

# Florida

An Opera in Two Acts

[Libretto]

Music by  
Randall Eng

Libretto by  
Donna Di Novelli

December 2017 Draft

## CAST

Florida ..... Soprano  
Marc ..... Tenor  
One Dead Mother/Judge ..... Contralto  
Female Redwood ..... Mezzo-soprano  
Male Redwood ..... Baritone  
Redwood Daughter/Technician/Defense Attorney/Diane/Cop..... Mezzo-soprano  
Redwood Son/Technician/Prosecutor/Bailiff/Sasha/Cop ..... Tenor

## ORCHESTRA

Flute (doubling Piccolo)  
Oboe  
Clarinet in Bb (doubling Bass Clarinet in Bb)  
Alto Saxophone in Eb (doubling Tenor Saxophone in Bb and Baritone  
Saxophone in Eb)  
Bassoon (doubling Contrabassoon)  
Horn in F  
Trumpet in Bb  
Trombone  
Percussion (1 player)\*  
Harp  
Piano  
3 Violins  
Viola  
Cello  
Bass

\*Percussion: Vibraphone, Marimba, Drumkit (Snare Drum, Bass Drum, 2 Tom-toms, Ride Cymbal, Crash Cymbal, Hi-Hat), 2 Woodblocks, 2 Triangles, 2 Suspended Cymbals, Tambourine, Castanets, Congas, Shaker, Vibraslap, Slide Whistle, Large Piece of Paper)

## **Characters**

### **FLORIDA**

An ordinary 16-year old suburban girl considered too sexy for her own good.

### **ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Her future hangs around her like the pair of panty hose wrapped around her neck. In Act II, once officially dead, she is the subject of a never-ending autopsy.

### **MARC**

The boy-next-door. Wants one thing and one thing only—Florida. Or someone as much like her as possible.

### **THE REDWOODS**

The Neighbors. They live on their deck, cling to their deck. They watch all, know all, tell all. In Act II they become the Jury.

### **THE REDWOOD CHILDREN**

The offspring. One son, one daughter. They live under their parents' deck.

## **Additional Characters**

**SASHA**, the **BAILIFF**, the **PROSECUTOR**, the **MALE TECHNICIAN**, and the **MALE COP** are played by the **REDWOOD SON**.

**DIANE**, the **DEFENSE ATTORNEY**, the **FEMALE TECHNICIAN**, and the **FEMALE COP** are played by the **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**.

The **JUDGE** is played by **ONE DEAD MOTHER**.

---

**TIME:** The present.

**PLACE:** Suburban land surrounding a large redwood deck mortgaged to the Redwoods.

Act I takes place on the Redwoods' deck (center stage) and in Florida's bedroom, One Dead Mother's kitchen, and Marc's bedroom. In Act II, the neighborhood is transformed into a courthouse as the setting for Florida's trial.

The deck is the center of the universe.

## Table of Contents

<u>Song</u>	<u>Characters</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Uneasy Gray	Florida	p. 1
2. Florida Fandango	Redwoods	p. 2
3. There's a Scream Inside Me	Florida	p. 5
4. Eighty-Eight Steps	Marc, Florida	p. 6
5. I Should Have Moved	One Dead Mother, Florida	p. 7
6. Imagine This Summer	Marc, One Dead Mother, Florida	p. 9
7. Run That Red Light Red	Redwoods	p. 11
8. Blue and Wild	Florida	p. 12
9. Looking Out the Window	Marc, Florida	p. 13
10. My First Champagne	Florida, Sasha	p. 15
11. Where Are Our Children?	Redwoods	p. 17
12. Summer Reading	Redwood Children, Marc	p. 21
13. Madly In Love	Florida	p. 24
14. I Believe	One Dead Mother	p. 26
15. Heal Thyself	Marc	p. 27
16. The Shattered Night	One Dead Mother, Florida, Marc	p. 28
17. In the Dark	Ensemble	p. 32
18. Under Arrest	Cops, One Dead Mother, Redwoods	p. 34
19. Jury Deliberations No. 1	Redwoods	p. 36
20. Autopsy No. 1	Technicians	p. 38
21. She Begged You To Kill	Prosecutor, Marc	p. 40
22. Autopsy No. 2	Technicians	p. 42
23. Readily Available	Marc, Bailiff, Florida	p. 43
24. A Yellow Legal Pad	Florida, Prosecutor, Defense Attorney	p. 46
25. Jury Deliberations No. 2	Redwoods	p. 49
26. Autopsy No. 3	Technicians, One Dead Mother	p. 50
27. Over and Over	Florida, Male Redwood	p. 53
28. Judgment	Judge, Redwoods	p. 55
29. Sea of Newspapers	Redwood Children	p. 57
30. Family Meeting, Part I	Female Redwood, Redwood Children	p. 61
31. There, There	Male Redwood	p. 63
32. Family Meeting, Part II	Redwoods, Redwood Children	p. 64
33. De-Voweled	Florida	p. 67
34. Coda: Seduction Chorus	Ensemble	p. 68

## *1. Uneasy Gray*

*[26-year old Florida Fandango awaits re-trial on charges that she conspired to kill her mother. The women's room in the courthouse basement. It is an all-gray environment—Battleship Gray water pipes and heating ducts, Gun Barrel Gray walls. She sits on the sink and blows smoke rings.]*

### **FLORIDA**

Let the world be black and white.  
I'll play in the uneasy gray—  
the hard color of cement  
ready to break a knee  
or camouflage an ash.  
I lose myself in this smoky pall  
blown by my own phoenix breath.

Here is home.  
Here I'd stay if  
it were not for the bailiff  
who calls.

## 2. *Florida Fandango*

*[As the sun rises on their suburban landscape, the Redwoods put the finishing touches on their deck. He pounds in one last nail. She watches, with hamburger flipper at the ready.]*

**MALE REDWOOD**

We built it ourselves.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

We stained it ourselves.

**MALE REDWOOD**

We sanded it, drilled it,

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

assembled and planed it

**BOTH**

ourselves.

Our deck,  
our tree house,  
our Winnebago,  
idling, calling us home.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

It used to be surrounded  
by an apple orchard.

**MALE REDWOOD**

Now all the apple trees  
have been corralled  
into pick-your-own farms.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

They cut down the trees  
and put in cul-de-sacs.

**MALE REDWOOD**

Now instead of apple pie,

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

there's the girl-next-door,

**MALE REDWOOD**

cooling on the window sill.

*[Lights up on 16-year-old Florida Fandango in her window.]*

Florida Fandango!

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Florida Fandango!

**BOTH**

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

She's an open invitation!

She's an open door!

She's an Open Sesame!

She's an open sore!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Ahh, ahh, ohh!

Ahh, ahh, ahh, ahh, ohh!

