

A forgotten corner of San Francisco.

Dirt and debris. Beauty built out of ugliness.
Kitschy, thrown-away objects are create a maze of
odd, striking towers.

A memorial altar. Candles and candles and candles.
Maybe some flowers, a worn photograph, a
handmade sign.

DREW, RICHIE, LENA, and VANELDA warm up.
Discord. Patterns repeating unrelated.

Eee-ee-oh-ee
ee-ee-oh-ee
ee-ee-oh-ee-ee-ee-oh.

DREW leads them, conducting. A shift.

It ebbs and flows and turns into something almost
unbearably beautiful.

At the end: Harmony, harmony, harmony. Lush.
Big sounds.

The warm-up ends. The singers stand, breathless,
exhilarated.

They look at each other, communicating without
words. Drew nods, steps forward, brings out a
crumpled piece of paper. He reads.

DREW

We gather here today to pay our respects to our teacher,
David Morrow--

RICHIE

Should we wait for--

LENA

He's not coming.

Drew

(ignoring)
His death reminds us all--

RICHIE

He said he'd come.

LENA

Might come.

RICHIE

We could wait just a few more minutes--

Vanelda has lifted something from Lena -- a scarf, wallet, something.

DREW

--of the sanctity--

LENA

Vanelda.

Lena grabs the item back. Vanelda wails.

RICHIE

(to Lena, re: Vanelda)

Could you not? She's gonna get all crazy.

LENA

Shut up. You can't just let her *steal* things--

VANELDA

Shut up shut up shut up shut up!

Vanelda paces, counting on her fingers, agitated.

DREW

(going to get through this if it kills him)

His death reminds us all of the sanctity--

VANELDA

Shut up shut up!

LENA

Why're you talking like there's people here?
There's nobody here.

DREW

We're here.
The people who knew him.
The people who loved him!

LENA

And how pathetic is that?

DREW

He was our *teacher*.
He taught us to *sing*.
When we had nothing!
When *he* had nothing!
He gave us *everything*.

RICHIE

You could've said all that at the funeral,
not forced us all back here--

DREW

That was a joke of a funeral.
All those *people*.
The same people who looked away
when they made eye contact on his corner,
the people who abandoned him!
That was no memorial.

I mean, that *room* -- was that David?
Everybody buttoned up, all in black.
Is that who he was?

LENA

That was who he used to be.
Before--

DREW

Before what?

RICHIE

(a list)

Drugs.
Booze.
Insanity.

VANELDA

Shut up shut up shut up!

LENA

(a correction)

Untreated mental illness.

DREW

He was a man of *art*!
Vitality! Community!
That is what we should celebrate.

(from the paper)

We gather here today to pay our respects to our teacher,
David Morrow--
His death reminds of us the sanctity of life.
He died on the streets where he lived with *us*.
We were his family when his family turned their backs on him.
He gave us the gift of music,
and created beauty from ugliness,
built these altars of discord,
and we will not allow him
to be forgotten.

LENA

(softening)

No. We won't.

VANELDA

"We gather here today--"

And then: BRYCE enters. He's sleek, powerful.
Untouched by the world. He zooms in.

BRYCE

Aha! I made it!
I changed my flight,
booked a car,
and here we are.
Time to *memorialize*.

Richie lets out a squeal, moves to him.

Drew noticeably hangs back.

BRYCE

(taken aback, a little)

Whoa.

RICHIE

(recoiling, suddenly burning with shame)

I'm sorry, I didn't,
I didn't mean--
It's just
I've
I've missed
I thought
I'm so--

BRYCE

(a kindness)

No, it's fine. C'mere, Michelle--

RICHIE

It's Richie, now.
Richard.

BRYCE

Huh.

RICHIE

After my dad, and my grandfather, y'know.
The family name.
Every son.

BRYCE

Congratulations?

RICHIE

Everything's changed.
It's so good now.
Can't hardly believe it!

Bryce turns to Lena.

BRYCE

I'm sorry, I don't think we've met.

LENA

HA.
Wait.
Are you serious?

BRYCE

...Lena?
Oh my god.
Look at you!
You look incredible.
How?

LENA

All twelve steps.

BRYCE

I didn't get my phone call.

LENA

For you?
No amends.

BRYCE

Ha.

LENA

I've heard you on the radio.

BRYCE

Oh, that.

LENA

Yeah, *that*.

BRYCE

Don't tell me you're mad--

RICHIE

(barging in, rambling)

Bryce! Bryce. It's so good to see you, man.
I don't sleep out here anymore.
Got a spot in a group home.
Just had my birthday, seventeen, got a cake, even.
And Lena's all clean, she's got a job--

BRYCE

(“Please stop talking”)

Good for you guys.

RICHIE

It just hasn't been the same with you gone,
y'know, but Vanelda's doing great,
and Drew's gonna keep living here
and keep the studio going
now that David's dead--

BRYCE

(to Drew)

What?

RICHIE

He's gonna keep David's memory alive, y'know?
Keep up the sculpture garden,
run the lessons--

BRYCE

For who?

