

COMEBACK

— a musical

[With music by Dan Turner and lyrics by Curzon and Turner was begun in 1979 and had a staged reading at the Berkeley Stage Company in 1980 and at the Noe Valley Ministry in San Francisco in 1987.]

ACT I

Scene 1

CHARACTERS:

ROSALIND, 30-60, a cabaret singer who used to be a man
GEORGE, 30-60, the earlier male self
ALEX, same age range, Rosalind's unsuspecting fiancé
ASSISTANT, any age, versatile male to play many extra parts

SETTING: A dressing room with one bare light, backstage at a cabaret. There is a dressing table, a chaise lounge, and various posters of past performers, including one of GEORGE SMITH. There is a door that leads to the stage. In center stage is a full-length "mirror" that acts as an entranceway and exit for visitors from the past and future.

AT RISE: The door opens and a woman (ROSALIND) enters quickly, carrying a dress and a cosmetics case. She looks around as if unsure of herself, then sets the cosmetics case on the dressing table and hangs the dress on a Chinese screen. She examines the framed star posters of those who have entertained at the club in the past. As she takes the picture of GEORGE — his former self — in her hands she says:

ROSALIND Goodbye, George.

(Dim applause begins to build, surprising her. We hear "A Guy I Know." ROSALIND grows cold and nervous and puts the picture back on the wall. She goes to her cosmetic case, takes items out, starting to get ready for a performance. But she can't ignore the poster or the song and returns to the picture and turns it around. Again she goes to the dressing table. Finally she returns to the poster of GEORGE and removes it from the wall and starts to throw it away — but once more she can't. She goes back to the dressing table. Finally at the end of the song she takes GEORGE'S picture and throws it into a trash container and wipes her hands.)

GEORGE (singing, perhaps partly visible on stage)

A GUY I KNOW

THERE'S A GUY I KNOW,
GOT A BRAIN LIKE A DYNAMO.
THERE'S NO DOUBT!
SHOUT IT OUT!

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

THERE'S A GUY WHO'S TOUGH.
WHEN HE FIGHTS YOU DON'T SEE HIM PUFF.
THERE'S NO DOUBT! SHOUT IT OUT! LOUD!
HE'S GOT A JAW THAT ISN'T GLASS.
SO DON'T YOU GIVE HIM ANY SASS.
'CAUSE IF YOU DO, HE'LL WHIP YOUR ASS!
YOU'LL LIKE THIS GUY 'CAUSE HE NEVER WAILS.
YOU'LL LIKE THIS GUY 'CAUSE HE'S TOUGH AS NAILS.
SOME FOLKS HATE HIM.
THEY'RE NOT HIS BEST FAN.
HE'S NO SISSY.
HE'S JUST ALL MAN!
SOME FOLKS TELL HIM
HE SHOULD BE MODEST.
HOW CAN HE BE?
HE KNOWS HE'S BEST!
I KNOW A GUY — GUESS WHO?
WORKING HARD'S WHAT HE LIKES TO DO.
DO YOU HEAR?
IS IT CLEAR WHO?
HE'S GOT A JAW THAT ISN'T GLASS.
SO DON'T YOU GIVE HIM ANY SASS.
'CAUSE IF YOU DO, HE'LL WHIP YOUR ASS!
HE ISN'T RICH,
BUT HE'S GOT HIS PRIDE.
HE DIGS A DITCH,
BUT HE'S GOT HIS PRIDE.
YES, LIFE'S A BITCH,
BUT HE'S GOT HIS PRIDE!

(Suddenly the dressing room door opens and ALEX — the fiancé — enters with a newspaper.)

ROSALIND Alex! I'm so glad you made it! I'm late! I'm so nervous! Have you seen the crowd out there? They're putting in extra chairs. Did your sister come? (closer to him) You've been so patient with me. (putting his arm around him) Thank you for making this a wonderful debut!

ALEX (pulling away) Don't you mean "comeback"?

(He waves the tabloid newspaper.)

ROSALIND What is it?

ALEX (Doesn't answer.)

ROSALIND Alex?

ALEX You know what's in here.

ROSALIND Is it about the show? . . . (realizing what he knows) Oh, no! They put it in the newspaper? They didn't!

Comeback

ALEX You can imagine my surprise. Why didn't you tell me, Rosalind?

ROSALIND (speechless, paralyzed)

ALEX Why didn't you tell me who you used to be?

ROSALIND . . . I couldn't.

ALEX (flabbergasted) You don't think I'd be interested that you used to be a man? You lied to me. . . . You lied!

ROSALIND I didn't lie. I just didn't say anything.

ALEX You don't consider that a lie?

ROSALIND Do you want me to make excuses? I didn't tell you because . . . because — I don't know the reason.

ALEX Bullshit! You didn't tell me because you didn't want to lose me.

ROSALIND I didn't tell you because I didn't want to hurt you.

ALEX Don't you think I'm hurting now? What am I supposed to do — ignore this? (Holds up the newspaper.) Is it true? What does it make me?

ROSALIND Yes . . . it's true. Are you afraid of what people may think? Isn't that it? What the folks back home in Sheboygan will talk about at the neighborhood picnic?

ALEX This news about you was rather sudden, Rosalind! (Throws the newspaper down.) Did you plan this? I can't think of a better publicity stunt!

ROSALIND No. I didn't want this. I wanted to keep it a secret.

ALEX Well, it's not a secret anymore. Why do you think you have such a big crowd out there? (Points offstage.) What do you suppose they've come to see? What do you suppose?

ROSALIND Oh, God! (touching her mouth anxiously)

ALEX Okay — from them maybe I can understand, but how could you want to keep it a secret from me?

ROSALIND It was so romantic, Alex. I just couldn't tell you. I wanted to enjoy the moment. I started to tell you that first time you kissed me. I didn't. Then the moment turned into months and —

ALEX And the months have turned into now!

 (The ASSISTANT enters as the STAGE MANAGER.)

STAGE
MANAGER (knocking as he enters) Ten minutes, Ms. Smith! (He sees that something is amiss and backs out.)

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ALEX Well, what am I supposed to do next — just forget about it? I can't, Rosalind! We've got to settle this.

ROSALIND Don't drive me crazy before I have to go out there! (gently) If I had told you, would you have accepted my past?

ALEX I don't know . . .

ROSALIND Is it because I didn't tell you or because of *what* I didn't tell?

ALEX Of course I don't know about that either.

ROSALIND (hurt) I see . . .

ALEX You have to grant me the right to be at least shaken up over all this. I'm a simple guy, Rosalind, that's all. I don't mean to put you down — honest. I don't know . . . I just don't know about all this sex stuff. And now, here I am right in the middle of it. And you didn't even tell me?

ROSALIND Will you give me time to explain?

ALEX You have a show to do. I'd better go. (Starts to leave)

ROSALIND Will you come back later, after the show?

ALEX (at the door) I don't know how to answer that. Excuse me, but I just don't know! (He exits too quickly.)

ROSALIND (She follows him to the door.) Alex! Damn! . . . I think you've answered it.

(She stands in the middle of the room looking at herself in the full-length mirror, then lies on the chaise lounge, dejected. She touches her throbbing head.) What am I going to do?

Scene 2

(The dressing room mirror lights come up as GEORGE walks through the mirror frame from the dark side. He is carrying a bouquet of flowers. ROSALIND, aware of his presence, slowly sits up on the couch.)

ROSALIND George, is that you?

GEORGE (checking the trash) You threw away my picture, Rosalind. How could you?

ROSALIND What are you doing here?

GEORGE I've brought flowers for your opening.

ROSALIND I won't accept flowers from the grave.

GEORGE (sets the flowers on the dressing table, prims in the mirror) You know you couldn't go on without me.

Comeback

ROSALIND I thought I killed you.

GEORGE Any bets on that?

ROSALIND Leave me alone, George. You don't exist!

GEORGE The cat's out of the bag, Ms. Smith. That crowd out there? They haven't come to see a woman. They've come to see what's left of me. (Holds up the newspaper) "Ex-Singing Star Is Ex-Man!"

ROSALIND I got rid of you before. I can do it again. Get out!

GEORGE You've got to expect them to be curious. What if Frank Sinatra came back as Madonna?

ROSALIND Go away!

GEORGE For now! (GEORGE shrugs and passes through the mirror.) See you!

ROSALIND (singing)

I USED TO BE A STAR

WHAT AM I GOING TO SAY?
HOW AM I GOING TO SAY
HELLO, REMEMBER ME?
HELLO, REMEMBER ME?
I USED TO BE A STAR!
HOW DO YOU LIKE IT SO FAR?
AREN'T YOU THRILLED THAT I'M HERE?
SHOULD I BRAG ABOUT WHAT I USED TO BE?
OR WILL THAT MAKE THEM HATE ME?
WILL THEY DESPISE ME FOR MAKING A CHANGE,
OR WILL THEY LIKE WHAT THEY SEE?
WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO SAY?
WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO THINK?
WILL THEY SAY "FABULOUS"?
OR WILL THEY SAY "YOU STINK"?
WHAT IS ALEX GOING TO SAY?
WHAT IS ALEX GOING TO FEEL?
WILL HE LOVE ME AS HE DID?
OR WILL HE THINK THAT I'M NOT REAL?
HELLO, REMEMBER ME?
HELLO, REMEMBER ME?
I USED TO BE A STAR!
SHOULD I FORGET ABOUT A CAREER,
OR DO IT NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS?
WHO THE HELL ARE THEY?
WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
WHAT THE HELL DO I KNOW?
I MUSTN'T BE TOO BOLD.
I MUSTN'T BE TOO SHY.

