

## **Deep Falls the Night**

A “Tragurdity” in Two Acts  
By Kenneth B. Lifshitz  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

Ellis Emefti – Crippled inventor

Ellen Emefti – His Wife and psychoanalyst

Louis Birdseye – Heavy set stand-up comedian

Terothers -A TV network executive

Measure -- The Town Constable

Werner Hand --- The Mayor

Alf – Local newspaper publisher

Paredi – Winemaker

Place : Europe  
Time : The Early 60's

Synopsis: Ellis who now lives in the mountainous regions of Europe was involved with crystallography in the early days of radio. He still has one prototype of a crystal he never shared with anyone. It's peculiar rumored qualities have caused the networks to send someone to get it. It not only transmits an audible signal but the signal also directly accesses the listeners nervous system to impel them to action.

The networks are attempting to recover this crystal from him but curiously at the same time terrorists have invaded the town for some unknown reason where Ellis lives. Is there some connection between them and the network's efforts to lay claim to his invention or is the connection just a figment of (several) deranged imaginations?

ACT I

Prologue:

Terothers

Let's get this rolling.

Louis

Rolling, what th'! This is much too confusing!  
I have been given no instructions on what I should wear?

Terothers

Wear! Wear for what?

Louis

A fair trade. What should I wear for the prologue?

Terothers

You're confusing things.

Louis

Oh, I see.

Terothers

The wherefore is the prologue!

Louis

I should leave.

Terothers

Why?

Louis

(A little whiny)

You said I could it.

Terothers

Change of plans. There is no prologue.  
Got that, --nooo prologue.

Louis

What do you call this?

Terothers

(Taking control)

You are supposed to be the stand up comedian, I'm just a heckler, a kibitzer  
an executive in other words. (Menacing) Do you understand!

Louis

Now look! I don't want a confrontation here. What is this!

Terothers

It's just an introduction, to get things rolling or unrolling,  
only things that are or will be unrolling,--are to be here

I don't want any other kind of log rolling or "r" rolling or, prologue or  
dialog rolling or in fact any kind of rolling other than unrolling,-  
so just say what you have to, deliver the line.

You can do it in your damn underwear if you please.

Louis

What abouta rhythm?

Terothers

(Exasperated)

You don't need any it's just a prologue

Louis

What about moral implications?

Terothers

Fresh out,- .

Louis

A point?

Terothers

Out, all out !

Louis

No point?

Terothers

The line,-- just the line!

Louis

No point,-- but a line!  
-- a mathematical impossibility.

Terothers

What?

Louis

Aha! The line must be imaginary.

Terothers

OK imaginary,--Well,--let's hear it.

Louis

How about those fishers eddy?  
---- well.

Terothers

Okay. Fine.

Louis

What do you think of that?

Terothers

--not much.

Louis

Symbolically,--fishes eddy appears to have no meaning,  
when in fact it is something, a vessel for thoughts, to be crammed in  
Thoughts from which the thick and molten  
fount of motivation springs, --

Terothers

Well that's just ducky. Too ambiguous  
It is, - it is a busman's holiday of meaning.

Louis

How do you like those fishers eddy!  
It is something which must unfold  
in all its terrible import,  
--- it is couched in mystery like,--like

Terothers

A can of imported sardines,-.lost in the couch.

Louis

Exactly,-

Terothers

Are they imported sardines?

Louis

It doesn't matter, the point is you can't tell when a symbol will unfold, it's one of the mysteries of playdom.

Terothers

So you want me to play dumb then?

Louis

No I said

(to offstage stage whisper)

you-can't-tell-when a-symbol-will-unfold in playdom.

(Offstage voice,)

Unfold the symbols

(Two giant curtains unroll, one with a bloodshot CBS. eye and one with a bedraggled NBC peacock)

Terothers

(Falling on his knees worshipful), --and you're not even dressed. Get dressed, quickly!

Louis

Dressed for what?

Terothers

Don't you see! This is network not cable!

Louis

What's wrong with being casual?

Terothers

You're in your underwear.

Louis

But Getting dressed up,-- its not in my contract.

Louis

Alright --but I think you owe these good people something.

Terothers

Like what?

Louis

An apology!?! These people deserve a prologue.  
Don't you agree? They came all the way  
here perhaps expecting a prologue perhaps not,—but not  
Expecting an argument and  
inappropriate dramatic tension from someone in his underwear.

Terothers

(To audience) Ladies and gentlemen, I realize you expected  
a prologue here, and all I can say is that I'm terribly sorry  
and I hope you will settle for a play with no prologue.  
As we could not afford one due to budget cuts.

Louis

That was very good. Almost as good as a prologue.

Terothers

Well that was a sly way of getting out of it. (end prologue)

*(scene i: The Mountainside near Ellis' chalet. )*

Louis

Jeez,—I'm, freezing. You said this would be a cinch.

Terothers

Our cleft and saddled purposes must outpinch these wanton winds.

Louis

They will as soon unbuckle me and pry my lips from  
every inconsonance—away,— have at another chap.

Terothers

Come over here,—just a bit further. --can you see it?

Louis

Yes, I see,— the house. Ellis?

Terothers

That's where he hides himself, the blind beggar,  
And to think,—once he was a respected researcher,  
—now he studies only how to sponge.

Louis

I can see a woman, is that his wife!

Terothers

- ready water for this course,  
She made a primer of his injuries to educate pity  
And he in her, blinded in convening terms, like a worm,  
chewed through her binding  
a library bore outburned tutelage in midnight sport,  
Indexing himself duly cataloging only his ills,  
So she who once attended famed lecturers,  
now drains attentive only to the whirlpool of his  
tempered invalid whims  
battered and refrigerated with cool stares  
shrunk to a serene task, adhering to him like sandwich wrap,  
as hereditary as shrunk fit jeans. She clings to  
adopted paternity which both father and mother  
to his blindness like a kitchen cabinet too often opened and closed  
argues his unhinging better than any plaited counsel each time  
she unwraps his battered brief case of eyes,

Louis

You knew him in the war,-?

Terothers

Yes, he was a sound operator and I a cameraman for the newsreels.  
-- there when that infant medium went from, swaddling clothes  
to princely stature in a few short years, we together watched  
a mere curiosity become indispensable to men's affairs.

Louis

And he himself was a pioneer in the field of crystals? A researcher  
before the war. Before he was blinded.

Terothers

Yes, and none more astute when it came  
to coaxing from rock facets a light invisible,- a beacon  
to guided unhorizoned multitudes to safe harbor,  
Or burn through the fog of time and space, with  
a lightless sun to quell the heavy night of rumor.  
And then to crown his achievements, that thing we now seek,  
the Vox Humana, his unheralded ,unknown masterpiece in rock.  
Remember! You must bring away both, one without the other is useless  
-remember

Louis

Remember? Remember what? What is the Vox Humana.

Terothers

The crystal to speaks directly to the human will.  
But only the voice it is tuned to can operate it,  
or like a breezeless flag  
It is but a lifeless thing.

Louis

And he invented this thing, the Vox humana?

Terothers

If I tell you, you must swear to tell no one else,  
not another soul. Tell no one--swear!

Louis

Who would I tell. No one pays any attention to me.  
I'm a clown, a mere cipher of importance.  
Telling me is better than burying it,  
not even maggots will noise it.

Terothers

It is a transmitter fitted with a crystal of a special sort.  
One whose facets mirror the very contour of the human will.  
With it one can control motivation, even  
muscular response in those who hear it.

Louis

He found the very frequency of the will!

Terothers

But he decided to keep it for himself, to hide it from us  
his fellow researchers at the lab.

Louis

This is something more frightening  
than even the A-Bomb.

Terothers

But I new it existed, –when he thought he was dying,  
wounded in the Ardennes he told me then, –and now I  
have come to find it.

Louis

But why me. Why don't you just steal it yourself.  
You were his friend. Perhaps he might even give it to you.

Terothers

Yes I was his friend. Only I even knew it existed .  
And then it was a long time  
before I could get anyone else to believe it existed.  
When he and I first enlisted we were assigned to the same unit.  
He brought with him an early  
prototype to test in field radios,  
It was in the Ardennes we were under attack and it  
looked pretty bad, he then tried to use it  
to see if he could make the Germans surrender  
involuntarily. Unfortunately he found out too late  
that its effect is not immediate the muscles it addresses  
must become used to it over time, like a foreign object introduced to the body  
which must be knitted to the organism,-- like an artificial bone.  
While he was testing it in the field he was hit by a sniper,  
in the head, we couldn't get to him, I could hear him all night  
No more than a few yards away yelling while I say an shivfered behind a tree,  
I filmed his anguish until he stopped screaming,  
by the morning out lines had moved  
Back too far to even try to rescue him,  
we left him for dead, but he wasn't. I don't know how but  
eventually he made his way here to Switzerland.  
When I heard he was alive I always assumed he had been captured.  
I tried contacting him after the war. After I went to work for the network.  
When he heard my voice he  
started ranting at me for abandoning him there in the battle.

Louis

He thinks you just left him to die on purpose,- .

Terothers

Worse, it seems-he believes I filmed his anguish just for a propaganda film, in fact  
it did make my reputation and led to my career with the network news  
----- If I could have rescued him I would have. Certainly.

Louis

Well? --why are your bosses suddenly so desperate for this now?  
You said you've known of it for thirty years now?, why the sudden urgency?

Terothers

Louis, you are familiar with the common assumption that television is like a drug?

Louis

I have heard that.

Terothers

Well the researchers found that it does have some similar properties, one being, that the more you are exposed to it the less it affects your judgement, Since it is judgement that ads are trying to affect the mind becomes innured to their message, advertizing on TV follows in effectiveness the line of a statistical declining normal curve. The frequency becoming ever more rapid over time. With any ad, at first repetition increases the effect but further exposure sees it decline to zero. We are losing revenue because the sponsors Aware of this effect pull their ads after only a few airings.

Louis

I see. If for instance I were to say some phrase like, 'how do you like those 'fishers eddy', the initial response is a yawn, a few times later the same respondent says Damn!, 'well how about those fishers eddy' or any other nonsense but then it comes full circle,

Terothers

To a yawn. What they didn't know before is that the effect is independent of the content, a viewer Innured to the effects of auto insurance ad will be as immune to Cocoa crispies.

Louis

Cross ad bordeom transference.

Terothers

The effect being now that, any message no matter what the content is now rejected almost at first glance, by almost everyone To advertise on T.V. Has become as useless as sending tea to China. So they knew, my story of A wartime event, something But only as something which until now they had regarded a fairy tale,--

Louis

They seek a new wheel of fortune.

Terothers

So you can see what is at stake here, –in the worst case we might even have to charge for TV if we lose our sponsors.

We must have the Vox and Ellis, - or TV will wither and die.

Louis

But why call, me, I'm only a celebrity poker game show host?

Terothers

He is getting on, perhaps a bit senile now as well a bit mad he needs to be jollied out of it, and he loves card games, hence your part to get him to offer it as a wager on cards. He is suspicious of everyone unless you treat it as only a game, a bauble, a curious prize, not something critical to an industry's survival, Otherwise he will suspect it is me behind it and never agree to wager it..

Louis

Alright I'll do it. At least I'll try.

Terothers

Good! And I can promise you'll get Wheel of Fortune at the very least if you are successful.

Louis

And an executive producer credit?

Terothers

As if I would let some other comedian have that!

Louis

How do I get into his house? Gain his confidence?

Terothers

Think like an executive man. Think like an executive.

Yes I see a bright future for you after all.

We'll be the only network left,

looking at us, looking at you (CBS eye unfurls) listening to us.

(end scene)

scene ii

(The newspaper office. Alf, the editor, is there.)

(Enter Measure, the Town Constable)

Measure

Help! Get help!

Alf

Calm down,--what's going on?.

Measure

They've blown up the bridge over the Rye river.

Alf

What? Who did?

Measure

Those terrorists. You see here, they left this peevish ransom note. 'Don't tell the newspapers and don't tell the police or you'll never see the hand or the valise'.

Alf

But I'm from the newspaper and you're the police,  
How is that peevish  
Who had a hand in a valise?

Measure

: Shhhh! Say no more!

Alf

Agreed. (Getting a notepad) Whose hand? What Valise?

Measure

Shh!. You'll peeve them some more.  
Put out that light. I feel smarter in the dark.

Alf

I'd love to match wits again,-  
What is this about a backhand in a valise?

Measure

I can't say. All I know is that it is a tense situation.  
I have no further comment

(Enter Mayor Hand,--his head and face is bandaged he has an auto tire over him and the stump of his arm is bandaged)

Measure

Mayor Hand. What happened to you?

Mayor

Stop babbling Measure and help me get this tire off.

Measure

Not again!

Alf

What happened? You've been involuntarily retired.

Mayor

I was just walking to the Rye Bridge  
to give a speech on the new collective winery planned  
at Choiseaux and,--

Alf

You mean Paredi's new winery?

Mayor

Yes, the same. I had the architect plans handcuffed here,-- to my wrist.  
It was supposed to be a publicity stunt, to draw attention, when I introduced the  
project at the fair,-- it was supposed to look impressive  
like there was the million francs in the suitcase for the winery building  
-- it's only the architectural plans you know, but, then suddenly,  
They came up, men in masks they cut off my hand and took it and the suitcase  
just as I got on the podium. Some people tried to go after them but there was an  
explosion.

Measure

What kind of explosion?

Mayor

It was part of the clever ploy.  
They set off the dynamite laid for the  
groundbreaking,--it was all set. And then blew up the  
Rye Bridge at the same time to cover the noise.

Alf

Very peevish.

Mayor

Yes, exactly. But you see where its got us.

Alf

A clever ploy nevertheless. Only less clever than a hoi ploy.

Measure

What does he have to do with it? Get back to your presses.

Mayor

Ohh, nevermind, just get me to the doctor will you.

Alf

Certainly. Measure

(They exit helping him off.)

scene iii (inside the Emefti house, and Ellen immediately tries to hide something we cannot quite see. Ellis enters in a wheel chair. A knock is heard.)

Ellis

What are you doing there by the credenza, my dear?

Ellen

Just bringing in the tea. (Another knock)

Ellis

There's someone at the door. (Yells) Just a second!! I swear, probably someone from town, probably another balloon salesman. (Yelling) We don't want any more balloons.

Ellen

(The credenza opens by itself and something in a cloth bag falls out, Ellen stuffs the object in her apron, it appears bloody) I'll get it dear.

Ellis

Probably someone selling dancing lessons, door to door, you know Arthur Murray, Maybe it's a balloon dancer. You'd better answer it, it might be Measure, he might be out of lighter fluid again. Who is it?

Ellen

I don't know.

Ellis

Well answer it,--it could be Measure. (exits offstage.)

Ellen

(opens the door)

Can I help you?

Louis

Doctor Emefti? Doctor Ellen Emefti?

Ellen

Yes? I am What can I help you with?

(re-enter Ellis)

Ellis

Who is it?

Ellen

I don't know Ellis. Nevermind. It's for me.  
Do you intend to stand there all day.

Ellis

Well answer the damn door then.

Louis

This is a distinct pleasure.

Ellen

I am, I mean, I didn't expect--.

Ellis

Is it Measure?  
Is that you Measure?

Ellen

Are you?--

(re-enter Ellis in wheelchair)

Louis

My name is Birdseye. Dr. Louis Birdseye from the Institute of  
Media Psychology.

Ellis

Well, what do you want Birdshot? If you're selling some kind of crank idea  
medicines, or balm, you can giddyap out of here as we used to say in the west.  
Or perhaps you're from Arthur Murray, care to tango!

Louis

I'm not. Not at all. None of those things.

Ellis

Well then ,--

Louis

I just wanted to ask a few questions.  
Of your wife actually, about her research.

Ellis

Well go ahead.

