

MONOLOGUE BANK

From: *The Good Times Are Killing Me* by Lynda Barry

EDNA: The hills are alive with the sound of music was the first best movie I ever saw and the first best music I ever heard. All I ever wanted to be in life was the star of that show. Someone who sang like a record and ran and twirled in the mountains.. Someone so perfect that even the nuns couldn't understand her. Someone who said "Big Deal!" to the Germans and risked her life to save the sad children she was babysitting and then their gorgeous rich handsome father who thought his whole life was wrecked is now so happy and so thankful that he forgets all about his dead wife and then falls madly in love with me.

Me. Beautiful me with the British accent who can sing so beautifully that everybody knows I am God's first pick, no contest.

Sometimes when I'm trying to fall asleep at night, I remember that song. I just look there and stare at the silver spot coming through our bedroom curtains. My little sister Lucy told me one time that she used to think that street light was, in reality, God. I don't see how she can even stand to admit that. She's a lot different than me and it's not just because I'm older. I could always tell the difference between God and a street light.

From: *Eleemosynary* by Lee Blessing

ECHO: Eleemosynary. E-L..E-E-...M-O-S...Y...N-A-R...Y. Eleemosynary. It's my favorite word. Not just because I won with it, either. It was always my favorite. Eleemosynary . "Of or pertaining to alms: charitable." It's from the Latin, of course, but it's our word now. We're responsible for it. Eleemosynary. Like a small song.

This is my grandmother. She had a stroke. She can't really talk. I can hear her, though. At least I think I can. She's seventy-five years old. I know she doesn't look it. That's not how I see her. My grandmother believed she could fly using only a pair of homemade wings and the proper classical training. In 1958 she made a ten-minute movie— fully professional — of herself and her daughter, my mother, trying it out. Sometimes I think all my troubles began in 1958.

Spelling the words becomes easy, really — almost a nuisance N-U-I-S-A-N-C-E nuisance. What I really concentrate on is the meaning of the word — or more than that, the feel of it. Lots of words have a special feel. Words like prink and zenana. Words like dysphemism and autochthonous. Spelling them is nothing compared to just feeling them. Beautiful words for ugly things. Limicolous. L-I-M-I-C-O-L-O-U-S. Limicolous. Means, "dwelling in mud." Or this one: Esurient. Just means hungry. But the way it feels. I used to stop right in the middle of spelling it. Esurient. E-S-U-R- I...There are words I'd give my life for.

From: *A Bird of Prey* by Jim Grimsley

MARIE: I'm going home, I'm walking behind Monty and Evan, and I'm being quiet so Evan won't punch me in the shoulder, I'm going home like I'm supposed to, but I don't want to go. All day in school it's been peaceful, with nobody bothering me, except Marie in my math class who hates that we have the same name. Except for her they leave me alone, and I like that. All day I sit there with my books and do what I'm supposed to do. Everything is calm all day. But school doesn't last long enough, I have to go home at the end of every day, and when the bell rings I get all hollow inside, and I pack up my books and go outside to wait for Monty and Evan. We walk home the long way, we go pretty slow, and we never talk, unless we're arguing about something. We're all thinking the same thing, we're all wondering what it will be like when we get home, and I hate that feeling. I hate not knowing. I wish it would be peaceful, I think about it the whole way home, and sometimes it is. Sometimes Mama comes to walk us home instead of Monty, and I can tell by the way she looks whether it's okay at home or not. If she's smiling and she's brushed her hair and if she looks me in the eye, then everything's all right. But if she's standing there with her arms all wrapped around herself and her hair pulled back and she's looking at the ground, I know it's not okay, I know they're fighting again. I don't want to go home then, more than anything. But I don't have any choice. I wish school lasted longer. Sometimes I wish it lasted so long I would have to spend the night. I told that to my friend Candy, we have most of our classes together, and she likes me; I told her I wish I could stay in school all the time but she didn't understand. She says I need a boyfriend, that's all I need, but I think about my dad and I don't know if I want one or not.

