

**THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF
TIME**

**BY
MEGAN LOHNE**

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THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

“Creativity can’t have any restriction or instruction. It’s like dreams. If you say you want to dream about this or that, it won’t come out.”

~ Maria Irene Fornés

“I have stitched life into me like a rare organ.”

~ Sylvia Plath

“The trouble is not that I am single and likely to stay single, but that I am lonely and likely to stay lonely.”

~ Charlotte Brontë

THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

This Odd Geometry of Time received its world premiere at Adelphi University Department of Theatre, Garden City, NY, in March 2021. The production was directed by Shoshanah Tarkow.

Direction: Shoshanah Tarkow

Asst. Director: Matthew Pezzulich

Virtual Background Design: Chloe Yoo

Lighting and Sound Design: Fiona Govin

Costume Design: Sean Sullivan

Asst. Costume Design: Carson Ferguson

Props Master: Natalie Piperno

Production Stage Manager: Carrie McElroy

Assistant Stage Managers: Brian Donoghue and Nicole Sponaugle

The cast was as follows:

GALINA: Kristina Rossi

JANE GOODALL: Haley Franke

MARTHA DANIELL LOGAN: Amber Carr

SALLY HEMMING: Dayna Richburg

CHARLOTTE BRONTE / MARIA IRENE FORNES: Emma Isabel

MARY JANE KELLY: Mishka Rehak

SYLVIA PLATH: Madelyn Barkocy

GALA DALI / MARIA CANO: Alexis Barros

SALVADOR DALI/

BEN/ARTHUR BELL NICHOLLS/TED HUGHES: Fernando Mercado

FRANCESCA WOODMAN: Sophia Carvalho

This Odd Geometry of Time was subsequently presented at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival, Region 2 (2021) and remounted at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (2021)

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Notes on Play

- This play incorporates both historical and fictionalized figures. Except for Galina, the bowhead whale, all characters are based on real individuals. Their words and actions in this script are dramatized, and the work should be regarded as a work of fiction.
- Italicized slashes (/) denote overlapping dialogue.
- Place: All women exist in their respective times. Where we are at any given moment will be signified as a scene (originally referred to as a “card”). When important to the moment, age is marked. However, it is my intention that all characters weave in and out of time, ageless.
- This is a series of monologues and scenes that may at times intersect. The play may be performed on stage, virtually, or in a hybrid model.
- I have presented the doubling used in the original production.

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ACT 1 PROLOGUE: 1760

Swooping nature doc music reverberates.

Somewhere off the Sea of Okhotsk, GALINA, a bowhead whale is being born. The crack of ice is heard as she is released from her mother into the sea. She rushes to the ocean, playfully attempting to understand how to swim, bumping into her mother's side. Chunks of blood and afterbirth flop past her face. She winces, attempting to stay afloat.

The disembodied voice of JANE GOODALL begins to narrate. She is our guide on this journey, our friend, our voice of self-doubt.

JANE GOODALL. Good evening everyone. I am Jane Goodall, world renowned primatologist but for the purposes of our program today I will be your guide. *(Pause.)* We start our journey at the beginning. With Galina. She has not yet vocalized or heard the sound of her own tones, rushed into the sea during birth. We notice how without much instruction, she is able to make her way along the crisp and uncertain tides of The Sea of Okhotsk. Located between Russia and Japan this is where you will find many whales, including the Bowhead pod that Galina will spend her life with. *(Galina finds her footing in the swooping waves and it is at this moment she makes her first sound. It is low and guttural and is a whale tone, she discovers how different it can be until with ease she simply states-)*

GALINA. *(In a Russian accent.)* Hello? Hello. Da. Hello. *(She swims off in excitement.)*

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JANE GOODALL. The year is 1760. The day is January 8th, in the sky that same day Charles Messier will spot the comet in Paris by the sword of Orion. Meanwhile, off the shores of South Carolina-Martha Daniell Logan, 56, sits thoughtfully at her desk cataloguing her seeds. She is greeted by a local woman, seeking tutelage for her son.

SCENE 1: 1760, CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA

MARTHA DANIELL LOGAN sits, cataloguing her seeds in a large, beautiful book. She is surrounded by jars, flowers, and fresh produce hanging from the ceiling.

