

18 Audition Monologues

For Men & Women

By

By Kirk Wood Bromley

Selected by Chad Gracia

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Foreword by Chad Gracia

Dear Friend:

The celebrated playwright Kirk Wood Bromley has written tens of thousands of verse lines for Inverse Theater over the past decade. Included here you will find a brief selection of some of our most compelling and enjoyable monologues, perfect for auditions.

Many casting directors ask for a verse monologue, and they generally expect something from Shakespeare. However, the fact that a limited selection of the Bard's work is delivered over and over can often make it difficult for the casting crew to differentiate between auditioners. It is also hard to make an impression when a few dozen other actors have used your monologue that afternoon. This is a major problem.

The verse (and musical prose) monologues of Inverse Theater solve this dilemma. Not only will casting agents be surprised by these original, unique, and relatively untapped monologues, but the power and richness of the text can go a long way to making a lasting impression.

Try them out and see the results. And if you have any comments or suggestions, please let me know by emailing me at cgracia@inversetheater.org.



Chad Gracia
President, ActorTips.com

PS: Before your audition, be sure to read our tips for auditioning (and learn how to avoid the most common auditioning mistake) in our book *Becoming a Successful Actor*.

7 Monologues for Women

The Burnt Woman reveals her secret (dramatic).

From *The Burnt Woman of Harvard*.

Burnt

Woman-

Me and Johnny Brown were once together;
He was at Harvard, I was a hazard,
And negative attracting positive,
Or vice versa, was our verse device.
Johnny was a poet, and I was less
His muse than his tour-guide thru terror,
My goal to rid him of his fatal flaw:
The love of beauty. Minor poets rave
In one dimension – that which pleases them,
But now and then a poet's born who knows
To love the opposite of his intent,
Thru paradox, and doing so, is major.
We practist what I called hyperpoetics,
Which is to say we lived within a poem,
A poem he wrote, a poem I energized,
For to live inside a poem's to live inside
Its logic, and its logic is pure love.
O we walked the firy gamut of sense!
Hard, dirty lurches were our bed. The cold
Our shelter, distress our inspiration,
Seducing the dark and the dangerous,
The stranger the spot, the better the poem!
Yet I could not escape the throttling nag
The grandeur of his genes was still to splay:
For that bad habit, beauty, still remained.
O how I burned for him (but who the hell
Sees foreshadow in bright America?)
And here's where insanity edged out sense.
We started sniffing gasoline, screwing
In public, hurting each other in bliss.
Then, one night, pretty revved on regular,
I strippt and soakt myself in motor fuel
And ran into the street. Johnny followed,
Naked and lubed (he used to be a sport),
And there, as one, a twisting exxon frenzy,
I screamed "I wanna burn!" and Johnny screamed
The same, and then I screamed "death to beauty!"

And Johnny screamed the same. O I had him!
(Please, remember, all I really wanted
Was to make Johnny Brown a major poet),
So there we were, embracing, and I thought
“I’ll hit the lighter, go up in a flash,
And then go out.” See, it was raining,
But not enough. Do not try this at home.
So, flick the bic, and poof, I meet my match.
Next thing I know, I wake up wrappt in gauze
In the Harvard burn unit ICU
(And if you think you can empath such pain
As I have lived, you dream beyond your means).
But where is Johnny? Nowhere to be seen,
Nor have I seen him since, save on the sly.
He trickt me, see? He said “I wanna burn!”
And then he flincht. O just like a poet!

Enter John.

A city girl falls in love, against her better judgment (dramatic/comedic)

From Lost Labour's Loved.

Pekabo, the ultimate free-spirit, finds herself in love, and very confused.

Pekabo: Dam, I am in love! Strange in my own skin,
Cuz I am me, yet I'm not what I've been:
A riotgirl on the downtown scene,
The mother of my mind, a Trampoline,
Who bounced into the tapas bar of lust
And came out screaming more, her palate flusht.
But now, to be a nervous, quiet girl,
Whose only question is 'will my bangs curl?'
Or 'will he look at me?' or 'will he ask?'
Or 'should I swear?' or 'does he like my laugh?'
Love? O, love's an artificial sweetener,
Always old and yet sixteen forever,
A tigerbeat, a soggy note to Sassy,
A heavy heart that sighs, "O, I am empty,"
A kitten that can't sleep or move or eat,
And craves a letter sweater in her heat!
O, how can I love, accept dependency,
Put a v-chip on my eccentricity,
Strap on the straight-jacket fidelity,
And drowning in the phlegm of normalcy,
Lie down to drown in choked monogamy.
And, worse than worst, it is hypocrisy!
I am weak, I submit, O, I give in,
And to a man? More like a mannequin,
Born stiff, putting on, all but what you see,
Yet still too stiff to see that he's a dummy!
And I adore of these the most devoid?
Were style wealth, a beggar be that Boyd,
Speaking sibillant syllables round his word,
And, no doubt, dipping deepdish undeterred.
But still, he is a boy in action made,
As milk is milkt, lip lipt, as plays replayd,
So I am psycht to relive May dismayed,
To pass from boys to Boyd, to be his one,
To lose at loving's game of zero sum.
In playing love, the more you try to not
Commit, the more commitment tries your thought,
And from progressive freedom you digress,
Compulsion posing as impulsiveness.
Cuz though love is a lie, denying desire,
In this distortion I am most like nature:
Light? Prizmization. Matter? Fabrication.
Gravity? Persuasion. Growth? Exaggeration!
Every body acts as if it's special,

Yet every creature is a cannibal,
As cow-headed man kills man-headed cow,
In an ever-ending, meat-eating now.
So, lying to be true to what I am,
Let others love themselves; I love my man.

Mayumi wonders if her lover will return (dramatic)

From *The Death of Griffin Hunter*.

Her lover is three hours late, and Mayumi begins to wonder if he is true. Despite his protestations of love, he is married and living a very successful life as the UN Undersecretary for Disarmament.