From: *The Effect of Gamma Rays On Man-In-The-Moon Marigolds* by Paul Zindel

TILLIE: He told me to look at my hand, for a part of it came from a star that exploded too long ago to imagine. This part of me was formed from a tongue of fire that screamed through the heavens until there was our sun. And this part of me – this tiny part of me was on the sun when it itself exploded and whirled in a great storm until the planets came to be.

And this small part of me was then a whisper of the earth. When there was life, perhaps this part of me got lost in a fern that was crushed and covered until it was coal. And then it was a diamond millions of year later – it must have been a diamond as beautiful as the star from which it had first come

Or perhaps this part of me became lost in a terrible beast, or became part of a huge bird that flew above the primeval swamps. And he said this thing was so small – this part of me was so small it couldn't be seen—but it was there from the beginning of the world.

And he called this bit of me an atom. And when he wrote the word, I fell in love with it. Atom. Atom. What a beautiful word.

From: *Class Action* by Brad Slight

DENNIS: My name is Dennis Gandleman.. Around this school I am the object of ridicule from most of the students, simply because I have an extremely high I.Q. It's 176. My father wanted me to enroll in a special school that deals with geniuses like myself, but Mother was firmly against that. She wanted me to have normal education, and not be treated as some kind of freak...Which is ironic, because that's exactly what is happening to me here. The whole concept of education is a paradox: High School is supposed to celebrate education and knowledge, but what it really celebrates is social groups and popularity. In a perfect world, a kid like me would be worshipped because of my scholastic abilities, instead of someone who can throw a forty-yard touchdown pass. I suppose I could complain, and bemoan the unfairness of it all. But I am bright. I know something that the others don't...That, once we leave High School and enter the real world, all the rules change. What matters is power. Financial power. Power that comes from making a fortune on cutting-edge computer software. Software that I am already developing. Some call me a nerd. I call myself...ahead of my time. See you on the outside.

From: *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* by William Inge

SAMMY: I always worry that maybe people aren't going to like me, when I go to a party. Isn't that crazy? Do you ever get kind of a sick feeling in the pit of your stomach when you dread things? Gee, I wouldn't want to miss a party for anything. But every time I go to one, I have to reason with myself to keep from feeling that the whole world's against me. See, I've spent almost my whole life in military academies. My mother doesn't have a place for me, where she lives. She...she just doesn't know what else to do with me. But you mustn't misunderstand about my mother. She's really a very lovely person. I guess every boy thinks his mother is very beautiful, but my mother really is. She tells me in every letter she writes how sorry she is that we can't be together more, but she has to think of her work. One time we were together, though. She met me in San Francisco once, and we were together for two whole days. She let me take her to dinner and to a show and to dance. Just like we were sweethearts. It was the most wonderful time I ever had. And then I had to go back to the old military academy. Every time I walk into the barracks, I get kind of a depressed feeling. It's got hard stone walls. Pictures of generals hanging all over...oh, they're very fine gentlemen, but they all look so kind of hard-boiled and stern... you know what I mean....Well, gee! I guess I've bored you enough, telling you about myself.

From: *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* by Clark Gesner

CHARLIE BROWN: I think lunch time is about the worst time of the day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes mornings aren't so pleasant, either – waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night, too – lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between – when I do all those stupid things. Well, lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me.

Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. (*He opens the bag, unwraps a sandwich, and looks inside*) Peanut butter. (*He bites and chews*) Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely. I guess they're right. (*He munches quietly, idly fingering the bench*) Boy, the PTA sure did a good job of painting these benches. (*He looks off to one side*) There's that cute little redheaded girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she'd do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her. She'd probably laugh right in my face. It's hard on a face when it gets laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over and sit there. I could do that right now. All I have to do is stand up. (*He stands.*) I'm standing up. (*He sits.*) I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why shouldn't she look at me? Is she so great and am I so small that she couldn't spare one little moment just to... (*he freezes*) She's looking at me. She's looking at me.

From: *The Fault in Our Stars* by Scott Neustadter

HAZEL: Isn't this what you wanted, Mom? For me to be teenagery? I'm not going on dates. I don't want to go on dates with anyone. It's a terrible idea and a huge waste of time and—I'm like. Like. I'm like a grenade, Mom. I'm a grenade and at some point I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay? I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there's nothing I can do about hurting you; you're too invested, so just please let me do that, okay? I'm not depressed. I don't need to get out more. And I can't be a regular teenager, because I'm a grenade. I'm going to go to my room and read for a while, okay? I'm fine. I really am fine; I just want to go read for a while.