MARTHA. Why, hello, please-sit. You are interested in-of course. I entirely understand, the world is not easy for a woman on her own. I lost my Georgie in 42'. *(Pause.)* Do you know-seeds are like traveling trunks, they have everything you need to go from one place to the next. Small, unassuming, powerful creators. These seeds are little gods. Please, do not take that the wrong way-I... How long have you been in Charleston? I see. I've been here my entire life but...sometimes I feel like...I've traveled to every end of the world because of my plants. If you look out that window behind you, you can see the garden. That's my baby. Oh-yes! Children-I had eight myself, six alive and well, two with the Lord. We take our blessings where they come. Goodness, thank you. I am thankful Gardener's Kalender can bring information to so many local gardeners. Can I share a secret with you? I often wonder about the future, I know I ought not but-I often wonder, there's a tree east of the Mississippi, they say was planted back in the 1500s. The Angel Oak. When I worry about my death or my life and what I never felt I could do-I imagine I'm that tree, it wraps around you like ten hugs. Here-sit for me. You seem nervous and I have just the trick-do you take tea? Wonderful. Please. *(Martha makes tea and crushes lavender into the leaves before she steeps.)* I am fortunate to have inherited all of this but still-I struggle. I am no stranger. There is a man with whom I trade seeds. Mr. Bartram. Nothing like that. *(She hands her the tea.)* He's in

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Philadelphia and we surprise each other with rare roots and seeds for our gardens. Between us chickens, I sometimes imagine a world where I could study my seeds beyond the limitations of my garden, but I am being selfish, this is all I need. This is all I need. I am fortunate to have a son also intrigued by horticulture and have him import all forms of seeds, flower roots, and fruit stones. (*Distantly.*) I am blessed.

The scene is frozen on Martha looking off into the distance.

JANE GOODALL. Martha takes on the young charge, a son, Charles who she will bring into her home and teach to read and write. His mother must find employ in the local town, the tavern is the only place hiring and isn't a respectable place to rear a young boy. But mostly she will teach him of seeds and the importance of refilling the world past his life.

MARTHA. Wonderful Charles, wonderful. Charles from Charleston, how funny you are. How funny.

SCENE 2: 1773, VIRGINIA

JANE GOODALL. Just three years later, in a state not far from Martha we meet Sally, born in Williamsburg, Virginia to a very.... different life. (*There is a faint cry, and a still of an outline, a mother and infant leaning into one another.*) Her father, her owner, John Wayles, would birth several children with Betty Hemmings. Upon his death, they would all be inherited by her half-sister Martha Skelton....Jefferson and as a toddler young Sally was moved to Monticello with no idea of what lay ahead. But first-let us check upon our young Bowhead whale Galina.

SCENE 3: SEA OF OKHOTSK

GALINA. It is mating season; again...I am up to here- (*She holds her hand very high above her head.*) With the mating season. Just last week we lost Svetlana to harpoon and now I am the one female in pod. I am

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exhausted. I have been running from Sergei to Antoni for two weeks and they never give up, bumping and nudging me.

JANE GOODALL. Sexual activity occurs between pairs and in boisterous groups of several males and one or two females. Breeding season is usually between March through August.

GALINA. You know-I usually resist this; I have other females in pod but now I am-Antoni-don't you even look in my eye. I will- (*The sounds of whales advancing grow louder.*) What does no one say, Galina, do you want to repopulate pod? Is that what you want with your life? It's bad enough I am constantly bobbing and weaving to not be bludgeoned by harpoon but now-this? Why can't I live life of solitude? I find own food. I- (*The sounds become louder and advance as the waves of the ocean grow heavier and Galina is surrounded by several Bowheads ready to breed. She is crying and you can hear her whimpers in the distance.*)

JANE GOODALL. For the sake of the pod, a resistant Galina must breed. Survival of the species can translate in many ways and for young Sally Hemmings now working for Thomas Jefferson as a domestic servant in Paris has tasted freedom but must consider more-

SCENE 4: 1789, PARIS

Sally leaves the privy, wiping vomit from the corner of her mouth. She leans back into a chair slowly before rushing back. The sound of her retching is clear. She emerges and lowers herself into the chair.