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

AND IF THEY DON'T WANT ME,
ALL I WILL DO IS DIE.
IT'S ONLY BEEN FOUR YEARS
SINCE I COULD FILL A HALL.
IT'S ONLY BEEN FOUR YEARS.
THEY'VE COME TO SNICKER WHEN I FALL.
HAVE I GOT IT ANYMORE?
DID I EVER REALLY HAVE IT?
SHOULD I GIVE THEM EVERYTHING I'VE GOT?
OR SHOULD I MAKE THEM BEG FOR IT?
WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN NO ONE BEGS FOR IT?
DO YOU FADE AWAY AND DIE?
OR GIVE IT ONE MORE TRY?
ALEX, REMEMBER ME?
DO YOU ALL REMEMBER ME?
I USED TO BE A STAR!

(At the end of the song, she turns to the mirror.)

ROSALIND George? Are you there?

GEORGE (appearing) Y- e - s - s - s?

ROSALIND What am I going to do?

GEORGE Are you asking me to stay?

ROSALIND Only for a moment. And then you have to leave — permanently.

GEORGE Has it ever crossed your mind that maybe, just maybe, our little operation was a mistake?

ROSALIND It wasn't a mistake.

GEORGE Naturally you'd say that. All that pain we went through, mental and otherwise, has to mean something, doesn't it?

ROSALIND It was your idea!

GEORGE My idea! All I was doing was standing in front of the mirror — bored — looking at my body, thinking I needed to lose a pound or two. At most a face-lift!

GEORGE (singing)

CHANGE

OH, I NEED A CHANGE! I'M TIRED OF BEING SO BANAL AND TAME.
I NEED A CHANGE! I'M BORED TO TEARS ALWAYS STAYING THE SAME.
AND SO — I'LL TAKE OFF THESE CLOTHES — MAYBE THIS NOSE —
EVERYTHING GOES!
OH, I NEED A CHANGE! I'M SICK AS CAN BE OF THIS DREADFUL ENNUI.

Comeback

I NEED A CHANGE! FED UP TO HERE WITH THIS PERSON CALLED ME.
AND SO, I'LL DO AS I PLEASE! REFURBISH THESE (meaning hips),
EVEN MY KNEES!
OH, I NEED A CHANGE! ALTHOUGH FILLED WITH DREAD I WILL EAT
NO MORE BREAD!
I NEED A CHANGE! THIS IS THE END OF ALL SNACKS IN MY BED.
OH YEAH, EVERYBODY NEEDS A CHANGE! IT'S SO NICE TO RE-ARRANGE!
NO — IT'S NOT A PHASE! THERE'LL BE LOTS OF PRAISE! BUT NO
MAYONNAISE!
OH, FAT WILL DISAPPEAR, IF I PERSEVERE! WHO THE HELL NEEDS BEER!
EVERYBODY NEEDS A CHANGE!

ROSALIND (dancing a tango with GEORGE) George!

GEORGE What?

ROSALIND I'm thinking about doing something.

GEORGE (playing along, in sing-song) I know!

ROSALIND What do you think of the idea?

GEORGE Don't ask and you won't be disappointed!

ROSALIND I want to be born.

GEORGE Pardon me. I don't want to die.

ROSALIND I've been inside you for years, screaming to get out.

GEORGE Maybe there's another me inside *you* screaming to get out!

ROSALIND Be serious about this! (Tries to stop dancing.)

GEORGE Keep dancing! If we get serious, I may start to cry.

ROSALIND (stopping) It's what I've always secretly wanted. I've been miserable for so long. You know that, George. All the ways I've tried for all these years to drown out these feelings. You know — you know what I mean!

GEORGE Do you have any idea what you're asking of me? They're going to —

ROSALIND Please, George, please!

GEORGE Talk about a castrating woman!

ROSALIND No, it will be wonderful! (singing second verse)

CHANGE

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

OH, I'LL HAVE A CHANGE! I'VE MADE UP MY MIND THAT IT'S
TIME TO BEGIN.
I'LL HAVE A CHANGE. UP WITH MY CHIN, AND I'LL BE FEMININE.
AND SO, I'LL KNOW WHO I'LL BE! HELLO TO ME! THANKS, DEAR M.D.
OH, I'LL HAVE A CHANGE!
I THINK IT'S BIZARRE NOT TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
I'LL HAVE A CHANGE! NO ONE CAN TELL ME I'M GOING TOO FAR!
AND SO, IF I MODERNIZE, I'LL SCANDALIZE, NO COMPROMISE!
OH, I'LL HAVE A CHANGE! I'LL TURN BACK THE CLOCKS.
OH, I'LL BE SUCH A FOX. I'LL HAVE A CHANGE.
WHY SHOULD WE ALL HAVE TO BE ORTHODOX?
OH YEAH, EVERYBODY NEEDS A CHANGE!
IT'S SO NICE TO RE-ARRANGE!
OH, HE'LL FIX THESE BREASTS! WHO WANTS SECOND-BESTS!
THEY'LL PASS ALL THE TESTS!
OH, I CAN GET THE KNACK. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK!
HOPE HE'S NOT A QUACK! EVERYBODY NEEDS A CHANGE! *OLE!*

GEORGE (gesturing at his body) Well, apparently you won that round, didn't you?

ROSALIND Don't be a sore loser, George. Scars, wounds — they all pass with time.

GEORGE Do you know what you are?

ROSALIND I have a feeling you're going to tell me.

GEORGE You, my dear, are a conventional, role-playing, unliberated capon!

ROSALIND That kind of remark is why I don't want you around. You're pushy and intrusive — and suffer from far too much testosterone!

GEORGE Go on! Even a bad review — as long as you spell my name right! G-E-O-R —

ROSALIND Let me spell the ways — you're insensitive, demanding, jealous — and besides you're horny ail the time!

GEORGE You've forgotten ruthless, stubborn, loud, to say nothing of talented!

ROSALIND I don't want to argue or compete with you, George. You've had your years — your turn. Now I want my chance.

GEORGE But what do they want? (pointing to offstage audience)

(ROSALIND starts to get dressed.)

ROSALIND (singing)

JUST AS I AM

NO MATTER HOW PEOPLE TALK,
NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE PROBLEM,

Comeback

OR WHO MAY DISAGREE,
ALL I AM IS JUST ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SHOULD SAY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I CAN PROMISE.
WILL THEY LIKE WHAT THEY SEE?
ALL I AM IS JUST ME.
AND IF I SHOULD ASK YOU
IF YOU COULD LOVE ME,
OH PLEASE GOD, DON'T ANSWER
THAT YOU'RE SO SORRY.
FORGIVE ME IF I'M TOO PLAIN.
FORGIVE ME IF I'M NOT CAUTIOUS.
THAT'S THE WAY I MUST BE.
ALL I AM IS JUST ME.
I'M NOT AS BRAVE AS I SEEM.
I'M NOT SURE WHICH WAY IS FORWARD.
BUT I HOPE TO BE FREE.
ALL I AM IS JUST ME.
AND IF I SHOULD ASK YOU
IF YOU COULD LOVE ME,
OH PLEASE GOD, DON'T ANSWER
THAT YOU'RE SO SORRY.
PLEASE LOVE ME JUST AS I AM!
DON'T DESERT ME!
PLEASE LOVE ME JUST AS I AM!
AND DON'T HURT ME!
PLEASE LOVE ME JUST AS I AM.
FOR WITHOUT YOU I'M DAMNED!

GEORGE (Yawns.) Oh, is it finished? (Yawns again.)

ROSALIND Oh god, that might happen! Is there anything worse than offering yourself like some package of cookies on a shelf, and they put you back, and they put you back — shiny wrapper and all! (referring to her dress)

GEORGE (referring to his new body) It'll take more than a shiny new wrapper, cookie! Maybe if you stick with my hits, they'll pay attention. (sings)

THERE'S A GUY I KNOW!
GOT A BRAIN LIKE A DYNAMO!

ROSALIND That's not my style anymore, George.

GEORGE It worked before. What's wrong with it?

ROSALIND It's vulgar.

GEORGE Me vulgar?

ROSALIND An audience likes something new. Something artistic.

GEORGE Don't deceive yourself! (singing)

HOW TO SELL A SONG

IF YOU WANT TO SELL A SONG,
IF YOU WANT TO BE A HIT,
THERE'S ONE RULE YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW,
AND YOU'RE LOOKING RIGHT AT IT!
PUT AWAY THOSE STUFFY ART THINGS.
GIVE 'EM LOTS OF SUDS.
DO A NUMBER ON THEIR HEART-STRINGS.
EVERYBODY DOES.
IF YOU WANT TO BE A SMASH,
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE IT STICK,
GET YOURSELF SOME GREAT ARRANGEMENTS,
AND BE SURE TO MAKE 'EM SLICK.
GIVE 'EM CHRISTMAS. THROW IN NEW YEAR'S.
EVEN KISS THEIR KIDS.
HOWDY-DO'S AND HALLELUJAHS —
THAT'S THE WAY IT IS!