Louis

Actually, I need to catch my breath. That was some walk up the mountain.  
She is the famed media psychologist?

Ellis

Was, Birdshit, was,-- past tense, pluperfect singular caput nostrum.

Ellen

What he means is I'm no longer active in the field.

Louis

Ohh. I'm sorry to hear that,  
-- your work has become very well known you know.

Ellis

Don't apologize, I hate apologizing.

Ellen

Don't mind him. Ellis doesn't like any strangers.  
He grew up in America,--near Colorado you see.  
Kind of Rocky Mountain high,---

Ellis

Don't pay any attention to me Birdshoes. Come on in.  
Give the ole' peckerwood a rest.

(Louis enters, winces and collapses in a chair)

Ellen

What's the matter? Are you hurt Birdshoes?

Louis

The road was closed so I came up here  
On snowshoes, not birdshoes, anyway, it appears  
I must have given my ankle a sprain it seems.

Ellis

Give the boy a cup of tea. Show him we're  
Civilized here,--drink tea? Ought to, anyway,  
It's a great tonic! (Yells at the window loudly) Asshole!

Ellen

Sit here won't you, I'll get you a compress.

(Ellen exits)

Louis

A what? Who's out there.

Ellis

(Oblivious)

Tea's a great tonic. The membranes just suck it up,  
flushes out the system, makes anxiety just canoe  
down your asshole. Pardon the expression.  
I drink enough of it to float a friggin frigate,  
sniff the steam and it makes you go woo-woo.  
Keeps me out of dry dock so to speak.  
Now there's a medical fact.  
The drier the doc, the more money he'll squeeze out  
of you. Last time the doc came here, I told him  
to go soak his syringe in it. Sterilize his needle so to speak.  
Give the young man a cup of tea, Ellen, don't mind me, I tend  
To go off on tangents (Yelling), not many visitiors,  
Ellen. what are you waiting for, the jello to set?  
(Yells again) Moron!

(re-enter Ellen)

Louis

Thank you. I'm sorry if I am imposing on you.

Ellen

Not at all.

Louis

I'll try to be brief, my business is this,  
in the course of my work, I chanced across  
some of your wife's writings on the Gestalt.

Ellis

Well then why don't you geget geshstarted.

Louis

I'm sorry?

Ellis

If you're gestalt you better geget shtarted.

Louis

I'm sorry. Is he joking?

Ellen

Ellis. Please. Its not funny anymore.

Ellis

What are you,? Some kind of a fruitcake?  
A mealy wormy fruitcake with little pieces of  
crap that'l crack your teeth if you'r not careful?  
(Mimicking) I don't understand. I'm sorry.

Louis

I beg your, pardon.

Ellis

Yore pardon,-- spoken like a true frizzlewimp,--yore pardon.

Ellen

Ellis! Stop that! Apologies set him off you see.

Ellis

Nothing like an little cavilling and snivelling,  
right Birdseye? I know your type, you research types.  
Ellen told me all about you, you and your friends.

Louis

About me? How could she?

Ellen

Stop that at once , -- and -be civil to him Ellis!  
You two work this out civilly if you want a conversation.  
I won't stand for this in my house. Be civil  
Here's your tea Mr. ---

Louis

Birdseye. Uhh Louis Birdseye. If you would hear me out,  
I would be in your debt.

Ellen

I need to check my scones. (Exits).

Ellis

Yore, debt, yore pardon.

Louis

Sir. I really need to speak just to your wife.  
I don't mean to impose, perhaps, I should go.

Ellen

Ellis, you've embarrassed him. And me.

(exit Ellen)

Ellis

What kind of balls do you have!? Bird balls? .

Louis

I beg your pardon.

Ellis

Your debt,-- yorrre pardon, your wife,-- you young man!!  
What kind of balls do you have!? Bird balls?  
I know you university types. Ready with a-bundle of  
obedient phrases that slide off your tongue  
like a greased bear off Sunday. Elbowing your way through life like some glorified  
porter carrying this load of lachrymose ingratiations,  
a luggage of 'excuse mes', and 'pardon mes'  
All the little thieves, that spirit off the small antagonisms that make life  
worth while. You are an artist with a weasel my friend, a wondrous  
worm!

Louis

Begging yore pardon. You don't know me that well.  
To accuse me,--

Ellis

Ohh, really, I think I'm going to be ill.  
What a world this is, where all the mice  
have convinced the cats that  
eating is a rude pursuit so they starve themselves.

(re-enter Ellen with tea cups and scones)

Ellen

Don't mind Ellis, his bark is worse than his bite.  
It's getting dark, --  
you absolutely must stay the night, professor.  
Right Ellis. It's a long way to town.  
He couldn't possibly get back there tonight,  
besides it's beginning to blow, -and (as if in a dream) the wind weaves  
wistful curtains from the snow, and the water murmurs low,--  
And with your ankle turned. You know  
one's imaginations can build stepping stones to nowhere from the  
whipping snow.

Ellis

Ohh (grumpily), so now we're whipping snow are we.  
I expect she's dropping some hint with her lashes.

Ellen

Ellis I--, really, you are being rude.

Ellis

It is almost nightfall. You might as well stay then, Birdseye.  
If having two psychiatrists under the same roof doesn't cause  
An avalanche I don't know what will, -too much gravity

Ellen

You mustn't mind Ellis, he doesn't believe psychiatry,  
or in the mind playing tricks.

Ellis

That's cause I've found that the  
trick is to mind one's own business  
and not be a do-gooder, busybody,--  
don't you agree? Too damn many do-gooders  
already there to help you to a seat,  
to a second helping to help you to make something of yourself  
Aid you in making a decision, help you to a grave,  
to a grave,-- God help us,---  
Somebody always giving you a hand.

Ellen

(Ellen takes off apron and what she was hiding falls onto the floor) Ohhhh!

Ellis

What was that?

Ellen

Just your electric razor. Seems to have gotten dirty.  
I must give it a good dusting later.

(Puts it back in the bureau drawer)

Ellis

What a housekeeper! Ehh Birdbath.

(Ellen exits)

Listen,-- Do you think I'm handsome?

Louis

Whhaaatt?

Ellis

I'm not asking out of vanity. Really.  
Purely from a theoretical standpoint.  
Am I handsome?

Louis

Well it's really hard to say.

Ellis

Well, I think I am, somewhat anyway,-- just enough,  
I think I maybe could have, I don't know,- hosted a game show?!  
Don't you agree? I mean that requires good looks,  
but not gripping good looks, -like yours, well.  
I wasn't always well you see what it is now. But I think I  
have fairly good looks,-- a person looking at my  
face from the bottom of a swimming pool might have said  
'now there's a quantity of good looks, --in a wavy sort of way'.

Louis

Forgive me,-- I was just temporarily put off by the  
strangeness of your question.

Ellis

This is a face that goes well with chlorine.  
A face that outfaced our sponsors, Clorox.  
It's all due to a bad reception. All these many woes.  
You see a good face looks bad. And a bad face looks good.  
Even in living color,--it is a dead issue.

Louis

Bad reception?

Ellis

(Changing his manner)

Yes, speaking of which. Please forgive me,  
I have been a poor host.

Louis

Well I really didn't expect,-- I mean bursting in on you like this.

Ellis

No, no I've quite forgotten myself, quite forgotten myself.

(re-enter Ellen)

Ellen don't you see we have a hungry guest? Screw this turtle piss.

Make up some hamburgers.

Ellen's hamburgers stick to your ribs, screw  
this tea, get us some burgers and potatoes.

You like potatoes don't you Bird uhh, whatever.

Well anyway, you must be hungry,  
don't worry, we have potatoes here so big, --

Why, they'll make your eyes pop out, in fact,  
they're so big, they made their own eyes pop out.

Naturally we call them popeye potatoes,,-- heh, hehh,  
learned to fix them from a Swiss sailor, right honey.

Ellen

Stop lying Ellis, there are no Swiss sailors.

Ellis

What again? Why there's none left,  
--they all drowned because when the ship went down they  
-ate their tubers. Play cards?

Louis

I beg your pardon.

Ellis

Play cards Eddy? Gin rummy? poker? --go fish?

Louis

Occasionally I do--do I.

Ellis

Great,- What a card is this fellow. I do, do I.,  
A regular panmunjon, to and fro,  
Let me tell you bro, there's two things I'm  
an expert at; wheelin and dealin', yessir.

Louis

Sorry if I spoke out of turn before.  
No, I think we'll get along fine.

Ellis

Where did I leave the cards honey?

Ellen

In the kitchen drawer I think. Do you want them?

Ellis

Is my electric razor there as well, did you clean it?  
I think I need a shave.  
(To Louis),--don't you go anywhere,  
I'll be right back. Here you can deal.

(exits)

Ellen

He seems to have taken a liking to you. He's usually much  
Less hospitable to university types when they come here.

Louis

I really should start back. Beside I really didn't come to see him.

Ellen

Nonsense,--nonsense, besides, your leg! Tell me,  
What kind of research do you do at the Institute.  
You mentioned the gestalt.

Louis

Computer studies of Perceptual Statistics Dr. Emefti.

Ellse

Call me Ellen,

Louis

Basically statistical TV pattern viewing, Ellen  
How we arrive at judgements taking past experience into account.  
From subconscious patterns formed by the images on TV, darkness  
light, the more basic responses to these inflections,  
I work at the Trebek Lab at the Institute. They are expecting me back.

Ellen

Sit, sit, Hmm, Trebek, I'm not familiar with it yes,  
is that a new lab? Properly funded and all.

Louis

What? Oh yes, we were short be we are now out of jeopardy.

Ellen

Really!-- How interesting.

Louis

Is it interesting? I think I'd really better go now anyhow.

Ellen

(Goes to block him at the door)

Since you work with statistics, tell me,  
in your professional opinion,  
what would you put your chances at for getting back to town now,  
In the dark, with a storm on the way  
--Someone with a bad ankle.

Louis

My it really is starting to blow now. A storm?  
I'd say it's a cut of the cards either way.

Ellen

I see you have the same failing as he,-- my husband

Louis

As him?

Ellen

I mean as any scientist. You are good in the abstract,  
but when the tables turn they think it's all  
a game of roulette, touch them near themselves  
and it's red thus every time, you should make your rule  
to let others be a little kind, or else you may catch the croup.  
At the very least stay the night.

Louis

But,-- Ellis seemed well, preoccupied.

Ellen

Don't mind Ellis,--we get so few visitors,  
he's like that to all strangers at first.  
like a battery ready,  
to take any circuit for the current charge.  
I haven't really talked with a colleague in  
a long time, afterwhile, so for my sake then,

Louis

I do not really consider myself a scientist.

Ellen

Consider! What is there to consider?

Louis

I mean what I am really is more a professional observer.

Ellen

They seem the same, scientist and observer,

Louis

Yet I am a stranger to you, -yet I can see that you are

Ellen

What,--

Louis

I just mean you and Ellis seem poles apart .

Ellen

Let's stick to safe subjects.

Louis

What could be a better combination  
than the sweetness apparent in your smile and  
and the welcome in your words.

Ellen

Well you've vaulted my comprehension, I must say  
you are a charmer for an academic reasearcher.

Louis

Perhaps we've cracked the case.

(reenter Ellis)

Ellis

Cracked? Is that me you are talking about, -cracked this nut?  
You don't play bridge do you BirdSweat.

Louis

We need at least a third hand for bridge. Maybe

Ellen

Ellis, –our guest claims that a scientist’s hand  
is ever to be a stranger in any society.

Louis

Crack those two nuts, stranger and observer.

Ellis

Let's have the meat? Or is a mouse judge and jury.

Ellen

Justice is blind.

Ellis

And scrawny to boot! Observers are  
outsiders and strangers must be politic. They  
are better buttoned up, to keep their  
stock in trade, they cannot shelve decency  
or display counters of affection, or disaffection.  
they cannot be so, but only so-so,  
as a needle will tip them to disfavor.  
They may look, but not gaze, because shortly  
then their see may be a saw.

Louis

Is that true for scientists as well?

Ellen

They must look and look,, and outgaze-looking,  
Can you imagine if as a scientist once  
observed the rules of common decency.  
politely averted their gaze when two fruit flies began to mate,  
aversion is the observers downfall,  
a scientist must never have aversion.  
That’s where they differ.

Louis

Can you bridge the two.

Ellen

Well you are persistent, but no, I  
need get something ready for tomorrow,  
Ellis is going to visit Paredi the winemaker  
tomorrow and I need to prepare him some  
Snacks for the way. Some fruit. Oh time flies!

Ellis

What's that about having a virgin. Louis you devil you.  
Did you shuffle.

Louis

We were discussing fruit flies.

Ellis

Well I hope it was a fruitful discussion,  
-- but not too fruitful.  
Dear, why don't you put something on the record player.  
And bring some potatoes up won't you.  
I'd get em myself, but I hate those cellar stairs.  
I hate any stairs. Deal.

(Exit Ellen)

Louis

I was just telling your wife a little about my field. TV Gestalt.

Ellis

(Ignoring him) I had a daughter once you know. Once.  
She's gone now.

Louis

Ohh,-- I didn't know. I'm sorry.

Ellis

Well it was a long time ago.  
I can remember her face though,--or  
some kind illusion that makes up its stead  
this blind stair that makes stringers for stares  
that read balusters of stars to be

(re-enter Ellen)

I and I and I once had a sweet child, and the starlight  
tread on her lids with feet like dewdrops,  
-- all this constellation went to drown her  
in the little spiral of a buttercup from a  
bit of condensation that pearly a fevered brow  
and purl one and purl, two knit her neatly to death or so I'm told,--

Ellen

Ellis. Look. I think you've embarrassed our guest dear.

Louis

No, not at all. I enjoy poetry.

Ellen

It's not poetry, he gets this way, like a trance,  
hallucinations, about his dead daughter.  
We did have a daughter but we don't know how she died.  
They found her in the glacier.  
She hated him anyway.

Ellis

(Coming out of the trance abruptly)  
What'll it be then Gin rummy?

Louis

Fine with me. Gin Rummy.

Ellis

(distracted again)  
I called her lilac,--because whenever she came into the room it smelt like  
morning.

Ellen

Stop it you, lying bastard!!  
you called her lilac because you are never lacking for lies.  
(Storms out)

Louis

That seemed a little harsh.

Ellis

It's part of my therapy. It's called yelling and  
bitching therapy.

Louis

Ahh yess.

Ellis

It's my curse you see,--I have reverse Turets syndrome, instead  
of spouting involuntary obscenities that are an approximation  
of the truth, I involuntarily spout obscene fictions . Ironic.  
This tongue reviles its blind master and like an over-friendly dog waylays  
strangers and wags just to give them pause.  
I called her sweet pea.

Ellen

(re-enters)

Ahh,—still at it. Asshole!

Ellis

Ohh don't be cross my darling, a man must lie you see, when the world becomes too much of a burden, you of all people should understand a man must lie, make his own version, a better version, then it's not really lying after all, it's just carpeting the truth with a little thicker pile

Ellen

It is really a unique condition. Perhaps you've studied it at the Institute.

Ellis

Give me my cane,—I want to take a stroll

Ellen

But the storm.

Ellis

I don't care, I will not be leered at in this way.

I am no petty monarch of misery.

(attempts to get up from the chair and fails)

Ellen

It only sets him to railing,  
When he's mobile he's even worse,  
before too long cursing heaven and earth and Darwinian evolution.  
The more he walks the bigger the  
lies he comes up with as if he were tracing their dimension in the snow  
like concentric circles.

(to Ellis)

You know what the doctor said about your condition.

Ellis

Ahh yes what he has diagnosed as my peregrinatio bullshitosis.  
That idiot! Walking is good for anyone. Oh you mean lying is bad for you. Obviously he's not a card player,—right my boy, lying is just the ticket for us, after all the world does no worse by us for it, regardless we get clubbed when we're born buried by a spade and in between it's all for hearts and diamonds,—all for hearts and diamonds.