SALLY HEMMINGS. Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. (*Beat*) Ugh. I should have just- (*She makes a whooshing sound with her hand as if to indicate "run".*) What am I thinking-I can-I can find a job here. I could totally find a job here. I like Paris. The city of lights. Je m'appelle Sally. Oui. Oui. (*She practices and smiles at an imaginary stranger*) I should just-Right? Like, right now? (*She begins to walk out the door, then rushes back to the bathroom and vomits again*) Mother always said the beginning is the worst. I-I could get a job but what about-this is all so-UGHHHHHHHHH. (*She holds her stomach*) You. What. About.

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You. I couldn't get a job with you. We'd-starve. I should have been more careful. I shoulda-but-and he-Jesus, Thomas. Jesus. I can-you know what I can do-I can make a deal. I could. I'm free here. I'm free and he wants me to come back, he-he told me so, he wants me to warm his bed and I can strike a deal and then- You. You. You. *(She holds her belly.)* You will be free. I will put it in a contract that I will not leave-until. YOU are free. When I hold him a certain way-he is powerless, I'll just touch him right-and then-yes. That is how this will go. I will get him in just the right spot and in that moment, only in that moment-he is powerless. In just that second. You will survive, we will survive. In...Virginia. Jesus.

JANE GOODALL. Watch as the female specimen convinces herself to survive. Meanwhile, a young Charlotte Bronte observes a squirrel.

SCENE 5: 1830, CHARLOTTE BRONTE AT 13

CHARLOTTE, age 13, sits messing with her skirts. She looks around making a large harumph. She spies a squirrel. Smiling broadly, she slowly edges toward it but stops and simply watches. Rapt. This is 1830's reality television at its finest. She speaks with a charming and cartoonish Yorkshire accent.

CHARLOTTE. Why, hello there, you're a boy, aren't you just with all your below bits? I shall call you-Mr. Nutters. Do you like that name? Oh, I'd so long to please you. *(Beat)* It is just us, here. You and I. I do get so lonely. *(A large noise is heard in the distance, screaming and playing)* Oh, yes. They-are somewhat entertaining I suppose. My siblings. I have two sisters and one brother. I love the. I do. I really love them but-and I know my place. I am to sew. We are all encouraged to sew. And cook-of course. Can I tell you a secret? I don't believe I will spend my life simply sewing. Honestly, I will be married. I must. Why, I have all the resources to be a sustainable wife. Me. Truthfully, I would like to write stories. Like a man. Isn't that thrilling??? Why, I have so many ideas and I simply need to get them

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out or I will burst. I will fly open and burst so wide. (*She laughs loudly, manically excited*) Wait, where are you going? Why are you leaving? I am so lonely. Fine then-if you need to run away Mr. Nutters. Then-run away. (*Beat. She sighs long and hard.*) Meeeennnnn.

JANE GOODALL. As noted, this is the young Bronte's first interaction with a desperate feeling of needing to please a man. In the moment, Mr. Nutters has run from her, she now has the inkling that she must attract him back. (*Charlotte stands, desperately grabbing at nuts.*)

CHARLOTTE. Mr. Nutters! Wait, I have something for you. Please. You know, I thought about what I've said and you were right. Please take these nuts as a symbol of my servitude. (*Charlotte runs off after Mr. Nutters*)

JANE GOODALL. And thence, we have the beginning of shame. What is shame?

Projection: Single Card

Shame: a painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. "She was hot with shame"

CHARLOTTE. Why am I suddenly feeling so warm? Emily? Anne? (*She takes a much longer beat.*) Branwell? Where is everyone?

JANE GOODALL. Let us watch as our subject is left alone with her shame and rejection. See-how in the corner of her eye we spy one moist and hopeless tear. But wait-

CHARLOTTE. What's this? Why, hello little bird. (*She beckons the bird closer*) When birds, soft as their pinions closing, the hearts' best feelings gather home.