Ahh, ahh, ahh, ahh, ohh!

**MALE REDWOOD**

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida, Florida, Florida, Florida!

Florida Fandango!

Florida, Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh, ahh, ohh!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

**BOTH**

Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh! Ohh!

Florida, Florida, Florida!

Ahh! Ohh!

A name you can dance to,  
not a name you can trust.

A name you can dance to,  
not a name you can trust.

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!

Florida Fandango!  
Florida Fandango!

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

*[spoken]*

She had one too many vowels, if you ask me.



### *3. There's a Scream Inside Me*

*[16-year-old Florida sits at her window seat, applying nail polish and lipstick.]*

#### **FLORIDA**

There's a scream inside me—  
untranslatable.  
I think it's true of most girls.  
It has a sound all its own.  
It has a sound but knows no words,  
no words.

So where does the scream go?  
So where does the scream go?

To your fingertips,  
Roller Coaster Red.  
Bite 'em. Paint 'em.  
Press 'em into flesh.  
Flash 'em. Slash 'em.  
Wave goodbye to Fred.

There's a scream inside me—  
untranslatable.  
Its cry unheard of, but loud.  
A silent gasp of pure breath.  
Without a voice, without a word,  
it screams.

So where does the scream go?  
So where does the scream go?

Into the hottest lips—  
Run That Red Light Red.  
Lick 'em. Smear 'em.  
Pucker up and press.  
Pout 'em. Tout 'em.  
Cover up what's said.

There's a scream inside me—  
Untranslatable,  
undebatable,  
unseatable,  
inescapable.

## 4. *Eighty-Eight Steps*

*[Marc begins crossing the gravel driveway that divides their identical suburban homes.]*

### **MARC**

It takes me eighty-eight steps  
to reach her bedroom door;  
to ease my back door shut  
with a metal-on-metal click;

to slip onto the blue-violet slate  
sunk in the worn-out grass;

to cross the gravel driveway  
that twists my every foot  
into a rumble of rocks;

to mount the concrete steps  
and slowly open an identical door  
with identical tattle-tale click;

to take the back stairs in nine strides,  
and catch my breath,  
catch my breath,  
catch my breath,  
lose my breath at  
zero.

### **FLORIDA**

88,  
87,  
86,  
85, 84,  
83, 82, 81, 80, 79, 78, 77, 76

75, 74,  
73, 72,  
71, 70, 69, 68, 67, 66, 65, 64,

63, 62,  
61, 60,  
59, 58, 57, 56, 55, 54, 53,

52, 51,  
50, 49, 48, 47  
46, 45,  
44, 43, 42, 41, 40, 39, 38, 37,

36, 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, 29,  
28, 27, 26, 25, 24,  
23, 22, 21, 20,  
19, 18, 17  
16, 15,  
14, 13, 12, 11,  
10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1,  
zero.

## ***5. I Should Have Moved***

*[Lights up on Florida's kitchen. One Dead Mother stares out the window.  
Florida runs in, out of breath.]*

**FLORIDA**

Mom?

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

I've been calling you.

**FLORIDA**

What is it?

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Will you kindly tell me  
what the hell the sun is doing,  
setting now?  
Every minute in the light counts.  
Bring on that ultraviolet.

*[Throughout the following, Florida brings candle after candle to the table  
until the kitchen is ablaze with light.]*

Night comes with no regard  
for our sentiments.  
No sense of borrowed time spent.

I should have moved to a place where you pray  
for the sun to plunge into the sea,  
so you can dive into its warmth,  
as you follow its footsteps in.

I should have moved to a land where the sun  
like an orange hangs full and ripe  
making you sweat yourself new again  
to the sounds of surrounding splash.

New England stone is cold.  
Every bit of light  
it steals to heat its jagged Pilgrim past.  
All rocks it is,  
all stone-faced,  
scolding,  
ultra-granite.

*[Florida pulls down the shades through which the Redwood Children stare. As she pulls down the shade of one window, they appear in the next.]*

Only the sun  
deep in my eyes  
warms my insides,  
makes me forget.

Florida,  
so beautiful the name I named you,  
Florida,  
don't let it set.

*[Florida comes up behind her mother and covers her eyes. In a minute, she takes her hands away and One Dead Mother notices the candles for the first time.]*

#### **FLORIDA**

Dinner with candles?

*[One Dead Mother is mesmerized by the table ablaze in candles. The Redwood Children peer into the last window. Florida pulls the shade.]*

#### **ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Now you're talking sense.  
My daughter.  
You know, some day,  
you're gonna make some man  
a lucky wife.

## 6. *Imagine This Summer*

*[Florida's bedroom.]*

**MARC**

Imagine this summer,  
close-knit.  
Knit as close as polyester tweed,  
right next door, right close by,  
right here: blue check plaid.

You and me all summer,  
entwined, this tight.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

*[overheard by Marc]*

Florida!

Imagine this summer,  
somewhere else,  
somewhere far from here.

I'll stay here with all else.  
I'll hold down the fort,  
but you, I'm sending  
somewhere else.

**MARC**

Florida,  
Imagine this summer.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Florida,  
Imagine this summer.

**BOTH**

Imagine this summer,  
Florida.

**FLORIDA**

Imagine this summer?

Hot.  
Cold front meeting hot front,  
thunderclouds and kicking off bed sheets  
all night long.

Hot.  
It's not the heat,  
it's the stupidity.

Hot. Stupid.  
Hellish. Humid.  
Hot.  
Hot.

**MARC**  
Imagine this summer,  
close-knit.  
Knit as close as polyester tweed,  
right next door,  
right close by:  
blue-check plaid.  
Imagine this summer.  
Imagine this summer.

**FLORIDA**  
Imagine this summer.  
Cold front meeting hot front,  
thunder clouds and  
kicking off bed sheets  
all night long.  
Imagine this summer.

**ODM**  
Imagine this summer,  
somewhere else,  
somewhere far  
from  
here.  
Imagine this summer.  
Imagine this summer.

## ***7. Run That Red Light Red***

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Run That Red Light Red.

**MALE REDWOOD**

Run That Red Light Red.

**BOTH**

Run That Red Light Red.  
She's breaking the law with her lips.

## 8. *Blue and Wild*

*[26-year-old Florida, in the women's room of the courthouse, blows smoke rings.]*

### FLORIDA

When I was growing up—  
next to the driveway  
next to the...driveway—  
I thought that we were all  
one big carpool.

I didn't know  
I was stuck on the side of the road,  
with no one slowing down,  
and me, late for school.

I started smoking  
during my first trial.  
A necessary separation,  
like the ditch that divides  
the highway from the chicory  
growing idle on the side,  
blue and wild.

I stood with those  
left in the cold, smoking,  
as the headlights of the oncoming traffic  
sped to their hot-house homes.