Mayumi- Noon, and he said nine. Or did he? Noon, nine,
A difference small of sign but huge of hope.
O why did I trust? Why did I believe
That he would ever choose me over her?
How could I be so taken, so naive
To ever think he would exchange his life
Of peace, to be with problematic me?
No. Griffin will. He said he would, he will.
He is a man takes freedom over habit,
Love over status, bliss over boredom,
Yet in the latter is security,
That all-uncompromising cause of choice.
He will not come. He has thrown me away,
And yet, he said he...No, he said a lie.
O you sad human, once a comet came
Into the night of tiny, static dots
And spread a splash of light across the sky
As you stood dazzled, helpless on the ground,
And then it went away, yet still you stand,
Trying to review its transit marvel,
Incapable of honestly admitting
You'll never see or touch its flash again,
For it is gone, and when it does return
You will be dead, with darkness all around.

A mail-order beauty describes her experience in Russia (tragic)

From *The Burnt Woman of Harvard*.

Zhazha, a Russian mail-order bride, has just been complimented for her beauty by Mark, who admits that he “takes much pleasure in her beauty.”

Zhazha- It is a pleasure for Beauty to live? O, what silly Wordboy. You want to hear why I come live with Johnny in America? In my country, beauty is death sentence. When I was ten, my sister twelve, because my mother's poison so expensive and my father, he, how is said, he tuck us into bed, so we run to city seeking job, and there a man, pretending to be wealthy light-bulb maker looking for packaged people, he lock me and my sister in a room, then we go to what is English said like girl-farm. Here start our sentence for the crime of beauty. Men at morning come and, what you say, take much pleasure from our beauty. In afternoon men come with cameras and take much pleasure from pleasure being taken in our beauty. Then men for night-time come and they all dresst in silly clothes, with, how is this word, devices, and with animals, and with these they take much pleasure from our beauty.

But looking back on this, it a pleasant memory compared to what they happened to my sister when she try escape. When girl try leave beauty, this is for these men, what you say, unforgivable. So they hang her from the ceiling, cut off her arms and legs, and very drunk they take much pleasure from her beauty. This is what happense to be beauty in my country, and poetry is very popular there. But me, I escape, cuz I fast, so I like to live with Johnny in America, why for? Cuz Johnny he let me take much pleasure from his beauty.

Lydia falls for her best friend's man, a jock (comedic)

From [*Want's Unwisht Work*](#).

Lydia, sworn to celibacy as part of her final semester in a Women's Studies Program, finds herself irrevocably attracted to her best friend's boyfriend, Leavus, who represents everything her current lover is not.

Lydia: I'm done. My body, lowered into fields
Where spine and brain and pelvis dance apart,
To delirial exogenesis so yields,
Love's lattice swirls me another heart.
Leavus! O, when soon, they say, the sun
Shall eat the earth, why should you not consume me?
How strong you are, and I, so unbegun,
Hard arms demand to force my fantasy.
That pawing Warren's limericks make me sick!
He blinks, and it is fault to make me quake!
I was cloth-mother to that monkey geek,
Who's had nor ate life's ever-moistly cake.
It seems now I have loved a million Warrens,
And yet it seems I've never loved at all!
But O, Leavus, that firm mellifluence,
Throbs into me new vibrants palatal.
Warren's so weak, he weeps when a t-shirt dies!
He's air, a ghost, a fleshless, junior blip!
Leavus, I think, for greater things is sized,
Will more concretely at the soil grip.
Yet chasing him I fumble and respin,
And am, to my convictions, fugitive!
How can I swoonly savor, crave and sip
At all I have denounced as deathmanship?
Betraying my ideals, my own ideas
Become an anarchy I can't betray!
O, where's the pass in passion? Why now, rude lust?

Medicine woman conducts a marriage in the woods (comedic/fantastic)

From [*Icarus & Aria*](#).

Medicine Woman is a Navaho who wanders the land, performing religious ceremonies unasked. In this scene, she marries the young Icarus & Aria while they are on the run from the Phoenix and their responsibilities there.

Medicine Woman: Medicine Woman, registered trademark,
The sacred mother of this territory.
I roam the forage paths. Your languages
Together laughing called me. May I share
Your water? I am tired.
In love, I know. You want to be alone,
But don't mind me, cuz I'm not really here.
You're young, you want privacy,
You're old, privacy wants you.
Me, I'm with myself, I think of others,
But with others, all I think of is myself.
I'd go away, but there's no way to go
That's not my way, and that's the way it is.
So, a way's a way's away. You're married?
Well, since he's so cute, and you're so honest,
Here, for you, I wove a marriage basket.
In it, place an object of commitment,
Both of you. Pick anything! Who cares?
Not the leaf of trembling passion!
Not the stone of stumbling psyche!
Fine. I'll work with it. Hubba yakka ho!
Leafgirl, Stoneboy, you're in the basket now.
Look, you're dancing. O, what's that you're doing?
Squirming to escape the basket case!
There's only one way out: you must be wed.
A shot of shark excretion, and I'm set.
Now, who shall Stoneboy marry?
Leafgirl? No! Why not? Because. She is a leaf!
You will be ever envious!
Rippling in the sky, so supple-sure,
Her tree prevents the mountain from eroding,
From filling the rivers that feed the field,
From killing the flower that stuffs the bee,
From starving the bird that poops the pod,
That all may live in free dependancy!
Who shall Leafgirl marry? Stoneboy?
But he is a stone!
Sure, he's hard, he's strong, he commandeers
The marvel mantel of the earth, but he
Is of the melty forces underground!

None so cold when cold, none so hot in heat,
Ever seeking darkness like the first,
Striving at open spaces tween the stars,
He ruffles all your fragile ruffage parts!
Wait! A message. Mama Gunka! Of course!
How can Stoneboy and Leafgirl get married?
Her leaf imprints a fossil in his stone!
Ah, how wise the Mama Gunka! Cheers!
The vows!
To what but you, my leaf, should I be drawn,
When winter, hearing you, is singing-soothed?
In what but you, my stone, should I live on,
When in you time is still, and stillness moves?
You are, my leaf, of life the shape and seed.
You are, my stone, the granite and the gold.
So unlike, we are alike in need,
So new unknown, we are in knowing old.
Over time, the surfaces will soften,
Over all, impressions will enface,
Stone and leaf becoming leaf and stone,
An image of the now-in-then embrace.
Leafgirl, Stoneboy, desiring one of two,
Do you?
I now pronounce you unpronounceable.
You may kiss the countryside. Ten bucks.