Louis

I'm afraid I've suddenly become very tired.  
Do you mind if we skip the gin rummy?

Ellen

Oh, of course. Ellis has tired you out with all his chatter.

Louis

No, no,--I'm just not used to walking so much.

Ellen

Well, the spare room is to the left at the top of the stair.  
I've prepared it.

Louis

Thank you,--goodnight.,

Ellen

Goodnight.

(Ellis flips the cards all over the floor)  
(end scene)

scene iv (next day at the Emefti house)

(Enter Ellen)

Ellen

(She enters and sees the cards all over the floor. Goes and tries the door but it is locked)  
(Enter Louis)

Where is Ellis?

Louis

He went for a walk, ranting about something  
so,--I locked the door, what with the terrorists and all,  
--do you think me rude?

Ellen

I think to attain rudeness you must have at least some  
concept of it you have none and therefore cannot attain to it.

Louis

But if I contemplate it well?

Ellen

I'll give you two cents for this contemplation.

Louis

No more?

Ellen

That would be too much as indeed you are plain and  
in love and war one should give no quarter.  
I assume you will be leaving shortly

Louis

(A shot is heard)

What was that?

Ellen

A shot I think. Or maybe they've blown up another bridge.

Louis

No it was a shot. Certainly.  
Who has blown up a bridge?

Ellen

Ellis, I mean the terrorists they are out there  
--I've got to find him.

Louis

What a damn inconvenience terrorists,

Ellen

- they're blowing up things all  
over the place. Are you coming?

Louis

And the wind weaves wistful curtains from the snow.

Ellen

(From outside)

Well? Are you coming?

Louis

I'm coming.

(When she emerges there is a sudden gust of wind blowing the snow,--Louis kisses Ellen)  
(Enter Terothers with gun watching from behind a tree)

Terothers

You see it's quite easy, make them dance and jiggle like puppets.  
Well, let Birdseye cover his passion with papier machaut. It will make  
him a better bluster when this Louis bobs for her apples,--a clown  
in love, makes a good theme, yes a good theme,  
a silent clown puts the horns on a eye roasted ham.  
Well I have clove them for now, it makes for a more savory stew A  
nd less shrinking from the bone.  
A warming sight will be this pig with horns,  
But Birdseye best not for love, his purpose scorn.

(end scene)

scene v

(Enter Measure, the constable. Ellen and Louis are surprised)

Measure

I got a pungent call to come on the police radio.

Ellen

Measure, thank goodness, Ellis is missing!

Measure

What?! That pioneer with his pious sneer.

Ellen

He went out this morning after breakfast and hasn't come back.

Measure

This has this happened before you know.

Ellen

Yes,-- a few times. But I've heard the terrorists are making  
new demands, I hope they haven't kidnaped him to hold for ransom!

Measure

-those same terrorists have cut off Mayor Hand's hand  
and are holding it for ransom. They are sending craptic  
messages on toilet paper.

Ellen

Terrorists. Is that who they are?

Measure

What else could they be, 7<sup>th</sup> day Adjectives?  
Put out a hearty plate of stew on the window  
and most likely he'll strike for home at the savor.

Ellen

You talk about him as if he were a lost dog!

Measure

I mean in all probability he'll come back by supper that's all.  
From experience that is what is likely.

Louis

Statistically and behaviorially speaking you are quite correct.  
I have studied these cases Constable.

Ellen

Ohh, I beg you're pardon, this is Professor Louis Birdseye, from the  
Trebek institute, he has studied my work on the media and gestalt.

Measure

A pleasure. Most honored and ignited.

(to Ellen)

Don't be angry with me. This other matter is more pressing,  
I will find Ellis. I'm sure he's fine.

Ellen

I'm not angry, it's just with all these bridges  
getting blown up it gets me worried.

Louis

scene vi

(back inside the house)

But you are angry with me?

Ellen

I'm not. I'm not. Neither one of you.

Louis

You are,--I can tell, I've noticed  
Whenever you're angry you go stand by the credenza.

Ellen

Ohh what a keen observer of behavior!

Statistically speaking I mean. You're dead on.

Louis

Statistics is not a dead science. Why don't you go look for him?

Ellen

No,-- why have you changed your tune now?  
I would have thought,

Louis

You must climb out of this messy subjective state.

Ellen

Must I,-- says who?

Louis

You did, in your book, you said  
when one cannot do anything about the circumstances  
one must at least substitute rationality for inaction.

Ellen

Ohhh really, how pompous,--  
and please don't quote me to myself.  
It is so gauche.

Louis

It's just, that I have so much admiration for your reasoning.

Ellen

Is that a compliment?

Louis

Call it a bridge,- to affection.

Ellen

Then suspend your admiration and your  
compliments both, I am not hanging on your words.

Louis

Then I am doubly stranded.

Ellen

But you called me cross.

Louis

I lost my reason, and perhaps my heart as well.

Ellen

Easier for one who has his heart in his pants and  
may lose both for lack of suspenders.

Louis

So you do think me rude and forward.

Ellen

I think you have no concept of rudeness and thus cannot attain to it  
forward or backward.

Louis

But if I contemplate it.

(A shot is heard outside Measure runs in)

Ellen

What was that?

Measure

A shot I think. Or perhaps  
they've blown up the Rye bridge.  
They are an inseedlous lot.

Louis

No it was a shot! Indeed a shot.

Ellen

I've got to find Ellis.

Measure

What a damn inconvenience, – them  
blowing up things all over the place.

Ellen

Are you coming?

(Exits)

Louis

(distractedly)

The wind weaves wistful curtains from the snow.

Ellen

(From outside)

Well?

Louis

I'm coming.

Measure

Wait for me!

(end scene)

scene vii

(The Mayor's office, the Mayor is in his underwear  
--and he is missing a hand)

Mayor

Three thousand cases of sardines, stacks of  
Side vexed protesting crates,  
filled with skinless boneless loafers  
segregated by a coarse ungendering shave that  
Makes each well sexed by secondary traits,  
what may best go by an onion. By my eyes!  
I asked for the Marines not Sardines. At least this  
Is a multinational force they have sent.  
Portuguese packed in cloying wine, and well oiled sleek  
fillets stripped from the Argentine waters, altogether  
a spineless lot that stay in the can as if short of canter.  
Well matched to these forms for requisition fit  
a brainless school in a form two long and two short  
to make justice blind and stake an eye for an eye  
and a booth for a tooth to make secret these squinting  
Grinning substitutes

(enter Measure )

Constable look, the Canton government, sent me fish  
Instead of armed men.

Measure

I have a fresh set of demands from the terrorists.

Mayor

Did they sign it this time?

Measure

As before T.E.R. or Other wrist network.

It is some kind of code.

Mayor

Have you deciphered it yet?

Measure

I suspect that it is an acronym

Mayor

You mean an acronym.

Measure

No, -, an acronym. Short for  
acrimonius, which conjugates the Latin  
to have forbears in the letters U or S,  
Hence Ursus or the philosophical cruet  
from which we dip the question, of their  
acrimonius demands let ursus cum 'et al  
which poses the question who ate the bear  
and the rhetorical answer, al  
ate the bear, so the question answers  
itself, who are they, --they're not too sure themselves. .

Mayor

I may have lost my clothes but it looks like you may have  
lost your mind. What does T.E.R. stand for? I can't fathom it.

Measure

Obviously a brazen attempt to  
Undermine anonymity, a fragrant abuse of initials, --since it  
it not signed they imply that it may not be them at all, they  
claim responsibility for being totally reprehensible.  
They say this is their last contact.

Mayor

They have nothing further to say but  
they require the use of the television and radio with which to say it.

Mayor

What else? Have you got any theories?

Measure

I believe they may have located the old dynamite  
Charges that were set during the war under the bridges and roads.  
The ones planted to prevent

the Germans from reaching the town  
should they ever have get across the mountains.  
I think they have placed new radio detonators near all of them  
and will blow them all up unless we accept these demands.  
They said the Rye Bridge was just a warning, and  
that shortly all the other bridges may be blown up.

Mayor

We'll be cut off.

Measure

We shall be isolationists from this warning!

Mayor

Indeed their first warning took this hand from-me.  
as freely as your meaning slips from my hearing but  
for enforcement of these sentences that, to the end,  
these sentences have no feet and I no hand, in them,  
lest you suspect me. I am notably,-- little resembling a clam  
but very much like one in that this catechism is my permanent shell  
And I have no other covering. Can you recover my meaning. Or  
am I too crabby for you.

Measure

Yes, you appear to be out of  
Your tree,-even if it is a crab apple tree.

Mayor

The fruit is sound though small.

Measure

You must make a move Mayor,  
the townspeople are on the verge of riot.  
Some response is called for.

Mayor

But I lack the means for a response,  
have you no eyes man, I am stripped of both  
office and NOW officious.  
--I will not leave this house, I swear,

Measure

What about a radio address to the people, then

Mayor

I thought the radio and television signals were still jammed?

Measure

Odd, it seems they now have confined us to static as well.

Mayor

Have you any suspects yet?

Measure

None I'm afraid.

Mayor

Whoever it was probably has my hand and they attempted to kill you.

Measure

They've made a ransom demand.

Mayor

Have they! Well let this be  
a lesson. Some men are so lacking in  
scruples that they will even hold man's hand for ransom!

Measure

I have some further bad news.  
It seems they may have captured Ellis Emefti as well.  
He's disappeared last night, – at the very least.

Mayor

Another fine mess. This is a petition from the town council.  
They demand I make some kind of effort to stop  
the terrorists, or they will strip your office.  
Alf Camdenburg's, baldly heads the list.

Measure

(Looking at the paper)

I have it on this authority that he will attempt to  
make his case in person today to you from perusal of this.

Mayor

That despoiler of clean sheets, I will not hear his suit,  
He'll interview me for this rag and  
then makes a sparse pudding of my words,

so none can find a single raisin in them and then  
Once having rennet in the press makes the bastard custard  
of my sense so that on reading it, straining idiots think themselves  
satisfied,--lacking stomach for further draughts.

Measure

He's made it his habit lately to attack you daily in his column.

Mayor

He vents his spleen out his column which though of same issue  
has better punctuation than his colon.

Measure

You are a prisoner without wardrobe.

Mayor

They have locked here with no change of clothes  
lacking these I closet my confidence  
--I cannot speak to the crowd when  
they make plain that they think me a fruit of the loom.  
IF that is to be the emblem of my office they will ask me to resign,  
--I will try to postpone it, --these men  
must be brought to justice Measure,--  
and soon, and my hand and clothes restored before  
I can face them.

Measure

I will try to stall them but a crowd  
already is gathering downstairs.  
Their presence will no doubt  
make Alf bolder to strike a purposed stone to flinty editorials.

Mayor

The mob has octopus arms and he the ink.  
Keep him at bay a while longer.  
Give them a statement. Something is afoot, etc. etc.  
If only we could find Ellis, I think this will all come right.  
Til then,  
I must try to appear decisive  
grow to a fiercer nature  
than I possess, s'those appendages which would pluck  
me down, may take a more circumspect appraisal.  
I will be better, 'eeled for being less  
well heeled and by adopting a shocking  
manner will shoe them to their own polish and let these

octopus arms mob the stew-  
with that ink which their head has spouted,  
that they may in confusion apply the term sucker  
to themselves and strangle fast this strife.

Measure

If I do you must turn this confidence on the  
most forward of this ring's cycle  
who having put you to the round of his  
peg wringer wants to hang you out to dry.

Mayor

I might be hung out already if not for  
your sneaking this pair of briefs to me.

Measure

You should have a better tailor than me  
for your briefs.

Mayor

The general needling no doubt cross stitch  
Me to stigmatizing news, but enough!  
I fear this method courts madness,--  
my confidence is a cipher and my resolve  
leaks when appended to any purpose.  
If I am out in these parts it will only  
serve as a perch for further mocking,  
this paper posts my own upbraiding to me.  
I will not fence with them as any tailor of reasons  
may make me out as straw,  
since logic is the fashion, they will  
make a three piece suit to fit these limbs  
and take the field once I am defeated.  
He will I'm sure ask questions which peck  
out the eyes of any answer and then  
fly at the nose, --it is a prospect I would not face.

Measure

Windy discontent never moved you before.

Mayor

I have grown more vain with years  
and lacking that which tops the vain  
must appear to have eaten my hat and his

crow for lack of a cheesy cock.

Measure

Was that blown off too?

Mayor

In a row, –words man, words.

I am seduced by them yet have no proper usage.

Measure

Then we may be taxed by your words and have- no sin.

Mayor

And though I fish for them I am at a lack?

Measure

I will cover it with a codpiece if your  
hook lacks a worm for now  
And spawn no more discontent.

Mayor

I am upstream of the means to it now.

Measure

Good then, but if Alf sets the point,--

Mayor

When he comes here to interview me  
the stream of my discourse will be stopped up  
On this bank of memory no doubt and though there is  
no balsam on my tongue it will not leap to any issue,  
but make me meet all dumbly criticized,--  
my, my replies coming in starts and stops  
like a subway train that often halts in between stations  
to loudly broadcast mostly static,  
the doors of my mouth will be generally stuck  
open whether near any platform to take issue  
or no and so my interview will be conducted by mostly smiles  
for freight will lead him only ro railing further at my ailing speech.  
He'll style it that my mind is somewhat off the track.

Measure

He thinks you are unhinged already since you threw  
your clothes out the window frame.

Mayor

That was under duress I am not altogether  
off the jamb yet I have sweeter recourse adored

Measure

Well then lead him further off this track.  
Make out that you are nearly distract.  
Let him think you are a scientist that  
takes his problem to bed and wakes with  
it as sprung while from, Zeus' brow  
in the morning, let him think you dwell in  
some sphere of thought that repels the common measure.

Mayor

I think that in scaling my answers, he will find something  
--fishy.

Measure

Use your high office. To unseason this climate.

Mayor

He will no doubt rapelle to it and hye me out.

Measure

Then be antic, let him then regard you as some object of  
amusement rather as this will hold his judgement in check.  
Make of your disheveled state the most effect, drop the girdle of  
authority as if it, till now held in some keen expanding stratagem.  
I swear, that if you do, authority  
will be laced back up to you with double stays,  
Men fear no thing as much as uncorseted intellect  
as it is of such a self governed nature,  
as none can say it's orbit, and it's  
benefit takes no season as proper but  
may scorch up the sleeping ground of winter  
or freeze the green shoots of May to sudden ice,  
their day is as an age and no ticking off of attributes can bound them  
in the petty fashions of the age,  
fashion this as your coat, that you will outroot  
any rooting and they must vinelike cleave then to you  
for sustenance as they know that evil will make maps  
for runners of Coriolanus that uses nothing evil so well  
as some exiled good.

Mayor

Alright then. It is settled I 'll meet with Alf,--.

Measure

Like this? In your underwear? With no hand to show!

Mayor

If need be. I think I'd better make myself a drink.  
This is a familiar feud. Tell him to come up. I'll gamble on his good will..

Measure

I'll tell him then later. For now I must  
go up and see Ellis as he's been cut off since the bridge was blown up.

(end scene)

scene viii

(Paredi the winemakers cabin on the mountain overlooking the Rye bridge)

(enter Louis and Terothers)

Terothers

I see you got my message.

Louis

yes,-very imaginative to freeze it in  
an ice cube. I found it at the bottom of my drink.  
But tell me,-- what if Ellen had found it.  
Then our plan would have been on the rocks,- wouldn't it?

Terothers

What's the matter with you? You look worried.

Louis

You take the feature, not the thing,  
As worry is love's sister  
it rings sympathy true as its sex.

