

**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
LULLABY
YOU'VE EVER HEARD**

By
Greg Romero

© 2024 by Greg Romero

CAUTION: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that performance of **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LULLABY YOU'VE EVER HEARD** is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of The United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth) and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission of which must be obtained from the Author in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LULLABY YOU'VE EVER HEARD** are controlled exclusively by Next Stage Press. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance written permission and paying the requisite fee. Inquiries concerning production rights should be addressed to genekato@nextstagepress.com

SPECIAL NOTE

Anyone receiving permission to produce **THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LULLABY YOU'VE EVER HEARD** is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the Author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and in size of type equal to 50% of the size of the largest, most prominent letter used for the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the Author.

To all the people who have breathed into this play.

Thank you for all of your gifts.

The Most Beautiful Lullaby You've Ever Heard was first produced off-off Broadway by City Attic Theatre (Co-Artistic Directors, Amanda Embry and Dianna Marino) as a non-Equity production. The production was staged at Under St. Marks in New York City from May 24, 2007 – June 2, 2007.

The City Attic Theatre production also traveled to Philadelphia on July 14, 2007 for a one-night performance hosted by The Cardboard Box Collaborative at Plays and Players Theater.

Both presentations were directed by Andrew J. Merkel. The design team included Joshua Rose (lights and set) and Amanda Embry (costumes and set). The production was Assistant Directed by Genevieve Saenz with following cast:

THE NARRATOR.....Dianna Marino
THE MAN.....John Conor Brooke
THE WOMAN.....Lucy Walters

The Most Beautiful Lullaby You've Ever Heard received a second non-Equity production by Specific Gravity Ensemble (Artistic Director, Rand Harmon) in Louisville, KY. The production ran for nine performances from September 21, 2007 – October 1, 2007 at 21 c Museum Hotel.

The production was directed by Rand Harmon and designed by Todd Pickett (lights), Rand Harmon (set), and Paul T. Carney (set). The production was stage managed by Ashley Beck with the following cast:

THE NARRATOR.....Julia Leist
THE MAN.....Christopher Shiner
THE WOMAN.....Jennifer Poliskie

The Most Beautiful Lullaby You've Ever Heard received a third non-Equity production by Audacity Theatre Lab (Artistic Director, Brad McEntire) in Dallas, TX. The production ran for 10 performances from May 7, 2008 – May 17, 2008 at Risk Theatre Initiative.

The production was directed by Brad McEntire with the following cast:

THE NARRATOR.....Tyson Rinehart
THE MAN.....Jeff Swearingen
THE WOMAN.....Paula Wood

Characters:

THE NARRATOR (Any gender) Distant but connected. Visualizations become words become actions.

THE MAN (M) Electrical current. Zero-to-Sixty in nothing flat. Totally sincere.

THE WOMAN (F) A volcano. Razor sharp. Radiant. Totally sincere.

The Space:

Three chairs inside of a raised platform measuring 9 feet by 9 feet. The platform lives inside of a larger performance space. The Man and The Woman's chairs are 3 feet upstage of the downstage edge of the platform and 2 feet inside of their respective stage left and stage right edges. The Narrator's chair is 2 feet downstage of the upstage edge, bisecting the playing area.

For the Performers:

Precision is our friend. Listen as closely as possible to each other. Find the journeys.

For The Narrator: it is the playwright's observation that the play works best when The Narrator is played more as a function and less as a character. The Narrator narrates. And The Narrator is the rhythm section of this "Lullaby", necessarily keeping the energy of the piece moving.

About Focus:

While The Man and The Woman are on the platform, their focus is straight in front of them. They are looking all the way across the world to see each other. The Narrator's focus is straight out as well, as if they are looking into their imagination.

About Bodies:

The actors are confined to their chairs unless otherwise noted in the stage directions. They are permitted to shift their bodies slightly, expressing each specific location through precise adjustments of their bodies.

About Ellipses:

Breaks in speech are noted by a series of ellipses after the character name.

NARRATOR. ...

Each single dot is a heartbeat. These ellipses are space that the character uses to react to what was just said, or to think of (or to hold back) the next thing to say, or both. These are active moments.

About Breath:

You will see the notation, "A breath". This is the play breathing—think of the play as a living organism. "A breath" is played by all three characters. Each time "a breath" is called for, all three characters dip their heads down and, on the inhale, raise their heads.

About Time:

The play runs at a very sharp 45-50 minutes. The play is not in a hurry, but it runs best when things keep moving.

About Humor:

This play certainly expresses darkness, please also find its lightness.

About Care:

Please take care of each other when working on this play.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LULLABY YOU'VE EVER HEARD

As the Audience enters, THE MAN and THE WOMAN are already seated in the playing area.

The Man sits in the chair Stage Right.