Outside is as outside does.  
Outside is as outside does.  
I became one with them  
as we huddled against wind and night,  
hands cupped around each other's  
to save what little light  
there was.



## 9. *Looking Out the Window*

*[Florida and Marc in bed.]*

**MARC**

Looking out the window.  
You're always looking out the window.  
Every time we have sex,  
you leave the bed  
and "X" me out  
and look away.

**FLORIDA**

It's so green.

**MARC**

Staring into treetops.  
You're always staring into treetops.  
Every time that we make love,  
you disappear,  
and shove me out,  
and stare out there.

**FLORIDA**

I remember little buds. Blossoms.  
All of a sudden—wham—the leaves are all grown.

**MARC**

So what's the attraction?  
Why do you leave?  
Why not stay here  
with pillows of me?  
What's so great about an oak?

**FLORIDA**

And the blue.

Feeling one with nature.  
I find myself in this abundance.  
Strange how sex makes you see  
you're on your own,  
a part of life, and free,

**FLORIDA**

belonging to no one.

**MARC**

Free?  
Belonging to no one?  
Me! Am I no one?

And I'm supposed to let you go?  
Say "Bye" and "Don't forget to write"?  
No way, no way you're  
leaving for the summer.  
No way you're  
leaving me for the summer.  
This is no joke.

**FLORIDA**

An oak, Marc.  
You're jealous of an oak.

## 10. *My First Champagne*

*[Florida, away from home, writing in her diary.]*

### FLORIDA

Dear Diary,  
My first champagne.

*[A party is in full swing. Florida chats with guests who ask her about her unusual name.]*

No, I wasn't named after a state.  
The translation is flowered.  
You know, as in de-flowered.

*[The guests turn and walk away.]*

My mother was thinking of how to deliver  
the sound of hibiscus in one name.  
The breath of gardenia,  
the lilt of a tulip,  
a floral effusion I'd grow up to claim.

She started with vowels,  
the movement of hips,  
the sounds made by F—  
Fff. Fff.  
Two letters that bite on your lips.

*[Florida answers more questions from the partygoers.]*

No, he wasn't Brazilian.  
No, he wasn't Italian-slash-Egyptian.  
No, he wasn't Indo-European.  
More like Indian-Arctic-Atlantic-Pacific.

*[The guests turn and walk away.]*

Mom never knew who Dad might be.  
"Perhaps the ocean, or the sea"  
was how it was explained to me.  
So "father's" not a household word,  
and origins are somewhat blurred.

Absentee.  
Papa Sea.

*[Other guests question Florida.]*

No, I wasn't named for castanets.  
Actually, my last name is a mistake.  
My mother was thinking of the flamenco.

My mother had once seen the heels of a dancer  
drumming defiance with every tap.  
She named me Fandango  
to give me that power,  
except her translation was right off the map.

Fandango's a slave dance.  
The ankles are bound.  
They don't leave the ground.  
They keep you circling around.

*[Guests walk away. Florida picks up her diary.]*

And then I walked out,  
into the garden,  
where I first met Sasha,  
who was playing a violin.  
I asked him what it was  
that sounded so familiar.

He said,

**SASHA**

The sounds of night set to a fandango.

**BOTH**

The sounds of night set to a fandango,  
set to a fandango,  
set to a fandango,  
set to a fandango.

## *11. Where Are Our Children?*

**MALE REDWOOD**

Where are our children?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Did we have children?

**MALE REDWOOD**

We wouldn't let that slip us by.

*[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]*

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

We must have had two, then.

First one, then the next.

**MALE REDWOOD**

No.

We would have only produced first-borns.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Ahh!

First-borns!

That's what we had.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Where would they be now, I wonder?

The Ivy League?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Hmm?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Check our check stubs!

That will tell us!

**MALE REDWOOD**

Yes! Here!

Two tuition payments!

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Oh, I do hope they got into the college of their choice.

Tell! Tell!

**MALE REDWOOD**

Do you really have to ask?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Oh, I knew it.  
But...I wish I could picture them.

*[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]*

Wait—  
aren't they why we're here?  
I mean, didn't we move here, for them?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Who said your memory was going?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

And there are two, aren't there!  
One for each of us!

**MALE REDWOOD**

Of course.  
That way we do our part in keeping the population at zero.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Zero?  
How is two, zero?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Well, it's not.  
  
Two is not zero.  
But we are two, and they are two,  
so this way when we two die,  
they replace us.  
They replace us.  
  
Keeping the net gain,  
keeping the total population at zero.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

They what?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Zero.

*[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]*

Two by two,  
Just the way Noah had it planned.  
Boarding the Ark,  
two by two.

Walking the gang plank,  
just wide enough for two.  
Two lemurs,  
two gila monsters,  
two us.  
To us.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

They replace us!

**MALE REDWOOD**

In a manner of speaking.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Let's not speak of it!  
I don't remember this part being in the Bible.  
Where are those little bastards!

**MALE REDWOOD**

Kids!  
Who can keep track?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Well, it's dark.  
The street lights are on.  
They should be home.  
Maybe we should call a cop?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Cops!  
See there's another two.  
They only come in pairs.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Ring them up anyway.  
I'm worried.

**MALE REDWOOD**

Whom should I say is missing?

*[The Redwood Children wave from under the deck.]*



## ***12. Summer Reading***

*[The Redwood Children read a book.]*

**MARC**

What are you two up to now?

**REDWOOD CHILDREN**

Shh.

**REDWOOD SON**

Remember between Junior and Senior years?

**MARC**

Yeah.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

The summer reading that summer?

**MARC**

No.

What are you talking about Summer Reading?

Who read Summer Reading?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Whatever.

Anyway.

There was this book.

**REDWOOD SON**

The most classic of the classics.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Über Summer Reading Book.

**MARC**

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

**REDWOOD SON**

This book.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

This book here.

**REDWOOD SON**

In this book.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

All the people in this book.

**REDWOOD SON**

Once every summer,  
all the people gather around.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

They gather in this circle  
to perform this thing.

**MARC**

What thing?

**REDWOOD SON**

This what-we're-going-to-tell-you-about-thing.  
Everyone picks from this pile.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Whoever picks the black dot,

**REDWOOD SON**

the short straw,

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

the marked note—

**REDWOOD SON**

We forget the details, but this person,

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

every summer,

**REDWOOD SON**

this person in this book who loses

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

because of the aforementioned short end of the stick,

**REDWOOD SON**

gets stoned to death by everyone else.

**MARC**

It's a book about  
stoning someone to death,  
about murder  
and they assigned it to us  
for summer reading?

**REDWOOD SON**

But it's not about stoning.

**MARC**

You just said it was.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

It's about healing.

