2.5 Minute Ride
Lisa Kron

Play
30s+
Seriocomic
Contemporary

Lisa’s father, an infirm Holocaust survivor, insists on riding the big roller coaster at Cedar Point amusement park—an event that Lisa and her friend Mary must document.

At the entrance to the Magnum there are signs all over which say under no circumstances is this ride suitable for people who are elderly, diabetic or have heart conditions. I look at my father. He can’t read the sign because, in addition to having all the conditions listed, he is also legally blind. ( . . . )

Under no circumstances would they let us take a video camera on a roller coaster, but one of the girls told us that Mary could go up the exit stairs and shoot from the platform on the other side. When she got there, though, they gave her a hard time and she was really pissed off because these little high school amusement park girls were getting all snippy with her and making her stand in the sun, and she already had that kind of aggravated look that lesbians get in amusement parks in Ohio. So, she told me that I would have to go first and convince the girls to let her onto the exit platform. I found a method that worked pretty well, actually. I’d say, “Can my friend shoot here?” And the girls would say, “Well . . .” And I’d say, “We’re doing a documentary video about my father. He’s a seventy-four-year-old, blind, diabetic, Holocaust survivor with a heart condition.” And they’d say, “Oooh. OK.” It’s painfully easy to place the weight of the world right on a teenage girl’s shoulders.
Alchemy of Desire/
Dead Man’s Blues

Caridad Svich

Play
Late 20s-early 30s
Dramatic
Contemporary

Simone has just lost her husband, Jamie.

Truth is, I married him.
When you come right down to it,
I’m the one who did the marryin.
Jamie just fell into it.
’n fact, I’d say we sort of fell into each other:
He didn’t know what he was doin,
and I was still burnin with the memory
of havin made love in his car.

It’s a strange thing: desire.
It makes you do things for no other reason
than a mighty feelin you can’t even put your finger on
says you got to do it.
. . . Strange.

Haven’t cleaned up the house yet.
Haven’t even been in the house,
not for more than an hour or two at a time, not since the wake.
I don’t wanna go in there.
It still smells like fried chicken.
’n what stuff he had is in there, too.
It’s too pitiful to sit around, touch it. . . wouldn’t know what to do.

I sleep in the yard.
American Standard
Jonathan Joy

Play
20s-30s
Seriocomic
Contemporary

_Faith, a small-town, country girl with big city flair, lectures two lecherous senatorial candidates about political and personal priorities._

Stop! Neither one of you is really interested in what I have to say. It’s just your pathetic attempt to engage someone else in a conversation on your favorite topic—yourselves. Don’t you ever talk about anything else? When was the last time either of you were doing anything other than promoting yourselves and your agenda? You spend your entire lives crammed into little offices, pouring through documents, or better yet, having someone do it for you, making decisions that affect the people that you supposedly represent. And at the end of the day what really matters is to try to get it all done by five o’clock so you can hit the bar in time for happy hour and flirt with the cute young interns. And why do you do it? Because you love the power. You live off the excitement of beating the other political party like you were playing a god damned football game or something. Then, every couple of years you come back out here and try to convince all of us dumb country bumpkins that you’ve done great things for the state but you can do so much more if we just give you two more years. And after you win we never see you again. And you wonder why people hate
politicians? Well, there you go. I hope that answers any subsequent questions you may have had. (Silence.) And stop sending me gifts, both of you. You don’t know anything about women either.
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
Tennessee Williams

Play
Mid 20s
Dramatic
Contemporary

Maggie longs for her husband, Brick, to want her the way other men do.

You know, our sex life didn’t just peter out in the usual way, it was cut off short, long before the natural time for it to, and it’s going to revive again, just as sudden as that. I’m confident of it. That’s what I’m keeping myself attractive for. For the time when you’ll see me again like other men see me. Yes, like other men see me. They still see me, Brick, and they like what they see. Uh-huh. Some of them would give their—Look Brick! (She stands before the long oval mirror, touches her breast and then her hips with her two hands.) How high my body stays on me!—Nothing has fallen on me—not a fraction!

(Her voice is soft and trembling: a pleading child’s. At this moment as he turns to glance at her—a look which is like a player passing a ball to another player, third down and goal to go—she has to capture the audience in a grip so tight that she can hold it till the first intermission without any lapse of attention.)

