



BOUNTY OF LACE excerpt

By Susan Merson
4/06/03

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A large, shapeless woman with hair pulled back, wearing a sack of a dress stands and talks to the audience. Her hands are coarse, she smokes a cigarette. She has a slight accent, is 45 but looks older.

This speech, as are many of the longer arias in the play, is scored to music. Klezmer Wedding Music with techno percussion this time.

Maybe there are faded slides of the bride and groom at the wedding that we watch as Geula describes the wedding.

GEULA

At my husband's wedding he held a piece of lace.

He told me it was old.

He saw the holes between the fine strands

that held the fragile thing together and thought it must be junk.

He didn't understand that his child bride, (she holds up a faded wedding picture)

SHE was the delicate thread that made the beautiful possibilities they had together.

So beautiful, she was, they tell me. Crystal blue eyes, lovely sinewy arms, Sang like an angel. Only for her husband, of course.

What did she know when she said yes to

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this yeshiva boy, greedy for such beauty?

Here is the story. Listen carefully. You can follow it.
He held this piece of lace and she, my husband's wife,
she held the other side at their wedding party
as they spun in chairs held aloft by sweaty men in gabardine
who jostled and whooped them and made
the young girl sick to vomit.

Why? She felt her fate! Captured and sold by the yeshiva bucher,
the bounty of lace on her head,
bought and paid for by the eager fool with the sidelocks.

Picture this. Think of his pale white and hairy belly, the bridegroom
even young, draped in Belgian threads,
crocheted from silk worms half a world away,
his side curls panting, his penis slapping his socks til she appears
and it snaps at attention. Oy yoy yoy!
The red flag is waving and the bull approaches!

SHE LAUGHS HEARTILY AT
THE IMAGE

Did he place the wedding sheets over his head like a tallis?
Did they wrap themselves in them, a prayer shawl
full of lovers, rolling in the luxury of youth and clean hope?
I wonder. They never told me how it was at my husband's first wedding.
But I know--- it was a chuppah of Medusa's snakes and dirty fingernails.

He was so relieved when she died leaving only one child.
What could he do with such loveliness?
So the family legends go. So they tell me at family parties when I am
wiping the noses of the next 14 children and
humming cello concertos out loud for anyone to hear.

It was simpler when our marriage was arranged. Mine and his.
I was sturdy enough to bear many children. It was a different time.
I was not the dream. I was the wife.

Now, 19 years later. my womb is bent,
udderly flapping and falling from my body
Now, the child she left. A mystery as strong as her mother was weak.
As stubborn as her mother was eager to bend to his will.
I prepare his first daughter for her wedding. Judith.
The political one. The one without a curve. The one who is a mystery.
And now agrees to obey the community and
marry some carpenter from the yeshiva
who will probably beat her and never earn a penny.
And she will never enjoy her own body again.

If ever she did.

But this is a secret she does not share with me.

JUDITH APPEARS IN A SPOT ON
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STAGE.
SHE SPEAKS TO AN UNSEEN
QUESTIONER AT THE POLICE
STATION.

JUDITH

My first name is Judith. I worked in the
garage with him. I knew him.

GEULA

Today, the women,
My friends, full of life and living
they will gather around a bowl of fruit
at 2 o'clock in the afternoon
at Kitzy's place. When the children are still in school, thank god
And the plastic lace table cloth will cover the stains and
There will even be sugar cookies and maybe some schnapps.

JUDITH

I have an appointment. I should go.
You want me to sign a statement? I

didn't know this would happen. He
didn't tell me . No. Why would he?

GEULA
(SHE SMILES WICKEDLY)

Who knows what may happen at Kitzy's table?
as we prepare a wedding tish for his daughter
as the gun's blaze in Jerusalem and
the bombs scatter limbs on the roads to the settlements.

JUDITH

I am sick to my stomach. There was
so much blood. I didn't know. I was
going to meet my mother and I saw
the explosion.

How do you know it was him, officer?

(with an edge)He was my friend. Is
that alright? Can he have been a
friend and me not be a criminal?

GEULA SIGHS

GEULA

We all dream of being peace makers.
We all dream of Palestinian lovers with their scarves and
lowering eyes and their passion and hatred
and how we think we can tame them
with feather fanny ticklers and rose water pastries
and tales of Sheherazade that no one should ever hear.
We dream, but dare not tell.....

JUDITH

His name. Hassan. He was very
...passionate. Political? Strong feelings.
Yes. But believed in life.--Let me sign
so I can go. I am engaged to someone

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else. I will marry a rabbi's son. Soon.
Soon.

GEULA smiles a toothless smile

Come to tea.

JUDITH
I need something to drink.

GEULA TAKES OUT A CRUMPLED HANDKERCHIEF
FROM HER POCKET. AND PUTS IT UP TO HER NOSE.
BEFORE SHE BLOWS SHE LOOKS UP AND SAYS:

GEULA
Lace dragged around a
Corner

GEULA BLOWS HER NOSE

GEULA
Filthy with life.

LIGHTS CHANGE
WE ARE IN KITZY'S KITCHEN.
THE CYC IS LEMON YELLOW.

KITZY is AN ETHIOPIAN BEAUTY,
LATE 40'S. SHARON, 50'S, SITS AS
WELL. A PLUMP AMERICAN WHO
MADE ALIYAH 25 YEARS AGO. STILL
IDEALISTIC, RATHER NAIVE. THE
WOMEN SWARM PUTTING TEA
THINGS ON THE TABLE.

SHARON

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Geula! Where is the girl? Your daughter? Where is she?

GEULA

She is coming from her job at the garage. She'll be here. I think I told her.

KITZY

You think?

GEULA

I told her.

SHARON

I think.

GEULA

I think I want some sugar cookies.

KITZY

I made them this morning.

SHARON

My mother made these when I was a girl. But maybe they were Poppyseed.

KITZY

The explosion was by the bustop this morning. Here, have tea.

SHARON

Dead grama's will make them free? (she shakes her head) Do you have any cream cheese?

KITZY

The traffic was so snarled. I could hardly get back from the market. No cream cheese.

SHARON

Oh, this will be fine, darling. Still a little cream cheese with sugar cookies. Yum.

GEULA

Get back from Avi's office, you mean. I know you go there every morning for coffee and a quick one.

SHE GRINS A TOOTHY SMILE

KITZY

What do you know about Avi and me?

GEULA

No children! I know no children.

KITZY

No children so I can invite my friends with too many for a quiet moment of sunlight above the city. For sugar cookies. With no cream cheese.

SHARON

Oh, sweetheart. No problem.

GEULA

Give me a cup

GEULA GRABS A CUP OF TEA AND SLURPS NOISILY. A DELIGHT.

KITZY

Don't forget the schnapps.

GEULA POURS SOME WHISKY INTO THE TEA.

GEULA

Ah!

KITZY (drinks)

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Ah!

SHARON (drinks as well)

Ah! (like a toast)

It is a beautiful spring. The lambs are being born on the Kibbutz.
L'chaim.

THEY SETTLE INTO THEIR STOLEN
MOMENT

GEULA

As long as there are no babies being born. No more babies being born.
Give me more of that.

REFERRING TO THE SCHNAPPS

SHARON

We'll need more so THEY can strap themselves with bombs and explode in
the streets. Did you stop for those fresh apples at the market? My
favorite?

KITZY

I didn't get cream cheese OR apples! (SHE SPEAKS TO SHARON WHO
POURS) Today sugar cookies and schnapps.

GEULA

Not our children will explode in the street. Their children.

KITZY

Yours, mine and ours.

SHARON

We'll explode first with these delicious goodies. Everything is delicious,
Kitzalah.

GEULA

Kitzy is such a balabos (homemaker.)

SHARON

And where is Judith? She used to love our tea parties, right Geula?

GEULA

Oh yes. Judith loves Kitzy. You always knew how to talk with her.

KITZY

With her .. not at her, sweetheart.

GEULA

I have no time to talk with.. I talk at and they catch the meaning on the run.

