

Jerry's **"Look At The Way You're Looking At Me"** from Harold
Pinter's Betrayal

JERRY: Look at the way you're looking at me. I can't wait for you, I'm bowled over, I'm totally knocked out, you dazzle me, you jewel, my jewel, I can't ever sleep again, no, listen, it's the truth, I won't walk, I'll be a cripple, I'll descend, I'll diminish, into total paralysis, my life is in your hands, that's what you're banishing me to, a state of catatonia, do you know the state of catatonia? do you? do you? the state of.... where the reigning prince is the prince of emptiness, the prince of absence, the prince of desolation. I love you.

Everyone knows. The world knows. It knows. But they'll never know, they're in a different world. I adore you. I'm madly in love with you. I can't believe that what anyone is at this moment saying has ever happened has never happened. Nothing has ever happened. Nothing. This is the only thing that has ever happened. You eyes kill me. I'm lost. You're wonderful.

Ben's **"Father At The Game"** from David French's Of The Fields, Lately

BEN: He rushed out the door and down to the school-yard, the first game he had ever come to, and my mother put his supper in the oven, for later ... I hadn't reminded my father of the game. I was afraid he'd show up and embarrass me. Twelve years old and ashamed of my old man. Ashamed of his dialect, his dirty overalls, his bruised fingers with the fingernails lined with dirt, his teeth yellow as old ivory. Most of all, his lunch pail, that symbol of the working man. No, I wanted a doctor for a father. A lawyer. At least a fireman. Not a carpenter. That wasn't good enough ... And at home my mother sat down to darn his socks and watch the oven ... I remember stepping up to bat. The game was tied; it was the last of the ninth, with no one on base. Then I saw him sitting on the bench along third base. He grinned and waved, and gestured to the man beside him. But I pretended not to see him. I turned to face the pitcher. And angry at myself, I swung hard on the first pitch, there was a hollow crack, and the ball shot low over the shortstop's head for a double. Our next batter bunted and I made third. He was only a few feet away now, my father. But I still refused to acknowledge him. Instead, I stared hard at the catcher, pretending concentration. And when the next pitch bounced between the catcher's legs and into home screen, I slid home to win the game. And there he was, jumping up and down, showing his teeth, excited as hell. And as the crowd broke up and our team stampeded out of the school-yard, cleats clicking and scraping blue sparks on the sidewalk, I looked back once through the wire fence and saw my father still sitting on the now-empty bench, alone, slumped over a little, staring at the cinders between his feet, just staring... I don't know how long he stayed there, maybe till dark, but I do know he never again came down to see me play. At home that night he never mentioned the game or being there. He just went to bed unusually early...

Ben's **"Guys, We Need To Talk"** from Wade Bradford's The Roomates

BEN: (All alone, practicing what he will say to his roommates.) Hey guys. Hi. We need to talk. If it's a good time. You guys are moving out by the end of the month. The reasons are self-evident. (He closes his eyes and imagines the impact. He winces.) I need you guys to move out. It's time. I need... I want... I want you guys to know that it has been great living with you. But now I need my own space. But now, we need our own space. Molly and I need... want... feel... prefer. Molly thinks... No, not Molly. I think. You see, when you get married. Two people don't live with other people when they are married. Unless it's their own children. Look. Guys. You have been driving me crazy for the last fifteen years!!! (Closes his eyes. Winces.) Oh, don't cry. I didn't. Look. I want, need, demand, proclaim, ordain, decree - I like that - I have decreed that the time has come. Yes, the time has finally come. (Pulls hair.) I can't do it. I just can't. (Clears throat. Concentrates.) Molly, how would you feel about living with two extra guys?

Charlie Brown's "**Lunch Time**" from Clark Gesner's You're A Good Man,
Charlie Brown

CHARLIE B: 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, lunch time is among the worst time of the day for me. Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. Peanut butter. Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely. I guess they're right. And if you're really lonely, the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. Boy, the PTA sure did a good job of painting these benches. 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 get 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. I'm standing up. I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward she wouldn't even think of 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 ... She's looking at me. She's looking at me.