Other men still want me. My face looks strained, sometimes, but I’ve kept my figure as well as you’ve kept yours, and men admire it. I still turn heads on the street. Why, last week in

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Memphis everywhere that I went men's eye burned holes in my clothes, at the country club and in restaurants and department stores, there wasn't a man I met or walked by that didn't just eat me up with his eyes and turn around when I passed him and look back at me. Why, at Alice's party for her New York cousins, the best-lookin' man in the crowd—followed me upstairs and tried to force his way in the powder room with me, followed me to the door and tried to force his way in!

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Contemporary Monologues / 105
Crimes of the Heart
Beth Henley

Play
20s
Dramatic
Contemporary

Babe had an affair with Willy Jay, a young black man. After watching her husband, Zachary, abuse Willy Jay, she shoots her husband. Here, she tells her sister what went through her head in those final moments.

After that, I don’t remember too clearly; let’s see? I went on into the living room, and I went right up to the davenport and opened the drawer where we keep the burglar gun? I took it out. Then I—I brought it up to my ear. That’s right. I put it right inside my ear. Why I was gonna shoot off my own head! That’s what I was gonna do. Then I heard the back door slamming and suddenly, for some reason, I thought about Mama? how she’d hung herself. And here I was about ready to shoot myself. Then I realized—that’s right, I realized how I didn’t want to kill myself! And she—she probably didn’t want to kill herself. She wanted to kill him, and I wanted to kill him, too. I wanted to kill Zackery, not myself. ’Cause I—I wanted to live! So I waited for him to come on into the living room. Then I held out the gun, and I pulled the trigger, aiming for his heart but getting him in the stomach. (Pause,) It’s funny that I really did that.
A Day at the Beach
Beth Sager

Play
20s-30s
Dramatic
Contemporary

This woman's mother is an alcoholic. The daughter is looking at a picture taken several years ago while they were on the beach.

I look at this picture of the two of us on the beach, and despite the reflections of mother and daughter, all I can see is my anger. You were drinking. You couldn't go one afternoon without the liquor. There's no doubt in my mind what was more important to you. If you were forced to make the choice, there would have been none. If I had said it's either the booze, or me, I would be looking at just a picture of you. If someone saw this photograph they would say, what a nice family picture it was, what a happy moment. Captured for all to see. They would never realize there was a third party lurking in the shadow of the umbrella. They would never realize the secret behind your smile, or the pain behind mine. They would never know that the happy memory I should have had, was stolen by the very smile on your face. When I look at it, I don't see your face or the sun shining. I don't see the tide lapping in the background or the families playing. All I see is my anger. It burns hotter than the sun, and more predictable than the tide.
Keely, raped and pregnant by her ex-husband, confides in Du, a member of an underground anti-abortion group who has kidnapped her.

I haven’t ever been alone! Sharing with my brothers, moving in with roommates, moving in with Cole, moving back to Dad’s, always other people in the room, always hearing other people talk, other people cough, other people sleep. Jesus! I dream about Antarctica, you know, no people, just ice. Nobody on your side of the bed, no do this, don’t do that, no guys and what they want, what they have to have, just this flat, white, right, as far, you know, as far as you could see, like right out to the edge, no items, no chair, no cars, no people, and you can listen as hard as you want and you couldn’t hear one goddamn thing.
Personal History
Dominic Taylor

Play
30+
Dramatic
Contemporary

Bethany’s grief over a destroyed stained glass window comes from an intimately personal place.


(Picks up a piece of glass.)

Did I ever tell you what Momma said about stained glass? Are you listening? I was a baby, maybe four and I asked Momma, why did they have colored windows at church? She said that they were special. See, Momma said that, God listens to all prayers, but when you pray in front of a stained glass window, it’s like you are placing an emergency call. It’s like, this is the most important time. She used to say not to pray in front of them unless you need something very badly. But when you need something badly, that’s where you go.

Gene, you listening?

But then when it’s broken, do you pray to where it once was? What do you do then? Pray to the glass. Gene? What do you do then?
Tom is an intense, ballet-loving hockey player.

Of course. Oh yeah of course. I’ll go and see it a couple of times. I love the ballet. I’m a hockey player you know so I love it, it’s the same in a way, the movement, it’s the same, I mean you take Russian nineteenth-century ballet, it’s just like a hockey game, it’s got five acts, Russian ballet—five acts, act one, narrative it’s the story told from beginning to end, act two’s a vision, act three is mad scenes, act four the conclusion, act five, a little dance. Now hockey—the game is like the first act of the ballet when the story is told, it’s the narrative, the hockey game itself. Then the second act, that’s the moment of when it’s over, in your mind’s eye there’s that moment, that critical goal, that incredible, amazing save, or the penalty, that something that was the defining moment that brought us here, it’s like act two in the ballet, that moment is a vision. Act three, we won euphoria, or act three, we lost despair, madness, act four, the interviews, the commentary, the coaches’ recap, it’s all over it’s all wrapped up this is what happened this and this and then act five I have to go dance because I’m so fired up I couldn’t go to bed. I gotta go dance. I gotta keep moving. I love the ballet.
The Art Machine
Adam Szymkowicz

Play
Late teens
Dramatic

The Boy is autistic, an inventor, and possibly a mechanical genius. He is describing a new invention, which is getting clearer in his mind. Soon he will be able to build.