Terothers

Morel like a ghost for my purpose,  
alike in every feature but occupying a different sphere.  
Turn love to a transistor and it will engender worry  
like a dandelion its' seed,  
where a slight whisper will suffice to  
carry it to the furthest corner of the globe,  
--all the difference is in the naming.  
Move love but a few inches and it is called  
hemorrhoids. If the head hurts treat the arm!

That's the key to salesmanship,  
They'll thank you for the use of the arm  
And call you back for the head later.  
Cure the symptom where it is not  
And put the difference in your own pocket!  
The difference between wealth and poverty  
Then likewise only a matter of inches.  
How is your enterprise?

Louis

Things have changed.

Terothers

How so? Didn't he take the bait?

Louis.

Like a perch to a bottle nose bluefly  
She stalks my kin with kindness  
and makes me unresolved to anything  
Originally this all seemed to be black or white.  
But sharp antipathy like a hungry guest outstaying  
his welcome feeds on discontent and I have none there.  
I'm not making a silk purse from a sow's ear  
For she has made me fell at home, comfortable.

Terothers

This ear in the stalking is unwrapped by this same husk  
Socks are more easily unraveled than your twisting sympathies.

Louis

Ungrafted speech has sprouted a silk tongue  
and made my opinion hybrid; more composed  
of butter and sugar than grit and gall,-- I find nothing  
in all this to grease the wheels of my antipathy and  
Speaking in your favor to them I now find myself at pains  
to cover a warm heart with frosted looks.

Terothers

By this skimming turn you will outrim yourself of her affection  
Your catechism is not meet to sprout either horns nor studied parts  
but to be "all dare he this" or "dare he that". So you'll find the table set  
and turned on your tarnished loyalty to benefit others.

Louis

--Without a place for me.

Terothers

Move it to yourself. Move it to you.  
If the hour doesn't suit you change the o'clock, make dispensation  
chime to your Big Ben, make satisfaction run along  
the channels you set or all your furrows are to no end.  
Do not be content to field others contentment.  
Move it to you. Make of this thrusting  
sympathy no tangelo's but a symphony that takes the sections  
and leaves you the rind,  
all ears are politic deaf you will find  
To harpoon breached integrity is tedious at best.  
No one cares for something confederate to all,  
-- makes no particular bond and so, and so it  
provides poor counsel. Listen to me! Move it to yourself.

(Enter Paredi)

Paredi

Hide! Hide! the cow's outside.

Louis

Has he been listening to us all this while?

Paredi

Only with half an ear.  
Come get in this closet.  
Ellis is on his way up the path.

Louis

I have no reason to hide.

Terothers

Hide! there is some purpose in this visit  
I'm sure of that I'm sure will not be plain  
if he hies you out.

Louis

Alright then.

(They get in the closet. A knock at the door)

Paredi

Who's there?

Ellis

It's Ellis. open up I have a sausage for you.

Paredi  
A sausage! Or a message?

Ellis  
Both, under one skin.

Paredi  
Is it bloody news then?

Ellis  
(banging on the door)  
Open up Paredi!

Paredi  
(closing the closet)  
I think that you have the wrong house..  
I am Paredi the wine maker.  
What I have is in barrels not skins.

Ellis  
Then this is for you indeed,- a parody.

Paredi  
There is no linkage there.

Ellis  
Open the door as it is a link sausage.

Paredi  
Well, Come in then. And lay down your package.

Ellis  
Would you serve your sentences by a sausage.  
Who are you?

Paredi  
The winemaker Paredi, of course.  
Don't you recognize me Ellis?

Ellis  
Paredi, of course,  
then you are under arrest.  
These being are made from  
the vowels of a pig and strung together  
by this skin of meaning make a sentence

and a sentence does not a parody make.

Paredi

Are those sausages ripped off?

Ellis

No, strung together like a well turned phrase  
or non-concurrent jail sentences,  
by testimony of these sausages  
you must go to jail! and so you shall go to jail without pause  
And serve several sentences at the same time  
In irons, incognito and bituminously

Paredi

But I have done nothing. And I'll  
never go to jail by testimony of any whore sausage  
Sausage cannot speak!

Ellis

Pigs have no vowels, nor pause,  
nor the pause mocking.

Paredi

This pig never walked on any paws.  
And I have committed no crime.

Ellis

Then we will rehabilitate it  
to make Pygmalion from a pig, so,  
are we resolved,

Paredi

I am but, how a pig from a lion?!

Ellis

—that is mainly in the telling.

Paredi

So that which sticks by a lion., is telling  
and, it is a brave pig that squeals  
not when it is spit.

Ellis

Yet you did not stick by your herd.

Paredi

And any pig that sticks so close  
is a stuck pig and a spitted pig is  
too close as are some sentences likewise  
when taken too neighborly

Ellis

And so you must go to jail for whining.

Paredi

You are no pig and I no lion  
we are no longer cowed and  
I will not bore you in the main.

Ellis

Good then, you are no stranger to  
The gentleman who stopped here on the way  
to my house the other day I take. I  
spied him stopping here several times  
with my binoculars.

Paredi

What about him?

Ellis

Was he also singular?

Paredi

He being out of breath was pleural not singular  
as he came with a jug- to fill.

Ellis

A jug? What's jug have to do with it?

Paredi

It has a handle to catch it by.

Ellis

I'll catch you by your throat if you juggle words.

Paredi

In fact. There were two men.

Ellis

Oh really? That is news.

Paredi

They were here awhile knitted and crotch tight in conversation  
but when they parted there was some current of disagreement which running  
through their speech made their mutual dislike glow neon  
apparent their friendship down the tubes apparently but themselves  
yet still locked in some enterprise..

Ellis

A fine pair of fatted calves

Paredi

More like a pair of knees a knocked together in and out  
and were only forward bent to common purpose.

Ellis

What did they look like?.

Paredi

Fresh sprung from the joint . They both wore caps low  
so I couldn't see them clear and they spoke  
Softly what they intended, behind their hands like so

Ellis

So they were for the most part anonymous in their intent.

Paredi

Anon a what?

Ellis

I Mus.

Paredi

First it was a pig and anon a lion  
and then anon a moose. Anon it will  
a cow why don't you cut-this to be an, elk? for  
short and call it an anyzoo-

(In the distance Ellen can be heard calling)

Ellis

Gezundheit! I'd better go or I'll land in the dog house.

(exits)

Paredi

He's gone.

Terothers

Do you have enough dynamite then for the job?  
--and blasting caps as well?

Paredi

Good and Plenty.

Terothers

Then do what Ellis asks.  
Change the vintage and then fill the cask,  
(aside)  
he'll soon find his designs worked most detriment to himself,  
by uncorking what was better untasted left on the shelf.

Paredi

I saw someone start up the mountain a few hours ago, I think it was  
Measure. t recognized the yellow hat with the green plume.

Terothers

Oh really? He should be by here in about two hours then.

Paredi

Probably, if he is oh the way to Ellis' house.

Terothers

Yes. Do this. Set a charge of dynamite under the bridge  
and take this glove and fill it with straw. Are you listening?

Paredi

Very closely I am attending you.

Terothers

Hang this glove stuffed with newspaper from a tree  
closest to the bridge and attach a line to the blast caps..

Paredi

Is there a message in the hand.

Terothers

A message indeed.  
As soon as Measure reaches that branch and pulls

At the glove, it will  
set off the charge. It will suffice to avalanche th'snow,  
and will no doubt scare off that idiot Constable Measure.

Paredi

What about the glove? What is that for?

Louis

Do you have any red wine?

Paredi

I have a good port here.

Terothers

He'll think it was the Mayor's hand.  
Believe me he will be poking at every  
boulder and bush looking for the terrorists.

Paredi

Can hardly wait t'hear him, when he stops here  
to take a glass of port-- how he was beset by  
dangerous terrorists at every step of the way up the ridge.  
He has a knack for painting every little instance in epic terms

Louis

He has an epic tone for a Constable.

Paredi

Indeed and to further illustrate the grandeur of his actions,  
He usually cuts a wide swath with his yellow  
plume hat, causing the impression that  
he prevailed by sneezing his opponents into oblivion.

Louis.

It's worth doing for the entertainment alone.

Paredi

You are geniuses!

Terothers

Takes pains to receive him with proper consternation

Paredi

I'll make my mouth a chicken coop for  
the clucking at his near escape.

Terothers

Some old debts will be settled today and  
(Leaving money on the counter aside to Louis)  
as for him, if he would scour my cupboard  
Indeed let him this fonder find this idiot's delight for fare.  
I'd rather not have him think me bread rich and entertainment bare.

(exit both)

scene ix

(The mayors office)

(Alf enters but the mayor seems not to notice him. )

Mayor

Brandy, Brandy --where is my Brandy-  
Only milk?! they will send a posset after me, and say  
it was I that caused them to mix in this business.  
They were contented to herd cows, and so I should  
have been content to leave them unheard,--where is my Brandy!!  
Ahhh,-- here sweet cognac, make more cordial, plain ice cubes,  
more than-friendly,--

(reading the paper)

What is this here this accusation, another barb,---  
how have I failed to protect the wine industry from terrorists?  
Should I then tend every grape, or surround them with spears?  
Or perhaps lock each bunch in a box with a combination,-  
By the Great Gods mustard, I am in a state of confusion!  
I went out on a limb recommending these farmers  
convert their dairy pastureland to vineyards,  
and now even my limb is in limbo,--and they not content to  
leave me even with this nothing but remake these vines into  
bovines and with this as causus belli, their  
general hatred for me becomes causus bellow.  
I have been frank with them,--I haven't lied, only whined a bit  
and become a bit unwound, and for this they have trodden me under  
with ludicrous legs,,--making me a scapegrape for their problems,--  
and that pufferfish Measure, Ohh for a hatpin! I'd set him  
And the herd to mooing, send that manicured manure factory  
to a more fertile digestion,-- they are now so dunged up in habit  
that they cannot see where their profit lies.  
Making again pastures of their vineyards, they would  
dangle dung from the vines and call it fruit, they are so between  
themselves that they most resume their former charges and neither know the stakes  
but tread true interest to a most muddy-vintage. The milk of human kindness is  
thin brewed in them and they would whip me

from office with these blythe switches.

Alf

(Enters)

Mayor Hand!! Drinking so early?

And yet to get dressed

Mayor

I have tempered my temperance,  
will you join me?

Alf

No thank you,--. If I may  
get right to the point, - I'm working a deadline.

Mayor

Give it a jerk,--you may catch  
Something yet.

Alf

Your water is wasted?

Mayor

Only if you refuse to take a belt with me.

Alf

Have you caught the terrorists?

Mayor

I am working on it..

Alf

Any clues yet?

Mayor

Off the record?,--

I have nothing to say.

You can put your paper to bed  
by unquinting this inquisition.

Alf

People have a right to the truth.

Mayor

If you are for a right cross  
Go cover a boxing match.  
If you wish lighter matter  
cover a cardboard boxing match.

Alf

You are either speaking nonsense,

Mayor

--or still fishing for something.

Alf

Sail plainly and square your jib to school me by the horn.

Mayor

How can I when you drag out the lines  
from any speech I give, by your excisions  
the net of my intent is cut and it takes  
no school to make it shallow,--my wind  
unmanned by your pen,  
the harder it blows  
the more holes you cut in the sails with your sharp barbs,  
taking sense from censorship you leave me sore,  
and make opinions survey to map out my chafe  
I am glassed as incompetent by you when you  
yourself have made these pains,  
alright, I'll speak plainly  
--my clothes have been stolen, and  
--there's something fishy here  
and it takes no sage or uncommon acumen to see you seek  
to curry favor to gain my perch.  
Where is the shorwave radio? I want  
Speak directly and let people have at least a spar of truth.

Alf

Mayor, you well know Any such broadcast might raise more  
than eyebrows as it might accidently  
set off the terrorist bombs if they are tuned to that frequency.  
Measure confiscated all the transmitters  
because of this,-- to prevent a transmission from  
accidently setting off the charges.

Mayor

A dirty business.

You could merely look the other way.  
I care little anymore for how explosive my speech proves.

Alf

It wouldn't do any good.  
All the frequencies have now been jammed by Ellis  
-----Measure asked him to help in this.

Mayor

Then give me a week. Just a week more. I'll have them by then  
or be myself lemon jello.

Alf

Two days. That's all, then I'll print that our mayor is  
losing his grip

(enter Measure disheveled)

Mayor

Ohhh,-Measure!  
You look terrible,-what happened?

Measure

I was about to cross the bridge  
near the ravine when it blew up!  
There was a hand on the other side of the ravine  
It was perhaps yours, I don't know  
-- or mine, no, I know it was not mine as I shook my hand  
I assured myself quickly that all of me was on one side.  
A hand, but no ring on it.  
So it cannot be yours,  
yours had your seal of office  
On the pinky finger.

Mayor

Here is the beginning  
I suspect myself to be deranged.

Alf

Well are you?

Mayor

Non-comment mentus.

Alf

And what about all the grapes going to rot  
on the vines because the growers can't get to the press  
at Paredi's because the bridge is gone.

Mayor

Non compost mentus.

Alf

Measure you can see he has no solution to this mess.  
His attitude is amiable but irrational.  
What direction will the police take in this investigation?

Measure

I think I can speak for the Mayor when I say,-  
Non compus mentus. He waives his right to trial.

(Waving the hand)

Alf

Well I think I've heard enough it appears you  
Both thinking your are humorous. But  
unless you catch these men, believe me,  
there will shortly be a new mayor.  
And a new constable as well. There's  
nothing after all, more useless than a broken.measure,  
and none more helpless than a ruler missing a duke.  
Finish your drink,—and deal yourself a royal flush,

Mayor

-- down the hatch.

(Alf exits)

Mayor

How he rattles on. And he thinks every one should  
be on the wagon too. Perhaps if he had some oiling he  
wouldn't constantly squeak out of turn.

(Pours Measure a drink)

Measure

He is supported by some big wheels,— some from out of town,  
I've heard, He's been syndicated,—

Mayor

Well he may be syndicated but  
but even with bucket seats he'll never make a coupe, —  
I abhor his type,- and his typewriter,  
it changes key to suit his changing his tune  
on every issue. His paper folds on every point  
and shatters in my own view in a crazed fashion more like a Corvette than a  
gazette, it changes gear as often and this inconstancy is so expected that it is  
commonly called after his masthead, the Standard shift.

Measure

It seems he has you in his clutches regardless.

Measure

I can't stand talking to a man in his underwear.

Mayor

Can't you get me some clothes Measure? I have begun to talk to myself,  
--and just run them up the flagpole and I'll grab them  
through the window. I should have been a pirate.

Measure

The mob has posted a guard at the door.  
You must attend to this business.  
Their crop is about to be lost.  
They mean to see you stay naked til  
their problem is fixed

(Looking in the box)

I have another note here but it is illegible  
in the read.

Mayor

I will not float naked as Moses. Get me some pants!

Measure

I cannot sneak one in,  
they have guards at the door to your office  
--every package is searched  
at the door for a hint of haberdashery, the town is irate,  
they will let you have not a stitch, nor feather not a pearl button,  
if you are to have chicken for dinner rest assured  
it is well plucked,--any man that affects a sheepish grin  
will in this neighborhood be quickly shorn and no

argument will move them especially if it is cloaked in reason  
roundly and if you are unvisited by worry,  
it's only because a knitted brow cannot find its'  
way past the door without being unraveled.  
the hallway was thrown down because it  
had a coat of paint. Naked terror rules  
and roams unimpeded having made itself the fashion.

Mayor

I ordered that search for security reasons and now that I am  
pantless am powerless to change it, --  
It looks as though the blast scorched your breechcoat.

Measure

I just thank heaven I wasn't killed.

Mayor

Well then, take off those clothes,--  
At least loan them to me so I can have some borrowed  
dignity.