JANE GOODALL. And we see, in this moment-the beginnings of poetry from our subject as a way to counteract her shame and rejection. Simple words. (*The birds shits on Charlotte*) One cannot create art without pain as they say. However, we will get back to Charlotte. We have a brief window to witness the mating habits of the colonial male.

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SCENE 6: 1802, MONTICELLO

Sally Hemmings paces, raging.

SALLY. How dare you tell ME I'm not being careful. I'm here Thomas, I stay here all the time. I don't move. What do you think I would-don't you dare hold up your hand to me. Don't you DARE. *(Beat)* I came back from France to be here. Where I was FREE. You want to threaten me? You made me a promise that our children would be free, you-I never have heard of anyone named James T. Calendar. I don't leave the house. My "room" is a small little place off of your room. There is nothing in this house that is mine except for the fact that EVERYTHING IN THIS HOUSE IS MINE. Including you. Or at least that's what you tell me when I-I will be crass. I'll be as crass as I want. *(Beat)* What a world-what a world is this that you walk without fear, you beg me to come back with you, you-need me and yet-you're disgusted an article suggests we have children, we have a relationship. I am not a fool, Tommy, I am not a fool. I know this world. I know this world tells me who I'm supposed to be and who you're supposed to be on our skin. Based on our place. But this is us-talking. This isn't the congress or the senate, or any of those fancy places you wanted off to in New York. This is home, at least for me because I DON'T GO ANYWHERE. I will scream. There is a hole-right there-in the middle of my chest. It cries for family, it cries for the souls, the names that you write down in your book who work your lands. It cries. Kill me. Kill me for my behavior, go ahead. Kill me but remember-you made a promise to our ken. You made a promise. Take my life-but their lives, they are a free one. They get to be free here. In this place where freedom isn't guaranteed. Where masters can seduce teenage slaves, where I fell in love with you. Was that love? Was it ever my choice or do you see hints of her in my face-the woman you mourn? *(He slaps her. She stares at him for a long moment. Taking him in.)* I see. *(He pulls her in, she winces and stares off to the side.)* Don't apologize. Just make it quick.

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JANE GOODALL. I would like for a moment to take a step back and drop you into this time in history. It is in this world that our subject Sally is reaching for independence, but our species has not yet evolved socially to recognize equality. Just as bees, wasps, beetles, and crickets enslave or trick others to do their work. However, it is the “slave-maker” ants which I would like to highlight. Many enslaved ants are not allowed to reproduce and in this instance the slave-making species are often completely dependent on the host and closely related to the host species. They share chemical signs. They share anatomy that makes their smells familiar and makes it harder to leave (*Beat*) But let us take a moment to discuss a central idea in today’s show. Time. Is time a shape, something you can hold? Is it impermanent? What is time? Some would say space and time are what unites the past, imperative, and future so does this then take shape? Can it be measured-if we were to move forward in time-backwards in time-what are the variables? What changes? (*The screen rushes with a sea of numbers and stars, the music is sharp and pointed. It is almost as if we’ve entered a time warp until we end up at-*)

SCENE 7: 1971: CASTLE OF PUBOL

GALA DALI, 76, leans over a table watching her subject wearing a silk robe that rests off her shoulder. She spreads out her tarot cards.

GALA. Shuffle them, really put your scent on them. Devour them. When you’re done pass them back. (*Beat. She looks around.*) You like? He promised me he’d buy me a castle. It was built in the 11th century and shall outlive us all.

SALVADOR (*Off-stage*) Lionette-

GALA. Soon my love. We are in the middle of a reading. He’s impatient. He has not been well, you know. Age, time, it is the factor that comes for all of us. What is a muse to do when his acts of service are changed from inspiration to perspiration? Are you ready?

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She shuffles the cards, staring distantly off until she cuts them into three piles letting her hand float over each. As with magnetism, you watch her palm reach for the right and she takes three cards-the past, present, and future spreading them in front of the audience.

GALA. Ahhh, the ten of cups but in reverse. You-feel disconnected from a lover? They have abandoned you. You know when this is straight up, it means bliss really. These two in the picture, they have everything they could wish for but in reverse. Well, that is your past so let us not dwell. (Beat) Ahhh, the lovers. A temptation? You crave to stray, there's something in you that feels restless, no? But at what cost young man. What cost?