SHARON

Does she still sleep at the garage sometimes? With the curfews and everything else? Does she sleep at the garage?

GEULA

I told her to come.

The grease monkey is an Arab boy, as if you didn't know. Since the curfews he has not come around.

KITZY

Can you be so sure?

GEULA

That is the last lover Judith needs. Though-like her father the boy probably is, grease beneath the fingernails and the smell of motor oil.

SHARON

Like in Southern France. Before I came to live in Israel. I was in Southern France, looking for somewhere to be. Someone to sleep with and every boy at the café was filthy. Bad teeth. Blue overalls with loose genitals. I swear.

KITZY

That kept you from sampling?

SHARON

Pastries and sweets, yes, but the boys??? No no..

KITZY

There are no greasy boys with loose genitals in Shaker Heights?

SHARON

All the Jewish boys wore glasses, and good jock straps. Stuffy noses and acne... but no grease under the fingernails. Very clean.

GEULA

Soap is a good thing.

GEULA SLURPS HER TEA AGAIN.
INDESCRIBABLE PLEASURE
THE WOMEN LOOK AT HER. THEN
IGNORE HER AND GO ON.

SHARON

Kitzy? When did you come here?

KITZY

University. A scholarship.

KITZY LIGHTS A CIGARETTE

GEULA

To meet Avi.

KITZY

Again with the famous Avi?

GEULA

He takes advantage. When are you ever able to be with us? The women. Avi always needs to be with you. Sucking your tit.

GEULA TAKES A DRAG ON
KITZY'S CIGARETTE

KITZY

He sucks in privacy, thank you.

KITZY TAKES HER CIG BACK

SHARON

Stop you two.

GEULA IS HAVING A GRAND TIME.
THEY ARE ALL DELIGHTING IN
THEIR HIDDEN PLEASURES

GEULA

I'll never understand how I came here,

SHARON

You were born here. The kibbutz. (trying to avert tension between the two)
How about the oranges, Kitz? They sweet?

KITZY

Here, try.

GEULA

I was meant for better things. I studied the cello in San Francisco.

SHARON

But you fell in with the Moonies in the States!

GEULA

It is not enough.

SHARON

Your brother rescued you!

GEULA

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To be merely good, when you dream...

SHARON

Brought you home!

GEULA

Of being TRULY great!!

SHARON

It was good thing. You are a great mother.

GEULA

My brother was jealous of my freedom.

KITZY

You could have gone back.

GEULA

My father brought me to the rabbi and a marriage was arranged. Just like that.

SHARON

I didn't know it was a shidoch. Like Judith and Shlomo?
Arranged marriages run in your family?

GEULA

You think I would have married him of my own free will?

KITZY

They forced you? You, Geula?

GEULA GETS A PERVERSE
PLEASURE OUT OF TELLING THIS
STORY.

GEULA

I wanted to play the cello and make a sound.

SHARON

Kitzy? Do you still rub orange peels against your wrists?
I remember coming into your class and smelling orange blossoms. So
beautiful? You remember, Geula?

GEULA

A BIG sound. Enough to put inside my belly and make it WIDE and FAT.

SHARON

We're listening.. but remember the smell of oranges?

KITZY

Vanilla is wonderful too. Just behind the earlobe.

GEULA WON'T GIVE UP

GEULA

Like HELIUM. So I could float. I never wanted to fill it with babies. But
with music. THAT is what I wanted.

WE HEAR THE STRAINS OF YO YO
MA'S CELLO. THEY GIVE IN TO
GEULA WHO WANTS ATTENTION

KITZY

And what happened, darling? We won't talk about perfume anymore.

GEULA

It's fine.

SHARON

Yes, honey. We are listening.

KITZY

Sing, sweetheart. Cream, Sharon?

GEULA BEGINS TO GET INTO THE
ROLE OF MYSTICAL STORYTELLER

GEULA

The rabbi gave me tea. Sweet tea. Like this, and he began to speak in tongues.

SHARON

Hallelujah sister.

AS GEULA SPEAKS SHE RISES AND ALMOST DOES THE FOLLOWING AS A STRIP TEASE. TAUNTING THE WOMEN WITH WHAT SHE WAS TOLD AND HOW SEXY IT MADE HER FEEL AND HOW SHE SWALLOWED IT ALL.

GEULA

He spoke of the treasures of womanhood.

SHARON

Oh yes. Oy vey.

GEULA

His words wrapped around me like snakes of fire,
Probing and prodding with his soft, searching words.

KITZY

A man of few words but much tongue?

SHARON AND KITZY LAUGH

SHARON

So much fun, Geula!

THE WOMEN LAUGH AGAIN
GEULA CONTINUES AS IF IN A TRANCE

GEULA

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That holy man. He spoke of the responsibility of a woman to "be fruitful and multiply".

KITZY

What did he know? He needed my class.

GEULA

He roped me in, spoke to me of needing Jews
to populate the land of Palestine,
to make sure the enemies of the Jews would never win.

SHARON

Nice to be needed for machine gun fodder.

GEULA

And he spoke of the holiness between a man and woman and
how the cabala queen-the Shekhina-searches
for these sparks of sex between a man and a woman

SHARON/KITZY

Oy mein.

GEULA

and how these sparks are THE matter of the world
and how our children are our holy sparks and
how we must give ourselves
Over to the task of holy infants and as he spoke

AS SHE CONTINUES HER ORATION
SHE STEPS ON A CHAIR, THEN THE
TABLE AS SHE ASCENDS TO
HEAVEN AND THE CYC TURNS RED

GEULA

I felt myself being elevated on a golden dais and
draped round in purple satin and
my doltish shmattes fell away and
I was anointed with rubies and emeralds and
sheets of satin and cascades of silk and

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I was beautiful!

And I rose above them in the rabbi's study and
they could see my belly begin to protrude and
tiny feet and toes begin to emerge from my vagina and
they saw how I would be swimming in children
And swimming in children
And swimming in children
Until I drowned. Almost.
Only I could save the Jewish people.

BEAT

SHARON

And so you have,

KITZY

Fourteen children later.

GEULA STEPS OFF THE TABLE.

GEULA

In a two room apartment with not enough beds.

KITZY

And no satin sheets.

GEULA

Not now. Not ever.

THE WOMEN TAKE A BREATH

SHARON

Where is Judith?

KITZY

Staying away. Using her head.

SHARON

Giving who head?

THEY LAUGH AGAIN.

KITZY

Using not giving. Why always giving?

GEULA

A feminist! We have a feminist!

Kitzy, how have you managed to live so long and remain so pure?

KITZY

I have had a time of defilement. Have been defiled.

GEULA

Defiled. So biblical.

KITZY

I come from Ethiopia. It is not biblical, it's with a knife. The pleasure
almond of a woman is dug out at puberty. Dug out. Not biblical. Surgical.

SHARON

Oy vey.

GEULA

And yet you sail on a silver dream with your Avi.

KITZY

You are jealous, Geula. It does not do good things for you. Being jealous.

SHARON

I've always liked Judith. I would have liked her to marry my son, David.
She would have liked him.

KITZY

And today she could be a widow.

SHARON

Today I could have been a grandmother!

GEULA

You think she would have given you children?

KITZY

She's ripe, that Judith.

GEULA LAUGHS AND SHAKES
HER HEAD.

GEULA

She is too tough for babies. If she marries this Shlomo her children will pop out from her like leatherette dollies. She will give birth to lizards.

KITZY

She is thinking of saying no?

GEULA

Her father will murder her if she doesn't marry. It is a big deal match. And so—the Messiah has arrived, according to Judith. She can't wait to hit the wedding bed.

KITZY

I'm sorry she didn't come. We could have talked.

GEULA

Ah! She's making peace with Arafat.

SHE SPITS

SHARON

The loving mother.

GEULA

Step mother.

KITZY

You're lucky.

GEULA

A mother's love is never jaded. A stepmother's love is mostly created.

SHARON

Geula, you are shameless.

GEULA

You are American.

SHARON

So.

GEULA

So, you dream and apologize and think money can solve everything.

