

AN
ANTHOLOGY
OF
CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN
SHORT
PLAYS

第一辑

美国当代短剧选

孙建秋 编

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

AN
ANTHOLOGY
OF
CONTEMPORARY
AMERICAN
SHORT
PLAYS

美国当代短剧选

第一辑

孙建秋 编

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS
北京 BEIJING

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

美国当代短剧选 第一辑 / 孙建秋编. —北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2005.7

ISBN 7-5600-4989-3

I. 美… II. 孙… III. 英语—对照读物, 戏剧—汉、英 IV. H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2005)第 073733 号

出 版 人: 李朋义

责任编辑: 段晓捷

装帧设计: 潘振宇

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京大学印刷厂

开 本: 787×1092 1/16

印 张: 22.5

版 次: 2005 年 8 月第 1 版 2005 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-5600-4989-3

定 价: 43.00 元

* * *

如有印刷、装订质量问题出版社负责调换

制售盗版必究 举报查实奖励

版权保护办公室举报电话: (010)88817519

前 言

美国戏剧对于我国观众来说并不陌生，尤其是尤金·奥涅尔、阿瑟·米勒、田纳西·威廉斯等美国现代杰出戏剧家的作品。他们创作的大量脍炙人口的戏剧极大丰富了我国的戏剧舞台，中国有不少学者和艺术家对他们的戏剧作品进行过研究和表演。

近年来，美国短剧大量涌现，而远在大洋此岸的我们却对此了解甚少，对短剧的认识还多停留在欧洲的独幕剧上。短剧是20世纪后期在美国出现的一种新的戏剧创作形式，也称“十分钟戏剧”，特指那些演出长度从7分钟至15分钟不等、不依赖布景及道具的短剧。自从1977年在美国肯塔基州路易斯维尔市举行了第一届“十分钟戏剧节”以来，这种剧作形式一发而不可收，吸引了一大批观众群体和剧作者，在戏剧史上留下不可磨灭的痕迹。它以独特的视角和新颖的形式，别具一格地反映了当代美国人的生活和多元性文化。随着当代美国人生活节奏的加快和审美情趣的变化，这种短剧日渐流行。通过精致的对话和拉近心理距离的场景，观众可以深刻地感受到发生重大事件时身边人的感受。

本书收录的美国当代短剧各不相同，但是仔细分析，可以发现它们也具有一些共通之处，也可以说这些相同点正代表了短剧的特色：

一、**重视语言艺术**：短剧较好地体现了语言艺术的回归。不依靠大场面，不依靠繁复的布景，短剧的创作重点完全在对话和人物刻画上。十分钟短剧以双人戏居多，（也有三人戏、四人戏和多人戏）。演出时间虽然不长，但对话层层深入，刻画人物的深度并不亚于长剧。在多幕剧中，人们可能会因为信息过多而仅能记住其中一个场景或一段独白，而短剧却能让你从头到尾铭刻在心。短剧艺术中的某些“一行独白”与长剧中的大段独白同样令人难忘。

二、**场景表现丰富**：从南极到外太空，从希腊神庙到天主教堂的忏悔室，从地铁到摩天大楼楼顶，从摄影工作室到舞蹈学校，从机场到乡间花园，从古埃及到中世纪欧洲，短剧涉及的场景无所不包，大大开阔了人们的视野。

比如，本辑收录的苏珊·米勒2002年创作的《宏伟的设计》，这是一出以科幻题材呼唤温情的戏剧。该剧将戏剧场景置于太空，剧中的科学家乔希试图与

外星文明沟通,却发现在完成对外星人描述人类的课题时,竟然难以解释自己的家庭状况,人类其实还没有处理好自己的生活,由此探索了人生存在的意义。

三. **体裁多样**: 美国当代短剧多数为喜剧或正剧。此外还有神话剧、成人童话剧、历史教育剧、音乐剧、超现实主义戏剧、黑色幽默剧、独角讽刺剧、浪漫爱情剧、动作剧、后现代戏剧等,多种多样,绝无雷同,以梦境般的逻辑创造出令人意想不到的神奇效果。

