

Listen to Our Voices

by Claire Braz-Valentine

1 Luis — 16

Male — Comic

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(This monolog is really in two parts: the first section up to the point where the babysitting story begins, is spoken by the entire cast in the original play; then the second section is spoken by Luis. It can be shortened by editing-down in this way, if time is a requirement. On the other hand, the two sections can be performed as a unit, as the monolog appears here — in which case the actor gains the opportunity for strong contrast. The rhythmic first section can be done almost as a rap, followed by a very naturalistic commentary — directly to the auditors — about babysitting one's brother. It is a high-energy piece, and Luis undoubtedly knows how funny he really is.)

Parents tell you when to eat, what to wear on your feet, when to sleep. Don't drink beer, don't pierce your ear. Do your chore. It's such a bore. Clean the kitchen. Stop your bitchin'. Clean your room. Use the broom. The garage is a mess. I hate your dress. Clean the house. I hate your blouse. Wash the clothes. Your friends I loathe. You forgot to walk the dog. You always eat like a hog. Wash the car. Don't go far. Water the plants. Hike up your pants. Grocery shop. Use the mop. Don't smoke grass. Show a little class. Your music stinks. Don't take any drinks. Don't get sexual. Be an intellectual. Fix your awful hair. Don't let me hear you swear. Time to wake up. You need a little shake up. Come home on time. Don't commit any crime. Don't get high. Don't ask why.

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Do the dishes. Grant my wishes. Don't give me resistance. I'm responsible for your existence. You better change your ways. You're going through a phase. You will be my ruination. All this of my creation. Don't make up another story. Don't say again that you're sorry. Just shape up. Just wake up. Just clean up. Just be good. For god's sake be good. You really should just be good. I've got to say that most of time I think I try with my family. I mean I even do chores. Well some of the time I do chores. The worse possible chore is babysitting. Now I really like my little brother, JoJo. He's just learning how to talk and man some of the things he says you know, they really crack you up. But when I'm watching him, like when I'm supposed to be taking care of him? I just don't understand it because the minute we're alone, he takes one look at me and then guess what he does? He loads his diaper. Now that's really sick. And he just walks around pretending that it didn't happen. Now I know he knows, I mean how can you not know? Just thinking about it makes me want to throw up right now. He does it on purpose. He looks me right in the eyes and then he loads his pants. Then he just goes right to his toys and wants me to play with him. That's so sick. And the smell! Damn, now that's something. He's so little. How can he smell so bad? Every where he walks it's like this brown cloud is over him and pretty soon the whole house is stinking. But he doesn't care. He just strolls around *(HE strolls around looking cool, walking like a teenager, not like a baby)* as if nothing happened. Sometimes he walks with his legs a little far apart like this. *(HE does this, but not as a baby walk, as a cool teen walk, but with legs apart.)* Maybe if I just wait till my mom comes home I can say I didn't smell anything. Maybe I'll open all the windows and doors and then the smell might blow out. Then you'll

1 never guess what he does. I can't stand it. Just as if he
 2 doesn't have this big old load in his pants he sits down.
 3 Then I can't believe my eyes cause then like this stuff
 4 squirts out the side of his diaper! Then what am I
 5 supposed to do? Talk about nasty! One time my friends
 6 came over when I was watching him and gets this cool
 7 idea. He shakes his leg like this. *(Shakes one leg.)* Well of
 8 course, JoJo does the same thing except this little piece
 9 of poop falls out of his pants. Rolls right and across the
 10 kitchen floor. I thought we'd die we laughed so hard.
 11 Course my brother thinks now he's got this real comedy
 12 act cause he's walking around the house shaking his
 13 legs and this stuff is falling out all over the place. We
 14 were laughing so hard I thought we were going to throw
 15 up. Then my mother walked in. She didn't laugh. That's
 16 the thanks you get.

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War of the Buttons

by Jonathan Dorf

1 Siggie — early teens

Male — Serious

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3 *(In this monolog, Siggie is speaking about his escape from*
 4 *Bosnia to three of his new friends in the American town where*
 5 *he now lives. This challenges the actor because the images are*
 6 *so powerful, and in order for it to work it cannot be played as*
 7 *a vague dream or as a casual memory. Nor can it work if*
 8 *played in a sort of emotionally dulled monotone, as though*
 9 *Siggie were still denying the past. Siggie makes a great effort*
 10 *to recall these buried memories, and he suffers great pain in*
 11 *expressing them to his friends. But only by struggling to bring*
 12 *them out in the open and grappling with his emotions, can he*
 13 *hope to lay the painful memories to rest.)*

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15 When the war happened, they came through the village,
 16 and if the people already killed had anything worth
 17 money, the soldiers would take it. They'd strip the
 18 bodies. The men and boys that were alive they'd bring
 19 together, and in some villages shoot them. That's what
 20 we heard from people running from the army, people
 21 who came through our village. Naked dead bodies,
 22 clothes in a pile. *(Pause.)* When we found out the soldiers
 23 were coming, my father told me take off all my clothes
 24 and put them in a pile. He and some of the other men
 25 did the same, and my mother and the other women told
 26 the soldiers that their army had already been through.
 27 *(Pause.)* We thought if they saw the bodies with no
 28 clothes, they'd think we were dead and they wouldn't
 29 bother with us. I had my eyes open, like I died with my