**REDWOOD SON**

Oh, yes, healing.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

How the community heals itself.  
How you need to weed out the bad  
in order to heal.

**REDWOOD SON**

Healing, healing.  
Ritual cleansing, ritual healing.  
Ritual cleansing, ritual healing.

**MARC**

Heal itself?  
A murder heals them?  
I don't get it.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

That's why you're in so much pain.

**REDWOOD SON**

Here.  
It's time you caught up.

*[They all read.]*

### ***13. Madly In Love***

*[Florida, away from home, writing in her diary.]*

#### **FLORIDA**

Dear Diary,  
I am madly in love  
with No One.  
Oh, there's a long distance relationship  
of long-term duration,  
plus a close-by  
for the short-term.  
But madly in love?  
But madly in love?  
But madly in love, love, love, love, love, love, love?  
No one qualifies.

To be madly in love  
with No One  
contains an insanity clause  
that gives one pause,  
wondering why  
when I'm in bed  
and reach for an arm,  
no one complies.  
No one complies.

But:  
No One makes it possible to be Anyone,  
keeps the door open and the seat warm,  
allows me always to fill-in-the-blank with a new No One.  
Oh, Glorious Absence filled to the brim  
with Everyone.

I am so madly in love with No One.  
I am so madly in love with No One.  
I am so madly in love with No One.  
So badly, madly, so radically,  
so fanatically in love with the No One  
who's as romantically  
involved with the No One that's me.

So madly, so madly, so madly  
in love with No One.  
I'm in love with No One.

I am in love,  
I am in love.  
I am in love with No One,  
I am madly in love with No One,  
I am in love with  
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One,  
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One,  
No One, No One, No One, No One, No One.  
I am in love with No One.

## ***14. I Believe***

*[One Dead Mother walks into her bedroom and prepares for sleep.]*

### **ONE DEAD MOTHER**

I believe in no Father Almighty.  
I believe in no Oneness,  
no Pyramid Scheme,  
no All-Seeing Eye.

I believe in no Seraphim to save me.  
No St. Jude I can call on,  
no St. Theresa I can shriek for  
as I pace a hospital hall.

But I believe in a mother's curse.  
I believe in a mother's blessing.  
In this, I am as superstitious as a pagan,  
as believing as a child.

I believe there are words of benediction  
that a mother can say over her child's head  
to protect her from harm.  
But a blessing must be given at the right time.  
It's all a mother can do.

I could have blessed my girl on her first day of school.  
I could have blessed her as she went away.  
But my blessing will not be heard  
until her wedding day.

There'll be no blessing till the time comes.  
When the time comes.

## ***15. Heal Thyself***

*[The Redwood Children costume Marc in gloves, hat, etc. They begin to throw stones at One Dead Mother's window.]*

**MARC**

I was healed,  
then cut open again.  
I was healed,  
then left to bleed.  
I was healed,  
then gravel was poured into my wound,  
once been healed,  
once been healed.

Once a girl  
licked my wounds.  
Once a girl  
bandaged me tight.  
Once a girl  
made everything right.  
Once a girl,  
once a girl.

Heal thyself,  
the prophets preach.  
Heal thyself,  
cause there's no one else.  
Heal thyself  
the only way you know how to  
heal thyself.  
Heal thyself.

*[The Redwood Children hand Marc a pair of black pantyhose. Marc places the spare key in his back pocket and tests the strength of the pantyhose.]*

## 16. *The Shattered Night*

*[One Dead Mother sleeps, dreams.]*

### ONE DEAD MOTHER

I turn around and I'm sixteen.  
How can I be sixteen—again?  
I have a daughter who's sixteen.  
I'm thinking hard about all this  
when I hear an odd...

*[tap]*

It's Walter Donovan  
throwing stones at my window  
to get my attention.  
I guess I am sixteen.

I'll just walk across the room,  
throw open the window,  
and climb down the drainpipe.  
But before I do,  
there's another tap.

*[tap, tap]*

How many stones did W. Donovan throw?

I take a step and triple taps

*[tap, tap, tap]*

hit the glass,

*[tap, tap, tap]*

then taps times four.

*[tap, tap, tap, tap]*

So what the hell is going on?

*[Florida, away from home, sleeps, dreams.]*

### FLORIDA

What are the birds from Snow White  
doing in my bedroom,  
draping me in cartoon clothes?

But before I can protest,  
they're dressing me in layers of light,  
white puff sleeves like paper lanterns.  
A dress the blue of outdoor Christmas lights.



I'm all aglow and waiting  
for my date with Sasha,  
expert on the sounds of night.

There are always doors in dreams,  
doors that never open.  
So I wonder if this is one of those.

But then I see the turning  
that sets it all in motion.  
A brass knob goes into orbit  
around a stifled click.

*[Marc opens his back door and crosses the 88 steps to Florida's house.]*

### MARC

I see her body  
framed in the light,  
the light of yesterday's storm window.  
This is how it starts.  
This is how it starts.  
I remember the first knock at her door,  
the new neighbor come to call.  
Me—bringing myself as welcome wagon.  
Her—jumping aboard.  
I want that first knock again.  
I want her to open the door.

I want her to open to me.  
I want her to open once more.  
Open me up.  
Welcome me home.

Open me up  
and pour me  
into a pool of light  
outside her window.

### FLORIDA

And as the door starts to open,  
I know.  
I know by the way it swings,  
Marc is on the other side.

I try to push the door shut,  
but Marc is pushing, too.

As I press against the door with all my weight,  
my dress breaks,  
tears and breaks,  
as I press,  
press against his weight,  
weight for weight.

**MARC**

I want her to open to me.  
I want her to open and break.  
Open me up,  
give me her weight,  
press my weight against her weight.  
Take on my weight,  
press me and weigh me down  
and break down with weight,  
down with weight.

**FLORIDA**

Weight on weight.  
Press against his weight.  
But  
then  
my dress begins to tear,  
tear and break.  
The dress breaks,  
the dress breaks.  
It breaks.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

When I hear the sound of a fifth stone,  
    [tap, tap, tap, tap, tap]  
I stop dead in my tracks.  
    [tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap]  
Is there a crowd?  
Is there a gang?  
Where are all of these stones coming from?

I reach the window.  
Now there's a shower of stone  
so thick, it's all I see.  
I can't see out.

*[Marc opens the door to One Dead Mother's bedroom.]*

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

I stand at the window,  
shattered by a rumble of rocks.

I stand at the window,  
choking on the sound of a crash.  
Where is my breath?

I stand at the window,  
shattered by a rumble of rocks.  
Losing my breath.  
Rattle of death.  
The window rattles.  
The window shatters.

**FLORIDA**

The dress gives no protection,  
shatters into slivers of glass.

The dress falls off and crashes,  
sending out a shower of glass,  
shatters away.