四. **角度新颖**: 短剧与独幕剧一样,能以崭新的角度看待社会问题。本辑收入的玛丽·路易丝·威尔逊1999年写的短剧《鹿回头》,就是这样一部作品。作者转换视角,从城里人、乡下人和鹿的角度看待人与自然、人与动物的关系。以荒诞的笔触构想了一段人鹿恋,从全新的角度诠释了人与自然的关系。

五. **时效性强**: 短剧多采用新闻题材,时效性强,能及时抓住百姓关心的大事。如:9·11、生态问题、太空拓展项目等。似乎没有什么东西能够超出十分钟短剧的创作范围。在轻捷、大胆的笔触中,短剧作家们努力反映新闻报刊中的重大问题。他们编制的即兴戏剧,重点并非反映事件本身,而是要透视出这些事件给人们带来的心灵震荡,力求以犀利的目光和宽厚的人文关怀表达永恒的意义。

六. **便于形成系列,步步深入**: 短剧很容易形成系列,在同一主题下展开来。例如,“地铁中的一天一夜”这个系列已经写了若干年,它由许多短剧组成,反映了一天不同的时间段纽约大都会生活的方方面面。其中的《不是你的错》反映朋友分手“到站”的选择,而《开往市郊》则反映了不同族裔之间、多元文化冲撞中所谓“白人受歧视”的心理状态,通过不同的切入点,发掘更深层次的意义。

七. **尖锐反映社会问题**: 十分钟短剧既擅长以一个震撼性的题材反映充满争议的社会问题,也可以以不经意的口吻展现常常被人忽视的具有普遍性的社会问题,例如,代沟问题、艾滋病问题、女性地位问题、生态问题等,以展示尖锐的冲突。由于可以集中表现人物性格和社会历史背景,短剧常常被作为反映社会问题的利器,对展现世态美丑有不可忽视的作用。

本辑中的《健身体操》,就是这样一出以家庭妇女为主角、反映美国中年妇女精神危机的独角讽刺剧。浓缩人生最为经典的就是独角戏。女主角丹尼丝不言放弃,毅然拼搏。对她来说,健身体操已经成为了一种象征,一剂度过中年危机的良方。从热烈的迪斯科音乐中透出的淡淡哀愁,愈发显得悲凉。

十分钟短剧在美国的发展非常迅速,原因何在呢?

一. **各剧团欢迎十分钟短剧**。在十分钟短剧节上,各剧团能与许多剧作家迅速建立起良好的关系,便于今后相互合作。短剧题材丰富,有很大吸引力,戏迷们在短时间内可以进入不同的戏剧世界,品味酸甜苦辣的百态人生。十分钟短剧的演出,一般为每晚6出话剧或6出音乐剧,时间在两小时左右。

二. **演员喜爱十分钟短剧**。在一个晚上的演出中,演员经常交替出场,每位演员都有机会扮演不同角色,这是对传统戏剧演出的一大突破。十分钟短剧精巧、易演,在家中、舞台、歌舞厅、咖啡馆、大学生活动中心以及教室都可以上演。由于短剧讲述的故事完整,人物形象丰富,可作为单个节目加入其他演出或晚会,或以专场形式完美地展现在舞台上。

三. **剧作家爱写十分钟短剧**。“一个长剧本是对作者耐力的奖赏,犹如攀登一座小喜马拉雅山;而创作十分钟短剧的一气呵成,犹如冲刺时的喜悦。”短剧的浓缩形式给作家以自由尝试的空间,敢于接触长剧难以涉及的题材。很难想象当代主要剧作家中还有哪位没有尝试过这种创作形式的,包括一些普利策奖获得者。本书包含了许多已经成名和新兴作家创作的精彩戏剧脚本,其中