It’s coming. Very soon, it’s coming. I can feel it gripping my neck, working its way into my voice. Drying up the dust, flooding through. It’s getting clearer. Certain parts I see very well. But I still don’t have the whole of it. Under my skin, running around my brain, electric gerbils building tracks, connecting, connecting, building and connecting. Coursing through my cortex, one and then two and then stopping and building more track so the train can get through, so this huge thing I don’t know what it is yet can get through. So this huge . . . don’t ask me questions. I won’t answer you because I’m not really here. I’m in a place there’s no words for and even if I had the words, I wouldn’t tell you. I wouldn’t tell you because you would never understand. I’m not like you. I can’t . . . don’t want to operate. I just know how things should go. And let me tell you a secret. This thing, this thing that’s coming is going to dwarf the old one. But not yet. Not yet. It’s coming. I’ll tell you when it’s here, but not yet. For now, let them believe what they want. I’m a void, an empt . . . these words are painful. Don’t ask me anymore. I’m not talking anymore.
Dinner with Friends
Donald Margulies

Play
40s
Dramatic

Two couples—Karen and Gabe, Tom and Beth—are old friends. Tom has left Beth for another woman. Here, Gabe explains to Tom what he has done.

So when you repudiate your entire adult life . . . ( . . . )

That’s essentially what you’ve done. And I can understand how you might find it necessary to do that: It must be strangely exhilarating blowing everything to bits. ( . . . )

I mean it. You build something that’s precarious in even the best of circumstances and you succeed, or at least you make it look like you’ve succeeded, your friends think you have, you had us fooled, and then, one day, you blow it all up! It’s like, I watch Danny and Isaac sometimes, dump all their toys on the floor, Legos and blocks and train tracks, and build these elaborate cities together. They’ll spend hours at it, they’ll plan and collaborate, and squabble and negotiate, but they’ll do it. And then what do they do? They wreck it! No pause to revel in what they accomplished, no sigh of satisfaction, they just launch into a full-throttle attack, bombs bursting, and tear the whole damn thing apart.
Angels in America
Tony Kushner

Play
30+
Seriocomic

Louis is wracked with guilt for not having the strength to care for his AIDS-stricken partner.

You’re a nurse! Give me something! I . . . don’t know what to do anymore, I . . . Last week at work I screwed up the Xerox machine like permanently, and so I . . . then I tripped on the subway steps and my glasses broke and I cut my forehead, here, see, and now I can’t see much and my forehead, it’s like the Mark of Cain, stupid, right, but it won’t heal and every morning I see and I think, Biblical things, Mark of Cain, Judas Iscariot and his silver and his noose, people who . . . in betraying what they love betray what’s truest in themselves, I feel . . . nothing but cold for myself, just cold, and every night I miss him, I miss him so much but then . . . those sores, and the smell, and . . . where I thought it was going . . . I could be . . . I could be sick too, maybe I’m sick too, I don’t know . . .

Belize . . . Tell him I love him. Can you do that? (LOUIS puts his head in his hands, inadvertently touching his cut forehead.) OW!!!!!! DAMN!
Angels in America
Tony Kushner

Play
30s
Dramatic

Belize differs with Louis on the subject of patriotism.

You know what your problem is, Louis? Your problem is that you are so full of piping hot crap that the mention of your name draws flies.

Up in the air, just like that angel, too far off the earth to pick out the details. Louis and his Big Ideas. Big Ideas are all you love. “America” is what Louis loves. Well I hate America, Louis. I hate this country. It’s just big ideas, and stories, and people dying, and people like you.

The cracker who wrote the national anthem knew what he was doing. He set the word “free” to a note so high nobody can reach it. That was deliberate. Nothing on earth sounds less like freedom to me.

You come with me to room 1013 over at the hospital, I’ll show you America. Terminal, crazy, and mean.

I live in America, Louis, that’s hard enough. I don’t have to love it. You do that. Everybody’s got to love something.