SALVADOR (Off-stage) Please-

GALA. A moment, my darling. We are almost done. I know you have come here to meet him, and I really do apologize. It is-he needs his rest today. He was working into the night and now-he is unsettled, but wait-we have one more card. This represents your future young man. (*Gala's robe begins to dangle further down her shoulder, revealing more and more.*) The Hanged Man. You wish-to surrender? (*She laughs seductively*) Or you maybe are suspended in time? You know-I would love to see your work; I saw you nervously place it in the hall. Why don't you bring it to me? (*She places her hand on his*) In a moment. But first-

Projection: man-eater

Noun

1. *An animal that has a propensity for killing and eating humans.*

"Occasionally, a tiger becomes a man-eater"

2. *Informal*

A dominant woman who has many sexual partners.

"He obviously imagined that she was some kind of flighty man-eater!"

JANE GOODALL. We are often hungry in our lives. Our most dominant need is for food to keep our bodies fueled. However, hunger can manifest in different ways-we can be hungry for light, hungry for

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emotional connection, hungry for success...hungry for someone to keep us warm, to provide.

SCENE 8: 1888, LONDON

MARY JANE KELLY tilts her head back and laughs. She is at a pub, enjoying a pint engaged in conversation. She leans forward a little too deeply, showing her cleavage.

MARY. We can arrange something if you like. I'm happy to sing you a song too. Would you? Very well. This one's A Visit from Mother's Grave. *(She clears her throat and stands on a chair, she is quite tipsy and overacting the song)*

Scenes of my childhood arise before my gaze,
Bringing recollections of bygone happy days,
When down in the meadow in childhood I would roam,
No one's left to cheer me now within that good old home.
(She is pulled down from her chair laughing) That's all you get from me now sir, for an encore performance you will have to escort me home.

JANE GOODALL. The subject examines its prey. To get a sense of her, he walks behind-taking in her hips. *(They enter an alley, Mary slips from side to side continuously speaking)*

MARY. I have a roommate, Julia. She might be out working but I wanted to make you aware.

JACK / GEORGE HUTCHINSON. *(He is cloaked in darkness, you never quite see his face)* Really?

MARY. Oh, sure, the girls you know-we depend on each other. Really, it's not safe out there- *(she turns, they bump into each other)* There's a man you know. We all hear stories. He's cutting women open from top to bottom for sport. George....Georgie, are you that man? *(He laughs)* Imagine? *(She takes him by the hand and pulls)*

JACK/ GEORGE HUTCHINSON. How old are you?

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MARY. Oh, come now-a woman never tells her age. (*He hands her a bottle and she takes a swig, looking at him fully, whispering.*) Twenty-five. (*She pushes her finger to her lips.*) Our secret.

JACK/GEORGE HUTCHINSON. So young....

MARY. More like so old. I was married at 16. I've lived ten lives, George. Ten lives.

JANE GOODALL. Note how the predator takes stock of every vulnerable area on the victim's body. (*Music plays, the beating of heart, neck, veins, perhaps projections*) He inspects where to begin while gaining her trust further.

MARY. In normal times, I'd be scared to be in this alley but Georgie, you make me feel quite safe.

JACK / GEORGE HUTCHINSON. I'm glad, come here. (*He seductively lets his finger trace down her neck to her bosom.*) You are quite beautiful, Mary. I'm sure you hear that all the time.

MARY. I do quite like when you say it. (*He feeds her another sip of alcohol*) Your hat, your gloves. You're so beautiful. You're a man I would imagine as a character in one of my songs. You mean something to this word.

JACK/GEORGE HUTCHINSON. You will too. (*She giggles and falls into him.*)

MARY. There's no lock on my door, George. I would love for you to find your way in. I need to ask you quite the favor if we are to- could you loan me a bit of money? Just sixpence. They are collecting rent tomorrow and-I must admit. I'm short. (*He notices a woman watching off in the distance.*)

JACK/GEORGE HUTCHINSON. We have spies.

MARY. Well, I have quite a good idea then. Why don't you walk around the street and come back to me?