Serena Ridge questions why she lives (dramatic)

From Midnight Brainwash Revival.

Serena Ridge has lived her whole life in awe of her father. Now that he has disappeared, she reexamines her priorities, and finally comes to grip with the fact that he may be gone, forever.

Serena: Why do I live? To dream my father does?
Then I've no reason to, as he does not.
O free me from this stupid show of faith,
This straining at a shadow, end this lie
Of life! Death, I admit you. Enter me
Entire, make my body your sweet home,
Reside in what I hide. Look out my eyes,
Take meals in my gut, lounge in my lap,
And stuff my sterile insides with your seed,
O make family with me, Death, that I might grow
Into myself and mother infant truth!
It is done. Death has replaced you, father,
Yet do not yell unjust, as justice speaks
Too justly in this order, 'father, die!'
Have you not left me, I, who lived for you,
Alone in doom? Your last paternal gift
A wasting loneliness, a birth betrayed?
You seemed a vibrant will with mine entwined,
Yet now in death you leave your living will
To my younger brother, who hated you,
While I, who gave you all, am left with none?
It is you, father, gave my life to Death.
I see you now, a frozen gaping stiff,
Atop that hissing peak. That is your will.
Always climbing, driving into danger,
Not thinking how your death would rape your daughter!
But Death and I have our own family now,
And it's for them I live, for it, for him.

7 Monologues for Men

A Harvard freshman contemplates Beauty & Truth (dramatic)

On Mark's first day at Harvard he meets two women: his classmate, the beautiful Clara; and the Burnt Woman of Harvard, who peered at him through the classroom window. When he is alone he contemplates these visions.

Mark- I was fresh at Harvard, undeclared.
 A fine, free beam of calorescing urge
 My spirit yawed, vitrifying voice,
 And most in all did I at beauty needle,
 Til vision, that ancient trick-directrix
 Of our intention, ript my brain in half.
 To see such beauty and such ugliness
 At once! O little did I know how deep
 The world's reserves! To feel my larval life,
 My paradise decaying from within
 And my decay into beauty blooming.
 Which will you choose to interlock with truth?
 O let it be beauty! Yet was there not
 In her opposite sheer veracity?
 She moved meatish thru the mental eden
 Of arrogant and mumbling arrivistes,
 Like a bleak angel bearing the stigma
 Of subterfuge, her clippt and twitching wings
 Conducting a choir of silent cackles
 That mockt human hope, and O how you,
 How all who saw her there were gazing dragged
 Thru hope's high drudgery. Awful Beauty!
 No! There is no peace in paradox,
 No sense in an ecstatic agony.
 You, the poet, must beauty's secrets plunge
 To mine of priceless truth the motherlode!
 O Beauty, he alone takes you for truth,
 And mark his word, his words shall hit your mark.
 She cannot shush a voice that shrieks when shusht.
 I will not be by ugliness unmothered;
 I will at Beauty breathe and not be smothered;
 I will her bliss and crush all undiscovered
 When first I saw the burnt woman of Harvard.

Hayden transforms into the Dean of Danger (strange)

Hayden decides to convince his now debauched friend John Brown to return to his former life of poetry and truth. His method is to morph into the "Dean of Danger," a filthy, truth-talking, mutant. After this transformation, he sets out to terrorize the Harvard campus with his insights. In this play's productions (1992 and 2001 in New York), this role was played by two actors, who metamorphosed on stage into one another. Take a deep breath, this is a mad one...

Hay- O John, your charms ensnared, your lust obscured,
Your passions vying at a futile prize,
No wonder you despise my stilted soul
That cowers bland so you may brightly cheme
Again. Each moment casts me as the clown.
I've sacrificed my urges for your whims,
And you but wipe my shadow with your ass.
For what? For the nostalgia of a love
So opposite to now it enters hate?
Yet it is love, a rage that washes clean
The ornery scent of the last pig's blood,
A love that sifts for golden in your guilt
At faltering in Megan's harsh but pure
Demands, that now, though once a verse elite,
You take pornography for poetry.
O I must help you back to what you were,
But how? I've tried with everything I am,
Yet what of what I'm not? Might I be now
A parody of what you have become,
That viewing your design you self-destruct?
Yet what you are I lack, though are you not
The opposite of what you were? Among
Perfections imperfection most allures,
And in our formulaic fame a flop
Alone can sometimes penetrate. A flop?
A freak? A mutant?
The too-defeated face that wins all funds,
So fuckt he tucks in anywhere. I'll be
A cryptoneurotic hyperencephelate
Sleazo-slingin slab of edible shit,
Or, as it will, I will be you not you,
And showing you yourself you will revert.
Hellmouth, Hellmouth, rap me a trap,
And cram it full of rhymes that make the stiffies snap.
Backbone, Backbone, crack me a man,

And stuff him up with goodies that sweets the dirty plan.
I have crawl'n into the angel food.
I am a prank fallen from the mothers.
When you sleep, dweamers, I move your room and run.
Dean of Danger, no one stanger,
Of your square root, the negative one.

He exits as the Dean.

Erad regrets his alliance with the nefarious Professor Kling (dramatic)

From [*Want's Unwisht Work*](#).

Erad discovers that his mentor has been utilizing questionable tactics in the “therapy” of Corne, motivated more by lust than a design to heal. His part in this charade disgusts him.