(Measure takes off his pants)

Measure

Tomorrow I'll need them back as I must  
visit Ellis again to see if he and Ellen are OK.

Mayor

So you'll wash them today and then once more into the breech? Ehhh?  
The terrorists haven't scared you off.

Measure

-they'll try it again no doubt  
but I'll avoid their hatred,  
by making a ring around their choler---  
I'll be a sly laundramat rat  
and avoid the trap and go straight at these agitators.  
If any ask me why I go see a shrink and her cripple husband every day  
I'll say I can't cope, and take thus straight route up the slope.

(end scene)

scene x

( Ellis' House)

Louis

No question, but that's the question.  
What is motivation,--a thing of mind or spirit.

Is the bite of a mosquito which impels us to scratch,  
As potent as the nudging of a behemoth that regards all existence as but an itch  
To take a back seat to action,--  
there's the knack,--but then we may be mounted  
on a spring of motives like some facile smiling figure,  
or worse, a hand that waves others on to death,  
that tree of all barks and not one leaves .--  
but to make ourselves composed all through  
of facile happiness, to wear a paste up smile to advertise our idiocies,  
will only make a thicker imposter of us  
and so make canvas of no more of mourning than this,  
-- that, --having thin tempers we paint more of future promise  
than , past hell. Life will unleash such acts as once committed  
now follow us about like ever cheerful dogs  
and as faithful as they are to us, the passing  
of all we do into oblivion will be as little mourned  
as that of a toy which through  
much use now sways ungainly on an exposed spring  
and so quickly wags away its charm.  
But if our acts precede us over these banal battlements  
then we find we are as well brinked to death as a shadow  
falling not on itself but on the light,  
for we like little lamps can but figure out a path for others but are ourselves  
wrapped in darkness. The tears weeped by factories of angels  
May yet scale this snowy assemblage of our woe.

(End ACT I)

**ACT II**

scene i  
(Ellis' house)

Ellen  
Come and help me, quickly!!--

Louis  
What happened?

Ellen  
It's Ellis,--he's hurt.

Louis  
Where? How did it happen?

Ellen  
There was an avalanche.  
and a rogue boulder must have  
made it's way off the glacier,  
it grazed him,--thank god he wasn't too far from the house,  
come on, will you, he's bleeding?

(They go out and drag Ellis back in and deposit him in the wheelchair. Ellen bandages his head)

Louis

How do you feel?

Ellis

Screw you!

Louis

I guess he's not hurt too badly, he seems fine.

Ellis

Fine!?,--I almost get the top of my skull knocked off and you say he must be fine, you pusillanious placater of invalids. Do you know how embarrassing it would be --- if I lost my head, or even a part of it?

Louis

You know, I've had enough of feeling sorry for you.

Ellen

This is no time for recriminations.

Ellis

No, no,--the boy is finally showing a little spunk,--good for you. I feel,--I feel,-- like a game of cards.

Louis

You're dealing.

Ellis

How about, Gin Rummy?

Ellen

Ellis, you can't play cards, you were almost killed just now, --you should go to bed.

Ellis

Nonsense! I'm fick as a flittle.. Flat as a fondle. Getting clocked by a boulder, what a corny way to die. that would never sell, they would screw the idea right there. Deal will you,-- I 'm trying to sell my life story to the network, they've offered me my own mini-series,--by Ken Burns no less, I lied a bit, and said I was wounded in the Spanish Civil War,--or killed at the Alamo,

I can't remember which.

Ellen

I think he has amnesia.

Ellis

No that would never sell either.

It was the Mexican American War,-- that's it.

Or was it Mexican whorehouses, anyway

I bet it would bring in just under a'mill in ad revenue ehh Louis.

Louis

I don't really know but I bet,

they would have cast you as a trojan tortilla

You should be flat as a card yourself, for all

your corny orneriness,-- the ace o, maize

Ellis

Why are you talking about mayonnaise when I've just almost  
been crushed to a mournful croutonous salad death?

Ellen

Croutonous?

Ellis

I've just gotten out of a pickle and you want me back in one,  
--for relishing danger.

Louis

(To Ellen)

Danger is one thing. Murder another.

I suspect that it was no accident,---

that boulder.

Ellen

I must get a fresh bandage,

(exits)

Ellis

Frankly, I suspect that it was them, the terrorists,--

but no matter, I don't want to upset Ellen.

She's been depressed about my daughter lately.

Louis

More worried about you.

Ellis

,--worry is like a fog, it will sink into any convenient depression.

Louis

You treat her like a child. Deal.

Ellis

So what! Do you think?  
Because she is a scientist she should be above worry.  
Is a scientist a giraffe that can out  
neck any depression by holding objectivity in high regard?  
Worry is a monkey that  
chatters and dances while you grind away  
at your round and then it steals you blind from any daily profit.  
It is a cheetah that with quick tale conceals a black ace.  
So sit your black ace down.

Louis

I don't think I like the atmosphere around here anymore,  
I'd better go.

Ellis

No! Stay! I had no intention  
of offending you. Sit your black ace down,  
it's a gin rummy joke, no stay, I'll go.  
Where is that woman?

Ellen

Ellis!

(Ellis exits)

Louis

My privacy's wedging offends me. It was  
a pry of this type that wedged a boulder, Louis,  
But try to tell him, it is as useless as tying  
feathers to that rock and granting it can fly.  
Still, it would fly if it were as light as he,  
and he as light as it is sedimentary. ---  
I perceive I am the crux of his mood.  
He deludes himself that in me he has found someone  
to pay court in his little kingdom.  
He sees my glances at her I'm sure, but

regards my feeling for her to be,  
only affection, no more—but it is  
an affection that outbreasts itself  
that much like to affection as  
a snowball to an avalanche.  
He commissions guilt to do battle with memory  
and setting up a false rule then takes me for a colonic  
that will purge it. It was Terothers! Damn  
him! I know it was! But Ellis is content to feed  
my suspicion with crumbs, he has netted a little  
bird with his game, knowing that still  
I will come back for more,  
--but my appetite is not so bird-like.  
I would like him take the whole loaf

(Enter Ellen)

Louis

Well?

Ellen

He's resting. Ellis told me you're thinking of leaving?

Louis

Yes, I feel, I can't conceal my feelings for you any longer,

Ellen

Then why didn't you tell him?

Louis

I can't bear to see the way he treats you,  
-- you, a scientist and a beautiful woman,  
twin virtues each constellating the other,  
like a lamp inlaid with mother of pearl,  
That outshines its own brightness  
yet to him, you are no more than a nightlight  
for him to read his horoscope by.  
You cured him and now he charges you a fee!

Ellen

Such is the economy of our natures that kindness  
is never paid in coin.

Louis

Even a babe at suck would make a purse

than serve you with's teeth!

Ellen

Such as may lead to a choleric disposition.

Louis

In his heated frolic he plays me for an ass.

Ellen

If choleric could kill we'd all be asses.

Louis

Even so. Like uncomplaining beasts,  
with a freight of woe that we carry about,  
and under it what dreams we have are soon pressed flat  
as flowers in dusty unread volumes,--so we fix ourselves  
in a tomb of words that trace the flat and brittle  
cappillaried tracks of our natures  
that all our years are flyleaves to unrailed fortune  
that in this catalogue of untrimmed stemmings  
Trimmed to this binding,-  
we are stifled up, never to emerge from a cocoon  
of commas so that finally we like  
caterpillars flex frustrate atop a gross spate of unconditioned sorrow.  
Our wants seared up in hot haste,  
our lives, a dime-store novel sold for  
a penny,-and we-the last of all our ills at last lock  
up the book lest any see our cuttings off.

(Enter Ellis)

Ellen

Ellis, what are you doing.

Ellis

Heyyy,--- I found the cards the new pack.  
I was in your sewing basket. Are you ready  
for a hand?

Louis

Do you know how to play whig?

Ellis

I can play whist,--if that's what you mean?

Louis

I whist it were a wig then we'd have a party.

Ellis

Call it when you whist, a wig will cover all.

Louis

Let's play at hearts then shall we?

Ellis

Certainly. Ellen make us some tea dear? Please will you.

(exit Ellen)

Louis

Your wife's very devoted.

Ellis

Oh yes,--and when she makes tea, then she's especially so.

Louis

What's the game?

Ellis

What's that?

Louis

I've forgotten the game. Whist, I can't catch it.

Ellis

Go fish.

Louis

Ah, then I have forgotten the game -and the line.

Ellis

Nothing will catch something as good as a fly lure.

Louis

There's a cast.

Ellis

But if you're partial to fruit flies,- Louis  
And a set.

(enter Ellen with tea)

Ellen

Here's the tea.

Ellis

Put it on the settee.

Ellen

He'll do anything for,--

Louis

An audience, I know.

(Ellis knocks over tea)

Ellis

Oh my! I am a clumsy ass, perhaps I am still under the weather a bit from the fall.

Ellen

Never mind, I'll get some more.

Ellis

Yes please do that dear. Won't you?

Louis

Yes please do.

(Ellen exits)

You threw that down intentionally. Why?

Ellis

I just did,--that's all. No motivation.

Louis

Ohh, how old men mock babes with a well matched cheek, rash for rash. You tax me, as an ass.

Ellis

And when we die? How do you write that off?

Louis

Young or old, we are well powdered and diapered in darkness.

Ellis

Well I'll tell you what I think,  
since you didn't ask. I think,--  
when we die--, God cracks opens each of our skulls  
with a spade and fishes out our souls with his fingers  
through the fissures and licks them.  
Like a kid in the peanut butter jar.

Louis

Well how do you like those fissures eddy.  
You see, --I'd have a soul-. like a can of peas.  
Since the Greeks call us shades after we die,  
--we turn into a package of sunglasses,  
If that's true want to be the best of the lot when I'm opened up.  
(Ellen enters with, more tea.)

Ellis

I suspect he'll find the same thing pretty much in every one of us.  
Except for one or two,- right Ellen? That's what's in the cards.

Ellen

In every one of what dear?

Louis

What's that Ellis?

Ellis

Commercials.

Louis

What? What did you say?

Ellis

Commercials,--beer commercials,  
right there at the very rim of our skulls,  
a fi-n-e- Pilsener, and near the  
Nostrils, dog food commercials, teach your dog to smile,  
--I've taught my dog to smile. My hot diggity dog.

Ellen

What's he going on about now? Ellis, calm down

Louis

Yes, he's going on about now. I don't know.  
He's seems mad. Something about dog food.

Ellis

They'd all come pouring out  
in one vast flood, forty days and forty nights worth and then  
when they've all run,,--mind you it's  
only spitting distance from late night  
T.V. to salvation, that is when they've all run, then  
what's left is the soul,--back there, a shriveled up  
little thing reading the Wall Street Journal without any ads  
in its' underwear and there you have it.

Louis

Have what?

Ellen

You're ridiculous, the soul sitting  
around in its underwear. Not doing a thing. A foreign concept.

Ellis

Well I hope you don't expect to show any interest in domestic affairs !

Ellen

There he goes again,--let's just tape it and save the equity.

Louis

Look, I don't want any confrontations  
here,--forget about soul and everything  
else, no motivation no points or morals,-- just drop it!

Ellis

Let's just drop it,-there's the motto for youth, --- and the grave,  
--both too shallow. Still, by injunctions made to fit  
well within this rose ribbed marble  
that is the woof of our warped lives  
here is the convergence of parallel lines,  
and what a convergence, that is, in its' flush, all of our  
posterity parcel by parcel purged  
down the swirling vortex of time,  
so that, were we beggars made new Caesars, and kings  
by its progression our sceptres now septic  
and this unplumbing reads unpatterned out our  
beginnings and our ends.  
So we, who by being abreast of the times,  
have made our success,  
but like not seeing our offspring take suck at cesspools.  
What we have undertaken has in the end proved bootless,

and all our cobbling is to no end  
but to make a bit softer, the foot  
that spurns us to our graves  
and bright honor set in stone  
as faults, cracked pavers on our quick way,-- to oblivion.

Ellen

This is a fit that comes over him.  
He sees the form of his daughter  
Near his tombstone hovering before him there.

Louis

Look he's reaching out as if to touch her.

Ellis

Irving!

Louis

Who is Irving?

Ellen

It was his son's name.

Louis

I didn't know he had a son. I thought you said he had only a daughter.

Ellen

Son and daughter both,- and both dead.  
It's best now just to leave him.  
He'll be ranting now for hours.

Louis

I see,-- wait, he seems to be recovering,

Ellen

I am familiar with the slope slalom  
of his madness and how the skein of his  
mind travels down as with this mountain,

Ellis

Some tea! Ellen, some tea.

Ellen

-- you are right, he will shrink to us again shortly.

Ellis  
(Weakly) Is this my cup of tea?

Ellen  
Yes my dear. Are you better?

Ellis  
And, my pipe?

Ellen  
Yes dear?

Ellis  
(Picks up cards) And this my hand?

Louis  
It is.

Ellis  
Gin rummy!

Louis  
But we were playing Go Fish!  
If he wasn't choleric formed.  
I'd think this madness feigned  
Only so he might come out better by his distraction in the game.

(end scene i)

scene ii (later that day)

Ellis  
What is that damn squeaking?

Louis  
It sounds like a mouse.

Ellen  
There are no mice here.

Louis  
(Brings out suitcases)  
I think it's coming from behind this curtain.  
(Picks up a golf club) I'll kill the little beast.  
(opens the curtain Measure is blowing on the glass  
and wiping it with a squeegee). It's the window washer.

Ellis

We don't have a window washer.

Ellen

Ohh, it must be Measure then,

Ellis

let him in. (Yells) Come in.

(Louis opens the window and Measure steps in.)

Measure

Good afternoon, Mrs Emefti,--Ellis.

I must apologize for this unorthodox entrance and disguise  
but you see I think I was followed here,-- and the first time I set out  
They set off a bomb at the bridge  
so I went back and disguised myself as a window washer.

Ellis

I would never have seen through it otherwise.  
(Measure drops his squeegee.)

Louis

What is that?

Measure

No need to ask questions,  
they answer themselves,--no need to bother.

Louis

Nevertheless, one will never find out unless he inquires,  
--for instance I'll swear by gosh I can't imagine what that  
thing is you've dropped by name or gender, species or class.

Measure

It's gender is the case, and the case is interrogative, --so I'll  
swear with equal conjugation that by heaven you do know what it is.

Louis

I don't and never shall till you leave!

Measure

You made it's limbs yourself.

Louis

It has no limbs but looks like a mere stick torso, a bare grammar with no conjunction.

Measure

Well nevertheless you've answered yourself and heartily I'll tell you how it is called a squeegee, which by all contiguity is composed of two parts,--that is, the anterior partis qui, which is the interrogatory part and the posterior part which in plural case is gees , ergo the the anterior part is the fracture interrogative of qui venitas which is quickly answered in the posterior in the expletive for the Lord, est demonstradum that if you swear by heaven you don't have the answer I'll swear as loudly you do!

Louis

How is this applied in your present adopted trade?

Measure

No one would see the Lord come if they have dirty windows would they?

Louis

You've already taken much more pains with this than it deserves. The matter is circular, a nine whole course.

Measure

Then you call for straight strokes.

Louis

Yes give us straight strokes indeed.

Measure

Well that is your occupation, --and this mine. A golfer should have straight strokes and a window washer circular ones after all.

Louis

Your meaning seems double hung. But it is not transparent as you muntin.

Measure

Nor by yours would it be if you had taken a stroking.

Ellen

Indeed.. Let's all have some more tea.

(exits)

Measure

I think I shall wait till I am well thawed out  
or else you'll think me drawn thin in this cast, as I may crack  
my block and die only with extreme unction  
as might a bit player extend his role by radiating by half life.