The Woman sits in the chair Stage Left.

They sit with their feet flat on the ground. Their hands are folded in their laps or resting on their legs.

They stay seated in this position unless the directions on this side of the page say otherwise.

A few feet upstage, an empty chair sits between them.

The Man and The Woman are energized and focused. They await activation.

They are pure potential energy.

Once activated, their movements are simple, direct, focused—much of it happening in their eyes.

There are no wasted impulses.

After a moment THE NARRATOR enters the performance space.

The Narrator walks to the outside edge of the platform.

Narrator takes a breath.

Narrator steps onto the platform.

Narrator crosses to the empty chair and sits down.

Narrator takes a breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

The Man and The Woman are activated.

They kneel down at the water's edge. They take a blank piece of paper from their pocket.

The Man and The Woman take a blank piece of paper from their pocket.

They imagine all of the things it could possibly be. They fold the paper into a sailboat. They place the sailboat on the water and give it a gentle push.

The Man and The Woman extend their arms forward.

They watch it sail off. They stand at the edge of the water.

The Man and The Woman return to their beginning position.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi. What's your name?

MAN. Gary.

WOMAN. Gary?

MAN. First name I thought of.

WOMAN. Do you like the name "Gary"?

MAN. Not really.

WOMAN. You can choose something else.

MAN. I choose Gary.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. We don't always have to like our choices. What's your name?

WOMAN. Petunia.

MAN. Petunia?

WOMAN. First name I thought of.

MAN. Sounds like a name you'd get picked on for.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. What do I look like? What name do I look like?

MAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar. They each have a beer in front of them.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

NARRATOR. They sit in silence for a moment. They drink their beer.

MAN. Come here often?

WOMAN. I'm a regular.

MAN. Irregular?

WOMAN. No. I'm a regular.

MAN. Oh. A regular. That's different.

WOMAN. Yes. Yes it is.

NARRATOR. They sit in silence. They drink their beer.

MAN. I'm irregular.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

WOMAN. Do you like this scar?

MAN. Yes.

WOMAN. What about this one?

MAN. That one bothers me.

WOMAN.

MAN. I want to stop eating refined sugar.

WOMAN. Me too.

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. I might cheat on you.

WOMAN. I might cheat on you.

MAN. I'll never cheat on you.

WOMAN. I know.

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. I wish I could play an instrument.

WOMAN. Me too.

MAN. You play piano.

WOMAN. Oh yeah.

MAN.

WOMAN. You play guitar.

MAN. Not really.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

MAN. We could do burlesque names.

WOMAN. How do you do that?

MAN. As your first name, you use the name of your first pet. For your last name, you use the first street you live on.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. Midnight Emerald

MAN. Biscuit Armstrong.

WOMAN. Whaddya think?

MAN. Midnight's kinda cool.

WOMAN. That was fun—do you have any more games like that?

MAN. Uh...porn names?

WOMAN. Porn names?

MAN. Yeah but I think you do it the same way.

WOMAN. Midnight Emerald.

MAN. Biscuit Armstrong. Or we could just make up our own.

WOMAN. Hot Box...Hot Box Simpson.

MAN. That's pretty cool.

WOMAN. Rose Hips.

MAN. That's perfect!

WOMAN. Are you saying I'm fat?

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. Brick Johnson.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. Butch Steele.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. Johnny Cockburn. Harry Cockslinger. Beef Henderson.

WOMAN. Ass Fucker.

MAN. Ass Fucker?

WOMAN. You heard me.

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. What do you do for a living?

WOMAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit on a park bench. They look out into the distance. The sun rises.

The Man and The Woman follow the arc of the sun with their eyes.

WOMAN. I want to live in a place where there's lots of cats.

MAN. That sounds nice.

WOMAN. There'd be lots of cats and they'd all be cared for.

MAN. No strays?

WOMAN. That's not what I mean. A cat can be astray and still be cared for.

MAN. Ok.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartments. They walk to their windows. They place their hand upon the glass.

They place their hand on the glass.

They lean the side of their face against the glass.

They press their faces against the glass.

They rest for a moment.

They rest for a moment.

MAN. Did anyone ever throw you a surprise party?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Me neither.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man is walking down a sidewalk. He looks into the distance. He continues walking. The Woman is walking down a sidewalk. She looks into the distance. She continues walking. They both stop.

Their bodies lean forward.

They begin walking again.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar. They take a drink of their beer.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. I make really good French toast.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. Ok.

MAN. Just so you know.

WOMAN. That sounds nice. I love French toast. Just so you know.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit on a park bench. They look out into the distance. The sun rises.

The Man and The Woman follow the arc of the sun with their eyes.

WOMAN. How long can people go without breathing?

MAN. I don't know.

They hold their breath for as long as possible.