From: *Kimberly Akimbo* by David Lindsay-Abaire

JEFF: I'm a member of the Junior Wordsmiths of America, an organization dedicated to the puzzleistic arts. You know, word play games. Palindrome challenges. Spoonerisms. Anagrams are my specialty. You scramble all the letters of something to spell out something else. Like the letters in George Washington can be rearranged to spell out Sweet Groaning Hog. Some come in my monthly newsletter. Like Federal Government can be rearranged to spell out Large Fervent Demon. And Mother-in-Law turns into Woman Hitler. My dad loves that one...You know, when I first saw you in the cafeteria, I thought you were a new lunch lady. Isn't that funny?

From: *Election Day* by Josh Tobiessen

You're not going to vote me are you? You're lying to me! I can't believe this. You told me that you could think for yourself. It sounds to me like you're not. And you know, I can take it that not everyone is going to vote for me. I disagree with them, but they have their reasons and I can respect that. But this. This is just wrong. And what kills me is that you know it's wrong. You make me want to scream. You're being weak, Adam. This school needs people who are strong. Think about that for a while.

From: *The Submission* by Jeff Talbott

You're the only person in the wide, stupid galaxy that knows I didn't show you my play first...I was scared. Not of your reaction, that's not it. I was scared it wasn't good. Or good enough. That you wouldn't think I was good. Or that you might think I was...I dunno. You know. And then I showed Trevor because I had to show it to somebody, and he said it was good, and then I couldn't show you because I decided to start sending it around and I didn't want to have this very conversation and then a week went by and another week and then a month, and I just let it go. And by then I hadn't shown it to you so I couldn't show it to you, and that's where I made my mistake. But now, I had to show you. Because...they called today...and it got accepted. So maybe stop being mad and, like celebrate with me or something.

From: *Gloria* by Branden Jacobs-Jenkins

Did you know what you were going to write about before you decided to be a writer? I can't even figure out what I'm going to do after high school. I was thinking about college and graduate school. I don't even know if I wasn't to be a writer or an editor or work in magazines, really. My teacher thought I would be good at it. I just realized that I've spent my entire life being in school. I think I need to experience the real world. I'm actually thinking about, after I graduate, maybe going abroad and just like teaching English. Just somewhere really far away and random. Like Germany or Japan or something, but I'm really interested in Africa, though. Did you know that, within our lifetime, they're expecting like two-thirds of the population of the whole continent to just be...gone? Just totally wiped out. I suddenly feel this deep anxiety about the future, about how everything I know now could just be gone one day--or like everything on the Earth right now at this exact moment could be totally different tomorrow.

From: *Matt & Ben* by Mindy Kaling and Brenda Withers

We're not going to throw it away. We're not. I'm not gonna let you. If it's a curse, we're cursed. We can't just put it in the garbage and then think just the garbage is cursed. Because the garbage is touching the floor of the apartment. Where we are standing. And if we throw the garbage out, it'll just go to some dump, which will be somewhere near us, and still on planet earth, where we still live. And the only way to get away from it would be if we were to float or hover above the crust of the earth. So unless you have a rocket ship or something...but, the point is...we can't run from this, or fly from this, whatever it is. Your name is on it, my name is on it, we have to just deal with it.

From: *Bachelorette* by Leslye Headland

Okay, I get that this is a really messed-up situation, but you don't have to freak out on me. First of all, I didn't do anything wrong. It was accident. I fixed it. You're going to look fine. No one's going to be looking at the dress, anyway. They'll be looking at how happy you are... You know. I really didn't want to do this. To plan this whole party. I don't have to even be there tomorrow. And I really don't appreciate all these demands from you. You know I get this kind of pressure from my parents all day. Do you know what people think when they look at you? Random people. People on the street. They think...what's the right phrase...that you are a..."mean person." That's what they think. And if you think that having some party is going to change that...it only emphasizes it. And I know you're all like, "I can't control what people think." But, you can. I've gotten so good at it that even a "mean person" thought I wanted to be her friend.