Ellen

What are you leaving so soon? Isn't there a game?  
Take some ease constable. And I have a change of clothes for you.

Ellis

Well how do you like those fishers Eddy.

Measure

Yes you're right,--I must get out of these clothes first.  
They smell terrible!

Ellen

Like fish! Sardines!

Louis

Then by your profession they  
should better answer solemnly like John the Baptist  
--headless thru a dance with a long meter, as one without bars,

Ellen

Or Measure

Louis

Indeed. We are off beat without Measure.

Measure

Who is this brusque fellow?

Ellis

His name is Birdseye,

Ellen

--he's from the Trebek lab at the Research Institute.

Measure

Pardon my hand, it is half frozen.

Louis

Not at all,--a warmer welcome is afoot I'm sure,  
The hand anyway, makes for the bars  
as the hand is a poor tailor of bonds  
and most often will post to  
a different seam and when found off,  
is more like to pull your leg than let make proper bail.  
Just as by a gripping speech,  
a lawyer may turn his case,  
though he himself credits not a word, so is the hand more often  
an interlocutor for our interest and severed from our drowning hearts.

Measure

Off from my wrist.

Ellis

Measure, do tell.  
What is your business here?

Measure

I have no use for indirect language.  
Like some others.

Ellen

Oolong?

Ellis

Hardly. It seems you have no use for anybody  
so far out of uniform.

Measure

I do not issue credit to merely habeus corpus.

Ellis

Then you must have only contempt for jurists.

Measure

What is the meat of the matter?

Louis

That depends, are you here shepherded in a official capacity  
or as your clothes suggest more in the horses vein.

Measure

Only if you trying to stall me.

Louis

I could not stall you even if I wished to stall you,  
because to stall you  
would mark me as a poor bridge player.

Mayor

Howso?

Louis

Because I would be out of stall before you out rump.

Ellis

A well played hand. Let's drink to Measure.

Louis

My speech is lame. But here's a shot, –  
What your office is, is plain in clothes

Measure

I am here investigating a crime in plainclothes.

Louis

Then you must arrest me as I have shot.-- a glass,  
which to a window washer must constitute a serious crime.

Measure

I don't want a confrontation, I'm just doing my job.

( Ellen sets down the tea)

Ellen

Constable do have some more tea.

Measure

I am anti-tea, I am a no tea, no tea boy.

Ellis

Well here is his highness judgement,  
he will no doubt administer a wipe to this posterior  
with the bag.

Louis

This is enough to make a fish weep.

Ellis

That's ridiculous,--fish  
don't weep,-- they use a squeegee.

Louis

Is this black tea?

Ellen

No, the green kind.  
Are you sure you won't have some Constable?

Measure

Perhaps I will. I am frozen. Just to thaw me out.

(Ellen exits)

Measure

Ellis, to be frank,  
I'm looking for the Mayor's hand. It's missing.  
I believe the terrorists took it after they blew up the bridge.  
In the confusion.

Ellis

How would I recognize it. Does it have some  
peculiar mark that would distinguish it.

Measure

There is a ring. It has the Mayor's seal on it.

Ellis

Does it. Well there's only  
one way to find a hand with a seal on it.

Measure

What is that?

Ellis

Why, get the seals to stand up and clap.

Measure

This is a serious matter , it is  
not the time for glib answers,--

anyone may be glib, it takes no practice,  
Napoleon may be glib,  
Caesar may be glib but you Ellis have not the right to be glib,  
for glibness must be earned.

Ellis

You are right then, I beg you, please forglib me.

Measure

This is no joke. (Putting the box onto the table).  
The Mayor was attacked just before he was to make his speech,  
they cut off his hand above the wrist and stole your plans  
for the new winery, and then they put a tire over his head  
and arms so he was helpless. The growers cannot get the crop in  
to Paredi's press either. If only your new winery press was set up.  
They are furious because it was he that had them all convert from  
dairy farms to vineyards, – the milk would keep but the grapes  
will not, they will rot on the vines if they can't get them to press.

Ellis

So they left the mayor wristless and tired, and what this about Paredi?

Measure

They blew the bridge and marooned the grapes on one side  
The winery on the other.

Louis

That is serious indeed.

Measure

If not for the cold snap they would have all rotted on the vine by now,--we --  
Suspected they must have planted a charge under the bridge,--  
at first I thought that they had just set off the  
Mines that were left from the war, the ones the Town's people  
had put there in case the Germans attacked,  
but I realized that this was impossible.

Ellis

That's right the charges underneath the Rye Bridge were already  
detonated right after the war. It couldn't have been them.

Measure

Yes. Exactly. Do you remember that?

Ellis

It was right after the end of the war right before the town was liberated.  
The radio was out, and they didn't know the war was over,  
the Mayor and Constable of the town mistook a single soldier  
To be the start of an invasion and they blew up the bridge to  
Protect the town. It didn't kill him, but a single piece of shrapnel  
lodged in his skull

Louis

Blinding him.

Measure

Yes that's true, blinding him.

Ellis

Poor bastard!

Measure

We never removed the explosives from the rest of the bridges and  
Now the terrorists are threatening to blow them all..

Ellis

You mean blow up the Rye all the rest of the bridges to boot.

Measure

Yes, --they also want use of the TV station.  
To broadcast their demands.

Ellis

This is what comes of--.

Measure

Of What?

Ellis

Nevermind! It's all propaganda,-- demands, threats,  
commercials, --news,--all propaganda,--we should not be  
moved by it. Stay the course,--

Louis

Ellis, weren't you wounded in the War, why didn't you  
Ever go back into TV after the war. Even if you were blind.  
They would have found a spot for you in news I'm sure..

Ellis

It's not a weaker man's medium.  
Do the executives have crystal balls?

Louis

Can I persuade you to join us in a hand constable.

Measure

I'm afraid I'm on duty.

Ellis

Duty is no better than red tea or green tea.  
Indeed you are due tea. Ellen!

Measure

What do you mean?

Ellis

What do you mean, what do you mean!  
Where is your badge? Are you completely out of uniform?

Measure

It's right here.

Ellis

Let me see. (Takes it) Ahh yes,  
the symbol of office. A piece  
of molded recycled metal that might have  
Once been a case for sardines,

Measure

Or a piece of shrapnel.  
but with it you can yourself prescribe, terms which you call duty,--

Ellen

Duty is a metaphor,-that's all.

Measure

A metaphor, for what?

Ellis

Nevermind, -- Four of a kind. (puts down cards.)  
Are you so cowed by duty that you won't play.  
Tell me Measure, is this a  
real card game or a metaphor.

Measure

Who cares which it is.

Louis

I'll tell you who,-- the Institute cares. Trebek cares.

Measure

But why should he care? Besides we are all in jeopardy till we catch these terrorists.

Louis

Their existence is a game of chance as well,  
-- it's best not to play the fool,--

Ellis

Ohh,--I'm sorry, I thought that  
I had removed the joker from the deck.  
These braille cards are confusing.  
The braille symbol for the joker is  
Just like a one eyed jack. Sorry.

Louis

Soo, now you're apologizing  
why because Measure is here?  
I thought you didn't believe in that!

Ellis

Are you gonna make a big deal about it?  
Just play out your hand!  
(Louis quietly moves the microphone  
toward him and switches it on)

Louis

What?

Ellis

I said, just play out your hand.  
(the hand jumps out of the box  
and onto the table,- Measure gasps)

Ellis

You know, given time,--  
I could have disliked you much more than I do.

Louis

No doubt.

(Enter Ellen)

Ellen

(Screams)

Red tea it is. Ahhh, what is that?

Ellis

It 's no use my dear. The hand is on the table.  
And a good job of it. Even if there was a joker in it.  
What's the sense!

Measure

I'm afraid I must arrest all of you..

Louis

Consider something Constable.

Measure

Be quick I am out of patience.

Louis

Is it likely that the men who  
just now tried to kill you would  
have made an attempt of Ellis' life  
if he were in league with them.

Measure

That's not for me to decide.

Ellis

No one has tried to kill me recently. Rest assured.  
That is an exaggeration.

Louis

What about the boulder?

Ellis

He has this fixation Measure this fellow here,-  
- that I am the object of some  
Malignant will so that I must constantly be ducking this or  
that. Rude fantasy.  
It was an accident. You yourself must know,  
know, such things are common this time of year.

Louis

Inspector, just go up on  
the ridge above the bridge near Paredi's and if you do not  
find some evidence of foul play there  
then, then take me for a liar. I'll stake my  
reputation on it.

Measure

We are never so foolish as when doing what is logical to  
protect our reputations.

Ellis

Well I must admit, he's gotten me curious a bit, --if you  
would go investigate, I give you  
my word I will not attempt to escape.  
You have my hand on it.

Measure

I have no need to investigate further.  
This hand is all I needed to see.

Ellen

Is friendship then of no account here?

Measure

When it comes to the satisfaction  
of the law, --it is as a mere cipher.

Ellen

You should restrain yourself  
more both in speech and action.  
Coming here like this in friendship  
or at least as a window washer.

Louis

Friendship has its own pull  
which might sometimes bend the law to the end  
that the arrogance which is most vicious to office  
when it is off-the cuff- be less high handed  
and send justice on a swifter course and with truer aim .  
--Well inspector cat got your tongue?

Measure

The arrow of friendship, when unfeathered  
of truth takes at best a wobbly course.

Ellen

And truth, when unshafted of friendship swiftly loses its elevated station  
and can only pauperlike drag pilfered baggage  
from here to there,--and for this  
purpose must even steal the hand that lends this transport,  
given over a space of this too swift dispatch  
Lend it apace,--the 'hated beast of prey that with single motion  
snaps its victims neck cannot but be credited with kinder nature yet even  
when seen to temper its bite to gently transport its cubs.  
Lend judgement the form of affection  
and do not worry about being given the slip,  
no ragged opinion will be conjoined to you,  
by anything of ours, if the swift exercise of the law is the rage  
,--do not serve it but say it is underage and still too downy,  
--that their orders will, not be enforced by the fuzz.

(A shot)

Measure

I may have to charge both you and Ellis.  
Do you have any knowledge of the hand

(Ellis is holding the gun)

Louis

Is anyone hurt?  
Where did you get that?

Ellis

It was thrown in the window just now  
And went off accidentally when I picked it up.  
I thought it was another ransom note from the terrorists.

Ellen

You've shot the fusebox Ellis.  
The circuit has lost its continuity.  
This confused act has deprived us of power  
-- we are no longer charged.

Ellis

Ohh what a shame,--I didn't mean to hit Measure,  
He was always so entertaining  
Especially when he was scared out of his wits.

Measure

I'm not shot. And I'm not a fusebox.

I thought it was,--you know, the hand, it  
just threw me for a second.

Ellis

Then you must be a circuit-breaker.

Ellen

Hand me the gun.

Ellis

No. I will not.  
No one shall have it.  
I won't give it up.

Ellen

No,-- I promise you I won't handle it.,

Ellis

If you must take it  
Then put it in the proper hands!

(Ellen takes gun in her apron and puts it in the grip of the hand).

Measure

Ellis,--I'm putting you under house arrest, and that goes for you two as well. I'll  
find out where the truth of the matter lies,--no one  
touch the gun, it's evidence. I'll be back!  
It appears that hand is the culprit,  
But no one leave the premises til I get back here.  
That includes you, mister researcher. We will  
get to the bottom of this.

(exits)

(end scene)

scene iii

(The Mayors Office. The Mayor is still bandaged and Measure is-holding a crowbar.)

Measure

This I found near the spot from  
which the boulder was dislodged.  
No more than two feet away.  
Ellis received a true wound,--  
a gash in his forehead that shuts up my  
doubts by staring them rudely down,  
-- as this wound had the same cast as his other two blind eyes.

He is no liar!

Mayor

Then we are both marked for some  
conjunctive purpose that I cannot unquilt

Measure

Nor can I read the quill,

Mayor

And both clearly sitting ducks to be quilled for lack of this reed,  
that whatever help he may decoy for me or me for him  
beats a common measure and flushes  
out a path for their enmity as sure as if  
we were each wings in the mansion of their malefaction,  
that set the authors of these deeds  
as more mallardic instruments of a darker purpose.

Measure

But what about me? They tried to kill me.

Mayor

You, you--were only marked when you were an envoy from me to him.  
Then you were in the trajectory.

Measure

It's true, I went straight there from here this morning.

Mayor

Measure,--I am having hot flashes, get me something to drink.  
I must talk to Ellis, quickly-- but  
The phone is still cut,--I can't get no, connection.  
I cannot, dare not venture out myself,--  
Measure, I feel my officer must, drag it bout like some  
amputated limb which feels pain in every vain imagined bump,  
a ghostly reminder of former sinew  
--yet with every artery and nerve tied off neatly like the thread  
ends of a comforter,-- yet finding no comfort.  
Governing none,--by some neglect like a cowherd that unlearns  
his charge in some convenient stump., - For lack of a hand,--nothing less,  
- but. a phone,--indeed, for lack of less. What should I do?  
I have no way to address my people.  
I cannot do it in person without clothes and the radio is jammed.  
All I can do is sit in the tub with my rubber ducky.  
I must let them know what is going on.

What is at the root of all these explosions.

Measure

Mayor maybe you answered your own question.  
When you ducked the issue by rubber stamping  
the approval for Ellis' new winery.  
He can buy all the production of the canton,  
leaving Paredi with no grapes,  
Perhaps this is Paredi's revenge for that.

Mayor

Yes,-- I have, I have ducked it rubberly.  
I must be able to talk to someone about this,  
but how?  
Wait. Wait,  
Don't you see  
--the outside band,

Measure

And the boulder, cracking Ellis head!

Mayor

Exactly! The rubber band outside! The bands outside!

Measure

Are you sure it wasn't you that  
cracked his head,--there's no band outside.

Mayor

No, the outside  
band on the wireless.  
Ellis developed it during the war  
to get around jamming devices.  
He told me about it once,  
It's a signal that travels at a  
very high frequency to get around the  
jamming, but it snaps back into audible range when it hits a receiving set

Measure

-like a rubber band.  
How did you find out about this?

Mayor

Eggs ackly!

Measure

Ohh please let's not start this again!

Mayor

No,--I mean Eggs Ackley, the chicken farmer. He began getting these transmissions on his dental work, the first time when the terrorists started jamming the radio stations, so he went up to Ellis to find out what was going on. Ellis fitted him with this technology But you must keep this quiet,--

Measure

I can try and convince Ellis to set it up for you as well.

Mayor

Yes, but for heavens sake keep it quiet,-don't tell a soul. Ellis, obviously didn't want anyone to get wind of this.

Measure

I will.

Mayor

And--don't let anyone pry this out of you.

Measure

I won't.

Mayor

And don't worry about me,--everything I've done lately has been somewhat muted, con sardino.

Measure

I won't!

Mayor

Well now we won't have to dance to the terrorists tune for long, --will we?

Measure

Come again?

Mayor

I said, --now we won't have to dance to the terrorists tune, will we.

Exactly. Mayor

So? Measure

Right. Mayor

(No response)

No response Measure

Mayor  
So, you're not supposed to say that,  
that's stage direction  
-it sounds stupid if you say it,  
you're just supposed to do it.

Measure  
And if it sounds stupid should I still do it?

Mayor  
And should I do everything I'm  
told to,--in a pig's eye I will. I  
told you that you are in the trajectory,  
-- why don't you just look me up,  
You can you know, and the reason you  
can is because my name is the same as always.  
I won't let them change that either.  
But if you must know,  
When someone tells you, your name is,  
say, Eddy, so that anything Eddy  
says you say and anything that's said to Eddy  
you respond to well then, where's the good ole Measure!!  
Snap crackle and pop, he's gone, like a piece of celluloid  
on the cutting room floor. It's all very negative,  
don't you see, you must make a statement,  
be who you are, don't you see, everything else is inside out,  
it's running backwards, even this speech is backwards,  
the terrorists have made it that way.  
They've made us look like fools,  
--do you know I'm really dressed on the inside.

