

sometimes you stepped on me even, yeah, like I was a rug or a bug, because your nature is selfish. You think because you've lived off one woman after another woman after eight or ten women you're something superior, special. Well, you're special but not superior, baby. I'm going to worry about you after I've gone and I'm sure as hell leaving to-night, fog or no fog on the highway, but I'll worry about you because you refuse to grow up and that's a mistake that you make, because you can only refuse to grow up for a limited period in your lifetime and get by with it . . . I loved you! . . . I'm not going to cry. It's only being so tired that makes me cry.

[VIOLET (*Starts weeping for her.*) Bill, get up and tell Leona good-bye. She's a lonely girl without a soul in the world.]

I've got the world in the world, and McCorkle don't have to make the effort to get himself or any part of him up, it's easier to stay down. And as for being lonely, listen, ducks, that applies to every mother's son and daughter of us alive, we were given warning of that before we were born almost, and yet . . . When I come to a new place, it takes me two or three weeks, that's all it takes me, to find somebody to live with in my home on wheels and to find a night spot to hang out in. Those first two or three weeks are rough, sometimes I wish I'd stayed where I was before, but I know from experience that I'll find somebody and locate a night spot to booze in, and get acquainted with . . . friends . . . (*The light has focused on her. She moves downstage with her hands in her pockets, her face and voice very grave as if she were less confident that things will be as she says.*) And then, all at once, something wonderful happens. All the past disappointments in people I left behind me, just disappear, evaporate from my mind, and I just remember the good things, such as their sleeping faces, and . . . Life! Life! I never just said, "Oh, well," I've always said "Life!" to life, like a song to God, too, because I've lived in my lifetime and not been afraid of . . . changes . . . (*She goes*

back to the bar.) . . . However, y'see, I've got this pride in my nature. When I live with a person I love and care for in my life, I expect his respect, and when I see I've lost it, I GO, GO! . . . So a home on wheels is the only right home for me.

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BOBBY

In Goldenfield, Iowa, there was a man like that, ran a flower shop with a back room, decorated Chinese, with incense and naked pictures, which he invited boys into. I heard about it. Well, things like that aren't tolerated for long in towns like Goldenfield. There's suspicion and talk and then public outrage and action, and he had to leave so quick he didn't clear out the shop. (*The bar lights have faded out, and the special spot illuminates BOBBY.*) A bunch of us entered one night. The drying-up flowers rattled in the wind and the wind chimes tinkled and the . . . naked pictures were just . . . pathetic, y'know. Except for a sketch of Michelangelo's *David*. I don't think anyone noticed me snatch it off the wall and stuff it into my pocket. Dreams . . . images . . . nights . . . On the plains of Nebraska I passed a night with a group of runaway kids my age and it got cold after sunset. A lovely wild young girl invited me under a blanket with just a smile, and then a boy, me between, and both of them kept saying "love," one of 'em in one ear and one in the other, till I didn't know which was which "love" in which ear or which . . . touch . . . The plain was high and the night air . . . exhilarating and the touches not heavy . . . The man with the hangup has set my bike by the door. (*Extends his hand to LEONA. The bar is relighted.*) It's been a pleasure to meet a lady like you. Oh, I've got a lot of new adventures, to think over alone or I'll drive all night . . . opens . . .

it up or something. But bad things sometimes happen all at once, and this particular day on my return from the hospital I was raped by some maniac who broke into the house. He had a knife and cut me up some. Anyway, I don't really want to go on about the experience, but I got very depressed for about five years. Somehow the utter randomness of things—my mother's suffering, my attack by a lunatic who was either born a lunatic or made one by cruel parents or perhaps by an imbalance of hormones or whatever, etc. etc.—*this randomness seemed intolerable*. I found I grew to hate you, Sister, for making me once expect everything to be ordered and to make sense. My psychiatrist said he thought my hatred of you was obsessive, that I just was looking for someone to blame. Then he seduced me, and he was the father of my second abortion.

[SISTER: I think she's making all this up.]

He said I seduced him. And maybe that's so. But he could be lying just to make himself feel better. (To SISTER) And of course your idea that I should have had this baby, either baby, is preposterous. Have you any idea what a terrible mother I'd be? I'm a nervous wreck.

[SISTER: God would have given you the strength.]

I suppose it is childish to look for blame, part of the randomness of things is that there is no one to blame; but basically I think everything is your fault, Sister.

Small Craft Warnings

Tennessee Williams

Premiere: Truck & Warehouse Theatre, New York City, 1972

Setting: Monk's Place, a beachfront bar on the Southern California coast

Monk's Place is the kind of bar where certain locals drink

night after night, bottle after bottle. On this foggy night, the regular barflies are Doc, who lost his medical license for drinking too much, but practices illegally; Violet, a tentative, hazy-eyed nymphomaniac; Bill McCorkle, a professional stud; and Bill's current meal ticket, Leona Dawson.

Leona is an itinerant hairdresser. She enters the bar "like a small bull making his charge into the ring. . . . On her head of dyed corkscrew curls is a sailor's hat which she occasionally whips off her head to slap something with—the bar, a tabletop, somebody's back—to emphasize a point." Today was the "death-day" anniversary of her cherished young brother, who died of pernicious anemia. Leona has spent the day in the mobile home she shares with Bill, cooking a fancy "memorial dinner," knocking back whisky, and crying her her eyes out. She is angry enough at Bill for sneaking out of the trailer without a word, but her fury explodes when she finds out that Violet is groping him under the table. She busts up the bar, kicks Bill out, and resolves to leave town before morning.

Monologue One: Leona tells Bill why she's leaving.

Monologue Two: Two strangers have entered the bar. Quentin is a homosexual screenwriter, so jaded he only gets sexual pleasure from "straight trade." He has picked up a young cyclist named Bobby, but loses all interest when he finds out that this clean-cut, All-American boy is already gay. Bobby is riding his bike from Iowa to Mexico. He has just seen the ocean for the first time in his life and is full of the joy of the road. His youthful innocence reminds Leona of her angelic brother. A self-proclaimed "faggot's moll," she asks Bobby to travel with her. Bobby talks about Quentin.

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LEONA

When I pass out I wake up in a chair or on the floor, oh, no, the floor was good enough for me in your opinion, and