Erad: Was ever more insidious torture known
Than that I suffer being just myself?
I am a hollow-headed, whiny failure,
A theory-propping, word-regretting cheat,
A lazy, timid turd, a crook of cheap respect,
A goo of subsidized ungroundedness,
Who, with a baby's bliss, makes the teethed
And spit-on ring of success his pacifier.
Destroy the mirrors! I'll kill who films me now!
O hopeless, hopeless, hopeless! What can I do?
I'd beg for change at Corne's midnight teller,
But I'm to change so long unpracticed,
I'd need a life to read the manual!
So, I must be systematic then,
And walk the whole way thru this half-way house,
Counselling Kling's closure on himself.
For what is schoolish learning, if it blots
The independent passions of reflection?
I am a bug born buried, that must dig
Its sensing-pod above the gestate soil
With those same mandibles that dug it in,
To chrysalis a winged and clingless man.
And once I dissertate this Dr. Dork,
I'll go declare to Corne all I know.
Listen, love, and I will call your cue,
And then, all gorgeous pleasures we'll outdo!

Deepu breaks out of his trance (comedic)

From [Lost Labour's Loved](#).

Herman Stein, in search of spiritual peace, has joined a cult and taken the name Deepu. He has been broken down by a series of mind exercises, but when he comes across a picture of a naked woman on the ground, the spell is broken.

Deepu: Is it not clear how universe be swirling? Rishi have huge head. Deepu, tiny room. Him? Twenty limos. Me? No shoes. Him? Holy lungis. Me? Holey rags. Him? Many lawyers. Me? No articles. Him? Best seller. Me? Fake accent. Him? Big ranch. Me? No lunch. Rishi have harem. Deepu have haircut. Chase skunk, Deepu, say Rishi. So, Deepu chase skunk. Deepu stink, say Rishi. Did not Deepu chase skunk? Take alcohol bath, say dummy man. But Deepu not allowed to bathe or drink, so Deepu stink! See how prospers all things over Deepu? What Rishi do is right cuz Rishi do it, yet Rishi cannot make Deepu unstink. So, I, Deepu, do stink. All is one? Ha. All is lost. For deep down Deepu know that Deepu do not stink by skunk, but Deepu stink cuz he too close to hugeheads like his Rishi! No, Rishi wise, Deepu dumb. Deepu stink. O, poor Deepu! What can Deepu do but die? Die, Deepu, die!

He sees a photo on the ground.

But what is this? O, asapurna! Precious rama! It is my vila! O, it is my goddess! It is Beautiful Naked Ooman! Deepu worship Beautiful Naked Ooman. Hello, Beautiful Naked Ooman. I am Deepu. But who is Deepu? Deepu once have wife like Beautiful Naked Ooman. Deepu once have house with wife like Beautiful Naked Ooman. Deepu once in house with wife did do what Deepu cannot do with Beautiful Naked Ooman. O, I am not Deepu! I am...No, I am Deepu. But Deepu worship Beautiful Naked Ooman. Deepu be to Beautiful Naked Ooman what Deepu was before he worshipt Beautiful Naked Ooman! With Beautiful Naked Ooman Deepu do what Deepu cannot do with Beautiful Naked Ooman! Deepu done with hugehead Rishi! Deepu love Beautiful Naked Ooman! I am... I am... Herman Stein, obstetrician, golf enthusiast, and family man!

A hippie literati takes us on a poetic ramble (comedic)

From [*Lost Labour's Loved*](#).

Dada Mysterio De Mystico, after too much ganja and poetry readings, goes a bit overboard in winning the heart of the illiterate girl he's focused his intentions upon.

Dada: A spectre is haunting my heart - the spectre of competition. For what? For you. Who you? My love. What's love? The egg of life. How many eggs? One egg. How many lives? O, millions. Lovers of the world, unite!

For I have seen the best signs of my imagination dragged screaming and nude thru the fast food malls of nuclear America.
Succulent, savory, sensuous snapshots of you!
You who yelp like a Chippewa coyote to my rhutebega in the sky!
You who devour my divine leftovers with mystic, dancing utensils!
You who are holy! Holy your toes! Holy your shins! Holy your thighs! Holy your vulva! Holy your mammalies! Holy your head!
Holy holy holy full of holes O you are wholly holy!

I sing the body selective. I sing of the sweatlodge of my loins, warmed by you alone. I sing of the corn in my combine, shucked by you alone. I sing of the musics moaned by you alone! Click, my magic cricket!
Soar back, my Spread Eagle! Come, my eternal compost of expression!

Signed, he who was formerly Insignifo di Nudomania, Beanpaste Powerbar, Buddhabrahma in Babybeing, and so on thru the sounds, your servant, your master, your man, your woman, Dada Mysterio di Mystico.

No I say no my silly froth O yes I say yes my swoonysong O no my libido O yes my albedo yes to my wish no to my shish No no my kabob Yes yes my nabob O yes yes yes my karma O no no no my schwarma no my umble yes my humble yes my mumble no my numble no my body, my sack of stuff, but yes to soul, my gotham amok, O no to all, but yes to you, O yes O yes O yes to you O let the hickies begin, O no O yes!

A father mourns his son (dramatic/comedic)

From [*Icarus & Aria*](#).

Jimmy Jones discovers that his son has been killed by the brother of his daughter's new boyfriend.

Jimmy Jones: My son, he offs my son,
The viril product of my laboring life,
A diligent, respectful, hearty boy,
My scrappy fighter, my little hero,
My baby, junior me, my boy, my son,
Yet she, O, my perverse, now-only child,
Would marry with that schizo scumbag's brother?
You were with a cheat, a coward, a killer,
A failure punk that smokt you like a hooka,
And zonkt you with his cattleprod of fame.
He is a rash my upright ass won't catch,
Schmmoizing after fathers for their daughters.
You wanna crack my heart? I'll crack you first.
You clueless, whoring brat.
My due for raising you's you let me down?
A child makes a child on a child's grave,
And fathers are condemned to fatherhood.
I'm next, ain't I? We are all connected
In some conspiracy, par excellence.
Maximus, Nite, Imaginero, you,
The plot is on a rampage, and I'm next.
Ha, I am abandoned!
Shovel me in and call me toxic waste.
This world treats a murder like a marriage,
Don't it now? My daughter humps a homicide,
My son is roadkill neath the getaway car.
His soul's in a better place?
Like nowhere? Like the great shrinking expanse?
Vacuum land, one with zero, nullibicity,
Everything with nothing, he's singin lead
For the no-more-man tabernacle choir,
Disappearo, poof, no refund bub,
Digested like a sixfoot greasy sandwich
Into the space where sense denies sensation,
He is where he is zilcho once again!
Woman, I'm middle aged, not middle ages.
I plan to sue, not sup that renegade.