They finally exhale.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

MAN. I kind of like Beef Henderson.

WOMAN. You'd have to grow a mustache.

MAN. I don't want a mustache.

WOMAN. Beef Henderson definitely has a mustache.

MAN. That's true. What about hippy names?

WOMAN. We'd have to have hippy parents for that.

MAN. You don't have hippy parents?

WOMAN. I don't know my parents. I'm adopted.

MAN. Oh.

WOMAN. That makes it easier.

MAN. Easier?

WOMAN. For my dad to fuck me.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. I wouldn't mind if you broke a bottle over my head.

WOMAN.

MAN.

WOMAN. Are you asking me to?

MAN. I don't know. I just know that I wouldn't mind. It would just be another way to be with you.

WOMAN.

MAN.

She breaks a bottle over his head.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

WOMAN. I was making a pattern. With my cutting. I wanted to be artistic about my scars. I thought that'd be cool.

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. A Lotus plant. That's what I was making.

MAN. That would've been cool.

WOMAN. It's not too late.

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. Why a lotus?

WOMAN. Because lotus plants grow out of shit.

MAN. That's pretty cool. Where'd you learn that?

WOMAN. I read about it. I was into Buddhism for a while.

MAN. What happened?

WOMAN. I lost interest.

MAN. Well yeah, but why?

WOMAN. Who cares.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

WOMAN. Do you have brothers and sisters?

MAN. I have a twin brother. He dies at birth. I'll think my parents wanted him more.

WOMAN.

MAN. You?

WOMAN. No. Just me and them.

MAN. Them?

WOMAN. My parents. Adopted parents.

MAN. Same ones? You have the same parents the whole time growing up?

WOMAN. Yes. You?

MAN. If you wanna call them that.

WOMAN. What do you call them?

MAN. ...

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit on a park bench. The sun rises.

The Man and The Woman follow the arc of the sun with their eyes.

WOMAN. Have you ever hopped a train?

MAN. No.

WOMAN. It's amazing.

MAN. Oh yeah?

WOMAN. You run alongside the car. Jump in. Ride for a while. You can feel the train move all the way through your body.

MAN. ...

WOMAN. ...

MAN. Oh man.

WOMAN. ...

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar. They drink their beer.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. You make me wanna come all over myself.

WOMAN.

MAN.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. Sorry.

WOMAN. Please. I've heard lots worse than that.

MAN. ...

WOMAN. ...

MAN. What do you think about people choking people?

WOMAN. What do you think about knives?

They both slam bottles over each other's heads.

The Woman stares into the distance.

She hears a door slam.

Footsteps walk toward her.

She tries to open a window.

She can't.

The footsteps get closer.

She keeps trying.

She can't get the window open.

She tries to cover her private parts.

She covers her head with her hands.

The Man stares into the distance.

Footsteps walk toward him.

He tries to get out of the chair.

He can't.

The footsteps get closer.

He keeps trying.

He can't get out of the chair.

He tries to cover his private parts.

He can't.

He turns his head away and closes his eyes.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

WOMAN. Temp worker.

MAN.

WOMAN. You asked me what I do for a living.

MAN. Oh yeah.

WOMAN. Office temp. So when I lose interest I can just move on to the next one.

MAN. That's discouraging.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man sits on the bed of a train. He moves with the motion of the track.

The Man moves with the motion of the train.

He looks into the sky. He tries to look past the stars. He sees nothing.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

MAN. Airports scare the hell outta me.

WOMAN. Why?

MAN. So many people.

WOMAN. Fuck those people.

MAN. I guess.

WOMAN. No really. Fuck them. Fuck all of them. Fuck ‘em ‘till they can’t walk.

MAN. That’s cool.

WOMAN. See.

MAN. I guess airports aren’t so bad.

WOMAN.

MAN. Have you ever fucked in an airport?

WOMAN.

MAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit on a park bench. The sun rises.

The Man and The Woman follow the arc of the sun with their eyes.

MAN. Have you ever been sailing?

WOMAN. No.

MAN. Me either.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. ...

MAN. Do you think sharks really eat people?

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. ...

WOMAN. ...

MAN. You wanna go sailing with me?

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

WOMAN. Once I start eating donuts I can’t stop.

MAN. Ok.

WOMAN. I’ll eat the whole box.

MAN. That’s cool.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. ...

MAN. I have lots of dreams where my teeth fall out. And I can feel it. Actually feel my teeth falling out of my mouth.

WOMAN. I don't ever remember my dreams.

MAN. That's sad.

WOMAN. You're sad.

MAN. Have you ever shoved a knife in your ass?

WOMAN.

MAN.

WOMAN. Have you ever been to the desert?

MAN. No.

WOMAN. I'd like to go.

MAN. Why?