RICHIE

Whoever wants to come, y'know?
Like David used to.
Every day at 10.
Group warm-ups,
Eee--ee--ee--ooh!
Then songs one by one.
“Everybody gives feedback.
Everybody's important!”
Eee-ee--ee--ooh!
You know it, join in, come on!

BRYCE

I'm...

Lena, sensing Richie's pending heartbreak, joins in.

LENA & RICHIE

Eee-ee-ee-ooh!

Bryce makes his way to Drew.

Drew. Where've you been?
BRYCE

Around.
DREW

You didn't return any of my calls.
BRYCE

(referencing Richie)
She says--

He.
DREW

He says you're still living out here?
It's been four years.
BRYCE

Time flies.
DREW

And what the hell did you invite Emily for?
BRYCE

Emily?
DREW

David's daughter, Emily?
RICHIE

I saw her while I was coming in.
BRYCE

"David's daughter, Emily?"
VANELDA

Doing what?
LENA

No no no no no...
DREW

BRYCE

Looking for parking, I guess.
It's impossible to park around here.
My driver's still circling--

RICHIE

(impressed)

A driver.
God, you're so cool.

EMILY, made of rage, stalks in. She's wearing all black and holding a small urn. She points at Drew, Grim Reaper-style.

EMILY

You.

DREW

Emily-

She enters the space, sees Lena and Richie.

EMILY

And *you* two.

LENA

Nice to see you too.

She sees Bryce.

EMILY

And... you?
Aren't you that famous...?

BRYCE

(faux modest)

Yes, yes...

EMILY

I don't care.

DREW

Emily--

Shut up.
Just shut up.

EMILY

Shut--

VANELDA

Emily points to her.

Nope.

EMILY

Vanelda is silent.

What are you doing here?

DREW

I'm looking for *you*.
What are *you* doing here?

EMILY

We're having a memorial.

DREW

Well.
That is just the most depressing thing
that I have ever heard.
What are you memorializing?
That time he slammed you up against a car
because you'd sneezed during a lesson?
The drug-addled psychotic episode
where he thought you were a squirrel?

EMILY

Emily is moving that urn pretty cavalierly.

(re: the urn)
Is that him? Are those his--?

RICHIE

Emily swings around, almost dropping the ashes.

EMILY

(gesturing wildly, almost losing the urn
again)

What kind of person--?

What kind of person could do something like this?

Damn it.

She turns, dropping the jar of ashes, much to the
terror of everyone. The lid flies off. A gasp from
Lena. Even Vanelda is frozen. ...but nothing
happens.

EMILY

IT'S EMPTY.

She overturns it.

EMILY

STOP ACTING like you don't know!

DREW

What is wrong with you?

EMILY

What's wrong with *me*?

You're the one who stole a dead man from his own funeral!

DREW

What?

EMILY

I saw you there.

All of you!

I asked you not to come.

LENA

We had every right to be there.

EMILY

(ignoring him)

And then you... took him.

DREW

No, I didn't.

EMILY

You're telling me it wasn't you.

DREW

No.

EMILY

You *asked* me for him.

DREW

Just some of the ashes, to spread out here--

EMILY

A dirty, trash-filled alley.

DREW

He was an artist!
This was his studio!
Look what he made!

EMILY

You asked me for him.
I said no.
And then he disappears?

DREW

I don't steal.

EMILY

Mr. Mastermind.
Mr. Always With the Big Plan!
Who else could it have been?

In her corner, Vanelda stands.

VANELDA

"Your remembrances are proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay!"
Ashes, ashes, we all fall down!

Everyone looks to each other.
Uh-oh.

EMILY

(deflated)

No.
Was no one watching her?

LENA

I am not my weird acquaintance's keeper.

Emily squints at Vanelda's pile of treasures.

EMILY

...Is that my purse?

It is. How'd she even *do* that?

DREW

If she took them they've got to be around here.

EMILY

"Around here"? LOOK AROUND.
I've got a hundred people
on their way to my mother's house for the wake.
People who knew my father before... this.
His real life.
My real life.
I need to be there.

DREW

I'll help you look--

EMILY

You know what?
Don't bother.
You've all done enough.
Just go ahead
with your stupid memorial.
Don't give me another thought.

She goes to the back, starts looking through a pile of
Vanelda's trash.

DREW

All right, then.
Everybody?
Let's connect.

This is clearly an exercise they're comfortable with.
They gather together, all except Emily, briefly
resume their warm-up. Eee-eee-eee-oh!

Then, together, an exhale.

DREW

Whoosh.

RICHIE

I've missed that.

LENA

Me too.

VANELDA

(laughing, HARD)

"The drug-addled psychotic episode
where he thought you were a squirrel?"

DREW

So now: The real memorial.
Who he really was.
What he really did.

I thought we could go around
and each share a few memories.

BRYCE

I've only got an hour...

Drew rolls his eyes.

BRYCE

What? I've got a flight.

RICHIE

No problem!
I'll start.

Everyone sits, watches.
The impression is that everyone has their "place."
Emily tries not to show that she's paying close
attention.