

# Seventh Wave 7

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1990 ≈

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# Off The Wall

Peter Gajdics

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YOUNG MAN

WOMAN

KID ON BICYCLE

*(The actor playing KID ON BICYCLE should be the same age as the actor playing YOUNG MAN.)*

*The lights rise suddenly to reveal the brick wall, running the entire width of the stage and very high. Sitting centre, on the wall, legs dangling over the edge, are YOUNG MAN and WOMAN. He is dressed simply, perhaps jeans and a t-shirt. His head is down, his eyes are closed, his arms hang limply by his side. WOMAN is dressed in expensive fashionable white pants, a patterned blouse, high-heeled white shoes, and much jewelry. She is staring out in front of her, in some sort of trance or daze. She is holding up an umbrella, but it has no covering, only a wire frame. Silence. The sound of a bicycle ring is heard offstage right. Another short silence and then the YOUNG MAN begins to mumble a "flup," or an "mmm" under his breath. His body jerks, his arms twitch, but his head is still down and his eyes are still closed. WOMAN's eyes are still frozen forward, fixed, like her entire body.*

YOUNG MAN *(under his breath)...*flup...flup...flup... *(his arms twitch, his head bobs, his eyes flutter)* Fluuup-flupflup-flupflupflupflupflupflup... MMmmmm mmmMMMMMM-OH-OH-OHHH... FLUPFLUP-FLUPFLUP-OHHHH! YES! YES! YEEEESSSS...

*(The bicycle ring is suddenly heard off stage right, and then the KID ON BICYCLE, who wears shorts, a t-shirt, and a crash helmet, zooms past them, right through left and off, ringing his bell all the way but not once looking up.)*

...ohhh-ohhhhHHH... *(his eyes fight to open, but*



- WOMAN Yes?
- YOUNG MAN Would you please tell me what is—AH! And-and what is this-this-thing-on the side of my-? (*suddenly sees how far up he is*) —H-heey. H-heeey! La-lady! HEY!
- WOMAN Yes?
- YOUNG MAN ...um, have you looked around you lately?
- WOMAN ...why?
- YOUNG MAN —Why-what? AAH! And-what is this-thing-on the side of my-?
- WOMAN —Oh, that. I hit you. Well, elbowed, actually.
- YOUNG MAN ...what? You did what?
- WOMAN Elbowed you. Is something wrong?
- YOUNG MAN Huh? Why did you elbow me? That wasn't very nice, you know. (*pause*) Who-who are you?
- WOMAN Haven't you already asked me that? Why do you keep asking me that? Are you not feeling well?
- YOUNG MAN Well, no, actually! I seem to have this enormous-bruise-I have an enormous bruise-on the side of my—
- WOMAN —Do you have a temperature?
- YOUNG MAN Wha— (*she feels his forehead*) What are you...I feel fine. Well, except for—
- WOMAN (*overlapping*) Well you feel fine. Then it must be something in your head.
- YOUNG MAN Why do you keep saying that? Something in my head. What does that mean, something in my head?
- WOMAN (*pause*) Nothing.

YOUNG MAN No, now just a minute. I'd like to know what you mean by that. What does that mean, something in my head?

WOMAN (*calmly*) Well you don't have a temperature, you are obviously not physically ill, well, then, it must be something in your head. You are obviously suffering from some sort of...some sort of...of...OH!

YOUNG MAN Go on, go on, say it! Some sort of-what?

WOMAN Oooh—why are you asking me so many questions? Would you please stop asking me so many questions!

YOUNG MAN (*pause, as he starts to look around again, as if for the first time*) Hey...h-hey-where am I? (*sees WOMAN, as if for the first time*) Excuse me?

WOMAN Yes?

YOUNG MAN —Uh-I don't mean to be rude but-do I know you?

WOMAN Of course.

YOUNG MAN ...I do...?

WOMAN Of course I do.

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) Then-you know me.

WOMAN Yes.

YOUNG MAN ...you do...?