ROSALIND (singing)

TRUTH, WHY CAN'T THERE BE TRUTH?
IS IT ALL ILLUSIONS?
(I NEED SOME VERMOUTH.)
WHY CAN'T MY SONG JUST BE SMALL
IF THAT SIZE TELLS IT ALL?
CRASS, WHY MUST IT BE CRASS?
WILL EVERYTHING SHATTER
IF NOT MADE OF BRASS?
I'M SURE THEY WON'T HEAR A NOTE
WHEN YOU'VE DONE IT BY ROTE,
'CAUSE PEOPLE WON'T BELIEVE IN YOU!

GEORGE (singing)

LISTEN, SWEETIE! GET IT STRAIGHT.
FOLKS WON'T PAY FOR WHAT THEY HATE.
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE THE BUCKS,
GIVE 'EM GLITZ ALTHOUGH IT SUCKS.

ROSALIND (singing)

HE WHO SELLS COUNTERFEITS
ALWAYS A CRIME COMMITS.
MUST WE BE BOISTEROUS AND BRASH?
IT'S ONLY MERCHANDISE
WHEN IT'S BEEN MADE OF LIES.
CONNOSIEURS MIGHT CALL IT TRASH.

GEORGE (singing)

GET IT THROUGH YOUR LITTLE SKULL:
DRACHMAS DON'T COME IF YOU'RE DULL.

Comeback

BOSES DON'T CARE IF IT STINKS,
JUST AS LONG AS IT SELLS DRINKS.

ROSALIND (singing)

SINGERS IN CABARETS
WHO ACT LIKE SALOMES,
SERVING UP SONGS TILL YOU'RE DEAD,
FLAUNTING IN ALL THEIR SETS
SHOULD REALLY VEIL THEIR THREATS —
OR BE BEHEADED INSTEAD!

GEORGE (singing)

SELL IT HARD OR THEY WILL SNORE.

ROSALIND (singing)

MUST I SELL IT LIKE A WHORE?
I KNOW HOW TO SPILL MY GUTS.

GEORGE (singing)

BABE, YOU GOT TO GRAB THEIR NUTS!

ROSALIND (singing)

I KNOW JUST WHAT YOU MEAN.
YOU WANT IT PHILISTINE.
I WANT IT POLISHED AND FINE!

GEORGE (singing)

SINGERS WHO PACK THEIR SHOWS
KNOW HOW TO ACT LIKE PRO'S.

ROSALIND (singing)

THE WAY TO DO IT IS MINE!

GEORGE (singing)

THE WAY TO DO IT IS MINE!

BOTH (harmonizing)

THE WAY TO DO IT IS MINE!

(They laugh together as the song ends, showing a little camaraderie.)

GEORGE I've got the solution! Why don't we do a duo!

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

- ROSALIND Good try, George. But no thanks.
- GEORGE But I'm unemployed now — thanks to you. Give a guy a break!
- ROSALIND No, George!
- GEORGE (in mock agony) Please!
- ROSALIND I can't! Alex has you on his mind already — you bother him. You need to disappear once and for all.
- GEORGE But I have insights where men are concerned! Really! If you want to keep your lover, you'd better listen to old George.
- ROSALIND I'm afraid from now on, on and offstage, it's a one-woman show!
- GEORGE (pause) So — what's it like?
- ROSALIND What's what like?
- GEORGE Being a woman.
- ROSALIND Well, for one thing, people don't listen to you as much as they do when you're a man. (pointedly) For instance, they don't leave when you ask them to.
- GEORGE Is that a hint? You need me around, to remind you of things.
- ROSALIND Like what?
- GEORGE Well, it wasn't so long ago when some person of your description, as I recall, absent-mindedly found herself standing in front of a urinal in the men's room of a fashionable downtown restaurant.
- ROSALIND (brushing his hair) Á little slip. I'd had a little too much wine, that's all.
- GEORGE You don't really mind if I stay, do you? I won't be any trouble.
- ROSALIND You already are trouble.
- GEORGE Don't patronize me! I've asked you nicely.
- ROSALIND No.
- GEORGE Okay, Rosalind, if I can't make this comeback with you, you're not going to make it either!
- ROSALIND What are you talking about? You can't stop me.
- GEORGE Watch me! There's someone I'd like you to meet. (calling at the mirror) Ronnie?

Comeback

Scene 3

(The ASSISTANT enters through the mirror as RONNIE.)

ROSALIND (surprised) Ronnie! How are you?

RONNIE Hello, dad. I heard you're going to be in show business again.

ROSALIND Yes. (pause) I'm thinking about it.

RONNIE I suppose you want me to sit in the audience and say, "Hey, that's my mommy up there! *People* magazine might pick it up! Maybe you'll make the cover of *Time* — "Man of the Year"!"

ROSALIND Do you dislike me that much?

RONNIE It isn't pleasant being rejected — as you'll soon find out on stage.

ROSALIND I didn't reject you! When your mother died, I took you on the road with me. But you —

RONNIE But I what?

ROSALIND You became such a problem I couldn't take you anywhere, so I . . . so I —

RONNIE So you hired a keeper for the poor little monster. If you'd cared about me, you'd have gotten another kind of job and stayed home like a normal person. But why should I have expected anything from you? I'm only your only child!

ROSALIND When I did see you, you wouldn't let me touch you. I gave you pets and you mistreated them.

RONNIE Yeah, at least that was fun!

ROSALIND You would have driven me insane. We simply didn't get along.

RONNIE Parents are supposed to like their kids. It's considered a package deal! But your great "career" in plush beer joints — excuse me, champagne joints — was more important than me!

ROSALIND Sometimes we have to choose.

RONNIE I didn't have a choice. I didn't have a mother or a father. But lucky me — no, I have both! Hello — you mother-father! You think being a great performer is more important than any number of ordinary children.

ROSALIND That's not true. I'm not so sure I'm a great performer.

RONNIE Don't be so sure I'm so ordinary!

ROSALIND (gently) I never even thought it.

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

RONNIE Okay, okay, so it was the way I thought about myself, being compared to such a famous father.

ROSALIND We wanted things from each other we couldn't get — or give.

RONNIE Is that the most you can say?

ROSALIND (hurting) I hating to say it, but parents don't always love their children.

RONNIE Children don't always love their parents either!

ROSALIND (moving toward him) Ronnie, maybe I can . . .

GEORGE It's too late. He's grown up. You think you can make up for the past with a few motherly hugs now?

ROSALIND (singing)

TWO LULLABIES

WHEN YOU HUG ME IN THE DARK AND TELL ME YOU'RE NOT SCARED,
WHEN I TUCK YOU IN TO BED WITH STORIES WE HAVE SHARED,
WHEN YOU SLEEP UPON MY LAP, I ROCK YOU TO AND FRO,
WHEN YOUR FINGERS CLING TO MINE, THEN MOMMY LOVES YOU SO.
BUT THERE ARE THOSE OTHER TIMES,
THOUGH I LOVE YOU LOTS,
I TRY HARD TO KEEP THEM STILL,
BUT I HAVE OTHER THOUGHTS.

GEORGE (singing)

I DON'T MISS YOU AT ALL. I DON'T MISS YOU A TAT.
YOU ARE LAZY, DEFICIENT, A DUMPY LITTLE BRAT.
YOU WON'T EAT YOUR VEGIES. YOUR HAIR IS LANK AND LIMP.
TAKEN ALL TOGETHER, DEAR, YOU'RE SOMETHING OF A WIMP,
WHO'S GIVEN HIS FATHER JUST NOTHING BUT PAIN.
YOU NEED PSYCHOANALYSIS AND CRUTCHES FOR YOUR BRAIN.

ROSALIND (singing)

THEN YOU KISS ME ON THE CHEEK AND DRIVE AWAY THE ACHE.
THEN I REALIZE THAT KIDS CAN GIVE AND NOT JUST TAKE.
WHEN YOU LAUGH AND TICKLE ME AND SAY YOU THINK I'M FUN.
WHEN YOU SAY YOU LOVE ME TOO, I MELT 'CAUSE YOU'RE MY SON.
BUT THERE ARE THOSE OTHER TIMES,
THOUGH I LOVE YOU LOTS.
I TRY HARD TO KEEP THEM STILL,
BUT I HAVE OTHER THOUGHTS.

GEORGE (singing)

Comeback

I DON'T MISS YOU AT ALL. I DON'T MISS YOU ONE BIT.
YOU ARE GROUCHY, DEMANDING, AND ALWAYS IN A SNIT.
AND NO ONE CAN TELL YOU THE WAY YOU SHOULD BEHAVE.
YOU ARE UNHOUSEBREAKABLE AND SHOULD LIVE IN A CAVE,
WAY UP IN THE MOUNTAINS OR ELSE DOWN IN A HOLE.
TELL ME WHY MY DARLING CUPIE DOLL TURNED INTO SUCH A TROLL.