很多是首次出版。

四. 院校的教师喜欢使用短剧。剧本被用来作为课堂和工作坊的教材。校园剧社的群体喜欢使用短剧作演出的剧本。短剧更是许多大学业余戏剧团体的首选剧目。与此同时,短剧也日益吸引着专业剧团和戏剧工作者的注意。

本书共分三辑,第一辑重点介绍十分钟短剧,其中也包含了篇幅较长的一出独幕剧和音乐剧节选。

全书采用中英文对照的形式编排,英文剧本在前,中文译文在后。其他项目的中英文并不完全一一对应。为了帮助读者更好地理解美国当代短剧,编者选集中增加了剧评。许多美国短剧都没有专门的评论,本书剧评由编者及约请的中外几位戏剧家和评论家一起讨论而成,评论者观点不一,所以长度亦不求一致,以留给读者更多讨论的空间。

本项目始于1997年,当时编者访问美国期间,首次接触到美国这种短剧形式,即被吸引。此后一边筛选篇章,一边在对外经济贸易大学英语学院研究生戏剧课上有意识地加以引进,在进行课堂教学之后,要求学生进行期末结业演出,并逐步根据中国同学欣赏和理解情况确定了本套书的选篇范围。其后,在陆续收到作者的版权授权后,才开始了翻译和注释工作。历时八年有余,方得编竣付梓。希望自己的努力能够为短剧的发展做出些许贡献。

本书适合各类艺术院校的表演及导演课程使用。也可作为高校统编戏剧教科书的辅助教材,并适用于普通院校的英语教学和英语课外戏剧和口语活动。还可供希望了解美国社会、家庭以及多元性文化的读者欣赏。

在此,编者衷心感谢以下人士:

孙其达(Jennifer Sun)女士和戴维斯(Patrick Davies)先生从美国为编著者选购当代短剧及独幕剧集。

本书英语剧评顾问约瑟夫·格雷夫斯(Joseph Graves)和汉语剧评顾问兰旭博士。

友人赵华志、贺永新两位教授和闫石渊先生,对文稿提出了许多宝贵的意见。参加本书工作的李聚广先生和冯研、仇明璇两位女士。

感谢李华瑞教授三年来的支持和鼓励。

感谢中国国际文化交流中心的周雅女士协助筹措资金,使编者翻译、出版美国短剧的愿望成为现实。

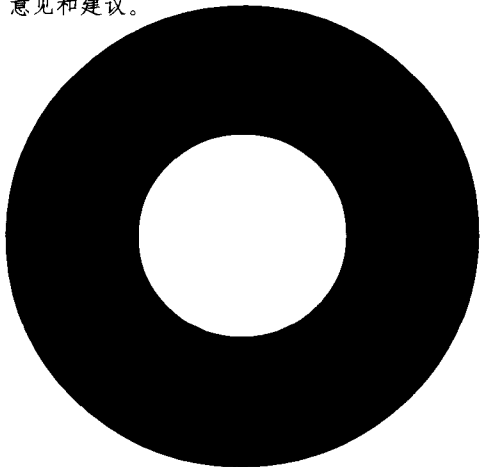
本项目得到美国驻华大使馆文化处的资助。

最后,作者向所有帮助本书出版的人员表达深深的谢意。

囿于编者水平和版权限制,本书尚存遗憾。欢迎大家对本书提出宝贵的意见和建议。

编者

2005年6月于惠园秋叶斋



CREDITS

Jason Katims: *The Man Who Couldn't Dance* by Jason Katims ©1992 by Jason Katims Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Lysna Marzani, Samuel French, Inc. 45 West 25th Street New York, Ny 10010 Tel: 212-206-8990 Fax: 212-206-9078

Mary Louise Wilson: *Deer Play* by Mary Louise Wilson. Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Mary Louise Wilson, P.O. Box 819, Stone Ridge, NY 12484, Tel: 845-687-0370, Fax: 845-687-0029. E-mail: weezny@aol.com.