JACK/GEORGE HUTCHINSON. Why Mary, you are quite smart.

MARY. My mother always said to go for an older man. They are so starved for youth that they make you feel alive.

JACK/GEORGE HUTCHINSON. Well, then, until I return.

MARY. I will save a song for you.

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(Mary enters her room, she leaves the door ajar and stares into her mirror singing to herself. She jaggedly begins to undress until she is in her slip. Jack enters-they stare at each other a long beat.)

JACK. Put your clothes back on.

MARY. I thought you would prefer-

JACK. Put your clothes back on. *(He grabs her by the throat)*

MARY. Please, sir-I'm not saying, I know men do like this sort of thing, just-go easy on me. Go easy. *(He kisses her deeply and pushes her way to get dressed. Mary, shaking, begins to pull her clothes back on, lacking her dress nervously until she turns, holding herself in a hug. She begins to cry.)*

MARY. Sir-I-I've survived so much, and I just-I'm happy to do whatever you want. I will- *(she gets on her knees and opens his pants)*

JACK. Get up, Mary.

MARY. George?

JACK. That's not my name. Shhhh....*(he holds her tightly)* Quite now.

MARY. Just-make it fast, please. Make it- *(He slashes her throat and pushes her onto the bed.)*

JANE GOODALL. The predator, with a clean stroke of his knife, has thus killed his prey. He will spend the next hour examining her body until he is done and exits cleanly through the door.

SCENE 8: 1860, SEA OF OKTOSH

Galina is swimming with a party hat on her head.

GALINA. Today. I am 100. Sergei insists I have a party. We lost Antoni twenty years ago to a whaler. Sergei spent two years crying for him, you would think they were lovers. I have four calves of my own, they are grown now, making new whales. One girl, Natasha, already has new whale-Katrina. The men, they surround her now. She is more exciting. Ahhh, life. *(Beat. She coughs a bit.)* The water. It's different. When I was calf, I remember this ease when I float through

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the seas. Oh, hold on. (*A Whale chorus moans out a Russian happy birthday to Galina*) You guys, you are too much. Last week, for first time, I watch whale die. Not from harpoon or boat accidents but-but from life. Gregor, he was swimming next to me and just stopped. He began to sink, and I try to hold him up but-Gregor was not there anymore. I've never seen such a thing. I don't remember a life without Gregor, since I was small. We never celebrate Gregor or his life-so today, we do that too. I miss him. He gave the best advice and he never tried to impregnate me. Well, only once and that was a dark time for him. We talk about it. I try to think how old Gregor must have been-but I don't know. I don't know when I will-stop. What it means to stop.

JANE GOODALL. At this moment, Galina realizes her mortality.

GALINA. Today, we sing. But-how long? (*She coughs again*) How long, until-

JANE GOODALL. For some us, mortality is something we must control-

SCENE 9: 1981, NYC

The scene transitions to FRANCESCA WOODMAN, Franny, sits gripping her palms at the edge of her bed. She gets up, walking to a manual camera and setting the aperture. She frenetically snaps while she walks. Sometimes with her eye through the lens, sometimes lets it sit at her stomach as she snaps. After a thought, she pulls off her sundress quickly. Underneath, she is entirely nude.

BEN. Hi. (*She sits silently and poses again. SNAP.*) I wanted to- (*She poses again. SNAP. He finally reaches her, entering the frame. The camera continues to mechanically snap as he lets his fingerships trace the curve of her naked backside. She turns, he goes to kiss her, and she holds up a hand.*) I deserve that.

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. I don't-

FRANNY. Why? (*She pulls her knees to her chest*) Why are you here?

BEN. To-see you.

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FRANNY. Why?

BEN. To-say I'm sorry.

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. I don't know what you want. Can you at least-put on a dress?
(He tosses her dress at her, she doesn't flinch, staying perfectly still like a Sphynx.)

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. Why?

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. Why?

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. I don't fucking know. Ok? I don't know. It didn't feel...good. Anymore? You're always so-sad. I guess. The sadness is good for art but, hey-can we turn off the camera? Or- *(she shakes her head no)* I don't want this to end up on a wall somewhere. Fran, Franny. Don't-just, say something.