BOTH (singing)

SWEET AND SOUR'S WHAT YOU WERE,
THAT WE ALWAYS KNEW.

ROSALIND (singing)

FOR THE SWEET I GIVE YOU THANKS —

GEORGE (singing)

AND HOPE YOU HAVE KIDS TOO!

ROSALIND Now that you're grown up, Ron, can't we at least be friends?

RON You don't seem to realize. I don't approve of what you're doing. (angry) I don't approve! People know I'm George Smith's son. How do you think I'll feel when my father appears prancing around on the stage in a dress?

ROSALIND What am I supposed to say?

RON You don't have to say anything! Just let me say something. If you go out on that stage tonight, I'll never speak to you again! (Exiting through the mirror) Kisses on your opening, Rosalind!

GEORGE (with a double meaning) Yeah, kisses on your opening, Rosalind! Aren't you glad you became a "mother"? (ROSALIND stands looking after her son) Ros, what's wrong? We're all sure you did the right thing!

ROSALIND (with desperation) Alex! Alex! Where are you?

Scene 4

(ALEX appears through the lighted mirror. ROSALIND reaches for him. He reaches for her.)

GEORGE (stepping between them before their hands touch) (to ALEX) (singing)

HELLO, REMEMBER ME? HELLO, REMEMBER ME?

ALEX Yes. You're George Smith. We met.

GEORGE He remembers me, Rosalind!

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ROSALIND He remembers who you *were*.

GEORGE I loved you, a long time ago.

ALEX (uncomfortable because it's a man) You did?

GEORGE From afar. Didn't you notice?

ALEX Well, I don't know if . . .

ROSALIND But now I've changed. Utterly.

GEORGE No I haven't!

ALEX (confused) I see.

ROSALIND Do you think you could love me now?

GEORGE He remembers *me*, Rosalind, and he always will!

ROSALIND No! Alex, dance with me! Please.

ALEX Dance with you?

ROSALIND Let's try. Please. I want to be held.

(ALEX hesitantly takes her in his arms; they begin to dance.)

ROSALIND That's not me anymore!

GEORGE Ah, that could have been me. If only . . . If only . . .

GEORGE (singing)

I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE

I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE.
I WANTED SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T WANT ME.
NO QUARRELS OF COURSE. NO CHANCE FOR DIVORCE.
SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T START CAN'T FALL APART.
I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE.
I YEARNED FOR SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T NEED ME.
THE LITTLE TOY BOAT I SAILED WOULDN'T FLOAT.
I GUESS THOSE HOLIDAYS WERE JUST A PHASE.
EVERY NOW AND THEN I PAUSE
AND THINK ABOUT THE CAUSE,
AND WONDER IF YOU WONDER WHAT'S BECOME OF ME.

(GEORGE cuts in on ROSALIND, asking ALEX to dance. ALEX feels awkward, looks at ROSALIND, refuses, and disappears through the mirror.)

Comeback

ROSALIND Don't go! (singing second verse)

I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE.
I CRIED FOR SOMEONE WHO WOULDN'T TOUCH ME.
INSIDE THERE'S A BRUISE. HOW COULD YOU REFUSE?
HOW ODD THAT I SHOULD FEEL WHAT WASN'T REAL.
I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE.
I WANTED SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T WANT ME.
I HOPED WE WOULD DANCE, HAVE WINE AND ROMANCE.
THE WINE WAS LEMONADE. NO MUSIC PLAYED.
EVERY NOW AND THEN I PAUSE
AND PUT ASIDE APPLAUSE,
AND WONDER IF YOU WONDER WHAT WILL COME TO BE.
I MADE A FOOL OF MYSELF FOR LOVE —
NOW NOBODY FOOLS WITH ME.

GEORGE (gesturing after ALEX) And you made such a sweet couple too.

ROSALIND He'll come back. This is just a sad dream!

GEORGE Maybe he won't. I don't hear him pounding down your door. (referring to the real dressing room entrance) What can be keeping him?

ROSALIND I think I need a drink.

GEORGE A pick-me-up? I thought that was my song. I guess you can take the man out of the girl, but you can't take the drink out of the drunk!

ROSALIND Come to think of it, I'd better not.

GEORGE How about a tranquilizer?

ROSALIND How about a tranquilizer gun? I understand it works on elephants. It might even work on you!

GEORGE Roz, how unkind. No drinkee-poo?

ROSALIND I don't need that anymore!

GEORGE Right! You only needed booze and pills when you didn't know who you were. But now your sexual crisis is over — salvation through surgery. Goddamn, this gal's on the cutting edge of society — so to speak!

ROSALIND (shivering) Stop!

GEORGE Hey, somebody bring the lady a drink!

Scene 5

(The ASSISTANT enters through the lighted mirror as the PUSHER.)

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

PUSHER I'm wanted?

ROSALIND No thank you, Mr. Nice Guy.

PUSHER What's the matter? Chicken?

ROSALIND (for GEORGE'S benefit) No, capon, remember? (to PUSHER) I don't want one. Thanks.

GEORGE I don't want one either — I want a dozen!

ROSALIND (trying to move away, but the PUSHER blocks her path) Excuse me!

PUSHER Want to forget your problems?

ROSALIND Yes . . .

PUSHER Well then, maybe I can be of service! (Opens his coat and reveals an array of drugs)

ROSALIND No.

GEORGE Want a sniff?

PUSHER Want a snort?

GEORGE An upper?

PUSHER A downer?

GEORGE Some hash?

PUSHER Some smack?

GEORGE Some dreams — nice dreams?

PUSHER We have self-service here!

ROSALIND (tempted) . . . No! I've changed!

(GEORGE and the PUSHER offer alcohol and drugs as they sing with growing intensity:)

GEORGE AND PUSHER (singing)

WHIRLWIND

WHEN YOU'RE DEPRESSED, YOU CAN GET WIRED, (PUSHER)
WHEN YOU'RE ALONE, YOU'LL FEEL ADMIRER, (GEORGE)
IF YOU'RE AT WORK, YOU WON'T FEEL TIRED, (PUSHER)
IF YOU'RE IN LOVE, YOU'LL BE DESIRED! (GEORGE)

(LAUGH)

WHY DON'T YOU DO IT, HUH?
WHY DON'T YOU TRY SOME NOW! (BOTH)

Comeback

WHY DON'T YOU DO IT, HUH?
WHY DON'T YOU BUY SOME NOW!
WHEN YOU'RE AROUND, THERE'LL BE A FUROR, (GEORGE)
WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID, YOU'LL FEEL SECURER, (PUSHER)
IF YOU ARE WEAK, YOU'LL FEEL MUCH SURER, (GEORGE)
IF YOU ARE SOILED, YOU WILL FEEL PURER! (PUSHER)
(LAUGH)
WHY DON'T YOU DO IT, HUH?
WHY DON'T YOU TRY SOME NOW! (BOTH)
WHY DON'T YOU DO IT, HUH?
WHY DON'T YOU BUY SOME NOW!
WHEN YOU HAVE FOES, THEY'LL BE REFUTED, (GEORGE)
WHEN YOU HAVE FRIENDS, YOU'LL BE SALUTED, (GEORGE)
WHEN YOU'VE A HORN, IT WILL BE TOOTED, (PUSHER)
IF YOU ARE — (PUSHER)
OH, DON'T BE A PRUDE, LIKE SOME UGLY OLD MAIDEN AUNT. (GEORGE)
DON'T BE A PRIG WITH A FACE THAT IS GLUM AND GAUNT. (GEORGE)
DON'T BE A SQUARE. BE A REAL SWINGING BON VIVANT! (BOTH)

(ROSALIND joins the other two, singing.)

WHEN YOU ARE DAMP, YOU'LL BE IGNITED,
WHEN YOU ARE BORED, YOU'LL BE EXCITED.
IF YOU'RE DISMAYED, YOU'LL BE DELIGHTED,
IF THERE IS FUN, YOU'LL BE INVITED! (LAUGH)

(They fall dizzily to the floor laughing. Then ROSALIND's laugh turns into near-tears.)

PUSHER (offering drugs) What'll it be, lady?

ROSALIND (waving him away) Go away! Go away!

(The PUSHER looks at GEORGE, then slinks off through the mirror.)

GEORGE (offering his hand) Want some help?

ROSALIND (from the floor) I can make it. (out of breath) I'm stronger now.

GEORGE (sensitively) Just trying to help . . .

ROSALIND (quietly) You're ruining my life, George.

GEORGE No, you're ruining mine. I've gone from reviews in *The New York Times* to exposes in trashy tabloids.

ROSALIND It won't always be that way! I can be as big a star as you were, George. I'll make them forget you.

GEORGE I can see it now. The silver limousine arrives at Carnegie Hall. The star makes his way to the stage door surrounded by cheering throngs. Suddenly a break in the crowd — lights, camera, the eyes of the world are on you —

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

(Immediately the ASSISTANT enters through the mirror as a REPORTER.)