Craig Pospisil: *It's Not You* by Craig Pospisil, copyright ©2003 by Craig Allan Pospisil. Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Patricia McLaughlin, Beacon Artists Agency, 208 West 30th St., Suite 401, New York, NY 10001, Tel: 212-736-6630, Fax: 212-868-1052.

Nina Shengold: *Emotional Baggage* by Nina Shengold. ©2003 by Nina Shengold. *Finger Food* by Nina Shengold. ©1993 by Nina Shengold. Reprinted by permission of the author. No part of this play may be reprinted or performed without the written permission of Rosenstone/Wender, 38 East 29th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10016, Tel: 212-725-9445.

Rich Orloff: *Playwriting 101: The Rooftop Lesson* by Rich Orloff, Copyright ©2003. Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Melissa Hardy, The Bret Adams Agency, 448 W. 44th St., New York, NY 10036. E-mail: Mhardy_bal@verizon.net.

Diana Son: *The Moon Please* by Diana Son, Copyright ©2001 by Diana Son. Reprinted by permission of the author. CAUTION: *The Moon Please*, being duly copyrighted, is subject to a royalty. No professional or non-professional performance of the play or any portion of the play thereof may be given without obtaining in advance written permission of and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning all rights should be addressed to Sarah Jane Leigh, ICM, 40 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

All rights to *The Moon Please* are fully protected under the Copyright Union and are controlled by the Author and her representative. No performance may be given without first obtaining permission from the Author c/o Sterling Standard LLC, 445 W23rd Street, New York, NY 10011.

Seth Kramer: *Bucket of Moon* by Seth Kramer. ©2004 by Seth Kramer. Agency Contact: Rosenstone/Wender, 38 East 29th Street, 10th Fl. NY, NY 10016 Att: Ronald Gwiazda / Tel: (212) 725-9445 E-mail: Rosenstone@aol.com

Susan Miller: *The Grand Design* by Susan Miller. Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Carl Mulert, The Joyce Ketay Agency, 1501 Broadway, Suite 1908, New York, NY 10036. E-mail: carl@joyceketa.com.

Eric Lane: *Faith* by Eric Lane ©2003 by Eric Lane. *A Bowl of Soup* by Eric Lane ©1995 by Eric Lane (as part of his longer play Cater-Waiter). Reprinted by permission of Rosenstone/Wender. All rights reserved. No part of this play may be reprinted or performed without the written permission of Rosenstone/Wender, 38 East 29th Street, New York, NY 10016.

Wendy Wasserstein: *Tender Offer* by Wendy Wasserstein 1991 by Wendy Wasserstein. *Workout* by Wendy Wasserstein. ©1995,1997 by Wendy Wasserstein. Reprinted by permission of the author. All rights reserved. No part of this play may be reprinted or performed without the written permission of Rosenstone/Wender, 38 East 29th Street, New York, NY 10016

Meg Bowman: *Hypatia* by Meg Bowman. Reprinted by permission of the author. Inquiries contact: Meg Bowman, 1448 Sunshade Lane, San Jose, CA 95122 Tel: (408) 292-1172

Carol S. Lashof: *Medusa's Tale* by Carol S Lashof. ©1991 by Carol S. Lashof. For all inquiries contact: Carol S. Lashof at Department of English and Drama, St. Mary's College, California, USA. E-mail: clashof@stmary-ca.edu Tel: (925)631-4431.

Joseph Graves: *Revoco* by Joseph Graves ©1996 by Joseph Graves. Reprinted by permission of the author. For all inquiries contact: Joseph Graves at Institute of World Theatre and Drama, Peking University, 100871, Beijing China. E-mail: jgtonga@aol.com Tel: (010) 62751580 Fax: (010)6275-2469

This Project is sponsored by the PAS of the American Embassy Beijing.