Benedict Arnold first contemplates betrayal (dramatic)

From [*Washington: The American Revolution*](#)

Benedict Arnold, upon first learning that General Washington has passed him up for a promotion, contemplates in revulsion what the democratic revolution has come to signify, as well as what it will mean for his career to be “second in command.”

Arnold: So this is what America will mean?
The smarm of imperfection's victory,
Where process triumphs over prodigy,
And master majority over me.
Second? What is second? It is a loss!
And a second's second? That's second squared,
A dream encircled by a real defeat,
Making me, with the first, like nearly fifth!
Fifth? No, I'll think it second. Still! Second?
Second to clear the globe? To tag a teen?
To speak a gorgeous phrase? All, and so none.
A second's next, forgotten, some other's other,
Absent, after, without core or being
Himself in selfless, lacking recognition.
Second gives, first gets; second does, first did.
First goes, second went; first is, second was.
A wrong and coward thought, that is second!
This wishy Washington, this highbrow southern,
This democratic King will botch it all!
O stillborn revolution!
Your protocol has made your best to be
A helper, a tag-along, a shadow -
So, then, Dark Eagle, hide in what you hate,
Be what you have lost, excel obscurity!
I'll be the greatest second ever known,
And fight so fierce and forward that the first
Shall be the only power worth my wrath.
Second? Second? O second I will be,
And thru this rank rise to rankless glory!

3 Great duets

A Psychology Grad student meets his match

From [*Want's Unwisht Work*](#).

Erad & Corme have been chosen to enter the "Home of Feminist Study," and right from the start, the energy between them is electric and volatile. Notice their intense need to defend their respective mentors.

Erad- I am not out to get you, Corme.
Corme- Good,
Because I am not in to take you, Erad.
Erad- Why so radical?
Corme- Why so obedient?
Erad- Let's not read, but just look at, each other.
Corme- Men of your science cannot stare on woman,
But as an author fondling his first text.
And I am here to learn, not to gawk.
Erad- My science, Corme, seeks to reconfigure
The graph of lust's relations, to deconstruct
Humanity's commuting, basic language,
And wage some compensation for inborn labors.
To saw down walls in habit's bleary maze,
I analyze forlorn and sexfull ways.
Corme- That does sound sexy: grafting woman's flesh
With graphics judged by man to up his graft.
Erad- Perhaps, to you, sex is but exhibition.
To me, who am not timid in its dark,
Our sex is extract of our body's birth.
It's all the meanings, histories, and dreams
Of every tincture of uncome detail;
The plastic, vital, moving communique
Of form decreeing law, law begging space,
Space urging time, time talking love,
That binds creation to a coupling code,
Which I intend by cracking to reset:
To you, sex may be just some simple action;
It is, to me, the logic of attraction.
Corme- So says the playboy, pornstar, and psychologist:
Sex is all, so let's just all have sex.
Erad- I am professional.
Corme- Another term
For websites of invisible invasion.
Erad- You are so stoned with dope conspiracy,

You probly say earth spins to make you dizzy.
 Corme- And you are so abstracted with your lust,
 Your thoughts are limp, and lack a certain thrust.
 Erad- That was low.
 Corme- In earshot of a snake.
 Erad- What have I done to you?
 Corme- You cling too much.
 Erad- Dr. Kling is famous!
 Corme- All fame can do
 Is push the past, until our tolerance
 To newness is so low, we sell tomorrow
 For its fix of loitering arrogance.
 Erad- He is, Corme, the pallette of his field!
 Corme- My, how much life's spectrum has congealed.
 Erad- No man, in word's captivity, is freer.
 Corme- Of great men's freedom I am prisoner.
 Erad- O, how the glass of genius is here stained
 By jealousy, yet scintillates the more
 It is besmirched! Must every man, from slugs
 That feed upon the compost of old newspaper,
 To he whose head deserves the title planet,
 Be ever slopped into mundanity
 By high frustration's dealer, jealousy?
 You're insecure, and so secure this place.
 Corme- So dumb is genius, it calls insecure
 What it cannot knock down with axioms.
 Erad- If you're so certain, drop Bertha the Bomb.
 Corme- Bertha Lerner is a force of nature!
 Erad- She is a self-constructed caricature.
 Corme- My future traces her.
 Erad- You trace a blur.
 Corme- She is of woman's statement architect.
 Erad- Fashionable militants start progressive sect.
 Corme- If you don't like it, don't go in it.
 Erad- If I don't enter, I'll miss my victor's exit.
 Corme- There is no winning when you beat yourself.
 Erad- To penetrate is triumph in itself.
 Corme- You will not go too deeply in, I'm sure.
 Erad- Deep enough to find your cure.
 Corme- O! This house is due to men like you.
 Erad- What? Who wish they knew what women knew?
 Corme- Don't men, should woman once think for herself,
 Instantly turn thinking to love's stealth.
 What do you want?
 Erad- I want to know of woman,
 Without glamour, gimmicks, or absolute

Design, to touch her simple permutation.
In life's absurd path, she is acute
Of truths both tiny and magnanimous:
She rules both life and love: she calibrates
The mixtures of emotion's rich vicarious;
She sees all secrets; yet, in purer states
She's curious: of wilderness unlicked,
The art of rounding corners, the extra toe,
The milk that slips from lettuce when it's picked:
In these minutia, she feels a crucial flow.
What is she, being so material,
That renders immaterial all else?
What tugs her, sluices thru her, makes her call
So tirelessly to our better self,
Desiring man, who is so death-adept?
Why is she? From what music has she lept?
If your eyes see with mine, we will perceive
What man and woman can as one conceive.

