why did he stop at “W”. Did the corpse recover? Oh well, Wondering at life is the journey...life’s wonders are the reward. (REALIZING ‘THAT’S IT!’ SHE RUSHES TO THE TYPEWRITER AND TYPES IT OUT) “Wondering at life is the journey...life’s wonders are the reward.” (SHE QUICKLY AND QUIETLY COUNTS THE LETTERS.) 33.....34. Perfect. Nooooo!!!! (SHE RUSHES TO THE DOOR) Frieda!! Frieda!! (NO RESPONSE) No, no, no, no...(SHE REENTERS DRAMATICALLY AND COLLAPSES ON THE FLOOR WITH A LAUGHING, CRYING FUTILITY-FUELED MOMENT OF HUMOROUSLY IRONIC, SELF-MOCKING PITY, ENDING UP ON HER BACK IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. AFTER A MOMENT OF THIS LABORED LAMENTATION SHE HICCUPS. PAUSE, THEN SLOWLY, TO GOD:) Very funny. (HICCUP AGAIN)

(THE DOOR SLAMS OPEN AND MAN #9 ENTERS. HE STOPS, ABOVE DOROTHY, HANDS POISED ON HIS FLY, FROZEN IN WONDERMENT)

DOROTHY: (AFTER A BEAT) Oh, hello society...piss away. (HICCUP) I’m an artist!

BLACKOUT