Slivers of glass.  
The dress falls off in pieces,  
shatters like a shower of glass.  
Weight of the crash.  
The dress crashes.  
The dress shatters.

**MARC**

I'm broken and I'm shattered.  
Will she ever open me up?

Open to me?

I'm broken and I'm shattered.

Will she ever open me up?

Open to me?

Open and break?

I'm halfway to the rumble,  
rattle, and the shower of rocks.

And halfway into the shattered night  
outside her window.

*[End of Act I.]*

## ***17. In The Dark***

*[A funeral. Each character holds a long-stemmed rose. They now appear as a community chorus, not as their individual characters—that is, except One Dead Mother.]*

### **FLORIDA**

In the dark,  
events transpire.  
There comes a blackout,  
something's gone.

### **MARC**

What is missing  
will become all we want.

### **REDWOODS**

Were we not secrets unto ourselves,  
the secrets of others  
might not hold such allure.

### **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

If we could see inside our skin,

### **REDWOOD SON**

view our ever-pounding heart,

### **REDWOODS**

we might be at peace with what's within.

### **MARC**

And the unknown

### **MARC & FLORIDA**

might lose its

### **ALL**

power to entice,

### **MALE REDWOOD & REDWOOD CHILDREN**

power to seduce.

### **FLORIDA, MARC, & FEMALE REDWOOD**

Encased in flesh,

**MALE REDWOOD & REDWOOD CHILDREN**

hidden from itself,

**MARC, FLORIDA, & FEMALE REDWOOD**

hidden from our view.

**REDWOOD CHILDREN**

We cut open others

**ALL**

to dissect the truth.

*[One Dead Mother walks past the mourners. She now wears a dress made completely of pantyhose. She collects the roses and luxuriously inhales.]*

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Smells like death to me.

*[One Dead Mother sits on a metal autopsy table. She taps on the table indicating Florida should sit with her.]*

## ***18. Under Arrest***

*[As Florida sits, two cops come up behind and handcuff her.]*

**COP # 1**

You're under arrest.

**COP # 2**

For the murder of your mother.

**BOTH**

We know an inside job when we see one.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Don't be absurd!

She had nothing to do with it.

*[beat]*

Unless you count  
that I moved here for her.

**COPS**

One.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Unless you count  
that she liked  
the red shingles  
on the white house  
at the cul-de-sac,  
and so we bought that particular house.

**COPS**

Two.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Right next to  
the boy-next-door.

**COPS**

Three.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Unless you count  
her dating Marc.

**COPS**

Don't you worry.  
We've nabbed him, too.

*[The cops exit with Florida. Lights up on the Redwood deck. The Redwoods simultaneously open envelopes that have come in the mail.]*

**REDWOODS**

Jury duty!

## ***19. Jury Deliberations No. 1***

*[The Redwoods enter the courtroom.]*

**MALE REDWOOD**

I am agog.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

I am in awe.

**MALE REDWOOD**

To think  
we have landed  
in such a hallowed hall.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

To think  
that our voices  
echo off the wall.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Help me put on this blindfold.

**MALE REDWOOD**

First you, then me.

*[They tie blindfolds on each other.]*

**BOTH**

We are beside ourselves.  
We are ready to do justice.  
We are ready to play our parts.  
We are ready.  
We are ready to part.  
We are ready.  
We are ready to part ways.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

I could use a little room.

**MALE REDWOOD**

I could use a little space.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

I have evidence to consider.



**MALE REDWOOD**

I have testimony to weigh.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

I don't know why we are kept in the dark.

**MALE REDWOOD**

Is it really necessary  
for us to play hide and seek?

**BOTH**

You think anybody will mind if we peek?

*[They peek.]*

## ***20. Autopsy No. 1***

*[The medical technicians, wearing lab coats, enter the autopsy room. They take notes on yellow legal pads. One Dead Mother sits watching them from a parallel table.]*

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

She's dented!

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Dented!

**BOTH**

Dented all over!

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

She's dented!

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Dented!

**BOTH**

Dented all over!

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Looks like a car roof left out in a hail storm.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

As if she'd been poked with a barbecue fork,

**BOTH**

to test if she's done.

So dented!

So dented!

*[One Dead Mother removes stone from her skin and hands them over.]*

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

You think it's a clue?

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

I think we should take notes.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

I'll measure the radii.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

I'll count up each poke.

**BOTH**

It's as if her skin broke.

## ***21. She Begged You To Kill***

*[Marc, questioned by the Prosecutor.]*

### **PROSECUTOR**

This is how it went.  
This is what occurred.

She begged you to kill.  
She knelt down and cried,  
conspired and lied,  
promising love.

She wanted her dead,  
her mother no more,  
if you did the chore.

*[The Prosecutor places Florida's diary on Marc's lap and exits. Marc begins to read.]*

### **FLORIDA**

July 15th. Number 7.

Dear Diary, Number 7 was the best so far  
because Sasha didn't leave after sex,  
but slept with me through the night.  
The weight of his leg over my leg  
was the best kind of weight.

July 17th. Number 8. Number 9. Number 10.

### **PROSECUTOR**

She begged you to kill.  
She knelt down and cried,  
conspired and lied,  
promising love,  
love, love, love.  
She wanted her dead.  
Her mother no more,  
if you did the chore.  
Forever, ever, more.

### **MARC**

She begged me.  
She knelt down.  
  
Promising love,  
promising sex.  
She wanted her dead.  
Her mother no more,  
if I did the chore.  
Promising forever and ever and more.

**MARC**

She saw me as pawn,  
as her means to an end.  
She pulled at my heartstrings,  
unraveled and spun me tight  
like a ring around her finger.

**PROSECUTOR**

It could lock her up, my son.

How she provided the access.

You had no chance to think.

You were completely seduced.  
You were completely seduced.  
Seduced, seduced, seduced.

So:

sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.

**MARC**

Is this key the smoking gun?

So I could enter the address.

And I swallowed the bait,  
hook, line, and sink.

Like a hit man who's juiced.  
I was completely seduced.  
Seduced.  
Seduced, seduced, seduced.

Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.  
Sentence reduced.

## ***22. Autopsy No. 2***

*[The Technicians continue with the autopsy.]*

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Seek and ye shall find.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Seek and ye shall find  
what you sought to seek.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Clues of every kind.

**BOTH**

Huh!  
There's a tongue in her cheek!

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

We should pursue the implications.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

We should inspect the degradations.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

This may indicate a language barrier.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

She may have been a carrier  
of a linguistic virus

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

passed on through ovum and gene.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Cheeky!

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Cheeky!

**BOTH**

If you know what I mean.

## 23. *Readily Available*

*[The Bailiff removes dangerous items from Marc—belt, shoelaces, and finally his wristwatch.]*

**MARC**

I can't even keep time?