Corme-

Are you for real?

Erad-

If you say so, I am.

Corme-

I say, so I am.

Erad-

I am, so I need.

Corme-

You can't come in.

Erad-

But you are my sponsor!

Corme-

Why would Dr. Kling have such a student?

Erad-

We each, in some commitment, hide our love.

Corme-

We should, for love, not hide what we are of.

Erad-

Corme, do not go in.

Corme-

And why not, Erad?

Erad-

We will be posed, in there, opposingly.

Corme-

Then let aversion our allure be.

A Maid and a young girl argue about love

From [*Icarus & Aria*](#).

The worldly wise Trinidad speaks to her charge, the 16-year-old Dina, about love and sex. Despite their mutual affection, they come to some very different conclusions about these matters.

Dina: Yo, Trinidad, what up?
Trinidad: Dina, were there syntax on your grammar
This state could not afford its only border.
Dina: But plop a sin tax on my thoughts, we rich!
Trinidad: Child, your father's on his way, and wants you!
Dina: You seen her?
Trinidad: One sees not a girl in love.
She rises into clouds, alone above,
Just like a moon, phased out by her own phase,
Her direct beams become dim-fulging haze.
She's traced to tracers, her orbit is her doubt,
Past attractions tug at her new thrill,
And glowing glumly, happy just to pout,
She mopy mopes, with moping mopier still.
A girl in love, to be seen, must outgrow love,
But only new love leads from old to no love.
Dina: Wo, Nana, that's some prehistoric rap!
My Aria and me, we chicas nuevas;
Tight with the opposite, we trip no trap,
Immune to love, but ill for hombres fuertes.
Trinidad: Behave yourself, or you'll have no behaving.
Dina: Yo, conflict and me can't stop agreeing.
Trinidad: She loves selfish Emilio more than herself,
Yet he's not phoned her in one month and a half.
Dina: She don't love him!
Trinidad: Do I know Aria?
Dina: Yo, you been main Nana since ground zero.
Trinidad: And you?
Dina: Be best friends fly since we was two.
Trinidad: That is two years, my girl, I have on you.
Dina: Sur nuf, sur nuf, but I can lucidate
More soundly on my sister's pressure rate,
Like siamese twins, we school joined at the hip;
Like jungle janes, we swankin on one swing;
And like twin kamikazes at one ship
We've taken out the boys, wing to wing.
She's my def hermana, my central chitchat,
And we's one pitter in one heart with pat.
So, all respect to you, she ain't love's loser,
Cuz love is out, old, done, and she's a chiller.
Trinidad: Then she is in what's out, fresh to what's old,

Done by what's done, hot for what's left her cold.
Dina: You mean she's hot to do th'old in and out.
Trinidad: Dina!
Dina: Trinidad! Offense is cop-out.
Trinidad: I know, cuz age is wiser til it's dead.
 She sighs, and asks her shadow what it said;
 She stares in mirrors, walks off, and there is left;
 And screaming nights, she dreams her body's theft.
 Her world is empty, or with absence fill'd,
 Each beauty thing ugliness self-will'd.
 Since love's pure touch, she now will nothing feel,
 As all's corrupt, contaminated, gross, unreal.
 You run your mouth, child, but you walk your brain;
 Love's bug is caught, and it's a dang'rous strain.
Dina: Wo, Nana! I teach you.
Trinidad: Youth teach? That's doom.
Dina: Youth ain't so bad as exit-rates suggest.
Trinidad: Yet everything turns old, cuz old knows best.
Dina: Not 'bout love and lust!
Trinidad: Lust lies, love trusts.
Dina: Love follows fools; lust takes the lead, and fools
 him.
 Love rules over you; lust over-rules him.
 My Aria, she's frontin lust with love,
 Which flip bitch thinkin I will spay her of.
Trinidad: Child! How old are you?
Dina: Near seventeen.
Trinidad: And your Aria?
Dina: She is what I'll soon be.
Trinidad: Yet tween those figures, dwells a wild math,
 And you have yet traversed that crazy path.
Dina: From forceps to funeral, girls is girls por vida!
Trinidad: But come thirteen, like blackcat in bonfire,
 She's blood and briers and cranes in dark ravines,
 Clutcht like a palm desiring to be read.
Dina: But come fourteen, she's taffy pillow-stick
 Boys kill to put they heads on, and kaboom,
 Them littlelady oleander bulbs
 Wetted by the world's drool be bloomin.
Trinidad: But come fifteen, it's bleak and bottomless,
 Words fight speech, hormone cancels hormone,
 Shame dullens, and her light goes lurching in.
Dina: But then come what? Teen sexy ten and six!
 Pony tail? Sassy wink? Sweet deadly numchuck
 wiggle!
 And there prance I, delectable as dread,
 To say my say, strut stuff, and get good...
Trinidad: My tiny Nabokov, be out of bed.
Dina: I'm bad and glad.
Trinidad: Then gladly hear bad said,
 For seventeen is whirlwinds and dustdevils,

Cantations from whatever can't exist,
As far from sanity as time from touch.
Your Aria, from this familiar bath of friendship,
Now steps most common thru that strangest age,
And like the mantis eat the cocoa leaf,
Her change is chance, her growth is stifle grief.
Nana, me and my girl don't do no voodoo.

Dina:

Trinidad:

Then fetch her, child. I've spellwork to do.

The evil Rockwell loves Griffin Hunter's wife, and he's been caught.

From [The Death of Griffin Hunter](#).

Griffin Hunter, UN Secretary for Disarmament, has just caught his wife in a compromising situation with the unscrupulous arms dealer Rockwell. The confrontation, however, quickly fades from hate to understanding.

