

A BALANCING ACT by Susan Galbraith

A BALANCING ACT enters the world of chemical dependency and its effects on teenagers, parents and their friends. By the end of the play CATHERINE, whose mother has just come out of a treatment center, relates her very personal and poetic reaction to drugs and their effects on both her mother and consequently herself.

CATHERINE

Sail home, mom. Sail home safe with your four white roses. Four for the points of a compass, four for balance, four for wholeness. You were just beautiful this morning, your soul peeled clean like a shrimp, nothing between us there with all our frailties. Now you're being asked to get back up into life, back aboard that thing that rocks like a huge raft out in the middle of nowhere, and you're asked to have your conscience clear and your sea legs ready to withstand the rocking and the changes that go on with every new encounter. Can you keep your balance? Here I am, still trying to take care of you, something I've got to learn not to do, and the funny thing is I'm just as scared. Scared of stepping out on that raft. I'm having to start over, too, and I don't know how to be in this new balancing game. Mom, can I let go of you and still see the horizon? Mom, help. I'm letting go.

QUESTIONS ABOUT A BALANCING ACT (Catherine's Monologue)

- This monologue uses metaphor to create CATHERINE's new understanding of her mother's drug addiction. What specific images does CATHERINE use throughout the speech and what are they referring to?
- How does the idea of balance figure here? What does this tell us about CATHERINE's physical gestures?
- This monologue allows the actor to use language that is poetic and non-realistic. Finding the rhythm and sounds of the words is important to performing the monologue. What music and or sounds from your daily experience could be used to find these rhythms and images?