Scene 6

REPORTER Tell me, Ms. Smith, how does it feel to be back in the entertainment world?

ROSALIND (bravely) It's marvelous!

REPORTER We certainly missed you.

ROSALIND Thank you.

REPORTER The industry loves a new . . . face.

ROSALIND I'm hoping.

REPORTER (fawning) You're my favorite entertainer. I saw you in Vegas when I was a teenager.

ROSALIND (looking at GEORGE, who points to himself) How nice.

GEORGE Yes, yes, but how is your . . . health?

ROSALIND I feel like a million dollars!

GEORGE But then money isn't what it used to be, is it?

REPORTER Do you feel you have as much to offer the public as you used to?

GEORGE She gave up a lot for her new career!

ROSALIND Oh, George, it wasn't that big!

GEORGE (getting back at her) I've always thought it rather pitiful the way some performers will go to any extreme to get back into the public eye, don't you?

(The REPORTER is taking notes.)

ROSALIND George always says the right thing!

GEORGE How kind of you to notice, Roz. I take it all back. It's not pitiful at all. It's cute!

ROSALIND Cute?

GEORGE Yes, has-been ladies prancing about the stage, croaking out the latest teenybopper fad. So dignified, don't you think? And now that we have a lady who used to be a gentleman, well, it's the best thing to happen since . . . since —

ROSALIND Barnum and Bailey? (aside) I can't go through with this.

REPORTER Tell us, Ms. Smith, is it true you started your career as a bearded lady in a freak show?

Comeback

ROSALIND No, but I did do a little American television.

REPORTER Isn't it true that you performed in carnivals in Singapore?

GEORGE And didn't you entertain the troops in the Franco-Prussian War?

ROSALIND And I thought they'd forgotten me!

REPORTER Ms. Smith, we'd like a few details about your —

GEORGE Yes, every single morsel!

ROSALIND (backing off) Well, I'm not sure that —

REPORTER Now don't be coy. Just a few intimate — very intimate — questions?

GEORGE Of course! Ms. Smith is the epitome of graciousness. Just how old are you?

REPORTER How many times have you been wed?

GEORGE How many lovers have walked out your door?

ROSALIND Please! I feel faint.

REPORTER Do you sleep by yourself in a great big bed?

GEORGE Do you like consenting sex, or do you prefer to be forced?

REPORTER How much money do you make?

GEORGE Are those eyelashes also fake?

REPORTER Do you have habits that might be considered exotic?

ROSALIND Please!

GEORGE (waving a tabloid) The public wants to know!

REPORTER (waving his notepad) The public has its rights!

GEORGE How many nervous breakdowns have you had?

REPORTER Do you have fits?

ROSALIND Wait!

GEORGE What brand of silicone are your tits?

ROSALIND What!

GEORGE (waving the tabloid) Answer the questions!

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

REPORTER (waving the notepad) Answer the questions!

GEORGE/
REPORTER Answer the questions!

ROSALIND I'm getting ill —

REPORTER Do you read Charles Dickens?

GEORGE (to REPORTER) Now you're going too far!

REPORTER Do you think you're as beautiful as Venus?

GEORGE Is it true that you still have your p —

ROSALIND Stop!

REPORTER/
GEORGE Do you —

ROSALIND (running away) No — no — no!

REPORTER/
GEORGE (following her relentlessly, speaking alternately) Do you? Do you? Do you? Do you?
(together, disgusted) . . . You *do*?

(The scandalized reporter leaves through the mirror.)

GEORGE (gently) The public has its rights.

ROSALIND The public thinks it owns you, but what do they know? What do they see in the spotlight? An image. Do they know me personally? My friends! Of course! They'll stand by me.

(She holds out his arm to the mirror, anticipating a warm welcome.)

Scene 7

ROSALIND Hello!

(The ASSISTANT as the FRIEND enters through the mirror, then walks right past ROSALIND, who was prepared to hug him.)

FRIEND (to GEORGE) Good to see you, buddy! (holds out his hand to shake)

GEORGE (pointing to ROSALIND) I'm over there.

FRIEND (startled) What?

ROSALIND I've changed.

Comeback

FRIEND My goodness, what have you done to yourself!

GEORGE It's a little surprise! Like what you see?
(The FRIEND makes some inarticulate noises, speechless.)

GEORGE (to ROSALIND) He's speechless, Rosalind.

ROSALIND (to FRIEND) Well, how have *you* been?

FRIEND George, could I have a word with you? (confidentially) Did you really have to go that far? I mean, it's one thing to wear new fashions, or even change your hair style. But if you ask me, changing your whole body seems like showing off. For god's sake, why?

ROSALIND My reasons were personal.

FRIEND Believe me, I wasn't asking to hear the gory details! (to GEORGE) I'm sorry, I've got to get out of here. I hope you understand, George. (Starts to leave.)

GEORGE I understand completely.

FRIEND (coming back) There are a couple of things, if you don't mind.

GEORGE Yes?

FRIEND (to ROSALIND) Well, did they take your . . . you know, and put it where your . . . you know is?

ROSALIND (patient) . . . I really can't remember.

FRIEND My god! Wait till I tell 'em this! (He leaves, shaking his head, trying to stifle his snickers.)

ROSALIND Do you think he wants me to break a leg tonight?

GEORGE Both legs.

ROSALIND Who needs 'em!

ROSALIND (singing)

FRIENDS

I'VE HAD SOME FRIENDS, BUT I'VE ALWAYS HAD TO BUY 'EM.
I'VE HAD SOME FRIENDS, BUT NOBODY I COULD TRUST.
I NEEDED THEM, BUT WHAT DID THEY CARE.
THEY CAME AROUND IF THE WEATHER WAS FAIR.
I TAKE IT BACK — THEY LIKED ME WHEN I DID FAVORS.
I TAKE IT BACK — THEY LOVED ME WHEN I HAD CASH.
I FELT THE WARMTH IN OTHERS, YOU SEE.
I THOUGHT WE HAD A SPECIAL ESPRIT.
WHO GIVES A DAMN! KNOW WHO I AM!

SO NOW I'M COUNTING, I'M COUNTING ON ME!

NOW I'M NOT SO DUMB! I'M MY ONLY CHUM! NOT SOME OTHER CRUMB!
FRIENDS — THEY CAN MAKE YOU CRAWL! THEY CAN BE SO SMALL!
YOU CAN HAVE 'EM ALL!

I'VE HAD SOME FRIENDS! YEAH, I'VE HAD JUST ONE TOO MANY!
I'VE HAD SOME FRIENDS! YEAH, I'VE HAD 'EM UP TO HERE!
I'LL LOVE MYSELF INSTEAD OF THOSE CREEPS.
I'LL LOVE MYSELF. THEN I'LL KNOW IT'S FOR KEEPS.
I'LL GET ALONG AND WON'T HAVE TO COUNT ON NO ONE.
I'VE GET ALONG AND WON'T HAVE TO GIVE A DAMN.
ALL THAT YOU GET FROM PEOPLE IS PAIN.
THEY LIKE YOU BEST WHEN YOU OPEN A VEIN.
WHO CAN I TELL TO GO TO HELL?
PEOPLE JUST DRIVE ME, THEY DRIVE ME INSANE!

NOW I'M NOT SO DUMB! I'M MY ONLY CHUM! NOT SOME OTHER CRUMB!
FRIENDS — THEY CAN MAKE YOU CRAWL! THEY CAN BE SO SMALL.
YOU CAN HAVE 'EM! YOU CAN HAVE 'EM! YOU CAN HAVE 'EM ALL!

GEORGE (at the end of her outburst) Feel better?

ROSALIND No.

GEORGE Take me with you. It'll be easier. We'll make new friends. We'll get a new lover.
Forget Alex. We'll get somebody who likes three-ways!

ROSALIND Maybe it's too late to start over again. Maybe I'm too old. Maybe I should just
quit. I think I've lost Alex. And I'm a joke to most people, including you.

GEORGE That's why you need a pal in your hour of need. Walk through that storm! Climb
every mountain — that kind of stuff!

ROSALIND And you want to help me out of the goodness of your heart, right?

GEORGE Ros, of course! What else? I'm thinking only of you!

ROSALIND You are so full of —

GEORGE (breaking in) (singing)

COMEBACK

(GEORGE) BREAK A LEG! (ROSALIND) (I'LL BREAË MY NECK!
(GEORGE) BUT YOU'LL COME BACK! YEAH, YOU'LL COME BACK!
(GEORGE) YOU'LL BE GREAT! (ROSALIND) I'LÌ BE DRECK!
(GEORGE) NO, YOU'LL COME BACK! (ROSALIND) SHOULD I COME BACK?
(ROSALIND) WHAT SHOULD I DO TO FIND MY NICHE?
IT'S AWFULY HARD TO MAKE A SWITCH!
(GEORGE) GO FOR BROKE! (ROSALIND) GO AWAY!

Comeback

(GEORGE) BUT I'LL COME BACK! YEAH, I'LL COME BACK! YOU'RE THE BEST!

(ROSALIND) YOU'RE PASSE!

(GEORGE) NO, I'LL COME BACK! (ROSALIND) SHOULD HE COME BACK?