KITZY

That is so unfair.

SHARON

You are such a bitch.

GEULA

We'll meet again another time.

KITZY

I have to teach in an hour.

GEULA GETS UP TO GO AND GRABS
A COOKIE ON THE WAY.

GEULA

Kiss Avi for me. No better he should kiss me, tell him to kiss my ass.

THERE IS A BEAT . THEN THE
THREE WOMEN GUFFAW
TOGETHER. CELLO MUSIC COMES

UP AND MERGES WITH THE SOUND
OF TRAFFIC

LIGHTS CHANGE

GEULA STANDS AT A BUS STOP
LOOKING AROUND. THE CYC IS
ANOTHER VIVID COLOR. A YOUNG
WOMAN STEPS UP TO HER. IT IS
JUDITH. JUDITH IS VERY
DISTRACTED

GEULA

And where have you been? The sugar cookies were made. Kitzy was there.
And Sharon. We drank.

JUDITH

I was late. At work. I was late.

GEULA

So's the bus. (beat) What's wrong. You're sad. What's wrong?

JUDITH

I am tired. That's all.

GEULA

The bus is coming.

JUDITH

I'll walk . I don't want to take the bus.

GEULA

You cannot go wandering through the streets. You are engaged to the son
of the head of the community.

JUDITH

I will pay a visit to my future mother in law. There is no one to stay with
her.

GEULA

You cannot have it both ways. Either you accept your bondage and come home to your father and then your husband or you run to the desert with the Arab boys and ride a camel into the sunset.

JUDITH

Which do you suggest?

GEULA

What are the stones in your pockets?.

JUDITH REACHES INTO HER
POCKET SHOWS GEULA SOME
PEBBLES.

JUDITH

I need to go to the cemetery. Place stones on the graves.

GEULA

Cemeteries are for dead people. Too crowded these days.

JUDITH

I need to go to my mother's grave. To invite her to my wedding.

THIS IS A REBUFF

GEULA

And what color gown will she wear? Dior? Coco Chanel? Would she like to help plan the menu?

JUDITH

Tell Abba I will stay with Shlomo's mother tonight after the cemetery. I will see you in the morning.

GEULA TRIES TO MAKE UP

GEULA

The women were asking for you. They want to give you gifts. Kitzy was disappointed.

JUDITH

They can give me gifts at the wedding. I have to take care of Shlomo's mother now. She is sick.

GEULA

You're not her daughter yet.

JUDITH

I am nobody's daughter.

GEULA IS RELUCTANT TO CLAIM HER KNOWING SHE WILL BE REBUFFED.

GEULA

You are your own woman, Judith. It has always been so.

JUDITH LEAVES ABRUPTLY. GEULA CALLS AFTER HER

GEULA

You will regret giving yourself so fully and so often!

BUT JUDITH IS GONE.

GEULA POCKETS THE STONE, TAKES OUT CHANGE AND WAITS FOR THE BUS. WE HEAR IT ARRIVE. LIGHTS FADE.

SHARON ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE. DURING THE SPEECH SHE PEELS AN ORANGE AND POPS THE PIECES INTO HER MOUTH.

SHARON

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She's always been a bitch, that Geula. That's why we love her. Impossible. Always trying to shock. I've known her since I came to Israel and had my two children and lost my son in the army and gained a son when my Michal married. She's seen it all. We have too.

Still, it's like there's a demon inside of her. I don't think you can live to have 14 children in this day and age and still be sane. And always the ghost of the first wife. So perfect. An ideal hanging over them. She died with the first child. In this day and age? That woman did not want to live.

And that Judith. Geula is right. She is like a desert creature. Eyes wide into the night. Darting from side to side. Ever wary. Never settled. What does she look at? My David would have tamed her wildness. Secret doings and now an arranged marriage with a rabbi's son. Such an honor.

Everyone waits for the offspring!

JUDITH IS BACK AT THE
CEMETERY. IT IS TWILIGHT
NOW. SHE IS ANGRY AND
SPUTTERING AS SHE
APPROACHES A GRAVE WITH
A JEWISH STAR.

JUDITH

Mama! All afternoon they talked at me at the police station. I couldn't come earlier. And I am marrying Shlomo, soon, very soon. I moved up the date. I will be the Queen of Mea Shearim,-- Queen of the Jews.

JUDITH PUTS A STONE ON
THE GRAVESTONE.
OTHERSIDE OF THE STAGE
SHARON IS STILL CHATTING
WITH US.

SHARON

They never make a living, these frummies. Pray all day, the government gives them money but not enough, they get their wives pregnant and go back to debate the Talmud while women like Geula raise their children on nothing. Into nothing.

JUDITH

The rabbi's family is ready for me to give birth to the messiah.

NO RESPONSE.

Why do you make me shiver?

SHARON

At least my Barry is an engineer and he makes a living and we have a good life here in Eretz Yisrael. My mother called from Evanston-where she lives now-- wanting me to come home. She told me I was endangering my children in the streets of Tel Aviv. I laughed at her. All the gangs in Chicago and Cleveland now.

JUDITH RUBS HER BELLY

JUDITH

Right here. A secret messiah. To bring us peace. New life.

SHARON

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My neighbor was blown up in that restaurant bombing. And my Duvid-last year-a stone in the eye, brain damage and dead. Children don't have the will to live anymore.

JUDITH

Shlomo will never know. Come to my wedding. I choose life!

LIGHTS CHANGE

KITZY'S APARTMENT. IT IS LATE.

JUDITH KNOCKS AT THE DOOR,

SLIGHTLY DISSHEVELED.

KITZY OPENS IT IN HER SILK

BATHROBE.

KITZY

There you are. Your mother—Geula-- has been looking everywhere. She called.

JUDITH

I saw her at the bus stop after your party.

KITZY

She wondered where you were this afternoon.

JUDITH

I was at the police station. I knew the boy.

KITZY

What?

JUDITH

The boy. This morning. At the bus stop. I knew him.

KITZY

My God. You knew him.

JUDITH

I told him I was marrying Shlomo. I told him it was an arranged marriage. An honor. The rabbi's son. I had no choice.

KITZY

You loved him? This boy. The one in pieces like at a human meat market?

JUDITH

I knew him. I gave him up.

KITZY

Why did you give him up?

JUDITH

I—

JUDITH JUST SHAKES HER HEAD

KITZY

What ?

JUDITH

Sometimes in the Judean hills we would bring along a scratchy radio. We'd dance disco and avoid the snipers. We'd make love and scratch each other's mosquito bites.

KITZY

When is the last time you saw him?

JUDITH

We took a bus ride to the Holy City of Sfat.

A month ago. Two.

It was late at night and I had enough money for two busfares and I was cold and brought a big coat and so did he.

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And we huddled in the last two seats of the bus and we covered ourselves over and we descended beneath the covers and it got close, so close that we could not breathe except the breath of the other.

He would breathe out. I would breathe him in.

And the bus would jump and he would touch me and the bus would jump and he would touch me again and I would jump and my legs became slick and slippery and his fingernails were long.

KITZY

You paid the busfare?

JUDITH

And the old woman who sat three seats ahead of us turned her head because she smelled the smell of us and then thinking that we were discovered I pulled on my pants but he kept his hand there, on my mound and I couldn't help it, my voice left my body in a little yelp. For mercy and so much pleasure and the old woman she smiled and his hand began to move again and I could not stay still. And I thought they would throw us off the bus. But we were all alone in the shadows beneath our coats and we rode all the way to Sfat and the sun came up and we didn't wash ourselves and we sipped orange juice and fresh baked bread and we got back on the bus to come back in time for work and there were crumbs in my underwear that I felt all day long and orange juice on his penis that made his pants stick to his skin and

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we sat stunned, stoned until we returned and walked like dead ones
back to life.

And we did this every week. We did this on Thursday night to Friday
morning and then we slept at the garage on Shabbat and pretended we
didn't know each other and then would meet meet each other again and
again every night.

KITZY

It's a mitzvah to make love on Shabbat.