FRANNY. Something.

BEN. Do you see? Do you see how HARD you're making this? *(He notices an open letter on the table)* Fuck.

FRANNY. No.

BEN. Babe, I'm sorry.

FRANNY. That's-that's not for you.

BEN. I'm sorry.

FRANNY. It's fine.

BEN. It's not fine. I know how much you wanted this funding.

FRANNY. I realized something today.

BEN. Did you?

FRANNY. I realized-it might be better to not get the funding.

BEN. I don't-

FRANNY. It might be better if...I don't have a reason, to keep snapping.

BEN. Hey-

FRANNY. I've done my best work. *(She begins to cry.)* It is not-a problem to know that this is where I leave you.

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BEN. I'm going to call your parents.

FRANNY. The phone has been disconnected. I wanted silence.

BEN. Let's go for a walk. Air.

FRANNY. You're a hack, did you know that?

BEN. No, Franny, I don't know I'm a hack. I love my work.

FRANNY. It's only glass, Ben. Glass-you're playing god in a sense aren't you? Taking those elements, melting them to create...well, little atrocities. That can break. I can throw any of them across a room and those hours-those minutes, moments, seconds, micro-particles-poof.

(She laughs erratically) Poof. Snap. Poof. Snap. Poof.

BEN. You're being a bitch.

FRANNY. You have a-dick. *(She throws back her head laughing again, spreading her legs, her naked body gyrating, it crescendos into sobbing. Heaving. Ben rushes to her and holds her hard from the side, grounding her. She turns and bites him, drawing blood.)* Poof.

BEN. Fuuuuuuck. I tried, Franny.

FRANNY. An epithet for the ages. I-tried.

BEN. I can't be around you. Not like this.

FRANNY. That works out splendidly, I don't want you around.

BEN. Cover yourself up, please.

FRANNY. Why?

BEN. No.

FRANNY. WHY. WHY. WHY. *(She edges toward him, yelling it louder and louder. Ben retreats and rushes out the door. She takes a beat and walks back to her camera. She begins to snap again, mostly from anywhere but the perspective of her eye. She goes to the windows, pushes them open-the chill rushing at her hair. Blowing.)* Is it so bad to know the moment to say when?

JANE GOODALL. The moment before. The moment after. The moment- *(the stage goes dark.)* Time. *(Dali's melting clocks begin to project, creating a collage of chaos.)* It is here we meet Salvador Dali, with a brief introduction on time.

THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

SCENE 10: 1931, THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY

SALVADOR. *(It almost appears as if Dali is in the painting himself, a piece of the dreamscape.)* Calm down. You are in a dream. Take a deep breath. *(He playfully twists his moustache)* Have you heard of the theory of relativity? It is so large, no? Physics-it's everywhere. The faster we go, our image, it changes. You jump in a photograph-at the right shutter speed, you become a ghost. These clocks, these officers of time. They mean nothing in the universe. We are all lost-a bit. There is no meaning in this world. There is time-and there is sex. Women are an inspiration in many ways. But time-it is one line, one interchangeable moment.

GALA. Salvador-

SALVADOR. My muse.

GALA. Come take your pills.

SALVADOR. No! We are not there yet.

GALA. I do not understand.

SALVADOR. We are not at the end. This-I am at the beginning.

GALA. Quiet now. Quiet.

SALVADOR. Hold me.

GALA. Quiet now. *(They become the clocks, melting into each other.)*

JANE GOODALL. There is a time for everything. A time for birth, a time for growth, and a time to explore one's own desire.

SCENE 11: 1953, BOSTON, MA

SYLVIA PLATH, 21, leans over a chair holding a single rose. She's all knees, knobby. Constantly shifting her body, finding new framing. Smiling.