(ROSALIND) HOW CAN I TELL WHICH ROAD TO TAKE?

WHAT IF IT'S ALL A BIG MISTAKE!

(GEORGE) HEY THERE! BE THE LUCKY ONE, DEAR!

HEY THERE! WHY NOT HAVE SOME FUN, DEAR!

(ROSALIND) BAD THINGS GATHER LIKE CLOUDS IN BAD WEATHER.

(GEORGE) GOOD THINGS HAPPEN WHEN YOU GO AND GRAB 'EM!

WE CAN WIN, HIT THE TOP!

YEAH, WE'LL COME BACK! GOD, WE'LL COME BACK!

(ROSALIND) SHUT YOUR MOUTH! WE'RE A FLOP!

SHOULD I COME BACK? SHOULD I COME BACK?

(GEORGE) WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU MUST SUFFICE.

IF YOU ARE WISE TAKE MY ADVICE.

(ROSALIND) YOU ARE RIGHT! I'M MYSELF!

SO I'LL COME BACK! YEAH, I'LL COME BACK!

(GEORGE) YOU'D BE WRONG BY YOUSELF.

LET ME COME BACK!

(ROSALIND) NO, I'LL COME BACK! I'LL TAKE THE WORLD
AND MAKE IT TWIRL! NOBODY HERE CAN STOP THIS GIRL!

HEY THERE! I'M THE LUCKY ONE, DEAR!

HEY THERE! I'LL BE HAVING FUN, DEAR!

(GEORGE) BAD THINGS GATHER LIKE CLOUDS IN BAD WEATHER.

(ROSALIND) GOOD THING HAPPEN WHEN YOU GO AND GRAB 'EM!

(GEORGE) YOU'LL COME BACK — CRYING!

(ROSALIND) NO, I'LL COME BACK — SMILING AND PROUD!

GEORGE Rosalind, how can I put it so you'll understand? (emphasizing each word) They don't want you!

(The ASSISTANT enters as the STAGE MANAGER.)

ASSISTANT (at door, with telegram) Telegram, Ms. Smith!

(ROSALIND grabs it and tears it open.)

GEORGE Well?

ROSALIND It's from my agent. (reads) "Best wishes . . ." They want me in New York . . . if tonight goes all right.

GEORGE (Leading her) And if it doesn't?

ROSALIND He has another offer.

GEORGE Did he say where?

ROSALIND I didn't look.

GEORGE (forcing) Where?

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ROSALIND (looking at the telegram) It's a . . . It's called . . . the Club Sideshow.

GEORGE (chuckling) A nice place?

ROSALIND Maybe I won't have to take it.

GEORGE I've played some pretty bad places in my day. I wouldn't mind.

ROSALIND I would! I'm not playing in some dive, where they gawk at me and keep calling me George all night long!

GEORGE You'll take it and you'll be grateful. You got me into this — with you whacking away at my body — no, my soul! But it's not too late. I'm still alive. You haven't cut me out of your life entirely yet!

ROSALIND I'm going out there alone, George.

GEORGE No you're not!

ROSALIND Alone. It's over, George. It's over! It's over!

GEORGE No, Rosalind, it's not over. Those people out there are always going to wonder what happened to George! (passing back through the mirror) (in a whisper) Always! Always! (Exits.)

(ROSALIND is left alone, uncertain, as the lights fade.)

END OF ACT I

Intermission

Comeback

ACT II

Scene 1

(ROSALIND is discovered in the same position as at the end of Act I. GEORGE is gone. The ASSISTANT enters through the dressing room door as the STAGE MANAGER.)

STAGE

MANAGER Five minutes, Ms. Smith! Do you need some help?

ROSALIND No, thank you. I'll be fine.

(The STAGE MANAGER nods and leaves.)

ROSALIND (to herself) What if it doesn't go well tonight? Can anyone ever really change, fundamentally? Or is it just a desperate wish?

ROSALIND (singing)

DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOURSELF

DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOURSELF. DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE YOU.
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED OF TRYING. DON'T BE SCARED OF THE NEW.

IF YOU FIND IT HARD FLYING, JUST REMEMBER THAT VIEW!
DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOURSELF. DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE PAST.
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED OF LIVING. DON'T BE SCARED YOU WON'T
LAST.

CAN'T SPEND LIFE IN MISGIVING, FOR YOUR FUTURE IS VAST!
PEOPLE MAY WANT TO MOCK.
YOU MAY BE TEMPTED TO QUIT.
YOU'LL BE A LAUGHING STOCK —
IF YOU SHOULD BOW YOUR HEAD AND SUBMIT!
DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOURSELF. DON'T BR AFRAID TO BE GREAT.
THE BEST IS WHAT WE CREATE!
SO DON'T WAIT — DON'T LIMIT YOUR SCOPE!
I AM SURE YOU CAN COPE.
NO ONE CAN LIVE — AND LIVE WITHOUT HOPE!

(At the end of the song ROSALIND hears interior bar sounds, raucous laughter. The noise grows louder.)

(Reluctantly ROSALIND approaches the mirror since the lights have begun to pulsate and chase each other like those at the entrance to a night club.)

ROSALIND Is anyone there? Hello? Can you tell me the name of this club?

(The ASSISTANT immediately stumbles through the mirror as a drunk, scaring ROSALIND.)

DRUNK Club Sideshow, baby. Want a little side action? (He grabs her arm.)

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ROSALIND Let go, please!

DRUNK What's wrong? You don't like me?

ROSALIND Let go.

DRUNK I asked if you liked me!

ROSALIND Please!

GEORGE (unseen, over loudspeaker) Need any help, my womanly friend?

ROSALIND No! (She manages to break free of the DRUNK, who lunges for her. As she steps to the side, he falls back through the mirror.)

GEORGE (over loudspeaker) All you have to do is ask, and I'll come running!

ROSALIND (sings to herself to build up her courage)

DON'T BE AFRAID OF YOURSELF!
DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE YOU!

(She walks boldly up to the mirror.) Hello? I'm here!

(The lights flash like those of a marquee.)

GEORGE (popping out of the mirror as a sleazy producer in a carny coat and derby) Hi, toots!
(The lights stop flashing.)

ROSALIND Is this the Club Sideshow? I'm supposed to sing here . . .

GEORGE You the broad what's had the change?

ROSALIND (nervous) Ah . . . ah . . .

GEORGE Okay, okay, let's see your . . . vocal arrangements. (pause) Your legs! Your legs!

ROSALIND (smiling) What key are my legs in?

GEORGE You don't still got hair on 'em, do you? Ha, ha, ha! (Checking her out, touching her.)
You take all your clothes off at the end of your act and strike a pose, right?

ROSALIND I don't undress, I'm afraid.

GEORGE Never? You sleep in your clothes? Ha, ha, ha! You expect our customers to pay good money just to hear you sing?

ROSALIND Well, I thought that —

GEORGE Come on! I ain't got all day. Let's see what you got to offer. And it better be commercial!
Okay, Max!

Comeback

(A spotlight hits ROSALIND. Nervously she begins to sing her new song in the harsh light, without accompaniment.)

ROSALIND (timidly) “A butterfly can fly at night. Her dazzling wings will give her light. And when it’s time she’ll take her flight. She’ll do it! She’ll do it!”

GEORGE (simultaneously, like a barker) Ladies and gents, feast your eyes on this! Is it a man? Is it a woman? Is it a human being? Hurry, hurry, hurry! She walks. She talks. She does the Hawaiian hula!

(ROSALIND attempts a timid hula.)

Is that it? You call *that* an act?

ROSALIND Well . . .

GEORGE Listen good! If you’ve got something people want to see, they’ll pay big money to catch a gander. And if I’m any judge of character — and I am — I think you’ve got potential. With your natural equipment, or whatever, you could go to the very top!

ROSALIND I could?

GEORGE And when you get there —

(ALEX enters through the mirror in a tuxedo and sings with GEORGE, both centering their attention on ROSALIND.)

GEORGE (singing)

SUCCESS

THERE’S NOTHING LIKE SUCCESS, AND I MEAN NOTHING LESS.
THE FAME, THE FORTUNE I MUST CONFESS
HAVE MADE YOU EVERYTHING YOU ARE RIGHT NOW.

ALEX (singing)

NO SHYNESS WHEN YOU START. PUT GLAMOUR IN THE PART.
THE FEARS, THE THROBBING WITHIN YOUR HEART
CAN TURN TO MAGIC WHEN YOU SHOW ‘EM HOW.

GEORGE (singing)

NICE TO STRUT AND NICE TO LAUGH AND NICE TO TRAVEL FAR.
NICE TO SIGN YOUR AUTOGRAPH — I MEAN WHEN YOU’RE A STAR.

ALEX (singing)

YOUR LIMOUSINE’S NOT COLD, NOR IS YOUR CHAUFFEUR OLD.
THE ROYAL CARPET HAS BEEN UNROLLED,

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

GEORGE (singing)

AND WHEN IT COMES TO TROUBLES YOU HAVE NONE.

ALEX (singing)

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE, WE'LL SEE YOU ON THE STAGE.
YOUR SEXY AURA IS ALL THE RAGE.