JUDITH

But he would not let me go when it was time. The boy took and took. He
took my breath away. The one in parts all over the cucumbers and the fruit
stand. He swallowed me whole. And I told him I had to leave him. I could
not have his baby. His Arab baby in my Jewish belly.

KITZY

And he blew himself up?

JUDITH IS SCARED

JUDITH

Am I covered in blood?

KITZY

Did you murder him?

JUDITH

I never thought he'd strap his body, my body, ours – he'd wrap in
dynamite and—

KITZY

You did not kill him.

JUDITH

I cannot kill his baby.

KITZY

A dowry for the fancy Orthodox Rabbi's son?

JUDITH SHAKES HER HEAD
YES.
KITZY LAUGHS A BIG LAUGH.

KITZY

Come. Come to me.

JUDITH COMES INTO KITZY'S
ARMS. KITZY ROCKS HER.

KITZY

Oh my dear, dear dear--- couldn't put Humpty together again.

KITZY ROCKS
JUDITH. JUDITH PULLS
AWAY.

JUDITH

I went to the cemetery. After the explosion. I invited my mother to the wedding with Shlomo. And all the time I was waiting for parts of Hassani to arrive.

KITZY

They don't bury them—the suicide bombers-- in the Jewish cemetery.

JUDITH

Of course they do. A part of each of us is buried with a part of them. We are all standing buried with earth up to our chins.

SHE IS PHYSICALLY
UNCOMFORTABLE

I can't breathe. Will I ever breathe?

LIGHTS UP OTHER SIDE OF THE

STAGE. SHARON IS ON THE PHONE

SHARON

She knew him? She couldn't know him.
You've told Geula? The father?

JUDITH SHAKES HER HEAD AND
WALKS INTO THE BATHROOM. AND
KITZY PICKS UP THE PHONE ON
HER SIDE.

KITZY

Judith refuses.

SHARON

She's a child! She needs a parent! Someone to comfort her.

KITZY

I comfort her.

SHARON

Judith should go to Shlomo. Tell him. He will never marry her if he hears
she had a lover - this lover.

KITZY

Please don't tell Geula. Judith and I will go to Eilat and sit by the sea. We
will return in a week.

SHARON

By Egged bus? I hope they don't blow you up too.

KITZY

We leave at noon.

SHARON

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And your Avi.

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KITZY

My Avi comes with me everywhere.

LIGHTS CHANGE.
SOUND OF A BUS.
IT IS BRIGHT LIGHT, THE
WINDOWS OF THE BUS ARE OPEN
AND THERE IS A BREEZE

JUDITH AND KITZY SIT
NEXT TO EACH OTHER
ON A BOUNCING BUS. JUDITH IS
VERY HOT. SHE IS LOOKING OUT
THE WINDOW.

JUDITH

It is so hot here. Dusty. Hot.

KITZY

It's July. It's hot everywhere.

JUDITH

Not in San Francisco. Geula. My step mother...

KITZY

Yes, Geula. I know her.

JUDITH

Geula told me it is cold in San Francisco. Foggy and cool and sometimes in summer you need a coat—like wintertime.

KITZY

Are you going to San Francisco?

JUDITH

I can't leave here. I am the next generation. I carry the future.

KITZY

You carry a baby that you can choose to leave behind. It's been done before.

JUDITH

I don't want your advice.

KITZY

Oh, terribly sorry. I got that wrong.

BEAT. THEN KITZY SMILES

KITZY

You feel better? Can you breathe?

JUDITH

I breathed easier in the cement brick walls with Hassani.

KITZY

Like in a prison cell, eh?

JUDITH (surprised)

You know what about a prison cell?

KITZY

Sweet girl You are the only one who has lived?
Those of us gone before have some real time logged as well.

JUDITH

I just didn't know. Don't think of you in prison. With no way out.

KITZY

There is always a way out, my dear. Tragedy can most often be resolved with time and distance. Cut the wine with water and the tears with a good look around at those with real problems.

JUDITH

But you remember your prison?

KITZY

I don't live there anymore.

JUDITH

What happened? Tell me.

KITZY

They threw me there. At home.

JUDITH

Why? For what?

KITZY

I had a lover. Just like you. Can you imagine?
An American black man.
Peace Corps. Educating the natives.
Ethiopia. Empire of the Kush gone dry.

I was young and my parents arranged for my...
Initiation. Cliterectomy. They still do that.
They do that even today.
Take it out so there is no pleasure.

JUDITH

Kitzy. I---

KITZY

In my homeland.
In Ethiopia. Empire of the Kush gone dry.

But this man. Lester. He was there working and
he saw me as beautiful and He
took me early on. Before my pleasure was removed.
He called me his Queen and he a self styled King Shabaka.
He took me early on so I could feel the pleasure that a woman can feel.

Before anyone knew. My parents. Before I even knew what happened.
I was pregnant. At 14. A young girl

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reading Shakespeare at the Missionary school and
lying with a Black American poet.

And my parents discovered our liaison and
drove him away. And threw me in prison
to take away the child,
and dug out my insides.

And when I was 18 I smiled sweetly at the Missionary Massah
who gave into to Lester's pleading letters.
I got me to Paris to study.

And there was Lester. Waiting.
And the Sorbonne. And the rest of my life.

JUDITH

You were lucky.

KITZY

I was lucky.

JUDITH

Where is he?

JUDITH CLOSSES HER EYES.

KITZY

Paris was a long time ago. He moved on.

JUDITH

And you are still alive.

KITZY

And I am still alive.

LIGHTS CHANGE. MOONLIGHT. WE
HEAR THE SOUND OF WAVES.

SHE IS PLAYING THE CELLO AS SHE
SINGS.

GEULA (SINGING STARDUST)

Sometimes I wonder why I spend the lonely night
Dreaming of a song
The melody haunts my memory
And I am once again with you
When our love was new
And each kiss an inspiration

But that was long ago.
Now my inspiration
Comes in the memory of a song

Beside the garden wall
Dah dah dah dah...

SOUND OF THE WAVES.
GEULA SPEAKS TO THE STARS
FROM APARTMENT ROOFTOP.

MAN'S VOICE

GEULA! COME IN NOW. GEULA!

GEULA

Beside the garden wall...

MAN'S VOICE

GEULA!

GEULA

(quietly) Anyone can hear me?

LIGHTS FADE.
WAVES AND DESERT WIND.
LIGHTS CHANGE TO A
DESERT NIGHT

KITZY (off)

Come. We can lie on the chaises on the patio.
My God. Cockroaches that big do not deserve to live.

KITZY AND JUDITH BRING
BLANKETS AND LIE ON CHAISES IN
THE MOONLIGHT. THEY CLOSE
THEIR EYES.

JUDITH

Fat from the kitchen. Heat from the desert. Ants used to swarm our sink.

KITZY

The moon is better for us. We cannot hear it blink and chew.

JUDITH

Thank you for taking me away.

KITZY

I do it for your mother

JUDITH

Don't do it for her.

KITZY

You are like my child too. She does the best she can.

JUDITH

Do you think the moon will burn us? Will the moon spy and tell them
where we are hiding?

KITZY

The moon is changeable. It is not to be trusted. Sleep now.

THREE BEATS.

JUDITH

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I could not stand the army was bulldozing his home—so he slept at the garage. And, then I slept with him.

KITZY

And he was guiltless?

JUDITH

He couldn't stand that a stone he threw
murdered a soldier one time. He thought.
It could have been his brother. So he slept with me.

KITZY

So many things to feel. Better to side step one or more at a time.
Drink tea. Wash the dishes. There is enough to digest.
Walk between the feelings to survive.

JUDITH

How do you know that?

KITZY SMILES DRYLY AND RECITES
HER LIST.

KITZY

I am black, a woman and a Jew.

KITZY SMILES AT JUDITH AND
PATS HER OWN SHOULDER.

KITZY

Here. Put your head. Dream the sleep of the innocent. You are young
enough.

JUDITH LIES HER HEAD ON
KITZY'S SHOULDER.