WOMAN You do.

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) I know you?

WOMAN Yes, I do. You have always known me. Even before we met. Now please!

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) Oh, I can't-I don't...I can't remember any-

thing. Why can't I remember anything?

WOMAN You're confused.

YOUNG MAN —But...but...*(pause; looks up at the sky, stares)* ...no one...

WOMAN *(pause)* What?

YOUNG MAN *(still up to the sky)* No one. There was no one. ...I was...alone—

WOMAN —What?

YOUNG MAN I was by myself. I was somewhere—

WOMAN —You were-*what?*

YOUNG MAN —Somewhere else. I wasn't here. I was—

WOMAN —Somewhere else, mm. —Then where was I?

YOUNG MAN ...what?

WOMAN If you were-somewhere else-then where was I? Was I there too?

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* I don't know. I don't remember seeing you.  
*(pause)* I told you, I don't know you!

WOMAN You were nowhere, you were here. I was here. I saw you here...

YOUNG MAN ...but...

WOMAN ...I wouldn't have seen you if you were somewhere, now, would I?

YOUNG MAN But—

WOMAN *(overlapping)* Of course I wouldn't.

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YOUNG MAN *(pause)* But...I was by myself.

WOMAN You have never been by myself.

YOUNG MAN I'm telling you that I was by myself! You weren't there!

WOMAN No, but you're here now and everything'll be just fine. There's nothing to worry about, everything'll be just fine.

YOUNG MAN ...but...but...oh, I feel so—

WOMAN —Confused. You are. It's alright. It's normal. Would you like to watch some TV?

YOUNG MAN ...what? But—

WOMAN —You can watch for one hour but then it's lights out, okay?

YOUNG MAN ...but—

*(But she has already unfolded her umbrella and placed it between them, reached behind the wall and pulled up a small, black and white TV and placed it on her left side, away from him. There is fuzz and no sound. But there is a cord that runs back, behind the wall. He watches her, dumbstruck, looks behind the wall, slowly. She reaches back and pulls up a plate of cookies, offering one to him.)*

YOUNG MAN ...uh-no. Thank you...

WOMAN Not even rum-raisin? They're your favourite...

YOUNG MAN I'm...not hungry. Thank you.

*(Pause, as she takes one for herself and begins eating while watching the TV, turned slightly away from him. He looks back, behind the wall. Suddenly, the bicycle ring is heard off*



*stage left, and then the KID ON BICYCLE zooms past, left through right then off. He doesn't look up. YOUNG MAN stares at him as he passes, then off right WOMAN continues to watch the TV and eat the cookies, not once looking over.)*

Uh...uhm...

*(He looks at WOMAN, then off right, then off left, staring. Suddenly the bicycle ring is heard off right, and then the KID ON BICYCLE zooms back on.)*

—Uh-h-hey. Hey! You, kid! Stop!

*(KID ON BICYCLE slams on his brakes, stops under YOUNG MAN.)*

Uh, hi. —Uh-d-do you live around here? Do you want to do me a favour? *(pause, as the KID ON BICYCLE just stares up at him)* What's the matter?

KID ON BICYCLE I don't know you.

YOUNG MAN —Uh, do you think you could do me a favour? Do you have a ladder at your house?

KID ON BICYCLE *(suspiciously)* Why?

YOUNG MAN You want to go and get it for me?

*(Pause. KID ON BICYCLE starts to leave, left.)*

—Hey! No, no! Please!

*(KID ON BICYCLE stops by left, looking back.)*

Look, I really need your help. Could you please—

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KID ON BICYCLE —My mother told me never to talk to strange men.

YOUNG MAN I'm not strange.

KID ON BICYCLE You look strange. *(pause)* What kind of favour?

YOUNG MAN Could you go and get me a ladder? *(KID doesn't move)*  
Please?

KID ON BICYCLE I don't think so; my mother told me never to trust  
strange men.