SYLVIA. I'm going to NY tomorrow. I went to my closet and began to pack every single piece of my clothing but then I stopped. I will get new clothing. I'm on a scholarship. A magazine. Very metropolitan. A college girl no more. *(She pauses, letting the petals of the rose dance on*

THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

her cheek.) Do you think I'm pretty? I want to meet a man. I want to meet a man I wish to devour. I wish to eat entirely whole from the very tip of his forehead to the cusp of his cheek, down to the permanence of his feet. I wish to eat a man and allow him in kind to....eat me. New York City seems an apt place for such things. Does it not? Close your eyes. Close your eyes now. I'll start. Think of this man, think of him. Is he tall, is he short? Is he a she? *(Long pause)* Fat, thin, just right? Who is the other? Now, take them in, take out paper pen, a pencil, a brush, a feeling. Take it out of your body and put it down on this paper, on this table, on this bench-and now I want you to eat it. Not the paper, the feeling. I want you to eat it. Swallow it. Now it's there. It's there inside of you. Tommy gave me this rose. I've grown out of him like shoes or a sweater. I've grown out of him. One day. I will find a dark-eyed man, he will brood and lust after all the right places. We will stare at the moon and determine its meaning while entertaining our sex. Like animals. Like the animals we are. *(Beat)* Nothing is real except the present, and already, I feel the weight of centuries smother me. Some girl a hundred years ago once lived as I do. And she is dead. I am the present, but I know I, too, will pass. And I don't want to die. *(Beat)* I don't want to die.

SALLY HEMMINGS. I don't want to die...

MARTHA. I don't want to die...

MARY JANE KELLY. Please-no, I don't want to die...

FRANNY. I need to die.

GALA. I'd prefer not to die. Silly, to die.

SALVADOR. I will never die.

This combined space transitions quickly to....

SCENE 12: 1855, THE BRONTE PARSONAGE

CHARLOTTE BRONTE, 38, lies on her bed. She is hallucinating...

THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

CHARLOTTE. Anne? Emily? Is that you, come sit with me. I have missed you so.... *(Her breathing is difficult, and her voice is light and airy. She holds onto a baby bonnet that she strokes.)* I've been married just this year. Arthur Bell Nicholls. I wish you had both been there to stand next to me. I quite love Arthur, he's a kind man and...should I tell you? *(Pause. She leans over the bed and vomits, weaker.)* I'm sorry you had to see that.

ARTHUR. Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE. Anne and Emily have come to visit. *(She laughs quite loudly)* I've yet to tell them about the baby. Oops, cat's out of the bag.

ARTHUR. Please-lean your head up. *(He pulls a chair next to her, doting)* What is it you need? Can I fix you some bread with butter? Something small?

CHARLOTTE. I would quite like some roast chicken.

ARTHUR. Darling, you wouldn't-

CHARLOTTE. I have told you what I want. Why must men always tell me what I want?

ARTHUR. Shhh, let's just be together here.

CHARLOTTE. You are looking at me with such a face, Arthur. Such a face. I love you, you know. I liked you when I first met you but I quite...love you now.

JANE GOODALL. During death, you note the body's organs begin to slowly shut down one after the next. In this instance, Charlotte Bronte, an accomplished and best-selling female author of the 19th century will die from hyperemesis gravidarum, the pernicious vomiting of pregnancy. A charge that would kill no man. Charlotte does not understand, has grown nauseous, depressed, and delirious. Thin and weak, she has not been able to eat for weeks. Her husband, Arthur, has no will but to watch. If she had been alive today, a doctor would have cured her. Instead, she succumbs to her fate.

CHARLOTTE. Oh, I am going to do it, am I? He will not separate us, we have been so happy.

ARTHUR. Of course not. Please, rest. *(Charlotte leans over, vomiting again. There is nothing left, her breathing more compromised.)*

THIS ODD GEOMETRY OF TIME

CHARLOTTE. Do you know, every choice I made in our lives?
Publishing the poems as the Bell's, finally admitting to my identity.
Writing Jane Eyre, darling Jane. You do know, I'm Jane Eyre. Anne
always went on, saying I copied her. I didn't though, I didn't. I had my
Jane. I'm so so boring Arthur. I truly am. Jane though-she was stunning
in her plainness. Stunning. *(Her breath becomes shallow.)* Anne?
Emily?

ARTHUR. Charlotte? Charlotte? *(She breaths less and less until it
stops)* Charlotte?

JANE GOODALL. And in one moment. One second of time. It is
done.

END OF ACT ONE

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS--
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