LIGHTS CHANGE. GEULA IS
STANDING AT THE COUNTER OF A
GROCERY STORE MAKING
CHANGE. SHARON IS THERE
DRESSED FOR SHOPPING. WE

HEAR THE BELL OF THE CASHJ
REGISTER.

SHARON

HOW big is the ring?

GEULA

Too big. My husband is going crazy.

SHARON

He's excited?

GEULA

He made the match. The Rabbi has blessed it. They are driving to the settlements tomorrow – the next day—to chose a house.

SHARON

This is a decision for the Rabbi?

GEULA

They don't ask my opinion. Let them decide.

SHARON

Fine. Let them clean it.

GEULA LAUGHS.

GEULA

She doesn't come back soon. The match will be lost. Hell to pay—heaven to live.

A GRIN

SHARON

Why should she come back?

GEULA

Because her Abba says jump. And she jumps for her Papa. She jumps still for him.

SHARON

I can't tell you where they are. Why do you even care? You don't get along.

GEULA

I miss her. When she was little she used to cry herself to sleep. Married to her father, this I understood.

SHARON

Don't start with all that sympathy stuff.

GEULA

I wrapped my arms around the little crying girl, looking for her dead mama, and she stopped crying and so did I. It's no small thing.

SHARON

You have lots of other children that you can comfort too!

GEULA

She was the first.

SHARON

I can't Geula. Kitzy will never speak to me again!

GEULA

So fine. He'll throw dishes tonight. Less to wash.

GEULA NODS TO AN UNSEEN
CUSTOMER. DOING BUSINESS

GEULA

Here, Mrs. --Change for the bread.

WE HEAR A JINGLE OF CHANGE.
SHARON NOTICES THE WOMAN
AND HAS AN OPINION ABOUT HER.

SHARON

Why she doesn't take the change?

GEULA

Charity for the poor. Coffee cake for me.

SHARON

Come shopping with me. All my clothes are too tight. (they don't fit me anymore)

GEULA

Wear sheets. Smoke cigarettes. It's more comfortable.

SHARON

I'm not ready for a shroud. Are you going to take another class at the University?

GEULA

Yes. Animal husbandry. I will teach the Graduate course. When I get out from the hospital from the dishes that are aimed at my head every night since she is gone.

SHARON

Oy. Geula. I cannot tell you they are at Eilat,

GEULA

Turning red in the sea?

SHARON

I can't tell you that. But if I could, it's because I would prefer you didn't need new dishes.

GEULA

I love you.

SHARON

I'm a mush bag. Shabbat Shalom.

GEULA

You're my friend. Shalom Bayit.

LIGHTS CHANGE.
SHARON ADDRESSES THE
AUDIENCE.

SHARON

I have lived here. In Israel. Almost 25 years. I am like a Sabra but they would never admit that. No. But I am tough enough to be a real cactus. A native of the dust and sun.

I met my husband right here at Tel Aviv University. Long before Kitzy and Geula and I took that psychology class together. That's another story.

I came here as a young girl. Joined all the youth groups and had the summer kibbutz stays. I loved it. Even though I never worked in a field or picked an apple. Bad allergies. No. They always put me in the mailroom. I was never an athlete but I still could run as fast as any of them for the bomb shelters. Boom! So fast I ran. And even in the heat. I still am not crazy about the heat.

Home, well. Face it I was never the homecoming queen in Shaker Heights. Too zaftig. Pushy? Maybe. Never a beauty-- I mean according to my day. Remember Twiggy was quite popular when I was a girl. That's before they had a name for anorexia or bulimia.

But here in Israel. In Jerusalem I was noticed. It was okay to be bigger than a twig. We had a country to build.

And I was staying in Jerusalem that summer and had to meet someone at the bus stop...

SHARON CROSSES AND SITS DOWN NEXT TO GEULA. THEY BOUNCE AS THEY ARE ON A BUS TOGETHER AS SHARON CONTINUES HER STORY. GEULA HOLDS HER BAG ON HER LAP.

GEULA

Who were you meeting?

SHARON

I can't remember. Some guy. A soldier I think.

GEULA

And you went to the station?

SHARON

I had to walk across this dirt path. And there was an Arab guy there. Selling coca cola. And it was almost twilight...

GEULA

You stopped for a Coca? So many calories!

SHARON

No. I walked. Quickly by them. And I don't know. Maybe because I was in shorts and a tee shirt. And you know, I bounced as I walked faster and faster.

GEULA

You bounced?

SHARON

You know...

SHARON CUPS HER BREASTS AND BOUNCES THEM. GEULA LAUGHS DEPITE HERSELF AND ADJUSTS HER KERCHIEF.

SHARON

And as I picked up my pace I heard these footsteps behind me in the sand. Nothing big. And what I remember really was how quiet it all was. And soft. The soft sand under my toes in the sandals. And I was looking at the sky and I felt this funny little knock on my head and I couldn't see anything.

GEULA

What happened?

SHARON

And boom. I was looking at the inside of a box.

GEULA

A box?

SHARON

I was looking at the inside of a box. This Arab boy had followed me and put this box over my head. As if this would stop me. Amazon Youth group girl from America! It was so strange.

GEULA

Why a box?

SHARON

It was strange. It was like he was half heartedly trying to rope a lion. And I turned on him with a roar..

GEULA

There were others there, too?

SHARON

The man at the Coca stand was grinning. And I turned on this boy and threw the box off with a grand gesture and pulled myself and my grand breasts up to a mad height and screamed at him. HOW DARE YOU!!!!

GEULA

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Oy, a real demon!

SHARON

I was like the caterpillar in Alice in Wonderland WHOOO ARE YOOOOOOO?

GEULA

Too easy to squash. What happened?

SHARON

He ran away.

GEULA

Ah. Pigs really do fly.

THEY SIT FOR A MOMENT AND
BOUNCE ALONG LOOKING OUT
THE WINDOW OF THE BUS.

SHARON

It was the first time. I ever felt sexy.

BEAT

GEULA

What? With a box from a skinny Arab boy?

BEAT

SHARON

No one had ever desired me before. For bad or good. (BEAT)
And then I moved to Tel Aviv and married Barry and had my children. (All
as a size 16.)With eyelashes.

GEULA SPEAKS ADMIRINGLY

GEULA

You take up space, sweetheart. That is certain. You are a feature of the
landscape.

SHARON

Yes. I matter.

GEULA

Come closer. I want to close my eyes.

GEULA CLOSES HER EYES AND
GEULA RESTS HER HEAD WHILE
SHARON SITS UPRIGHT WITH A
SMALL MYSTIFIED SMILE ON HER
FACE.SOUND OF BUS COMES UP.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

IT IS SUNDOWN. KITZY AND
JUDITH HAVE A BOTTLE OF WINE
AND SHASLIK (SHISH KABOB
STICKS) ON THE PATIO.

THE RADIO FROM INSIDE THE
ROOM PLAYS JAZZ. THE SKY IS
STREAKED WITH THE LAST RAYS
OF THE SUN.

KITZY LOUNGES ENJOYING THE
LAST RAYS OF THE SUN.
40'S DANCE BALLAD COMES UP.

KITZY

Will you have a band?

JUDITH

What?

KITZY

At the wedding. A band? Will you play rock and roll? What do you play at an orthodox wedding? Will you do those circle dances? Or will you dance to Frank Sinatra?

JUDITH

Eat the shish kabob. I don't think it's kosher.

KITZY

I love dancing. I love to dance. I have no rhythm.

JUDITH

You don't need rhythm. You need a partner.

KITZY

I dance well alone.

JUDITH

Why did you never marry?

KITZY

I don't miss men. I miss a child.

JUDITH

You can share my child. Our secret.

KITZY

You better pray nothing will come between you and your Shlomo.

JUDITH

Everyone is ready. They will think him the most potent to have a child born exactly to the day.

KITZY

From one prison cell to another.

JUDITH

Maybe. Maybe not. It is done now.

KITZY

I measure myself against your age, you know . It is a gift. Watching you grow. Make mistakes.

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JUDITH

I miss my mama.