**BAILIFF**

That's exactly what we do.  
We keep time.  
We take time.  
You serve time.  
You do time.

We are the keepers,  
we are the takers.  
You serve.  
You are the waiter.  
Later.

*[The Bailiff exits. Marc stares at his wrist.]*

**MARC**

What to do  
when time ticks blue?

When I reach under my bed,  
there's a time zone that's mine alone.  
in letters begging to be read.

*[Marc takes a stack of old love letters from Florida, tied up in a red ribbon.]*

Re-read and untied and memorized,  
each letter open wide.  
Flaunting a lipstick seal,  
seeming so real  
as to still feel warm.

I feel the time race.  
Not forward, not ahead,  
But back when, back then.  
A time that's always red.

Readily available memories  
waiting to be opened up.  
Every day, a different shade.  
Every shade, a different day.  
Every shade.

**MARC**

Jalapeño Pepper Red.  
Cherry Dipped In Chocolate Red.  
Overflowing Glass of Chianti Red.  
Halfway Down Your Throat Tongue Red.

**FLORIDA**

Red.  
Red.  
Red.  
Red.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Red.  
St. Sebastian Arrow Red.  
All the Holy Martyrs,  
Needing, Feeding, Bleeding,  
Blushing, Rushing, Gushing,  
Screaming Tabloid Headline Red.

Red.  
Red.  
Red.  
Red.  
Red.

*[The Bailiff returns, dragging a large bag.]*

**BAILIFF**

It's a crime.  
It's a crime. All the mail with your name on it.

**MARC**

What?

**BAILIFF**

Happens in high-profile.  
Aren't you going to read them?  
They'll help pass the time.

*[The Bailiff picks one out. Starts reading it.]*

**BAILIFF**

I loved the picture of you on the front page.  
I tacked it to the wall of my bedroom.

**DIANE & BAILIFF**

Do you mind if I keep writing to you?

**DIANE**

I want you to know I believe you—believe in you.  
Yours truly,  
Diane.



*[Marc checks out the back of the envelope.]*

P.S. It's Purposely Pink.

*[He picks up one envelope after another. Each one from Diane.]*

**MARC**

Cunning Baby Bunting Pink  
Pepto Bismol Soothing Pink.  
All the dolls and milkmaids  
ribboned in their bonnets,  
whining, pining, shining,  
sighing, trying, crying Pink.

**DIANE**

Pink.  
Pink.  
Pink.  
Pink.  
Pink.  
Pink.

## ***24. A Yellow Legal Pad***

*[16-year-old Florida takes her place at the defense table where she will sit throughout the second act writing on a yellow legal pad.]*

**FLORIDA**

I can't even defend myself?

**DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

That's exactly what I do.

*[The Defense Attorney hands Florida a pad.]*

Consider twenty-nine lines.

Consider a yellow legal pad.

Consider two pink lines perpendicular to twenty-nine blue.

**FLORIDA**

*[looking at the pad]*

A prison of legality expected to contain desire.

The desire to speak,

the desire to blurt.

The desire to shout,

to leak, to assert.

The desire to howl,

the desire to maim.

The desire to loudly proclaim

my innocence to others.

**DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

Don't talk. Don't squawk.

Don't speak.

Don't seem to speak.

Whatever goes on in your head,

don't let your thoughts be read by the jury.

And whatever you do,

don't try to whisper in my ear.

**FLORIDA**

Don't try to whisper in your ear?

**DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

Use this yellow legal pad.

This will be your constant companion,

your confidant and right-hand man.  
Anything you desire,  
anything you desire,  
anything you desire,  
write it here.

## FLORIDA

*[to audience]*

But desire defies these twenty-nine blue lines.  
Desire defies these twenty-nine blue lines.

I write with such pressure,  
I can read the dents on the next page.  
I write so quickly, I flood those dents with rage.

I write with big block letters,  
the way I learned in first grade

*[to Defense Attorney]*

“That’s not true!

Another lie!”

*[to audience]*

Then I proceed to the intricacies of detail:  
how, when, what, and why.

Still, the desire to conspire remains,  
to lean in close to my lawyer  
and whisper aloud all the page contains.

My lawyer has other ideas.  
There can be no sotto voce.  
No shoulder-to-shoulder secrets,  
no permission to lean in.  
Whatever happened to attorney-client privilege?  
How much more efficient  
to tilt my head and whisper,  
“Liar! Liar! Hey, Mister:  
Let me refresh the jury’s recollection.  
I was in bed throughout the incident in question.”

## PROSECUTOR

Consider this:

*[showing the key to the Jury]*

The key Florida planted in the back pocket of her boyfriend’s jeans so the patsy  
could enter her mother’s bedroom and kill her.

**DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

Consider this:

*[taking the key]*

The key an innocent young girl gave her boyfriend so the boy-next-door could come over and do their homework together.

**PROSECUTOR**

Consider this:

*[showing the diary to the Jury]*

The Slut's diary, where she enumerated her sexual conquests, desiring one young boy after another. Anyone to do her dirty work, to get her what she wanted—her mother out of the way.

**DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

Consider this:

*[taking the diary]*

An Innocent Girl's diary, stuck between childhood and adulthood. Fatherless, not sure which way to turn. Madly in love with no one, desiring no one, nothing.

**FLORIDA**

Consider this, I say,

I write like I'm on fire.

I write a blue-pink criss-cross of desire.

A screaming criss-cross of desire.

## 25. *Jury Deliberations No. 2*

*[Jury deliberations continue.]*

### **FEMALE REDWOOD**

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.  
He did it but she made him do it.

### **MALE REDWOOD**

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.  
He did it but she made him do it.

### **MALE REDWOOD**

Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.  
He did it but she made him do it.  
A done deal come undone.  
Did it but didn't.

Marc said  
he didn't do it.  
He did it,  
did it, but didn't.  
He did it.  
He said  
she made him do it.

He said he did it.  
He said she made him do it,  
but he didn't do it.  
A done deal come undone.  
He said he did it,  
but he didn't do it.  
A done deal come undone.  
She made him do it.  
He said she made a done deal  
come undone.  
She made him come undone.  
She made him come undone.  
She made him come undone.  
She made him come undone.  
She made him come undone.

### **FEMALE REDWOOD**

A done deal come undone.  
Did it but didn't.  
Marc said he did it, but didn't do it.  
He did it but she made him do it.

He did it.  
He said  
she made him do it.  
Marc said  
he didn't do it.  
He did it,  
did it but didn't.

Marc said he didn't do it.  
He said he did it, but he didn't.  
He didn't do it.  
Did it but she made him do it,  
Marc said.  
A done deal come undone.  
Did it but didn't do it.  
She made a done deal come undone.  
She made him do a done deal.  
She made him come undone,  
come undone, come undone  
come undone.  
She made him come undone,  
come undone,  
come undone.