Griffin- You tryin to screw my wife?
Rockwell- I'm trying to love your wife.
Griffin- But are you trying to screw her?
Rockwell- As a woman, not your wife.
Griffin- That woman is my wife.
Rockwell- O that she weren't!
Griffin- That's it. You're dead.
Rockwell- But wait!
I said that I was trying to screw a woman
Not your wife, and for that, you too should die.
Griffin- You'll die for both of us.
Rockwell- Then we are one!
Griffin- O we are as distinct as north and south,
And when we merge, the earth will ice and crack.
Rockwell- Don't we both love your wife?
Griffin- My love has the right.
Rockwell- My love has it wrong,
Yet still I love, and therein we are one,
But if you must, kill me to end my pain,
Then after me, go kill your lovely wife.
Griffin- I never will do that.
Rockwell- Then don't do this,
For she is also hurting, due to you.
Griffin- I've never hurt her.
Rockwell- Not directly, but
To please yourself outside of her, that hurts.
Griffin- I'll kill you here and now!
Rockwell- What here and now?
You killed me when you took your wife from me.
Griffin- She was not yours, therefore, I did not take,
Yet as she's mine, you thief her.
Rockwell- That's my crime?
To want what you have, to love what you love?
Be flattered, then, and once for all admit
That your wife pleasing others pleases you!
Griffin- It pleases me that my wife please herself.
Rockwell- Then let her please herself with me, as you
Please yourself with others.
Griffin- How do you know?
Rockwell- You exude frustration.
Griffin- I do?

Rockwell- Of course,
But that is normal. You're a married man.
Some foreign fruity gum on the counter
Has caught your fancy, but mommy says no.
The candy's there. Forego it or filch it.
Forego it, mommy wins, you got no chew.
Filch it, and all the world's in your jaw,
Splashing sweetly in and out, up and down,
And Mr. Hunter, let me clue you in:
Mommy might filch some juicy for herself.

Griffin- Get up.

Rockwell- No. I've changed my mind. Please, kill me.

Griffin- I'm not going to kill you. Get up.

Rockwell- No.
A love abated is a life despised.

Griffin- A love abated? O quit acting and get up.

Rockwell- Quit acting? But that is a husband's job!
He acts as if he's thinking just of her;
He acts as if her interests interest him;
He acts as if monogamy improves,
Then, after so much acting, he begins
To crave reality beyond his role
And goes in search of raw experience.

Griffin- Your marriage is sour, but mine is fresh.

Rockwell- O marriage is a milk that cannot last,
And the hotter it gets, the quicker it spoils.
I pluckt the ripest peach, now it is rot.
I swam the shimm'ring streams, now they are schmutzt.
I stroked the softest skin, now wrinkly waste.
To you your wife's the newest kind of music,
But soon she'll be the same old naked big mouth,
For the mansion of youth is the prison of age.
A marriage, see, is much like a vacation:
Fun in theory, planning, expectation,
But once you're on it, boring, trite, and costly.

Griffin- Many marriages last, and so will mine.

Rockwell- O it may last, but what's to last? My parents
Spent their dear lives in nuptial holocaust.
Their love was hate. Trust me. It's horrible
That nothing can condemn unjust decay,
So, please, take now my scar-endorsed advice:
Kill that part of you that desires more
Than what you have, or that part will kill you.

Griffin- Just shut up and get up.

Rockwell- Help me. I'm old.

Griffin helps him up.

Rockwell- You and I, Mr. Hunter, are great men;
Therefore, we share a great desperation
For youth and newness. Nothing's wrong with us.

The liar's many souls, and juggles them
To the bafflement of even his own eyes.
We should, I think, revel in the greatness
Of being human, while it's still unique,
For as the Persians say, if you've two loaves
Of bread, sell one and buy a hyacinth,
And what is there to say to that but yes?

Griffin- I should have killed you.

Rockwell- Hug me, then, instead.

Griffin- Will you lay off my wife and shut your mouth?

Rockwell- I will respect your marriage in silence.

Griffin- I hug in pity, not in partnership.



Bonus Monologue: Vaseline's meditation on Pan

From [*Want's Unwisht Work*](#).

Called one of the most intense and rich monologues ever written, this meditation on good and evil, pleasure and pain, Pan and Pan, is one of Inverse's crucial masterpieces.

Vaseline: If relative to all, then he is Pan,
That ancient, crazy goat-god of deception,
And now, the mix m.c. of all sensation,
Who at his board, lays tracks to each event
And keeps the party pure flirtation.
Pan's body is a satellite omnipotent,
A hat of movie screens, where slogans reconcile.
Pan's dress is stitched of tiles heat-resistant,
To plummet thru the ozone of denial.
Two luxury ocean liners are his boots,
And he struts the ever-wriggling map of nations;
Pan's languages don't wallow, they transmute;
On his rings twinkle the die of ideations.
Pan is a massive ambling Las Vegas,
Born up from the desert of your addictions.
And at his service bop,
Like fleshy agitprop,
Three null-adoring, duty-free
Daughters of ambiguity:
Lazy, loose as a baptist's hose;
Loud, screaming like the iceman unfroze;
And Laughy, giggling her cortex out her nose!
These enemies to energy,
From all-spice shakers,
Dribble their magic milk
Upon you famous fakers,
Breaking down all families
And their pertinent loyalties
Of ethic, of prude and of ilk!
And so girl, as pain must have its partner,
Just like eye needs eye, so pain needs pleasure;
So cohesive xenophobic segregating judgement's brain
By Pan is jolted, mixing up our pleasure with our pain!
(Making good things bad, and bad things entertain.)
It's Pan first pierced the nipple with amulet.
Of another's drool, he brews love's sucklant soda.
How much bliss he crams into your debt!
What boring-glory to drive thru South Dakota!
You scratch a crabsore til its gold of pus

Drains out; it's Pan compels your frantic nails.
What horrid joy's the act adulterous!
Why do you shop at Bloomingdale's?
It's Pan hungers you for that hell.
O, why do tightpants feel so good?
Who's the hood within the hood?
Pan! The most-talked-about misunderstood!
And at his swimming meet,
Pain and pleasure race the waters,
Like daughters hurdling over daughters,
Lapping, stroking, choking to swipe
The ultimate trophy, 'First in Hype'.
But here is Pan, in velvet chair, smoking a fat robusto,
Laughing so unfoundedly, 'O, they drown with gusto!'
Cuz pleasure's finishline is death,
And pain's goal is limitless.
You who fly
To call the sky
Tiny, when you go
On jets of pain
It's pleasure's plane
To Pan's imbroglia.
O, can the strong still survive?
Are my emotions recorded live?
O what came first? I will confirm
The chicken egg is chicken sperm!