KITZY

You have a mama. More than one.

JUDITH

I miss her smell. Geula smells of onions and babyshit. My mama smelled of lemons and orange groves.

KITZY

You remember?

JUDITH

I want to remember.

KITZY SMILES/CHANGES

SUBJECT

KITZY

So, you will marry next week.

JUDITH

I will roll from one to the other. And pray that the child looks like me.

KITZY SAYS NOTHING.
FRANK SINATRA SINGS 'fly me

to the moon"

JUDITH

Will you dance with me? Kitzy? Will you dance with me into my wedding?

KITZY

Must I approve in order to dance you into this wedding?

JUDITH

No. I need so much to be held.

KITZY

Come.

KITZY OPENS HER ARMS AND
JUDITH WALKS INTO THEM.
THEY WALTZ WITH ARMS
EXTENDED.

KITZY(SINGS)

Fly me to the moon and let me play among the stars
Let me see what life is like on Jupiter and Mars
In other words, hold my hand. In other words
Darling kiss me....

THERE IS A MOMENT WHEN
WE ARE NOT SURE IF THEY
WILL KISS OR NOT. JUDITH
STEPS BACK

KITZY

In other words—you're nuts, sweetheart.

KITZY GOES AND LAYS DOWN
ON THE CHAISE. SHE INVITES
JUDITH TO LIE NEXT TO HER,

JUDITH

Peanuts, pine nuts, almonds, cash(she pretends to sneeze)

shooooZ!
KITZY /JUDITH(both sneeze together and laugh)

KITZY

Gesundheit. You remember—that used to make you laugh!

THERE IS HISTORY THERE.
JUDITH LIES DOWN NEXT TO

KITZY. SPOONING. KITZY
PLACES HER ARMS AROUND
JUDITH AND THE TWO
WOMEN CLOSE THEIR EYES.

KITZY

Good luck , madel.

LIGHTS CHANGE
FRONT DESK OF THE HOTEL.
THERE IS A PALM TREE AND
POSTCARDS. GEULA AND
SHARON ARE THERE.
SHARON IS TRYING TO TAKE
GEULA'S PICTURE. THERE IS A
GIFT SHOP WITH SOME
FANCY TOPS HANGING
THERE.

SHARON

No. There. Stand there by the palm.

GEULA

Where? (she fixes her hair) I will break your camera. Stop.

SHARON

No. You are beautiful. Now smile.

FLASH

SHARON

You are not smiling.

GEULA

I will break your camera! Where is the girl from the desk? We need a key.

SHARON

You need to practice. For the wedding photographer. I am telling you . Get

back over there. You will not be happy if you have not one good picture from the wedding. I'll help you.

SHARON SETS THE CAMERA DOWN ON THE COUNTER AND PRESSES THE TIMER. SHE RUNS AND STANDS NEXT TO GEULA, POSING.

SHARON

Smile!

FLASH. GEULA STANDS FOR A MOMENT. VULNERABLE.

GEULA

I don't know what I will wear? What will I wear, Sharon? Such a party?

SHARON

We'll get you a new dress. No sheets. Or you'll wear one of mine.

GEULA

And my hair.

SHARON

There is no need for you to remain a frump for your daughter's wedding. You can get a beautiful wig. Or a new schmatte for your head.

GEULA

You know, I have a dress. It wouldn't fit anymore.

SHARON

Which? What?

GEULA

A concert dress.

SHARON

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What color?

GEULA

I bought it for my debut concert at a concert hall in San Francisco. I never wore it.

SHARON

Oh my god. From 20 years ago. You kept it.

GEULA

I kept it. Dusty--- but it's beautiful. It has a neckline.

GEULA THINKS ABOUT THIS.

SHARON

Did you bring a bathing suit?

GEULA

What?

SHARON

Here. We are at the sea. Tomorrow we will walk against the sand. You can't do that in a blue sweater and an old green dress.

GEULA

Where is the key? Where is the man?

SHARON

It is late. He went home to his wife. Tomorrow you will walk barefoot on the sand. And you will not break. Enjoy your freedom before you capture the bride for the return.

GEULA

She will not marry this Shlomo. I know it. How could she marry that sweaty boy?

SHARON

She will marry just to see you stand naked in a brand new dress. There there is the cleaning lady! (she calls after her) Lady!! Where is the key for

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our room????

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SHARON GOES OFF YELLING TO
THE CLEANING LADY. GEULA
STANDS FOR A MOMENT THINKING
OF HERSELF NAKED IN A NEW
DRESS.

SHARON(OFF)

LADY! WOO HOO! LADY!

KITZY ENTERS THE HALLWAY
IN HER ELEGANT BATHROBE
GEULA IS DIFFIDENT

GEULA

So, you gotta kitchen in there?

KITZY

Where? This is a hotel. Not an apartment house.

SHARON(OFF)

Woo hoo! Lady!

KITZY

She better stop screaming. She'll bring the soldiers in from the desert!
How did you find us?

GEULA

How did we find you? My friend is Sharon! Your friend is Sharon!

KITZY

Your Judith needs a little rest. A little quiet.

GEULA

And you will provide, provide.

KITZY

I am her friend.

GEULA

I am her mother.. or the one that's left. That's not your job.

KITZY

You didn't need to come. I can take care of this. We will come home tomorrow.

GEULA

We're here now. I paid the bus fare. You got beds for us to sleep?

KITZY

Take your own room. We'll all go back tomorrow.

GEULA

I don't have to take my own room! I don't work at the University like you my fancy friend.

SHARON REENTERS

SHARON

There you are Kitzalah! Oy, a shower? Before I turn into a puddle.

KITZY

Thanks for keeping your mouth shut.

SHARON

Oh, stop. We'll have a girl's night. I didn't bring curlers and cigarettes but we can pretend, yes?

KITZY

Very funny. Judith is a wreck.

GEULA

Judith will be fine. Gimme the key, Sharon? The lady over there, she gave you a key?

SHARON (grins)

I told her I was your sister, Kitzeleh..

KITZY

That right?

GEULA (grins)

We're building a new world.

KITZY

I'll warn your daughter.

GEULA

Ms. Proprietor! Ms. Know it All. You'll warn my daughter! My daughter doesn't need warning.

KITZY

Wonderful. In the hallway. We will have a fight?

SHARON

I need a coke.

GEULA

Yes. A fight. You stealing my daughter. You're the mama now?

KITZY

Don't be ridiculous. She needed a friend. Not a mother.

GEULA

And I? What am I?

KITZY

I don't know, Geula! What are you?

SHARON

It's loud. It's the hallway. C'mon. Enough now.

GEULA

I need a coke. A cool drink. Some hospitality. Me no name person.

SHARON

You Big Mama . C'mon Geula. Kitzy meant no harm.

KITZY

I'm going inside. You can get a coke down the hall. C'mon. let's go in.
C'mon, enough.

SHARON

You got change, Geula?

GEULA

No. I don't change. I never change.

SHARON

C'mon. C'mon.

GEULA

I am the Mama—for better or worse. Got that?

KITZY/SHARON

Shhhhh—Everyone hears you. Sha!

GEULA AND SHARON
WANDER OFF TOWARD A
COKE MACHINE

LIGHTS CHANGE.

KITZY AND JUDITH ARE SITTING
ON THE BEDS IN THE ROOM IN
NIGHTGOWNS. IT IS LATE. KITZY IS
SHAKING A TOOTHBRUSH AT
JUDITH.

KITZY

Your father gave her bus fare and they are here in the lobby.

JUDITH

I will not go home to my father's house.

KITZY

I paid through the weekend. I don't want to leave either.

JUDITH

With Geula here, you may feel differently.

SHARON AND GEULA ENTER WITH
A BAG EACH. GEULA HAS A KEY IN
HER HAND.

GEULA

They gave us a key, Judaleh, to find your hiding place. Poof, at least we are not the Nazi's! (MAKING THE BEST OF THE SITUATION) Oy. What a ride.

KITZY

The trip was good?

GEULA

The trip was long. And hot. Coca? You have coca-cola? Sharon wants one.