## ***26. Autopsy No. 3***

*[The never-ending autopsy continues.]*

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

We've weighed the heart.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Busted and useless.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Check.  
The liver.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Toxic and suspect.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Check.  
The kidneys.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Drowned in their own juices.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Check.  
The contents of her stomach.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Not yet.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Then let's get to it,  
so that we can conclude  
about her eating habits  
at the time of her demise.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

What's this?

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

What's that?

*[They begin pulling out pages after pages.]*

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

A romance novel.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

And another.

A constant and steady diet  
of bodices ripped  
and bloomers rent.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

A veritable riot  
of Victorian suitors  
who need to repent.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

On the heath and on the farm.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

Girls with curls and girls with charm.

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Men with swords and boys with lace.

**BOTH**

Overcooked and underpaced.

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

You seemed to have forgot:  
there's a trial going on.  
Shouldn't you hasten your report?  
Enter it into the record?  
Categorize and sort?

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

Go on, go on.

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

"He whispered in her ear."

*[One Dead Mother picks up the yellow legal pad.]*

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

Here! Here!

*[She exits.]*

**MALE TECHNICIAN**

And then? And then? And then? And then? And then?

**FEMALE TECHNICIAN**

“She could no longer stand the suspense.  
She had to know the answer to their questions.”

*[They continue to read.]*



## 27. *Over and Over*

*[26-year-old Florida, in the Women's Room of the courthouse, blows smoke rings. Sings to a woman in a hospital bed. It is revealed to be One Dead Mother at the end of the song.]*

### FLORIDA

Twice a week, after school,  
in my strawberry pinafore,  
I moved from bed to bed.  
Smoothing a forehead,  
soothing the sick—  
any Florence Nightingale chore.

One old woman, lost in pillows,  
half-out, half-in delirium,  
stopped me from my duty,  
stopped me cold.  
She would hardly live long enough to breathe again.  
Still, she raised his empty hand to her lips.

Over and over,  
to her lips and back.  
She traveled this ancient, classic arc.

The slow curve of comfort,  
hand to lip,  
flesh to flesh.  
Forgetting all else  
but hand to lip,  
skin to mouth,  
flesh to flesh.  
Drawing a red-flared arc,  
waving in the smoke-filled dark.

Over and over and over and over,  
to her lips and back.  
Over and over and over and over.  
Over and over and over.

I thought it my duty to save her, so I said,  
"Psst! Missus! Psst!  
Missus, it's death touching your lips."

She looked at me and said,

*[One Death Mother sits up. Grabs her arm.]*

**ONE DEAD MOTHER**

"That's where you're wrong, little girl.  
This—this is mother's milk to me."

*[One Dead Mother hands the cigarette to Florida, who takes a puff. ODM gets up and leads Florida into the courthouse.]*

## 28. Judgment

*[One Dead Mother transforms into the Judge and blindfolds herself with the pantyhose.]*

What justice cannot see—  
what justice will not see—  
what data cannot indicate:  
a voice stifled,  
a scream smothered,  
a breath taken.

What the autopsy could not measure:  
a hollow beneath the ribs,  
a womb emptied,  
where once the defendant was kept,  
where once she swam.  
Where once a daughter in the darkness leapt,  
mother and daughter once leapt.

*[She takes off the blindfold.]*

Has the jury reached a verdict?

**MALE REDWOOD**

We have...

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

...not.  
We have...

**MALE REDWOOD**

...reached an impasse.

**REDWOODS**

We're split down the middle.

**JUDGE**

Do you think more time  
will help you to agree?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Yes.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

No.

**JUDGE**

I see.  
Then I declare this a mistrial.

I believe  
there is no reasonable hope of  
getting a conviction in this case  
where reasonable people differ.

Florida, Florida, Florida.  
You look at me,  
but you're not sure who you see.  
Your nerves are frayed.  
Your fear is warranted.  
I release you into the world again.  
Again.

Now starts your real trial,  
where you not only are freed,  
you are only free,  
you are only free,  
you are only free.

As you embark upon this journey,  
may good fortune be with you,  
and Godspeed.

*[One Dead Mother walks off into the sunset. Florida starts to walk off, but runs smack into a wall of people hidden behind newspapers.]*

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

*[lowering her newspaper]*

Not so fast, Miss Goody Two-Shoes.

## ***29. Sea of Newspapers***

*[The Redwood Children physically restrain Florida from leaving.]*

**REDWOOD SON**

Do you hear the buzz?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

See the news?

**BOTH**

Listen to your local talk show host?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Read the papers?

**REDWOOD SON**

Watch TV?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

You're on at six.

**REDWOOD SON**

You're on at five.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

ABC!

**REDWOOD SON**

CBS!

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

NBC!

**BOTH**

Full court press!

**FLORIDA**

Excuse me, I was just leaving.

**REDWOOD SON**

Here.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Here.

**REDWOOD SON**

Here.  
It says here.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Here.

**REDWOOD SON**

Here.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

The jury foreman winked at you.  
He blinked a wink  
to make a link with you.

**REDWOOD SON**

When the Judge was speaking,  
and the court room was reeking  
with anticipation,  
the old shark sent you  
a lover boy wink.

**BOTH**

The headline reads:

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

“She seduced the jury,  
like she seduced Marc.”

**REDWOOD SON**

“She seduced the jury,  
like she seduced Marc.”

**BOTH**

“She seduced the jury,  
like she seduced Marc.”  
“She seduced the jury,  
like she seduced Marc.”

She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.  
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.  
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.  
She seduced. She seduced. She seduced.

**FLORIDA**

Get out of my way.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

It says here:  
you should be re-tried.

**REDWOOD SON**

It says here:  
you should be refried.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

The sheriff cometh.  
The jig is up.

**REDWOOD SON**

We all know your M.O.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

You seduced Marc.

**REDWOOD SON**

You seduced the jury.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Who's safe from your seductive ways?

**REDWOOD SON**

Who's next?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Who's next?

**REDWOOD SON**

Who's next?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Citizen's arrest!

**REDWOOD SON**

Citizen's arrest!

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Citizen's arrest!

**REDWOOD SON**

Citizen's arrest!

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Citizen's arrest!

**REDWOOD SON**

Citizen's arrest!

*[Florida attempts to run away but runs smack into the Bailiff, who escorts her to the women's room where she will await her second trial. The Redwood Children look at their newspaper.]*

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Hey! Check out the society page.

**REDWOOD SON**

In a jailhouse wedding yesterday, Marc and Diane were united!

**BOTH**

Married. Forever.  
And we weren't invited!



### ***30. Family Meeting, Part I***

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Time to call a family meeting.