Lila's **"I Remember"** from William Inge's A Loss Of Roses

LILA: I remember my first day at school. Mother took me by the hand and I carried a bouquet of roses, too. Mama had let me pick the loveliest roses I could find in the garden, and the teacher thanked me for them. Then Mama left me and I felt kinda scared, 'cause I'd never been any place before without her; but she told me Teacher would be Mama to me at school and would treat me as nice as she did. So I took my seat with all the other kids, their faces so strange and new to me. And I started talking with a little boy across the aisle. I didn't know it was against the rules. But Teacher came back and slapped me, so hard that I cried, and I ran to the door 'cause I wanted to run home to Mama quick as I could. But teacher grabbed me by the hand and pulled me back to my seat. She said I was too big a girl to be running home to Mama and I had to learn to take my punishment when I broke the rules. But I still cried. I told Teacher I wanted back my roses. But she wouldn't give them to me. She shook her finger and said, when I gave away lovely presents, I couldn't expect to get them back.....I guess I never learned that lesson very well. There's so many things I still want back.

Mother's **"It Doesn't Bother Me"** from David Moberg's Constellations

MOTHER: It doesn't bother me. When she laughs like that. She laughs at nothing or sometimes talks like in different languages that nobody can understand. She doesn't mean to, I mean she doesn't do it on purpose.

But Dad says she might always be like this. But that I should remember that no matter what she does or says that deep down in my mama's heart, a part of her still loves me... just like she always did. Like she did before the accident.

That the part of my mama that loves me will never change no matter what. And I believe that, I mean, I want to believe that....I mean I don't think that Dad would lie to me.

But still.... how can my mama still love me if she can't even remember my name.

Juniper's **"I Kissed A Boy Once"** from Wade Bradford's Tomorrow's Wish

JUNIPER: I kissed a boy once. At least I tried. I don't know if it counts if they don't kiss back. But I tried to kiss a boy and it almost worked. Most of the time Grandma and I don't get to see folks much, but we go into town. Sometimes. And Grandma says I just have to be careful to mind my manners, and Grandma says I'm real good at being careful, but sometimes I get so bored in that little town. Only one video store. Only two churches. And the park only has two swings and a pool that never gets filled up anymore. But in our little town there is a boy named Samuel. He's a bag-boy at the grocery store. He does it just right and never squishes the eggs. And he has red hair and green eyes. And... (Laughs at the memory.) Freckles all over his face! And Samuel is so nice. So nice to me and Gram. He would always smile and always say "thank you" and "your welcome." If he says, "Have a nice day," then you do. That's how good he is at his job. And I always wanted... I always wanted to be close to him, or to talk to him, without Gram around. And one day when Grandma had a really bad cold I got to go to the store all by myself. And I bought some oyster crackers and some medicine. Then I got to watch Samuel all by myself. Watch him do his bag boy job. I just stared and stared, trying to count all of those handsome freckles. Then, he asked if there was anything else I wanted. I just whispered "Yes." (Pauses, closes eyes in remembrance.) And then I grabbed him by the ears and MmmmmmmMM! (Pretends she's grabbing and kissing him.) That was my first kiss. It was the most romantic moment of my life.... Until the manager pulled me off of him.

Brett's **"Mother-Substitutes"** from Jason Richards' This Will Not Look Good On My Resume

BRETT One day, while I was watching Jenny's kinderdance class from the back of the studio, perched on a small chair with the rest of the mothers or mother-substitutes, the teacher had to suddenly leave.

"Would you take over for a moment, please?" she said to me, rushing out. Serves me right for sitting closest to the door. Okay. Sure. How hard can this be? I stood in front of the class.

"All right, let's try a simple step-together-step-touch," I said, demonstrating, moving to the right, and then to the left. And forgetting for the moment that they had probably just learned how to walk. Forward. I was now expecting them to dance. Sideways.

A glance in the mirror tipped me off. One went down. Then another. And a third. Ohhh, that had to hurt. The fourth watched speculatively, chubby legs planted firmly, thumb in her mouth. It refused to try the step. It was destined for great things in life.

"Let's all clap in time to the music," I said with enthusiasm, clapping in time to the music. They tried. It sounded like an erratic echo chamber.

I then noticed that a few had hands that kept missing each other. Coordination! Of course! I'm sure that's also in the lesson plan! So when they had tired of clapping, fourteen seconds into the song, I said, "Okay, everyone, let's try something else. Put your arms out straight. Now close your eyes and touch your nose with the second finger of your right hand."

Dunks, the whole lot of them. Especially the few who fell down as soon as they had closed their eyes.