Monologues From The Burnt Woman Of Harvard

For Men & Women

from

Inverse Theater

By Kirk Wood Bromley

Selected by Chad Gracia

For information on producing, auditioning, or ordering more productions,
Please visit our website at www.inversetheater.org

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A Russian mail-order bride describes beauty in Russia

Zhazha, a Russian mail-order bride, has just been complimented for her beauty by Mark, who admits that he “takes much pleasure in her beauty.”

Zhazha- It is a pleasure for Beauty to live? O, what silly Wordboy. You want to hear why I come live with Johnny in America? In my country, beauty is death sentence. When I was ten, my sister twelve, because my mother's poison so expensive and my father, he, how is said, he tuck us into bed, so we run to city seeking job, and there a man, pretending to be wealthy light-bulb maker looking for packaged people, he lock me and my sister in a room, then we go to what is English said like girl-farm. Here start our sentence for the crime of beauty. Men at morning come and, what you say, take much pleasure from our beauty. In afternoon men come with cameras and take much pleasure from pleasure being taken in our beauty. Then men for night-time come and they all dresst in silly clothes, with, how is this word, devices, and with animals, and with these they take much pleasure from our beauty.

But looking back on this, it a pleasant memory compared to what they happened to my sister when she try escape. When girl try leave beauty, this is for these men, what you say, unforgivable. So they hang her from the ceiling, cut off her arms and legs, and very drunk they take much pleasure from her beauty. This is what happens to be beauty in my country, and poetry is very popular there. But me, I escape, cuz I fast, so I like to live with Johnny in America, why for? Cuz Johnny he let me take much pleasure from his beauty.

The Burnt Woman reveals her secret.

From *The Burnt Woman of Harvard*.

Burnt

Woman-

Me and Johnny Brown were once together;
He was at Harvard, I was a hazard,
And negative attracting positive,
Or vice versa, was our verse device.
Johnny was a poet, and I was less
His muse than his tour-guide thru terror,
My goal to rid him of his fatal flaw:
The love of beauty. Minor poets rave
In one dimension – that which pleases them,
But now and then a poet's born who knows
To love the opposite of his intent,
Thru paradox, and doing so, is major.
We practist what I called hyperpoetics,
Which is to say we lived within a poem,
A poem he wrote, a poem I energized,
For to live inside a poem's to live inside
Its logic, and its logic is pure love.
O we walked the fiery gamut of sense!
Hard, dirty lurches were our bed. The cold
Our shelter, distress our inspiration,
Seducing the dark and the dangerous,
The stranger the spot, the better the poem!
Yet I could not escape the throttling nag
The grandeur of his genes was still to splay:
For that bad habit, beauty, still remained.
O how I burned for him (but who the hell
Sees foreshadow in bright America?)
And here's where insanity edged out sense.
We started sniffing gasoline, screwing
In public, hurting each other in bliss.
Then, one night, pretty revved on regular,
I strippt and soakt myself in motor fuel
And ran into the street. Johnny followed,
Naked and lubed (he used to be a sport),
And there, as one, a twisting exxon frenzy,
I screamed "I wanna burn!" and Johnny screamed
The same, and then I screamed "death to beauty!"
And Johnny screamed the same. O I had him!
(Please, remember, all I really wanted

Was to make Johnny Brown a major poet),
So there we were, embracing, and I thought
“I’ll hit the lighter, go up in a flash,
And then go out.” See, it was raining,
But not enough. Do not try this at home.
So, flick the bic, and poof, I meet my match.
Next thing I know, I wake up wrappt in gauze
In the Harvard burn unit ICU
(And if you think you can empath such pain
As I have lived, you dream beyond your means).
But where is Johnny? Nowhere to be seen,
Nor have I seen him since, save on the sly.
He trickt me, see? He said “I wanna burn!”
And then he flincht. O just like a poet!

Enter John.

A Harvard freshman contemplates Beauty & Truth

On Mark's first day at Harvard he meets two women: his classmate, the beautiful Clara; and the Burnt Woman of Harvard, who peered at him through the classroom window. When he is alone he contemplates these visions.

Mark- I was fresh at Harvard, undeclared.
A fine, free beam of calorescing urge
My spirit yawed, vitrifying voice,
And most in all did I at beauty needle,
Til vision, that ancient trick-directrix
Of our intention, ript my brain in half.
To see such beauty and such ugliness
At once! O little did I know how deep
The world's reserves! To feel my larval life,
My paradise decaying from within
And my decay into beauty blooming.
Which will you choose to interlock with truth?
O let it be beauty! Yet was there not
In her opposite sheer veracity?
She moved meatish thru the mental eden
Of arrogant and mumbling arrivistes,
Like a bleak angel bearing the stigma
Of subterfuge, her clippt and twitching wings
Conducting a choir of silent cackles
That mockt human hope, and O how you,
How all who saw her there were gazing dragged
Thru hope's high drudgery. Awful Beauty!
No! There is no peace in paradox,
No sense in an ecstatic agony.
You, the poet, must beauty's secrets plunge
To mine of priceless truth the motherlode!
O Beauty, he alone takes you for truth,
And mark his word, his words shall hit your mark.
She cannot shush a voice that shrieks when shusht.
I will not be by ugliness unmothered;
I will at Beauty breathe and not be smothered;
I will her bliss and crush all undiscovered
When first I saw the burnt woman of Harvard.