SHARON

We got no change.

JUDITH

Near the ice machine.

GEULA LOOKS AT HER.

JUDITH

I'll get it.

JUDITH EXITS

GEULA

Obedience. That will come in handy.

SHARON

What have you two been doing?

KITZY

Swapping recipes.

GEULA

Thank God you were far away. I got a trip on an Egged bus with my friend.

KITZY

Dodging plates at home?

GEULA WALKS AROUND THE
HOTEL ROOM FINGERING THE
GLASSES, ASHTRAY, TV AREA.
IGNORING KITZY

GEULA

I feel like a hooker. I haven't been alone in a hotel room-since never.

SHARON (laughs)

So, what are we, chopped liver?

GEULA

Is there a radio?

KITZY

I brought my transistor from home. It's next to the television.

GEULA WALKS OVER AND LOOKS.

KITZY GETS OUT OF BED AND
TURNS IT ON FOR HER. A BALLAD
PLAYS. GEULA TAKES OFF HER
SHOES AND SOCKS. SHE FEELS THE
CARPET UNDER HER FEET. GEULA
PLACES THE RADIO NEXT TO HER
EAR.

THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND A SPOT
FINDS GEULA. SHE UNCLIPS HER
HAIR AND IT FALLS AROUND HER
FACE.

GEULA (SINGS)

Don't know why. There's no sun up in the sky
Stormy weather.
Since my man and I been together.
Keeps raining all the time.

JUDITH ENTERS WITH THE COKE-
NOT SURE WHAT IS HAPPENING.

JUDITH

Eema?

KITZY

Hush. She's left her body. We can track her on a satellite beam.

GEULA(SINGING)

Thought I'd die. When he made me come and lie
Down forever. God said just GIVE forever
Keeps raining all the time.

SHARON

Diva! Come back to us.

KITZY

Hush, you two. We'll get thrown out.

SHARON

Caterwauling women in the desert!

KITZY

Wonderful!

THEY CAN'T HELP LAUGHING
TOGETHER
KITZY TURNS OUT HER BED LAMP.

KITZY

SHA! Sleep ! Still! It's late and we have had a full day.

**GEULA TAKES OFF HER SHAPELESS
DRESS AND LIES DOWN ON A BED
IN HER SLIP.**

SHARON

I need a bath. Goodnight ya'll.

**SHARON GOES INTO THE
BATHROOM. KITZY TURNS OVER
TO SLEEP. JUDITH LIES NEXT TO
HER. HER EYES OPEN.**

**GEULA LIES ON THE OTHER BED IN
HER SLIP. DRINKING A COKE.**

BEAT

GEULA

So?

JUDITH SAYS NOTHING

**KITZY SPEAKS WITHOUT TURNING
AROUND**

KITZY

No telling secrets in the dark. Good night.

**GEULA TURNS TO HER AND
MIMICS HER BOSSINESS. BUT SHE
DOESN'T SPEAK.**

WE HEAR THE SHOWER. THEN
QUIET. THEN, WE HEAR SHARON
SING PASSIONATELY.
OFFSTAGE

SHARON(OFF)
DON'T KNOW WHY THERE'S NO SUN UP IN THE SKY
STORMY WEATHER.

JUDITH AND GEULA LIE STILL
SAYING NOTHING. GEULA TAKES A
DRINK OF COKE.

A BELCH.
QUIET.

THEN SHE PUTS THE COKE DOWN
AND TURNS ON HER SIDE AWAY
FROM JUDITH.

AGAIN SHARON SHRY'S

SHARON (OFF)
STORMY WEATHER! SINCE MY MAN AND I
AIN'T TOGETHER
KEEPS RAINING ALL THE TIME.

WE ALL LISTEN TO SHARON HUM
UNDER HER BREATH. AND THEN
VIGOROUSLY RUB HER BODY.

SHARON (OFF)
OY. It's a macheya!

SHE COMES OUT OF THE
BATHROOM AND THE LIGHTS ARE
OFF.

SHARON

In bed already. Oh. Well.

SHE TOWELS HER HAIR AND
SHAKES IT, THEN WHISPERS

SHARON

I'm calling Barry from the lobby phone if anyone's interested. I'll check out the gift shop, Geula. Maybe we'll buy you something sexy tomorrow.

SHARON EXITS THE ROOM
HUMMING.

BOTH JUDITH AND GEULA FLIP
OVER ON THEIR BEDS.
FINALLY, JUDITH WHISPERS.

JUDITH

Eema? You asleep.

GEULA

Old women don't sleep. Only the young dare close their eyes.

JUDITH

The boy. The one at the garage.

GEULA

Yes. I know. Kitzy told me. Sharon told me. You did not tell me.

JUDITH

I'm coming back. I'll come tomorrow.

GEULA

You think I am angry with you?

JUDITH

Isn't that why you are here?

GEULA

I'm here because your father gave me money for a ride on the Egged bus.

KITZY

Sha! Not now. I want to sleep.

GEULA

You were lucky, Judith. The boy loved you. How did it feel?

JUDITH

What can it matter to you?

GEULA

Build another LOVE.

JUDITH(sarcastic)

Fine. Good . Done.

GEULA

You are so fearless? Be fearless.
Or suffocate in a sheitel, an ugly wig or head scarf and spend your life
holding up your bladder.

JUDITH

Easy for you to rant now—

GEULA

Oh, live goddamn it. I dare you.
There is still time for God sake.

JUDITH SLAMS OUT OF THE ROOM.
WE SEE HER SIT ON THE PATIO
WITH HER KNEES DRAWN TO HER
CHEST

THE LIGHTS CHANGE ON GEULA IN
HER SLIP. A STAND OFF. KITZY
GETS UP AND JOINS JUDITH ON
THE PATIO WEARILY

JUDITH AND KITZY SPEAK ON THE
PATIO WHILE GEULA STANDS IN
THE
ROOM. ALL ALONE. NOT SURE
WHAT TO DO.

KITZY

You are like a hair trigger. She comes into the room and boom.

JUDITH

She has no idea about living. She lives everyone else's life! Next, she'll want you to tell more stories about your Avi. Stealing that too!

KITZY

Oh we all do what we have to to survive.

JUDITH

You defend her. She thinks she's telling the truth!!! What does she know about me.. my truth!!

KITZY

Things are .. relative.. we make things the way we need to to survive.

INSIDE THE ROOM GEULA SETTLES
ONTO HER BED AND CLOSSES HER
EYES.

KITZY

Invent things. Pretend.

JUDITH

What do you mean?

KITZY

There is no Avi.

JUDITH

What?

KITZY

I make my own magic. You make yours. If it must be deception—a child

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for you--

JUDITH

You told me you have been meeting this same man , for years.....

KITZY

We used to meet on Tuesdays at 3 before he went home
to his wife and drizzly nosed children. There at the Hilton,
full of American tourists and arms dealers
in the lounge making plans to transfer Ketusha missiles to the vaults of
Cairo in exchange for a donation to the Jewish National Fund.

And I waited at my usual spot with a red drink with vodka
and he never came
As Zubin Mehta flirted with me at the bar
And photojournalists waited for an interview with Fatah leaders
And the women of Baltimore Hadassah bought menorahs in the hotel gift
shop.

I strolled to the pool and began to sweat.
And he never came.

With my legs were soggy and strange
I felt an odd exhilaration, a celebration of secrecy
I took my gorgeous self up the stairs and
Down the hall and slipped the key in
And turned down the bed, sprinkled the rose petals
And drew my bath and sniffed the lavender.. And I have a secret for you

Sex in hotel rooms is better had alone
Amid fantastical lovers who caress
Your stomach with cream
and soft lights
And shadows from silk scarves
Thrown wantonly across a lamp.

Sex in hotel rooms is mostly in the mind of the beholders,
In the rich mahogany of the bed posts
And the full counted cotton sheets and the breeze from the window
And the silence of the hallways.

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The rich carpet beneath bare feet

I pace the room like a tiger until his image

returns to me

free

So free.

