**ANTON IN SHOW BUSINESS**
By Jane Martin *Casey*

So, the casting agent says to me, "You're not right for it; you're a character woman." I die. My blood congeals. Fissures appear. It's the actresses' death knell. I go through menopause in five seconds. All fluids dry. I become the Mojave Desert. Character woman! I, who have screwed every leading man on the East Coast, become their mother. Vertigo. I scream out in a silent, un attending universe: "I'm too young to be a character woman!" and the echo replies, rolling out of infinite space: "They want to see you for the funny aunt at the wedding!" *(She ritually disembowels herself)* Bad day. I once believed I could be very good. I wanted to be so concentrated, so compressed, so vivid and present and skillful and heartfelt that any- one watching me would literally burst into flame. Combust. I never did it. It never happened. I used to think that theatre could change people's lives. The truth is, two months later the audience can't remember the name of the play. I mean, honestly, has anybody you know to be a sentient being ever walked up to you and said the play changed their life? No, fine, okay. *You* know who is changed by Chekhov? Me. I finish a play, it's like, "Get me an exorcist!" He eats my life. He chews me up. He spits me out. I'm like bleeding from Chekhov. The audience? Who knows what their deal is? They come from the mists; they return to the mist. They cough, they sneeze, they sleep, they unwrap little hard candies, and then they head for their cars during the curtain call. And once, once I would like to step out and say to the ones who are up the aisles while we take the bows, "Hey! Excuse me! Could you show a little mercy because I just left it all out here on the stage and even if you don't have the foggiest notion what it was or what it meant, could you have the common courtesy to leave your goddamn cars in the garage for another forty seconds and give me a little hand for twenty years of work!"