I'm very well dressed on the inside,--  
do you know that I've been waiting an hour to get dressed  
so I can go on stage,--nobody is going to  
tell me I can go on stage in my underwear.  
Just mark out the stage directions, mark them  
out Measure, I'll be alright, really.  
As long as there is some deus ex machina to save the day.

Alf

(Bursts in)Measure! Thank god.  
Quick Measure, come with me,  
they've-broken into the warehouse  
Paredi's grapes are gone. There'll be no  
Wine!

(end scene)

scene iv (Ellis' House)

Ellen

Do you want some more tea?  
A roll maybe?

Louis

(Bitterly and angrily he is searching the house for Ellis)  
Where is he hiding now,--the coy rat!

Ellen

Well I suspect he's dressing.

Louis

And what's in his dressing?  
What's the motive, the moral implications of this dressing,  
--clue me to the point of his habilaments -- come doctor, let's  
have an analysis of this blatant haberdashery.

Ellen

You should have some respect.  
He is older than you you know.  
You should be able to calculate some other strategem  
than mockery.

Louis

Ohh indeed,--I can, but  
that is my field, remember?  
I'm used to dealing with numbers

and so am rooted to the fact,-  
that he is older both in mode and means.  
He is less fashion's glass than Asclepius' ass  
and so I ask you again madam, resolve to me this dressing  
--your lack of gravity makes silent protest  
that this dressing is for you  
-quite a strain. A little ditty.  
His little tunafish,--dressing for dinner, for lunch, for brunch,  
--all these changes making for only show of variety  
in what is a program of one line,  
“How do you like those fishers Eddy”,  
and he has you hooked on this line,  
by unreel and reel pulling against the currents,  
by tracing the length of your skirt  
gauging how much you have been taken in,  
until by a flick of the wrist you're  
on the deck gasping, and exhausted  
but dressed to the gills, so by this constant  
unhooking and hooking you are finally beat and destined for  
a malaise of mayonnaise that calls for quick scarfing  
or better suited most austere for his chicanery.

Ellen

You think you have it all figured out, --  
you wanted it by the numbers all along.

Louis

Can you honestly  
say you still love him, or ever did?  
He just uses you, --takes advantage of your pity.

Ellen

And where does love fit into your equation?  
You'll have another hash more variable  
as I am constant as corned beef.

Louis

He leaves nothing to the cut, nothing to chance  
but mark you not his increase by this entrapping?

Ellen

Go fish! .

Louis

Don't play games with me! Answer me.

Ellen

Even if what you say is true  
that, my world revolves around him,--  
that he likes it so,--  
I do not care what the result is,  
I am not cured of what I have incurred  
and set this to canine and quarterback,  
And I will not be unposted from it, by any persuasion.

Louis

And though this resolve  
may prove twice deadly to  
revolve around me  
--this theft has left you but a shell in these chambers  
and he the obliging slug,  
--all the rest but shadow play.

Ellen

You are the one ready-to go off half-cocked.

Louis

I should have left here a long time ago.

Ellen

Then why didn't you?

Louis

Because,--I love you.

Ellen

Go fish.

Louis

Why, - Ellen, Why?.

Ellen

I'm sick of excuses,  
isn't it just enough to be here,  
isn't this real enough for you also.

Louis

To call this reality would require  
quite a change.

Ellen

On whose part?

Louis

Do you really call this life?  
To be cooped up in his fancy  
Fairy world,  
like a persistent rhyme in some  
poor spent poet's mind?  
Don't you feel how you grate on him?  
He has been in hiding from himself  
and you have not the key being  
yourself no more than a coda to  
the variations of his will,-a postscript  
to his pejoratives, a tail to  
his cataract state,--so that you  
make wet his eyes for him after  
all weeping has ceased.,--

(points to the bell cord)

and when he pulls that, it's as if the other,  
end was tied around your heart to make it pray,  
while he like some - - scavenging bird  
makes lazy circles in the air, and with  
each flick of fingered wing  
drawing it yet tighter, --

Ellen

Yet perhaps all this is from an overheated imagination

Louis

--you can find out easily enough.

Ellen

Ohh, really? How?

Louis

Don't respond.

Ellen

Don't what?

Louis

For once, just ignore his directions,  
turn a deaf ear to his theatrical tones,  
He's made you tender on his blindness,

all these years, trade him sense for sense  
be deaf to him but a moment, --a small lapse,  
heaven knows, I have never once, heard  
the other end ringing. sing a lullaby to loyalty,  
make from that rope a cat's cradle  
in which you can put duty to sleep.  
Cap over the sneering face of this daily round  
and throw mothballs on obedience,  
it is not a suit for year round.

Ellen

My pity lends me a bat's hearing.

Louis

Make this bat's hearing wooden  
let him steal home unheard.

Ellen

Still I pity him.

Louis

You pity him! Pity is a poor drudge  
That sweeps up in riotous fortune's wake.

Ellen

You are wrong sir!  
--it is a saving spar,  
a board, a plank, a door  
that lacks a mirror wherein  
we else might adore ourselves  
and lashed to it by all unbounded hope  
wherefore we breath a space and find  
no feature miss'd when the sheeted storm  
washes from the face of nature all distinction  
and the unresolved flood is by the meddling wind  
thrust upon the spiky gates of heaven  
and quickly falls back to lick its wounds in the night,  
and pity forgets not old injury but unmeasured  
drops from that hundred stranded rope as if it  
flayed uncouncted tears from each several filament  
with its gentle lashes,--and this all spent,  
the moon sheds her thundering cloak  
to lie ermine-like upon the sea,-  
and makes of every wayward drop a pearl to

weep milky kindness on sore chafed natures.

Louis

I think he has lost the very fact-of love,  
and makes this tempest from all bluff and bluster's flame.  
The effect of all this thunder and lightning, a burnt matchstick.

Ellen

He has lost enough. You don't know.

Louis

But he can't see his loss to calculate it.

Ellen

And can you!

Louis

Anyone can.

Ellen

Anyone,—anyone but him can see his loss on this mountain.  
This cruel mountain. In spring

Louis

What do you mean by that?

Ellen

His daughter.

Louis

But I thought you said she was dead.

Ellen

To him she is, but she came back,  
- one day, one fateful day,—  
quite casually from America  
As if nothing had happened.  
She announced she was going to get married  
and wanted Ellis' blessing. To some fellow  
in the Television business. I think his  
name was Terry something or other. She said  
he would be a game show host one day.  
Ellis seemed to recognize his name.

Louis

What was her name?

Ellen

To think, if only she had stayed in America  
she would be married to some television executive or other,  
-what does it matter,-- her name

Louis

Well what was his name,--.

Ellen

Ter,-I think it was, yes,--  
Terothers, when Ellis heard the name,  
he flew into a rage,-  
For no reason, -that any could understand.  
She crying went up on the mountain near Paredi's hut  
and threw herself off,--  
or perhaps fell because she had on tennis sneakers,--

she was no match for the mountain,  
--she filled a little hole  
in the glacier, a poor hairless pore  
in the skin of an ice behemoth  
and it froze over her, a brittle blanket,  
as if she were but a slight infection.  
You could see her thru the ice in the spring  
When the snow melted.

Louis

And you have never told him what happened.

Ellen

No one did, no one in the whole town did.

Louis

Why don't you tell him now.  
He must know, after all these years.  
The other's silence has no force,  
you can choose,--now tell him.

Ellen

There's no point,--she's still gone.  
A big vacuum, a hole.

Louis

But,—the truth will fill that emptiness

Ellen

No I mean she is gone. Somebody dug her up.  
Cut her out of the ice like a big cube.  
As I told you I can see his loss,- this emptiness  
is no metaphor

Louis

What we are impelled to do from guilt  
leaves us empty in the accomplishment.  
You chose not to tell him and substituted  
yourself for his vanished daughter all these years.  
He thinks you are she.

Ellen

Do you think it was easy watching sorrow  
and doubt eat away at him,-this noble man.

Louis

So you borrowed his line  
and cast onto his misery,  
your mettle and his model  
made a pantheon of pain that all  
might worship what this sightless perfection was,  
-no wonder he says mind your business,  
when his business has been so thoroughly mined  
that he has not even ore to make a row  
and so has tied you to his gunnels.

Ellen

I saw no prospect in his face,-- long before I met him,  
his every quart of sweat had been panned.

Louis

I know the story well,  
every vein mapped and tapped  
and , if suspicions prove true,  
his eyes just two more quarries  
cut into a well scavenged tract.

Ellen

It was I that bandaged that ravenous ground

that fed upon its own sorrow and –if they squeezed from him  
the very soil of his pity

I covered the coarse unrelenting ground with gauzy whiteness,  
--a kind kinetic snow that hinged a thousand tons  
on trust,–like a burnt and twisted pine  
--so precarious a system that  
one word would have avalanched all  
in a second and left only roaring, only roaring

Louis

Those eyes that wept stones for tears,--  
and still they clamor for more solid stuff.

Ellen

Yes, he still has his work, with the radio station  
His inventions in the new kind of microphone,  
and now the new winery

Louis

So he has no progeny,-but this microphone.

Ellen

Yes a microphone.

Louis

The gal, and eyes both stolen  
and you with no one to tell but the wall.

Ellen

Yes,--but I have said too much to you.

Louis

No not too much,--not too little either. I think it is all crystal clear.

(end scene)

scene v

(in the street in Town, Alf is next to a Porta Potty)

Alf

Pssst. Psssst. Measure, over here.

Measure

Who's that making water there,and why?

Alf

It's me Alf. I'm making water here because  
The can is occupied.

Measure

Yes, I see you have no disorder,  
why is it I can only see you sickly.

Alf

Over here!  
Ohh, thank goodness.  
I thought they got you too.  
Come over here.

Measure

I will not step in that direction.

Alf

Ohh come on,-this high  
intrigue will keep you dry as dust.

Measure

I'll trade dry humour for dry shoes.

Alf

This moat is not deep.

Measure

I'll stay shallow as I am poor at the doggie paddle.

Alf

Measure, come over-here -if I have  
to talk louder it'll make me hoarse, I swear  
on a stack of bibles.

Measure

If you put a saddle on your  
throat and ride as , As-- Adam,  
I would not be able to go over  
there I will not be caned to it driven to it,  
nor shall I float to it like Noah. I am firm  
as an atheist.

Alf

Alright then.

Measure

What is it? (Alf comes out of doorway zipping up)

Alf

Just the greatest story on earth?

Measure

The circus?

Alf

No.

Measure

The for heaven's sake what is it?  
Do you think you're still addressing a fire pump,  
I have better things to do than wait around  
for some asshole to warm to his subject.

Alf

For an atheist you are preaching too much

Measure

There's been rioting at the bridge.  
The wine growers. They want to  
be paid but the warehouse was looted  
Paredi says he will not pay, the crop is gone disappeared.

Alf

Noo,--this is news!

Measure

Now close,--there's a reading  
as well, in verso knees,

Alf

Those two knocked together make for learning.  
This knocking is ill conceived and has raised a lump.  
This is a story.

Measure

Follow me then,--there's rioting and looting as well.  
It's those damn terrorists that are responsible.

Alf

Why didn't you tell me this before.  
I spoke with them, I had an interview  
It was a great scoop.

Measure

What was a great scoop?

Alf

My interview with the terrorists.  
The ringleaders contacted me and  
they drove me to a safe house.

Measure

Was it a safe or a house?

Alf

Idiot.

Measure

Go onl.

Alf

They said Friedrich the Butcher's  
son started it, it's all his doing,  
that's what the townspeople think  
what do you think of that said I,  
Ohh he was my next door  
neighbor said she,

Measure

She?

Alf

Yes the ringleader is a woman.

Measure

It all makes sense now.

Alf

You've got to hand it to her.  
Ohh Maxi was such a sweet boy,  
who would have thought  
said she , so you know the boy said I,  
yes said she and bursts into tears and then  
I did as well, out of comity.  
I dared not check my sources,

Measure

Account me more. The ringleader was crying

Alf

Collecting herself she says, that's what she called it,  
then going on,  
he was such a quiet boy, wouldn't hurt a fly,  
--every body in the neighborhood thought so,--.

Measure

Before, we get to the rest of the neighborhood,

(Announcers voice)

And now back to you Dan,--

Measure

Let's not jump to conclusions. A woman!

Alf

Ahh yes,-- Constable,-  
do you have any suspects yet.

Measure

You just told me who is responsible. Frederick.

Alf

So you believe he's behind the bombings?

Measure

I just heard about the damn thing from you!  
Wait, is this on the record?

Alf

I think it only fair to tell you, that this it is.

Measure

Well then, we have no one in custody as of yet  
but we expect to make and arrest very soon.  
Everyone has been very cooperative.

Alf

Who's been cooperating with you,-- is it confidential?

Measure

You, you idiot!

Alf

Can I quote you on that?

Measure

Yes,--spell it right,  
you, you, you , you, you. You are my source.

Alf

Wait,---Me?,--that's nonsense.  
News can't be about me,  
Why this is making me dizzy,

Measure

No one operates outside the law,  
I can have you up on charges  
For this upstream of here,

Alf

Well, that makes me what, Jesse James? Incarnate

Measure

Are you one of those pavement artists then, let's  
see you draw.

Alf

I don't have a gun.

Measure

Then holster your sculpting  
And draw me a picture on some canvas.

Alf

The rioters,--they've stolen all the  
Sardines from the armory as well  
and thrown them into the river  
liberated them they said,

Measure

Sardines and wine, what  
can they be up to?  
Let me in there-- I have to think-

(goes into the porta potty)

Alf

Right where the Rye Bridge used to stand.  
They claim they've liberated the fishes.

Measure

Were they still in the can?

Alf

I'll knock,-- it is so.

Measure

What a disaster!

Alf

Why? Constipated?

Measure

Yes, --Don't you see,--they'll damn up  
the river and flood the town.

The jail is in a low spot and will be the first building underwater.

Alf

No!

Measure

Yes, by tonight half the town  
will be underwater.  
I've got to get the prisoners out  
or they'll drown.

Alf

You should first set bail.

Measure

I've got to get to Ellis the Mayor  
thinks he has a device that can help,--

Alf

Yes and let him know I have been practicing.  
(Announcers voice)  
Well here's hoping your news is good news.

Measure

Here's hoping your noose is papa noose.

Alf

What? Papa what?  
Have a pleasant good evening. From all of us here,--

Measure

Aww shuttup!  
Wait, here take the keys release the prisoners for me,  
Will you,--  
I've got to get up to Ellis' house.  
Whoa, nelly.

Alf

Well that makes a lotta sense.  
I can see the headline,--  
Giant crap leads to mass pardons.

(end scene)

scene vi

(Outside Paredi's house)

Louis

So this is how you've occupied yourself,  
As a mere gutter for wine to run through,

Terothers:

Scotch my friend. Its only a wine glass that looks inward.

Louis

I told myself to discard this scheme,  
but I did not take my own best advice  
and made a philosopher of one to whom toughest question is,  
straight up or-with ice.

Terothers

Come, come, you look agitated,--sit down  
my boy,-would you care for a drink? Paredi can bring you one.

Louis

I had no father,--and you treated me kindly  
and so I thought by this act to repay you,  
get you what you said you needed.  
But such a lack as yours only begets another lack and alack.  
I know you set a crow to that boulder,--but in me,  
you have hatched something more malleable  
than you bargained for I'll guarantee.  
You have tied me to mutual vantage,  
--you should have hooped me with better  
iron,-as I will no longer tow the line.  
What --no better humour than this,  
Why didn't you cut me down when I was but a little weed,--  
better then to be cultivated  
for a noxious use,--better had my own father sliced off my life  
than this,--I would have called death sweet good humor,  
and the knife that slew me my popsicle.  
but to mount cold purpose  
on combustion of lechery and call the issue noble,  
--that is even more than shapeless  
steam should be imputed without revolting.