WOMAN. I just would. Something about the heat. About the expanse.

MAN. I can give you heat and expanse.

WOMAN. I fucking wish you would!

MAN.

WOMAN.

MAN. Bamboo plants. I like bamboo.

WOMAN. Whatever.

MAN.

WOMAN. My ex-husband used to pee on me.

MAN. Did you like it?

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ..

WOMAN. Oh yeah. I just remembered—there is one dream I remember.

MAN. Yeah?

WOMAN. My mom is trying to stab me with a pair of scissors.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar. They each have a beer in front of them. They stare into the distance.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. Sooo.....

She covers her head.

He turns his head away and closes his eyes.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman are standing at the edge of the water.

MAN. Maybe I work in an office too. An office mailroom. No wait. A bus driver.

No. A bus boy.

WOMAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

MAN. When I was a kid I used to mow people's lawns. I saved up enough money to buy a color TV for my bedroom.

WOMAN. You could have done better.

MAN. What's better than a TV in your own room when you're a kid? A color one?

WOMAN. A bus ticket.

MAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit on a park bench. The sun rises.

The Man and The Woman follow the arc of the sun with their eyes.

WOMAN. I think one of my legs is longer than the other.

MAN. Hot.

WOMAN. I could drink a Slurpee everyday.

MAN. Totally.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. I bet my dad has a bigger cock than you.

MAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Woman stands on the deck of a boat. She moves with the waves of the water.

The Woman moves with the waves of the water.

She looks into the distance. She looks over the edge of the railing and into the water. She stares at her reflection. She looks out into the distance. She continues to move with the waves of the water.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

MAN. Porn nowadays just isn't sexy.

WOMAN. I know.

MAN. Meat shots all over the place.

WOMAN. Yeah.

MAN. Looks like surgery.

WOMAN. I know.

MAN. No stories. No characters. No heat.

WOMAN. I know.

MAN. It's not enough just to have meat slapping against each other.

WOMAN. I know.

MAN. I've gotta know the story.

WOMAN. Me too.

MAN.

WOMAN. What kind of stories do you like?

MAN.

WOMAN. My high school English teacher was hot.

MAN. Maybe you should've fucked him.

WOMAN. I did.

MAN.

WOMAN. My high school Physics teacher was hot, too.

MAN. Don't tell me.

WOMAN. You suck!

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartments. They walk to their windows. They place their hand upon the glass.

They place their hand on the glass.

They lean the side of their face against the glass.

They press their faces against the glass.

They rest for a moment.

They rest for a moment.

MAN. I used to write children's books.

WOMAN.

MAN. They never came out right.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar. They each have a beer. They look into their reflection.

The Man and The Woman look into their reflections in the beers.

They look into the distance.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Do you like to go swimming?

MAN. Yes.

WOMAN. We should go swimming sometime.

MAN. Me and you?

WOMAN. Yes.

MAN. Awesome.

NARRATOR. They sit in a swimming pool together.

MAN. This is awesome.

She kisses him on the lips.

MAN. Oh man...

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. It's weird what people are scared of.

WOMAN. Wooden spoons.

MAN. ?

WOMAN. If you bring a wooden spoon near me I will fucking throw up all over you.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

MAN. Did you ever read *Frog and Toad*?

WOMAN. Uh?

MAN. The children's books.

WOMAN. Oh. No. Wait. Yes. Yes, I think so.

MAN. I love *Frog and Toad*.

WOMAN.

MAN. Will you read me *Frog and Toad* some time?

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. Yes.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit at a bar.

MAN. Hi.

WOMAN. Hi.

MAN. I can light my hand on fire.

WOMAN. ...

MAN. ...

WOMAN. Prove it.

MAN.

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartment.

WOMAN. New Year's Eve is lame.

MAN. I like it.

WOMAN. You would.

MAN. Catholic priests suck.

WOMAN. Yeah. Fuck 'em 'till they can't walk.

MAN. ...

A breath.

NARRATOR. The Man and The Woman sit in their apartments. They walk to their windows. They place their hand upon the glass.

They place their hands upon the glass.

They lean the side of their face against the glass.

They press their faces against the glass.

They rest for a moment.

They rest for a moment.

MAN. When I was eight years old I had a TV in my bedroom. I learned how to descramble the cable box and watch porn. When I was eight years old my uncle had sex with me. I don't remember which came first. There's a lot that I don't remember.

WOMAN. When I was twelve I used to stay up all night and read. I read *Chronicles of Narnia* a hundred times. When I was twelve my father started locking me in my bedroom. One night I tried to remember all of the things I'd read. I found my father's body in every single story. So I glued all of the pages of my books together. I've tried to forget them but I can't.

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—
ORDER A COPY AT WWW.NEXTSTAGEPRESS.COM***