GEORGE (singing)

AND YOU KNOW YOU ARE CLEARLY NUMBER ONE.

BOTH (singing)

THOUGH YOU MAY THINK YOU ARE CRAZY, ACTING RATHER BOLD,
WHAT'S THE USE IN BEING LAZY WHEN YOU'RE GROWING OLD!

ALEX (singing)

NOT AN HOUR AND NOT A DAY AND NOT A YEAR GOES BY

GEORGE (singing)

THAT SOME HUNKY GUY WON'T SAY I'LL LOVE YOU TILL I DIE!
SO LET THE MUSIC PLAY. BE AVANT GARDE, RISQUE.
THE JOY, THE SPARKLE ARE HERE TO STAY.

ALEX (singing)

YOU'VE COME TO PACK THE HOUSE AND MAKE THEM CHEER.
WE KNOW IT'S SURE BEEN ROUGH, WITH TEARS AND ALL THAT STUFF.

GEORGE (singing)

BUT ONCE YOU'VE MADE IT THEY KISS YOUR DUFF!
THE WAY TO DO IT IS TO BE SINCERE.

BOTH (singing)

THOUGH YOU HAVE TO KNOCK A FEW RIGHT ON THEIR DERRIERS,
TALENT JUST COMES PUSHING THROUGH AND KICKS THEM DOWN THE
STAIRS.

GEORGE (singing)

THERE'S NOT A THING TO LOSE.

ALEX (singing)

YOU'LL NEVER GET THE BLUES.

Comeback

GEORGE (singing)
YOU'RE MUCH TOO BUSY WITH INTERVIEWS.

ALEX (singing)
YES, ALL OF THIS CAN GIVE YOUR LIFE SOME ZING.
SO BE A STAR TODAY. GET ON THAT GREAT WHITE WAY.

GEORGE (singing)
AND MAKE THEM HAPPY THEY HAD TO PAY.

ALEX (singing)
YES, MAKE THEM GLAD THEY CAME TO HEAR YOU SING.

BOTH (singing)
THOUGH YOU THINK YOUR GREAT ROMANCES CANNOT BE OUTDONE,
FIDDLING WITH YOUR FINANCES GUARANTEES MORE FUN.

ROSALIND (caught up, joining in)
WOULD I DO IT ALL AGAIN JUST TO ATTAIN SUCCESS?
LET ME SAY IT WITH A GRIN. THE ANSWER'S YES, YES, YES!

GEORGE (singing)
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE SUCCESS, TO BRING AROUND THE PRESS,
AND FAME AND FORTUNE DONE TO EXCESS
CAN MAKE YOU PLEASED YOU TURNED OUT JUST LIKE ME!
SO PUT YOUR BEST FACE ON. REMEMBER, LIFE'S A CON.

ROSALIND (singing)
BESIDES, NEXT CENTURY WE'LL ALL BE GONE!

ALEX (singing)
LET'S ALL BE EVERYTHING WE WANT TO BE!

ALL THREE (singing)
LET'S ALL BE EVERYTHING WE WANT TO BE! SUCCESS!

ROSALIND It sounds fantastic!

GEORGE Maybe I can squeeze you in. You like animals?

ROSALIND What?

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

GEORGE I've got a donkey that just may like your type. He's very personable, for a donkey. In time you'll grow to like him too!

ROSALIND Ha! Ha! Ha! (She imitates his laugh.) You *are* kidding, aren't you?

GEORGE You a troublemaker?

ROSALIND (to herself) No, it won't be like this! I won't let it.

GEORGE (as himself) Cross your heart and hope to die?

ROSALIND Yes! Yes! (She crosses her heart.)

GEORGE Sorry, it's out of your hands! They don't allow criminals to appear in that club.

ROSALIND Criminal?

(GEORGE forcibly moves ROSALIND with her back to the dressing room door. He puts her arms behind her back as if putting on handcuffs and then puts a blindfold on her.)

Scene 2

(The ASSISTANT as the WITNESS enters through the mirror and marches downstage opposite ROSALIND.)

ROSALIND (blindfolded) George?

GEORGE Company, ready!

(The WITNESS stands at attention.)

ROSALIND George!

GEORGE Does the convict wish to say a few words before we proceed?

ROSALIND Convict? I didn't even get a trial?

GEORGE Formalities! Formalities!

ROSALIND Can't I at least know what I'm accused of?

GEORGE The damsel in distress wants to know what she's accused of! Step forward!

WITNESS (as the son) She neglected her only child! (Steps back.)

GEORGE She was a drunk — and a druggie! (Steps back.)

GEORGE Step forward!

Comeback

WITNESS She embarrassed her friends! (Steps back.)

GEORGE Step forward! (He steps back and then forward again quickly.)

GEORGE She couldn't keep her lover! (Steps back.)

ROSALIND But Alex loves me! He'll come back!

GEORGE Will he? He can't love you unless he loves me as well.

ROSALIND I'll make him forget you. I killed you! I killed you!

GEORGE Ah, hah! You've heard it from her own mouth. (Steps forward.) She murdered George Smith!

ROSALIND I won't listen!

GEORGE Of course you won't! It's the truth!

ROSALIND It's not the whole truth! Won't anybody speak up for me? (Silence.) Nobody?

GEORGE There *is* one character witness.

ROSALIND Who is it?

GEORGE Me.

ROSALIND I don't think I want to hear anything more you have to say.

GEORGE Ladies and gentlemen of the Firing Squad, what do you see before you? Exhibit A — one Rosalind Smith. All woman! Now I ask you — is this all-woman all bad? Of course she isn't! Just because she destroyed my career and my life and now wants to eradicate every trace of my existence, should we be angry with her? Of course not! She knows what she's doing! She's always known, hasn't she? Her whole life has been one long mess, and now she thinks she's going to solve everything by running away from it. I rest my case! Ready, aim . . . (Drum roll.)

ROSALIND (tearing off the blindfold) No!

GEORGE Any last words?

ROSALIND I won't die for you, George! When you accuse me, you accuse yourself! I won't be guilty of *your* crimes! I won't let my life end! Man or woman, I don't want to be the kind of person you are!

GEORGE There was nothing wrong with the way I was! Don't you try to shift the blame to me.

ROSALIND Can't you see yourself? You don't even need this (meaning the blindfold) in order not to see. You're so stubborn and unsubtle. It's always attack, attack. You were the one who hated your son! You were the one who drank and drugged yourself so that no one could

stand to be around you! Why don't you put yourself in front of the firing squad? Why not?
Aren't you man enough for that?

GEORGE But I'm not like that . . . I'm not like . . .

ROSALIND You're not? Just what are you, George?

GEORGE (singing)

WHAT MEMORY KNOWS

I WISH I COULD, I WISH I COULD JUST TELL MYSELF SOME LIES.
I WAS A SAINT, I WAS SO GOOD, I SHOULD HAVE WON A PRIZE.
THE FUN, THE FUN, BUT NOT THE BLUES.
THE PICK-ME-UPS, BUT NOT THE BOOZE.
ONLY THE BEST! DISCARD THE REST!
I WISH I COULD, I WISH I COULD JUST TELL MYSELF SOME LIES.
I WAS A SAINT, I WAS SO GOOD, NO NEED FOR ALIBIS.
THE UPS, THE UPS, AND ALL THE THRILLS.
THE PARTIES, YES, BUT NOT THE PILLS.
OH, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT WASN'T ME!
HOW CAN WE WARM WHAT MEMORY CHILLS?

I THINK THERE MUST — THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME GOOD AMONG
THE BAD.

I'M SURE THERE WAS, THERE HAD TO BE, SO WHY DO I FEEL SAD?
THE HEIGHTS, THE HEIGHTS, BUT NOT THE DOUBTS.
THE WINDFALLS, YES, BUT NOT THE DROUGHTS.
WHAT I REGRET I MUST FORGET!

I THINK THERE MUST, THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME GOOD AMONG THE
BAD.

I'M SURE THERE WAS, THERE HAD TO BE, SO WHY DON'T I FEEL GLAD?
I MUST, I MUST REMEMBER THOSE, THE SUMMERS, YES, BUT NOT THE
SNOWS.

THE GOOD — THAT'S ALL I MUST RECALL!
HOW CAN WE SOOTHE WHAT MEMORY KNOWS?

ROSALIND (bringing ALEX from the mirror) George, there's someone here who wants to talk
with you.

GEORGE (subdued) Oh?

ALEX Hello.

GEORGE Hello.

ALEX I feel sort of awkward.

GEORGE So do I.

Comeback

ALEX I just wanted to say that I love Rosalind very much. Very much. (looks at her) I'd never been as happy with anyone as I was with her, until I read that story in the newspaper. I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to believe it! I won't lie. It does make a difference. A tremendous difference. When I kiss her, when we make love, I can't help remembering who she . . . So I guess I just want to say that I understand. You don't want to die. It's perfectly understandable. I think you belong more to her than I do, and so I'm . . . so I'm giving you to each other. Be happy together! Goodbye. . . . Goodbye, Rosalind.