The Man Who Couldn't Dance	1
Deer Play	13
It's Not You	25
Emotional Baggage	33
Finger Food	47
Playwriting 101: The Rooftop Lesson	61
Off the Map	75
The Moon Please	85
Bucket of Moon	97
The Grand Design	107
Faith	119
A Bowl of Soup	125
Hypatia	133
Tender Offer	147
Workout	159
Medusa's Tale	165
Revoco	183

CONTENTS



目录

- 不会跳舞的人 195
鹿回头 205
不是你的错 215
情感的行李 223
秀指可餐 233
101 戏剧写作课：楼顶上
的一课 243
偏远之地 253
劳驾，去月球！ 261
桶中月 271
宏伟的设计 281
信仰 291
一碗汤 297
希帕蒂亚 303
温馨的提议 313
健身体操 323
美杜莎的传说 327
后悔不迭 343

THE MAN
WHO COULDN'T
DANCE (1992)

Jason Katims

THE CHARACTERS: Gail: Female

Eric: Male

(The attic of Gail's house in Connecticut. Elizabeth sleeps in her crib. Eric and Gail enter.)

GAIL: Not too loud.

(They walk to crib. Look in.)

GAIL: Eric, this is Elizabeth.

ERIC: Oh my God. She's really ... ugly.

GAIL: What?

ERIC: The kid is like a raisin or something.

GAIL: *(To Elizabeth, whispering.)* Don't listen to him Elizabeth. He's jealous. *(To Eric.)* I've been wanting so much for you to meet her. It's like it would make the whole thing real or something.

ERIC: God. She's a beautiful little raisin, isn't she? It's what was behind door number two.

GAIL: What?

ERIC: I don't know. All night I haven't been able to shake this feeling. It's like I'm visiting the life I could have had. A baby. A house in Connecticut. A subscription to *House and Garden*.

GAIL: You won't let me outlive that one, will you?

ERIC: Come on Gail. *House and Garden*.

GAIL: I put it in the basket in the bathroom for **you**, you know. I remember how frightened you used to be of bathrooms without reading material.

ERIC: Don't make me into some sort of like neurotic old boyfriend Gail.

GAIL: Are you going to deny your severe fear of bathrooms?

ERIC: Bathrooms are frightening, horrible places. Cold. Lonely. Sterile. But you should not use that to make me into some kind of little anecdote. Like a chapter of your life that was some little situation comedy. Do not mistake neurotic fears and obsessions for light comedy. Very dangerous, Gail.

GAIL: I don't want to get into a discussion like this now, Eric.

ERIC: What kind of discussion it is, and when would you like to get into it?

GAIL: A discussion about us. And never. They're waiting.

ERIC: They're fine on their own.

GAIL: What is that supposed to mean?

ERIC: What?

GAIL: They're fine on their own. Fine?

ERIC: It doesn't mean anything.

GAIL: Are you saying that my husband is attracted to your girlfriend. Is that it?

ERIC: Wooo. Hold on Gail. All I said was they're fine on their own.

GAIL: Fred and I happen to be very, very happy. Together. He's not interested in some twenty-three-year-old music student and her stupid thesis on Todd Rundgren.

ERIC: You seemed very interested over dinner.

GAIL: Who the hell would write a thesis on Todd Rundgren? Is she going to hand out T-shirts and loose joints at her orals?

ERIC: She's just a date, Gail. A date.

GAIL: It didn't sound like that on the phone. "She's beautiful. She's intelligent. She's not hung up by society's rules." These are your words. I think you should grow up.

ERIC: Why?

GAIL: Why should you grow up? Are you asking me why you should grow up?

ERIC: Yes. I'm interested in hearing about it from someone who thinks she has.

GAIL: That is what people do. They get married. They have kids. They remember their ideals fondly. They try to stick to them in their own way. They donate to public television. They get by.

ERIC: Don't cry, Gail. Please do not cry.

GAIL: Oooh that gets me. What makes you think I'm going to cry?