I anoint myself with oils----

High above the city, in a cool box filled with the heat of my own dreams

And the sly wink of the room service waiter

I conjure God at my pleasure every Thursday at 3 Pm

And no one is the wiser.

It is my own dream

it gives me comfort, oh my women

ye rams, ye damsels

shower me with raisins and drip honey from the rock

For I am sick with love.

KITZY KISSES JUDITH AND
RETURNS INSIDE.

LIGHTS RESUME NORMAL SETTING
AND SHARON COMES BACK INTO
THE ROOM.

JUDITH LOOKS UP WHEN SHARON
CALLS HER NAME. SHARON IS
UPSET.

SHARON

Judy? Judy, darling? Are you asleep?

JUDITH

No. Not yet. I am not sleeping.

SHARON

Judy darling. I talked with Barry.

JUDITH

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Barry is good?

SHARON

Barry is good but the Rabbi. Your rabbi who went with Shlomo.

GEULA (calls from outside)

They were going to the settlement to get you a house today, Judith. You were getting a house that the Rabbi will bless.

SHARON

No.

GEULA

Why?

SHARON

Judy? Did you love this Shlomo? No. You did not.

JUDITH

I will marry him. I will not lay alone in hotel rooms or scramble on buses only to make ghosts scream at me through the night.

SHARON

Shlomo and the rabbi have joined your other lover. They are exploded. They are dead.

KITZY

What now?

SHARON

Another bomb on the road. Barry said. And the Rabbi and Shlomo are gone. To bits.

JUDITH

Gone? They too gone?

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SHARON

Oh Judy. Oy Judy darling.

JUDITH

No. No. No.

KITZY

And now we will strike Fatah—

JUDITH

Hassani's brothers

GEULA

And then we will say we are sorry and run back to them

JUDITH

And bulldozers will come

KITZY

And Arab boys throw more stones

SHARON

And another son will be blind and dead.

GEULA AND KITZY HAVE
COME OUT TO THE
PATIO

GEULA

And we will say we are so sorry and come close again.
It is like the wife and the man who hits her.
It is the same dance. I know the steps.
(SHE SINGS) C'mon a my house. A my house.

SHARON

Stop! Someone must stop it!

GEULA

We need to go back to our own boxes. Not venture out. Never leave home.
This is what comes of leaving home. Can it be that my husband is right?

SHARON

We need to rest –
We all need to rest and then
go home. To love, safety, open arms.

KITZY

There is no safe haven, foolish women.
We hide in the desert and tell stories, for God's sake!
We live in time of war. There is no better plan.
We people the landscape with our denials and so
Create the next generation.
I want no part of it!

GEULA GETS UP AND SLIDES OPEN
THE SLIDING DOOR TO THE PATIO.

GEULA (speaks in disgust)

A speech! She makes a speech and our children are dead. I have fourteen
children and it still not enough. Children ground like hamburger. Theirs
and ours .

SHARON

There will never be enough children.

GEULA

And we will die giving our insides to push them out—so they can be wasted
one after the other. Ah—insides exploded by bombs or children or hate..
all the same in the end. It all comes to the same thing.

GEULA SITS OUTSIDE THE ROOM
LIGHTS A CIGARETTE IN HER SLIP.

WE SEE THE GLOW OF THE CIGARETTE
AND LIGHTS CHANGE TO DAWN.EACH
OF THE WOMEN IS IN HER OWN WORLD
AS THEY ADJUST SILENTLY TO THE
NEWS AND THE COMING LIGHT.

YO YO MA PLAYS

LIGHTS CHANGE TO DAWN

GEULA IS STILL SEATED IN A
CHAISE OUTSIDE THE ROOM. SHE HAS A
SHEET THROWN OVER HER BUT HER
EYES ARE OPEN. SHE HAS NOT SLEPT.

JUDITH SLIDES OPEN THE DOOR AND
COMES OUT TO THE PATIO AND SITS
NEXT TO GEULA.

GEULA

A widow twice before you're married.
The black widow of the Fertile Crescent. One of a legion.

JUDITH TURNS TO GO.

GEULA

No. I am sorry. I am sorry.
They say I am bitter. Your father.
He says I am bitter like sour lemon. Pitooey. (spits)
Too sour to embrace.

JUDITH

You've given him many children.

GEULA

But he does not kiss me.
He still kisses her. Can you imagine?
Will you ever kiss anyone but your Hassani? Your Arab lover boy?

JUDITH DOES NOT RESPOND

I kiss no one, nothing but my cello.

Where does it come from in you?

JUDITH

What?

GEULA

The bitterness.

JUDITH

Too many nights with my eyes closed listening to you.

GEULA

It is hard to hear a child. Even you—talk like you have only razors inside.

JUDITH

I have no razors. I have something better. I have the Arab boy's child. Here in my belly.

GEULA TURNS SUDDENLY TO
JUDITH AND SLAPS HER HARD

GEULA

You idiot child! (SLAP) Run away! Don't come home. Don't ever come home.

If I were your mother I would wrap you in swaddling clothes and set you adrift on the Nile. Go Judith. Please, don't make this new life.

JUDITH

You watch. I WILL give birth to the messiah. But I will be far away from you.

JUDITH PICKS UP HER BLANKET
AND DRAGS IT WITH HER AS SHE

WALKS AWAY FROM GEULA.
JUDITH LEAVES.

GEULA

(whispers) But I love you so.

LIGHTS CHANGE
THE WOMEN ON THE BUS THE
NEXT MORNING. THEY SIT THREE
ACROSS AND BOUNCE WITH THE
BUS.

SHARON

What will you tell him?

GEULA

I'll tell him. She needs time. Something will happen in time.

KITZY

I have lived this time.

SHARON

She took a job selling Coca and rum behind the bar at the hotel. The girl has a job. The girl will be fine.

GEULA

Not as fine as if she had married your son.

SHARON

We all would have been fine if she had married my son.

GEULA

Now just keep living. Every day. One more breath. Everyday one more step. No more what could have been. That's it.

KITZY

Noses to wipe.

SHARON

I don't know about you but I'd like to have sex again before I die.

THEY LAUGH TOGETHER

GEULA

Sweetheart from your mouth to God's ears for you only. You too, Kitzy.
Me. I'm done.

KITZY

Oh yes. I will try an Arab boy this next time. I will make love with him and
all his brothers and he will have no time for war.

GEULA

Judith has dibs on that one.

SHARON

Legs spread with humus and cream cheese so you don't get hungry?

KITZY

I will survive on love.

SHARON

Drink his semen???

GEULA/ KITZY

Oy!! Too much. Too much.

SHARON

We will all love for a hundred years.—one way or the other. There is
nothing new under the sun.

KITZY

And some will love more and some less.

GEULA

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We plan. God Laughs.

Amen. Gesundheit.

KITZY/ SHARON

THE WOMEN LAUGH

SHARON (SINGING)

“Don’t know why! There’s no sun up in the sky

GEULA/KITZY

Stormy weather!

ALL

When my man and I ain’t together.

Keeps raining all the time!

THERE IS A BUMP
THEY WHOOP WITH DELIGHT. THREE
SCHOOLGIRLS ON A SPREE.

EXPLOSION

THE TRANSISTOR RADIO FALLS TO THE
FLOOR. WE HEAR Its SCRATCHY MUSIC
STILL PLAYING THRU THE SMOKE.

KITZY GRABS FOR IT BUT THERE IS
ANOTHER EXPLOSION.

SCRATCHY RADIO OF STORMY
WEATHER PLAYS

THE WOMEN SCREAM, THE BUS
DISINTEGRATES. WE HEAR A
TWO TONED SIREN

THE CYC TURNS BRIGHT RED
THE BODIES OF THE WOMEN IN
SILHOUETTE, BROKEN ON THE SEATS.

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FLAMES AND SMOKE ENGULF THE
SCENE.

A BAG DROPS ON THE FLOOR

SIREN
STORMY WEATHER THEN
YO YO MA PLAYS

BLACKOUT.
END OF PLAY