(ALEX kisses her quickly and leaves through the mirror.)

GEORGE Are you trying to make me noble, Rosalind?

ROSALIND What do you mean?

GEORGE Aren't I supposed to be magnanimous now and call Alex back and give up my place to him? Because he loves you more than I do, I should surrender, and let you two be happy. I know what your ploy is, and yet the funny thing is . . . I'm considering it. Out with the old, in with the new. Love instead of . . . whatever it is I am.

ROSALIND Would you, George? Would you?

GEORGE I may do it. But I want you to ask yourself something first? Are you willing?

ROSALIND I'm willing . . .

GEORGE What if, once I'm gone, completely gone, and you're completely you, it's still *not* enough? What then?

ROSALIND That won't happen.

GEORGE (softly) Yes, it might. And you know it.

ROSALIND George, why must you always . . . (softly) Yes, it might. And I know it. My life might fall apart. No audiences, or insulting ones. Alex rejecting me. And then even you'll be gone. With me alone, growing older and older. Oh, it could happen! I know that.

(She takes GEORGE's hand. Together they sing:)

THE DAY THAT WE DIE

ROSALIND (singing)

SOMEDAY THERE MUST COME THE MOMENT
WHEN WE ASK THE QUESTION
AND WE STARE AT THE SKY,
FOR WE WONDER WHAT DAY IT WILL BE,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE.

GEORGE (singing)

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

SOMETIME WE BEGIN TO NOTICE
AS THE YEARS REMAKE US,
AND WE MUST PONDER WHY,
AND WE WORRY ABOUT WHERE WE'LL BE,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE.

ROSALIND (singing)

WILL WE SIT AROUND GROWN USELESS,
PARALYZED AND HOPELESS,
JUST TOO TRAMPLED TO TRY.

GEORGE (singing)

WITH OUR FUTURE NOW LOST IN THE PAST,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE.

ROSALIND (singing)

WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHERE DO WE GO?
IF IT GETS WORSE, WHO SHOULD WE CURSE?

GEORGE (singing)

WILL YOU BE YOU? WILL I BE ME?
I GUESS WE'LL SEE.

ROSALIND (singing)

DO WE ALWAYS WIND UP LONELY?
IF YOU KNOW DON'T TELL ME.
I PREFER THAT YOU LIE.
ARE WE HUGGED BY SOME VISITING NURSE,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE?

GEORGE (singing)

NO ONE GETS ALL THAT HE WANTED.
ONLY DISAPPOINTED.
WAS HE AIMING TOO HIGH?
MUST WE LIVE WITH A FISTFUL OF DUST,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE?

ROSALIND (singing)

SHOULD WE FIGHT IT OR SURRENDER?
SHOULD WE TRY TO LINGER? SHOULD WE COWER AND CRY?

GEORGE (singing)

Comeback

OR PERHAPS WE MUST LIVE WITH THE TRUTH,
THE DAY THAT WE DIE.

ROSALIND (singing)

WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHERE DO WE GO?

GEORGE (singing)

HOW DO WE END?

ROSALIND (singing)

COULD BE WE BLEND.

GEORGE (singing)

WILL I BE YOU?

ROSALIND (singing)

WILL YOU BE ME?

BOTH (harmonizing)

I GUESS WE'LL SEE.

ROSALIND How about a compromise?

GEORGE What do you have in mind?

ROSALIND It may mean losing Alex, but I'll accept you — if you'll accept me.

GEORGE But I accept you!

ROSALIND No you don't. No you *don't*!

GEORGE What do I have to do?

ROSALIND I'm probably asking the impossible.

GEORGE Oh no, not another sex change?

ROSALIND Do you know you always use jokes to get out of things?

GEORGE Sorry, hereafter I'll try to be somber.

ROSALIND Not somber . . .

GEORGE What then?

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ROSALIND I want you to . . . like me, George.

GEORGE Like you? How do I like thee? Let me count the ways! (realizing he is joking his way out of the situation again) Sorry! Let me re-phrase that. Ah. . . (Can't think of anything.)

ROSALIND That's what I've felt ail along. You're saying that you don't like what you've become.

GEORGE How do I answer that? What am I going to do now? Go back? There's no going back. We both know that. It's all done. The only question is . . . to be Rosalind or not to be . . . sorry.

ROSALIND (realizing it more fully) You *really* don't like me, do you?

GEORGE (examining her face seriously) It's just a *question*, Rosalind. I recall a very unhappy boy named George, who lived in a place far, far away from here. And this George was unhappy because he felt like a changeling — a child taken from its rightful place and left with a family that's not really his. And so he decided to make everything . . . change. He would find where he belonged. No matter how difficult, no matter how far. And when this boy reached his destination, what did he find? (touching her face) Himself? Or had he passed into the wrong country? Maybe even into enemy territory? . . . I just want to be sure that the country I'm going to live in for the rest of my life is better than the one I left behind.

ROSALIND It's better, George. It's better.

GEORGE Is it? (searching her eyes, then kissing her deeply) . . . I guess I'm Rosalind.

ROSALIND (kissing him) I guess I'm George.

(The ASSISTANT knocks at the dressing room door as the STAGE MANAGER.)

STAGE

MANAGER One minute, Ms. Smith!

ROSALIND It's time to go. (Gives final touches to herself.)

GEORGE (also primping) Am I fabulous?

ROSALIND How do I look?

GEORGE (adding finishing touches to ROSALIND'S makeup) Let's hope!

(ALEX enters through the dressing room door.)

ALEX Rosalind? (seeing that she is about to go on stage) I can come back later.

ROSALIND It can wait. (Afraid to bring up the subject) How are you?

ALEX Better. I'm sorry I ran out before. It knocked the wind out of me, that's all.

ROSALIND What do you think will happen to us?

Comeback

ALEX I was going to ask you the same thing.

ROSALIND George isn't going to go away, not completely.

GEORGE I won't be around that much! Just a teeny weenie bit — I promise!

ALEX (to ROSALIND) Maybe we should take some time and get to know each other — again.

ROSALIND Maybe so. For the first time.

ALEX I like playing Scrabble, and tossing a Frisbee around the yard, and reading the Sunday paper on this small bench I have in my back garden.

ROSALIND Do you? I like long walks and listening to old records. But then you know that, don't you?

ALEX Yeah, I know that . . .

ROSALIND Do you want to talk later?

ALEX I'm afraid, Rosalind.

ROSALIND Of what?

ALEX Of other things you may not have told me . . .

ROSALIND We'll have to talk, and say everything, everything!

ALEX I do love you — I think it was you.

ROSALIND Will you promise to come back afterwards?

ALEX That's not too much to ask. I'm come back, and we'll talk . . . we'll talk . . .

ROSALIND Wish me . . .

ALEX Of course . . . (He exits through the dressing room door.)

STAGE
MANAGER (entering) You're on, Ms. Smith!

(GEORGE hears the message, hurries to the door and begins to exit.)

ROSALIND (stopping him) George!

GEORGE Sorry!

(GEORGE steps back, gesturing for her to pass in front of him. We see bright light streaming in, hear the audience clapping rhythmically, to encourage ROSALIND to enter. ROSALIND walks toward the door and then through. GEORGE starts to follow her, then stops, goes back and retrieves his picture from the trash, puts it back on the wall, and hurries after ROSALIND as the lights fade to black.)

Collected Plays of Daniel Curzon

ANNOUNCER (played by the ASSISTANT over a loudspeaker) Ladies and gentlemen, the
(name of the theater) is proud to present Ms. Rosalind Smith!

ROSALIND (in a spotlight, surrounded by black) It's good to be b— (Starts to say 'back' but doesn't.)
. . . to be here. I'd like to dedicate my first song to someone special, someone who will
always be a part of my life — Mr. George Smith! (Looks over her shoulder.) Wherever
he is.

ROSALIND (singing)

GO DO IT

A BUTTERFLY CAN FLY AT NIGHT.
HER DAZZLING WINGS WILL GIVE HER LIGHT.
AND WHEN IT'S TIME SHE'LL TAKE HER FLIGHT.
SHE'LL DO IT! SHE'LL DO IT!
A HUMMINGBIRD CAN LEARN TO SING.
THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN WANDERING.
AND THERE'S NO NEED TO WAIT TILL SPRING.
SHE'LL DO IT! SHE'LL DO IT!

EVERYONE WILL ANALYZE IT.
EVERYONE WILL BE SURPRISED.
EVERYONE WILL EMPHASIZE IT —
SHE WAS DISGUISED.

A LITTLE DOE'S SUPPOSED TO RUN
WHEN ANY HUNTER LIFTS HIS GUN,
BUT FIGHTING BACK JUST MIGHT BE FUN.
GO DO IT! GO DO IT!

A UNICORN CANNOT EXIST.
AND IF IT'S BORN IT MUST INSIST.
AND SO TO GROW IT MUST INSIST.
GO DO IT! GO DO IT!

EVERYONE WILL REALIZE IT.
EVERYONE WILL BE QUITE DAZED.
EVERYONE WILL RECOGNIZE IT.
AND WON'T THEY BE AMAZED!

BLACKOUT
FINI

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