ERIC: Because you regret your choices. And now you're going to cry.

GAIL: I regret my choices? Fuck you.

ERIC: I'm sorry. I said what I thought. I broke the unwritten rule between us since we broke up. I'm supposed to smile, and talk to you like I'm really interested in just the right amount of sugar to put into the pecan pie recipe.

GAIL: I can't believe you said that thing about my pie.

ERIC: I liked the pie. I thought it had a little too much sugar. I just don't understand why everyone who makes pecan pie is obligated to put too much sugar in it because every

other pecan pie has too much sugar in it. It's like a world doomed to repeat its horrors. I eat that pecan pie and I think we're just marking time until the next goddamn Holocaust.

GAIL: Are you saying I baked a Nazi pie?

ERIC: Not intentionally.

GAIL: You shouldn't have criticized my pie in front of company.

ERIC: Gail, I am the company. (*A beat.*)

GAIL: Oh I am glad that you are not the father of my daughter.

I am so happy to not have to worry for her about your inconsistency, your stubbornness, your uncanny ability to make the most politically and philosophically interesting choices leaving yourself and your loved ones in the shit heap. Let's just spend the rest of the night playing Pictionary. All right?

ERIC: This is the fourth time tonight you brought up Pictionary. Are you forcing me to play fucking Pictionary?

GAIL: It's just a game, Eric. Or am I wrong? Is it actually going to join forces with pecan pie to cause the next Holocaust?

ERIC: It's a waste of time. People sit around and solve meaningless little puzzles and form arbitrary alliances for no other reason than to pass time. Well, time is passing well enough for me without games, Gail. Fred wastes enough of my time talking about his fucking boat. Does he really think I care about his fucking boat? All right, great. He bought a motorized flotation device. Does he really think I want to go on for hour after hour about it?

GAIL: So good. It's good to know how you feel about Fred.

ERIC: How do I feel about Fred?

GAIL: I always knew you didn't like him.

ERIC: How can I like him or not like him? I don't know him. I know his boat. I could draw the blueprints for his fucking boat. I don't know **him**.

GAIL: It's so goddamn easy for you.

ERIC: What?

GAIL: It's so easy for you **not** to play Pictionary. You're funny, verbal, provocative. Do you know how intimidated my husband is by you?

ERIC: Play fucking Pictionary, Gail. Play your heart out. I'll stay here with Elizabeth.

GAIL: You belong with Elizabeth.

ERIC: Purity-wise?

GAIL: Maturity-wise.

ERIC: (*Change of tone.*) You don't love Fred.

GAIL: What?

ERIC: You don't love Fred.

GAIL: That's it. I demand that you play Pictionary, Eric. I goddamn insist.

ERIC: Why did you marry a man you didn't love?

GAIL: I never said I don't love him.

ERIC: Christ, Gail. Tell me you love him. Please.

GAIL: YOU GOT ON THAT FUCKING BOAT. The crucial point. The pinnacle time. The absolute quintessential turning point of our relationship and you're on a fucking boat to fucking Saint John.

ERIC: That has nothing to do with it.

GAIL: It's got everything to do with it.

ERIC: You make it sound like you made some kind of choice between two men. Like it was me or him.

GAIL: It was.

ERIC: It was? Come on Gail. It's a huge world. If it were a choice between me or Fred most women would just fucking shoot themselves.

GAIL: You threw it away.

ERIC: I never threw you away.

GAIL: Not **me**. It. Everything. Eric you're such an asshole. Everyone's goddamn guru. Living by your values. True to yourself. The ascetic. The Twentieth Century Philosopher. Eric, I have a question for you. A real question. Why are you working on a farm? Why? It's like I'm supposed to admire you or something. I'm so sick of your untraditional paths. The Farm Boy from Bensonhurst. You're wasting your intelligence. You're wasting your intelligence to pick vegetables. There is nothing to admire about that. It's stupid.