Terothers

Ungrateful molecule, you quantum!  
To repulse a better nature when you are joined to its purpose  
is to compound a divided conscience with un-apportioned nature.  
So now you think to scorn the mixing of gentle treatment  
and stand unalloyed on strength of virtue,  
--you will not suspend your judgement,- do what is clearly both  
for you and myself, best. We can serve ourselves by blinding our needs  
and by such suspension,- have a co-loyal solution.  
Come, do not be ashamed. We are none of us self sufficient,  
but one depends on another, and he-also,  
- so on and so on,-- we cannot react ourselves master of all before us,  
but must share out this charge to an equal powder.

Louis

I have no need of your lectures,--

--- you are a weak and dirty man.

Terothers

-You call me that because  
I set you one little labor,

Louis

A foul, foul duty.

Terothers

You, were never a Hercules, given vipers for diapers,,  
I never called you such, If you called yourself a lion,--  
did I dispute it,--say you had no mane, no claws,-  
not even the main clause in your contract, which was void  
in Maine and New Hampshire or where prohibited,--no! It served  
Not to prohibit me from testing you,-- But I,-I ran the show without screentests,  
and now without result, You tell me that I'm, off-color.  
And you yourself set a fine investing,-- to resolve that you are  
lined with noble purpose. Ohh, clear font of fevered imaginations  
are you so favored with, good effect,  
that once bathed in your waters we are then exempt from scathing repute,  
and by your purgation vulgar deeds made  
to glisten like diamonds new fished from hell?  
Is a cool head such a poor companion to passionate acts  
that we must suffer double for misdeeds by borrowed guilt.  
Is it only the hot headed who may dip from passions palette  
and then strut the deed before the public eye to no greater blame,  
--but to say 'it is a complicated affair,  
--while for us in reruns it is all black and white.  
Tell me, what do you expect to do with her without Ellis.  
If he and the vox are lost all the game shows will be canceled.  
You'll be on sunrise semester put out to pasture  
with Mr. Ed. At forty dollars a week,  
- and all the oats you can eat.

Louis

Where is she?

Terothers

Where is who?

Louis

Ellis' daughter,

You cut her out of the glacier  
now tell me where you've hid her,  
or have you already thawed her out  
like some perverted TV dinner.

(Enter Paredi)\_

Paredi, admit it-- and has he  
made you into some kind of terrorist?,

Paredi

--not for love or money

Louis

--Do you like spectacles?

Paredi

What?

Louis

Do you like spectacles,--

Paredi

I suppose,--I am partial to them, I mean sometimes  
they're a bother. When I have to change to  
reading glasses especially.

Louis

Well you have a lot of material --for them,

Paredi

For what?

Louis

For reading spectacles, --if that's why you blew up the Rye Bridge,  
because now it is only sand which is left  
where the bridge once stood.

Paredi

Have some wine w' your sandwich, --  
Believe me, uncle, it's a very good wine

Louis

Will I know it is at least,  
And a very expensive wine as well since yours  
is the only stock of Riesling left in the Province so,  
if it is an expensive wine, that it is

a good wine stands to Riesling,  
and standing to Riesling means making a toast, so I will  
venture to toast the Rye bridge, that in being blown up it means  
for you as it ever is, yeast or famine.

(end scene)

scene vii

(Enter Louis)

Louis

I think I found where Ellis' daughter is.

Ellen

No where!?

(Enter Ellis

Ellis

Plaque my boy.

Louis

I beg your pardon?

Ellis

Plaque,--dental plaque,  
it spells doom for a good set of teeth.  
Half the town suffers from it  
I'll bet you,--and doesn't even know it.  
plaque -- it is the great equalizer.

Louis

But a good set of gums,

Ellis

Too late, once plaque sets in,  
it's a lost cause. I know your type,  
- you believe that on the seventh day  
God created dentists on the seventh day,  
I am myself a seventh day dentist.  
But, I'll tell you, once plaque gets a foothold, it's all over,-  
the teeth start to go one by one.

Louis

But they've made great strides in the mouth,--if you lose  
your teeth,--they can put in a bridge.

Ellis

No gum slinger's going to put a bridge in my mouth

if I have anything to say about it,  
--I'll let my words swim for it first.

Louis

And what about your little box here, will that work once you've lost  
all your teeth,--will it function any more or will it lose its effect  
--evoking only a slow and brittle response. Will the fruit of all your labor slowly  
inch its way after you to the grave,--so all it will effect in the end is to with last  
strength throw a little dirt on your grave.  
Something you should have learned by now is that only death can with  
impunity bite the hand that feeds it.

Ellis

Life is only a prophylactic  
that lets death keep its bite awhile.

Ellis

Then I am no dentist.

Louis

The town is foundering.  
You can see the water playfully  
licking its stern buildings like  
a hypothalamic puppy that, soon the tide.  
will mutiny and outstem these ramparts.  
It's because he would not pay the ransom.  
It's his own fault. If getting him  
to pay a bounty were not like pulling  
teeth, we would not be facing this Caine mutiny de novo.

Louis

I admire his spirit.

Ellis

Well, then hail to thy blithe spirit.

Louis

It's Measure,--and Measure alone who deserves your hate.  
He's the one responsible for your fate.

Ellis

My illness sears my brain.

Louis

He's the one who has made you life

a catalogue of ills. He has robbed you in darkness so you  
can't even make a buck. And if  
that-were not enough, he having  
locked you in this sightless cave  
would now make --this cavity itself, unseen.

Ellis  
But why, why, why?

Louis  
Has it occurred to you why he alone has cultivated  
your friendship, why he made it his business to look after you,  
all these years. It was him that set those charges  
At the bridge, you were blinded and lost  
Your memory, but you were in the army  
a radio officer, at the end of the war you  
came here, --the war was over but they  
had not yet removed the explosives.  
Most men would rather shun the sight of what they've mangled,  
but he, like a Brutus would bathe in the bloody stream of his slaughter.  
For what thing can draw the averred eye  
to hungrily peruse mayhem it has wrought.  
Even the fierce hunter sends a dog after his felled pray,  
that once the deed is done, he may joke and look away.

Ellis  
(whispers) Ellen.

Louis  
Yes!

Ellis  
It was he that blinded me? Measure?

Louis  
Yes and your blindness is her imprisonment.  
It was her pity of it that first made  
Ellen think she loved you.

Ellis  
Ohh, I have indeed been more than blind.  
Who made prophets blind was an ancient practiced fool.

Louis

Only the mayor has kept the records  
of this event. Put yourself and your offices at  
at the Mayor's disposal.  
Trust him and me alone,--even though he  
had a hand in fostering your ill, it is kindest to  
allow him to make his former trespass nil.

Ellis

Help me here, -Ellen help me here.

(enter Ellen)

Ellen

What's the matter,--where are you going?

Ellis

To a party my dear.

Ellen

Why didn't you ring the bell?

Ellis

I've been ringing the bell right along.  
(Yanks out cord) Come on Birdseye. Let's not waste time.

(exit Ellis)

Ellen

Where are you taking him? He's still too ill to travel

Louis

The truth will heal him quicker  
than could. You or I.

Ellen

Truth! is truth now become a conductor Of cripples.

Louis

Truth lends stature to cripples,  
love indentures us to its lies,  
To wing us swiftly above this pain,  
That would be our novacaine.

Ellen

Yes, truth will set monuments of wax and will melt like candles  
under love's fond gaze and quickly have you fishing for lies

unless you have already paraphrased with your own parafins

Louis

Take care, lest love melt your daughter!

(They both halt)

Ellen

And where is she?

Louis

In a cold tomb of grapes.

The ice wine hut at Paredi's.

Go, get thee both to a winery.

(They exit)

As the hyacinths sprout from the last snow,

so on frozen hopes I'll practice to grow.

(They return Ellis beckons to Louis, he goes out with Ellis and Ellen stays)

end scene

(scene viii )

(Mayor Hand is sitting at the window in his office,--

and object comes sailing through the window breaking the glass.

He picks it up. It is a rock wrapped in a newspaper. He discards the rock and

-begins to read the newspaper upside down.

Mayor

What's this. What are these strange markings.

(Reading)

'dedoolf nmot'.

Deadoolf. Hmm. That's probably short for dead wolf. EnTot...

ahh that is French certainly for in a word- let's see, in a word

dead wolf. No, that doesn't make any sense. Let's see dead wolf

en moe tee. Dead wolf and more tea

no it can't be, ---dead wolf enmity, that must be it.

Dead wolf enmity.

(Enter Louis and Ellis)

Louis

Mayor Hand, why are you reading the newspaper upside down?

Mayor

Ohh,--I knew it was upside down but since I've lost this

hand it keeps slipping around like this.

ohhh yess, town flooded. I knew it was that.

Ellis , my goodness, Ellis,  
I haven't seen you in a dog's ear. And this must be?

Ellis  
Birdshot,uhh Birdseye.

Mayor  
Ohh nice to meet you Mr. Birdseye.

Louis  
It's strange,-

Mayor  
Are you sure we haven't met.

Ellis  
Mr. Birdseye is from the Institute.  
he's been visiting with my wife and I.

Louis  
You got my name right on the first try.  
That's unusual.

Mayor  
Politicians' trick.

Louis  
Is that tea. Could I have a cup?  
I have a chill from wading through the water.

Mayor  
It's actually bourbon. How about a stiff shot?.

Louis  
Alright. It smells strange though.

Mayor  
It's cheap stuff. The only kind  
I could get delivered.  
Where is your wife. Not ill I trust.

(Hands both of them a drink)  
(Ellis drinks)

Ellis  
She had an errand to run at Paredi's

And then to town.

Mayor  
At Paredi's! Went to get some wine I suppose.

Louis  
I don't think so, ---she left her jugs at the house.

Mayor  
Well they're safe there I expect.  
What have you got in that box.?

Ellis  
Ohh this! It's just something of my wife's.  
For her to pick up.  
In town later,  
- when she gets her hair done.  
She likes to use a special hairspray  
so I brought it along for her.  
She forgot it.

Mayor  
And that?

Ellis  
It's the radio set-up. The microphone.  
Measure said you wanted to give a speech  
uses the side band technology.  
You can broadcast from here with it.  
Louis will help you set it up. He's familiar with it.

(Groans)  
Louis

Ellis  
What's the, matter?

Louis  
I feel weak all of a sudden.

Ellis  
Well I hope you haven't caught something!

Louis  
More than I bargained for I expect.

Ellis  
What?

Louis  
I think I feel a whale of a cold coming on.  
I left my coat at your house.

Ellis  
What! No coat! That's insane  
You should be glad you haven't gotten pneumonia already.  
Really the way you run about like a madman.  
You should count your blessings,--

Louis  
They will not stack to my one ill.  
Your wife went to Paredi's.

Ellis  
Why?

Louis  
Why? To parody your behavior of course.

Ellis  
Yes I know she did.  
Have you got it set up?

Mayor  
I think so.

Louis  
Howe would you like to co-host a game show?

Ellis  
What?

Mayor  
I think the boy must be a little fevered  
--- he seems to be ranting.

(Enter Measure)

Measure  
So you're here Ellis!

Ellis  
Are you always so observant?

Measure  
You gave me your word you  
wouldn't leave your house.  
Is, your word to be taken so lightly.

Ellis  
If it wasn't you would be  
out of breath by now, having carried it  
already up and down the mountain.

Measure  
Ellis,--I found your wife.

Ellis  
Oh what an investigator you are!  
I wasn't aware that I had lost her.  
You must be an excellent investigator  
to find what isn't lost.

Measure  
I have some bad news. I'm afraid she is.

Ellis  
Is what?

Measure  
Gone.

Ellis  
That's ridiculous, she is at Paredi's,  
how could she be at Paredi's and be lost.

Measure  
Not lost, She's dead.

Ellis  
What!

Measure

I found her in the ice hut. I was searching  
there for the terrorists hiding place.  
It was a logical place to keep explosives.  
She was frozen in his wine cellar, in a block of ice.  
A plain block that Paredi must have cut  
from the glacier for cooling his wine.  
the hem of her defrosted hem was already stained  
purple from the grapes.  
It matched her lips and nails.  
The champagne grapes were pink as were her lips  
still pink her one shoe filled with  
their liquor as if they had wept one last cup for her.

Ellis

Couldn't you save her. Revive her somehow?  
Bring her something hot to drink.  
Bring her a cup of this bourbon. Come Measure,  
Or a cup of tea, won't you take it to her,  
you will find the way faster than I.  
I am blind.

Louis

Then she will be twice dead as  
this drink has killed me.  
I feel now the potent poison.

Measure

I found another body as well.  
When the river carved out a  
new channel for itself, it unearthed  
Mayor Hand from his hasty grave.  
(Mayor takes off his bandages and it is Terothers.)

Terothers

Well no matter,--you see it's really no matter.

Ellis

No matter what, -then she is gone.

Terothers

You can thank Measure.

Ellis  
For what?

Terothers  
That you have not recognized who I am.

Ellis  
Terothers! Here!

Terothers  
Yes. Here.

Ellis  
I recognize that voice.

Terothers  
Ah the old bark. A bit too late for  
the bite though, --isn't it.

Louis  
But you were missing the other, your left hand.

Terothers  
Look,--no hands (takes off fake hand)

Louis  
Crawls over to' him  
I never asked you for a hand out.  
(the hand pops out of the case and is still holding the gun.)

Terothers  
No you never asked,-- but still,  
when I thought Ellis was dead  
I raised you and your sister  
as if you were my own children.

Louis  
With one small difference.  
You fell in love with her.  
I remember you coaxing  
her to call you Ter' instead of uncle. Then Terry  
You in your wheedling way.  
And I remember too well when the fatherly caresses grew

just a split second too long. I could not  
bear it and left. And after she died you were so kind,  
--and took me back in.

Terothers

Yes, I took the snake back in to catch a rat-  
And now that I have the rat,--well.

Measure

Yes, Ellis told me  
about you, --- poor Birdseye now you must pay the price  
for trusting him too.

Terothers

Yes,--you thought I would give you 'This is Your Life',  
but I gave you this; your death instead-

Louis

Blast him!

( when the gun goes off inside the box Measure is carrying hitting him)

Ellis

What happened?

(Turns on the microphone so everything hereafter is heard outside)

Measure

I'm shot,--your blasted gun went off by accident again.

Ellis

Impossible,--it could only have  
gone off if,--it could only have  
responded to my voice or to someone  
who had my exact neurological patterns,  
the same structure of will.

Terothers

Like your son?

Ellis

Yes exactly,--Measure  
he's' killed my son. Do something!

Measure

I am done-- Catch him, Catch him.

(Terothers leaps from the window)

Ellis

Where is everyone (stands up) ?  
(Falteringly walks toward window) are you here my little cockle shell?  
What? --- gone to the hairdresser ---  
oh yess. I can feel the hair dryer now  
and hear it as well (shouting is heard from the window)  
but it's so noisy,--  
come let me try and fix it,--I will make  
it quiet,--I will make it quiet (falls through window)  
(voices are heard)

voices

Catch him,--catch him(then) Ohhh.

Measure

(Grabs mike)

Terothers you aren't real. You were  
never real,--you are too completely evil to exist.

Terothers

(Yelling from the street)

That's the trouble with black and white,  
it makes a good face look bad and a bad face look good.

Measure

Yes,--but in the end, all one  
has to do is, - change the channel,

(Shoots him)

(Enter Alf)

Alf

Or turn off the set, turn off the set!!

(Go to black )

FINIS