**REDWOOD SON**

Because we need to know:

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Because we are perplexed

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

The question we need answered is:

What were you thinking?

**REDWOOD SON**

Why were you winking?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

What were you thinking?

**ALL**

Why were you winking?

**REDWOOD SON**

Explain your behavior.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

If you don't mind.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

We really are curious.

**REDWOOD SON**

And so is the press.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

They also want to know:

What were you thinking?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Why were you winking?

**REDWOOD SON**

What were you thinking?

**ALL**

Why were you winking?

*[Microphones descend.]*

## *31. There, There*

### MALE REDWOOD

An exact translation would be,  
"There, there."  
What I meant was,  
"It will all be over soon."  
But not quite.  
What I really meant was,  
"There, there. There, there. There."

As she stood, I could see her shake.  
I could see the fear in her eyes.  
I have a daughter.  
I know the words that comfort are  
"There, there. There, there. There."

The long charge was read by the judge.  
"Hear ye, hear ye."  
We knew the verdict.  
We knew her future.  
Why shouldn't she?  
Why shouldn't she?

"There, there. There, there. There."  
What I really meant was,  
"There, there. There, there. There."  
Can't really translate,  
"There, there. There, there. There."  
Untranslatably,  
"There, there. There, there. There."  
A body's gesture  
can send a message through the air.

On my own, I would stop her pain,  
try to soothe from across the room.  
I have a daughter.  
I know the feelings of despair.

So slightly, so slowly,  
I gave her a sign.  
"There, there."  
I winked.

"There, there. There, there. There, there. There, there. There."

## ***32. Family Meeting, Part II***

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

There!  
There!

**MALE REDWOOD**

What?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

My wedding ring.  
*(grunt)*  
It's embedded in my flesh.  
*(grunt)*  
My skin has grown around it.  
My bones won't let it go.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Try a little soap.

**REDWOOD SON**

Add a little water.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Try some soap.

**REDWOOD SON**

Add a little soap.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Try a little water.

**REDWOOD SON**

Add some soap.

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

There.  
Let's start again there.  
You can stay here.  
I'm leaving for elsewhere.  
I'm leaving for elsewhere.  
I'm leaving for...

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Elsewhere sounds good.

**REDWOOD SON**

Except tomorrow's a school day.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

So looks like we stay.

*[The Female Redwood exits.]*

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

There goes Mom.

**REDWOOD SON**

Bye, Mom.  
There goes Mom.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Bye, Mom.

**REDWOOD SON**

What were you thinking?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Why were you winking?

**REDWOOD SON**

What were you thinking?

**REDWOOD CHILDREN**

Why were you winking?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Perhaps I'll reassess,  
reconsider,  
sell my story to the press.

**REDWOOD SON**

Perhaps you should do that somewhere else.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Go off on your own.

**REDWOOD SON**

Get some perspective.

Distance. **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

We're told it helps. **REDWOOD CHILDREN**

Drop us a postcard. **REDWOOD SON**

Now and then. **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

*[The Male Redwood exits. The Redwood Children alone on the deck.]*

We built it ourselves. **REDWOOD SON**

We stained it ourselves. **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Our deck. **REDWOOD SON**

Our deck. **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Our deck. **REDWOOD SON**

Our deck. **REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Our deck. **REDWOOD SON**

Our deck. **BOTH**

*[As the Redwood Children become their parents, we see 26-year-old Florida walk into the women's room. The bailiff stands outside, guarding the door.]*

### 33. *De-Voweled*

#### FLORIDA

In a new place where nobody knows me,  
I wait for the gavel to call me.

A new life needs a new name.  
Born again, I will harness my hips.  
I will swallow the vowels  
that mark me.  
For there's no need of vowels,  
less need of lips.

I pull off an "A" and turn "florid".  
I lose an "I" and am "flor'd".  
Take away the "F" and I'm "lord".  
Lord of what?  
Just myself and how I wait  
in this new town,  
hoping to go unnoticed till it's over.

I trash the "go",  
and try to stay put as "fandan".  
But it isn't enough,  
so I toss the "fand",  
and turn into "an".  
Ann Lord.

A simple girl with a simple name,  
no longer round, but abbreviated.  
Like the gray walls of this women's room  
where I wait and pace,  
captive, domesticated.

I remember a life lived once before.  
What it was like to let loose  
that vowel of pleasure,  
that brought me wisdom  
that once taught me the truth.

*[As the vowel of pleasure escapes, the Bailiff enters to take her into the courtroom for her second trial. She stifles the vowel.]*

Ahh.

### ***34. Coda: Seduction Chorus***

*[Everyone re-enters as a community chorus.]*

**ALL**

Seduction.  
Who seduced you?  
Seduction.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Sexual tension seeps,

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

sexual longing cries out to be heard.

**FLORIDA**

Seduction.

**MARC**

Who seduced you?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Sexual tension seeps,

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

sexual longing cries out to be heard.

**MARC**

Seduction.

**FLORIDA**

Who seduced you?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

She had a way with men.

**MALE REDWOOD**

She telegraphed her sighs.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Sexual tension leaps,

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

sexual longing



**REDWOOD SON & MALE REDWOOD**

defies laws and boun-

**FEMALE REDWOOD & MARC**

-da-

**FLORIDA & REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

-ries.

**REDWOOD SON**

She fooled us all at once.

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

She hid behind her lies.

**MARC**

Right here in the courtroom.  
Right before your eyes.

**GROUP I**

Sexual tension creeps,  
sexual longing resides  
under it all.

**GROUP II**

Seduction, seduction.  
Who seduced you?  
Seduction.

Sexual tension creeps,  
sexual longing resides  
under it all.

Seduction, seduction.  
Who seduced you?  
Seduction.

**WOMEN**

Who seduced you?

**MEN**

Was it Marc with his dimple?  
Who seduced you?

**WOMEN**

Was it Mrs. Redwood in her nightie?  
Who seduced you?

**MEN**

Was it the Father Figure?

**ALL**

Or was it the Queen of the Trial?

Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?

**MALE REDWOOD**

Was it the Judge?

**FEMALE REDWOOD**

Was it the jury?

**REDWOOD SON**

Was it the stranger who never spoke?

**REDWOOD DAUGHTER**

Was it the Judge?

**MARC**

Was it the jury?

**FLORIDA**

Was it the headline marching cross the page?

**MARC**

Was it her bedtime taking center stage?

**FLORIDA**

Was it the headline shouting loud with rage?

**MARC**

Was it her bedtime frankly underage?

**ALL**

Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?  
Who seduced you?

Sexual tension creeps,  
sexual longing resides under it all.  
Sexual tension creeps,  
sexual longing resides under it all.

Ahh.  
Ahh.  
Ahh.  
Ahh.

Who seduced you?

Ahh.

**FLORIDA**

*[End.]*