ERIC: You're right. Why work with my hands to produce a reasonably priced source of nourishment for my fellow human beings while I could be getting fat and playing Pictionary.

GAIL: I gained four pounds. **Four**. Don't you dare say I'm getting fat. And there is nothing wrong with playing Pictionary, you goddamn all-knowing fool. You lost me.

ERIC: I know.

GAIL: It pisses me off. It really pisses me off. That thing you said about me regretting my choices. At least I made a choice.

ERIC: But you do regret it.

GAIL: I love Fred, Eric. I do love him. Not like I loved you. But we have these things together. This family. This feeling. This sureness.

ERIC: I don't consider your need for structure your strongest trait.

GAIL: Look, Eric, I don't think I can have this conversation with you. I'm sorry things had to happen the way they happened. Let's go downstairs.

ERIC: Right. I'm sorry.

GAIL: You're just being yourself.

ERIC: That's what I'm sorry for. I should say good-bye to Elizabeth. Who knows when I'll see her again.

(Eric walks to the crib. He looks down. In a moment he bends over to her.)

GAIL: Eric! She'll wake up.

(But Eric lifts her into his arms. When he turns back his face is flush with tears.)

GAIL: Eric. What is it?

(Eric cuddles Elizabeth. He puts his lips to her forehead. He places her gently back in the crib.)

GAIL: What?

ERIC: It's um. It's this thing I need to tell you. I can't dance, Gail.

GAIL: You can't dance. This is why you're crying? Eric, a lot of people can't dance.

ERIC: I don't know why I can't dance. But it's — I can't. I can't make my body move in these ways that the music is demanding that I move. It's just so goddamn embarrassing. The situation. I mean, standing in public around hundreds of people who are displaying their purest, truest selves. I mean, it takes them no more than two drinks and their souls are out there on the dance floor. Their goodness. Their sensuality. They're sharing and loving. I watch that, look at that. But my body fights it. I start to analyze the music. The rhythm. The time signature. I understand the theory of dancing. The **idea** of spontaneously sharing in this moment that exists now and only now. The give and take with your partner. Two mirrors on a

land where gravity holds you to this point and then leaves you free. And that the universe happens right there and then. Like, truth. I understand this intellectually. But Gail, I never have experienced it. I can't dance.

GAIL: How did Elizabeth make you think of that?

ERIC: When we were together. There were all these times when you would arrange for us to be in these places. These parties. And invariably there would be a band, or music playing and invariably people would start dancing.

GAIL: I would arrange this? Like I did this to you?

ERIC: Invariably you would want to dance. And I wouldn't dance with you. I wouldn't dance with you, Gail. And I could see the hurt register on your face. I could see the anger build within you. I could see that this just wouldn't do for you.

GAIL: Why didn't you just say you can't dance. Why didn't you just tell me?

ERIC: Because it was the dam holding the water. If I let that out. That one thing, everything would follow. I couldn't dance. I couldn't have a normal talk about the weather with a neighbor without getting into a conversation about God, love and eternity. I mean, after all, the weather has these huge connotations. I couldn't act correctly in social situations. I couldn't sacrifice truth for a relationship. I couldn't hold you when you needed to be held because I wanted you to be stronger. Because I wanted to be stronger. I couldn't ask you for the warmth of your touch out of need. I couldn't let myself. I would only ask for your touch out of strength. Out of something that wouldn't become sick and interdependent and symbiotic. I wasn't able to do these things. I don't know, Gail. I mean, you marrying Fred didn't really say anything to me. It was like something in this continuum. This cycle. I mean, it was this thing that happened in my life. The love of my life got married to another man. It didn't seem permanent. But the fact that Elizabeth ... The fact that this angel ... this unbelievable gift isn't mine. And will never be mine. This is killing me.

GAIL: Oh my God, Eric. You're human.

ERIC: I'll never have a daughter, Gail.

GAIL: Yes, you will.

ERIC: I'm thirty-seven. I have done nothing but make myself