*(He zooms off, left.)*

YOUNG MAN I told you, I'm not-hey! Hey! Where you going?!

*(He stares off left for a moment. Then he lifts his shirt and sees the large, black and blue bruise on the side of his stomach. He touches it gently.)*

AH!

WOMAN *(looking over)* Something wrong?

YOUNG MAN It hurts...

WOMAN What? Ooh. Where does it hurt? Can you show me?

YOUNG MAN *(showing her)* It hurts when I breathe.

WOMAN Ohh, that does look terrible.

YOUNG MAN *(slight pause, looking at her)* But...you did it. Why did you do it? It hurts.

*(She opens her umbrella, looks out front.)*

Why did you hit me? *(no response)* Why!

WOMAN Don't you raise your voice at me!

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* Why did you hit me?

WOMAN Oh, what are you talking about, I didn't hit you.

YOUNG MAN ...what?

WOMAN I have never laid one finger on you.

YOUNG MAN ...what? But...

WOMAN Isn't this a wonderful day. You know, I can't remember when the weather's been this wonderful. And not a cloud in sight. Mmm.

YOUNG MAN Can...can you tell me something? What happened before you...can you tell me what was happening before? Please? I-I mean... out there...and, and down-right here. Right there. What was going on right there? Can you tell me? Please? *Please?*

*(WOMAN has turned back to the TV. The bicycle ring is heard off stage left, then the KID ON BICYCLE zooms back on and skids to a stop under YOUNG MAN.)*

KID ON BICYCLE Why do you want a ladder?

YOUNG MAN *(slight pause)* Why do you think?

KID ON BICYCLE I dunno. *(pause)* What're you doin' up there, anyways? You can't get down, can you?

YOUNG MAN *(slight pause)* Sure. Sure I could. Hey-have you been riding up and down here for a while?

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Maybe.

YOUNG MAN What does that mean, "maybe"?

KID ON BICYCLE —If you're going to get mad at me then I'm—

*(He starts off, left.)*

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YOUNG MAN —NO! No, please.

(KID stops by left.)

I'm sorry. Please. Don't go. Please.

KID ON BICYCLE (*pause, staring up at him*) Are you sick?

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) I want to ask you a question-can-can you come a little closer?

KID ON BICYCLE ...why? What're you gonna do to me?

YOUNG MAN I'm not going to do anything to you! —Just-please-I want to ask you a question.

(*Pause. KID coasts a foot closer to YOUNG MAN.*)

KID ON BICYCLE What.

YOUNG MAN Did-did you see anything strange around here?

KID ON BICYCLE (*pause*) Can you get down?

YOUNG MAN What? No, okay, no, I can't get down!

KID ON BICYCLE Then I did see something strange.

YOUNG MAN ...what? Can you tell me? Please?

KID ON BICYCLE You. I gotta go.

(*He zooms off suddenly, left.*)

YOUNG MAN HEY! NO! DON'T GO! PL-! (*pause, to himself*) Stupid kid. (*yelling off left*) STUPID KID!

KID ON BICYCLE (*off*) I HEARD THAT! (*he coasts back on from left, stops under YOUNG MAN*) I heard that. That wasn't very nice, you know.

*(Pause, as the KID stares up at him.)*

YOUNG MAN Do you want something? *(Pause)* What!

KID ON BICYCLE My mother's warned me 'bout men like you.

YOUNG MAN What is that supposed to mean?

KID ON BICYCLE I know what you wanna do ta me, I'm not stupid.

YOUNG MAN What are you talking about?

KID ON BICYCLE You jus' wanna get me, don't you? You jus' wanna get me, you think you can hurt me, don't you?

YOUNG MAN Look kid, I don't wanna hurt nobody.

KID ON BICYCLE Yes you do, yes you do, I know what you wanna do ta me, I've seen pictures!

YOUNG MAN —Wha-what types of pictures?

KID ON BICYCLE In the paper. Pictures, kids like me. Only *dead!*

YOUNG MAN —Look, kid, I don't know what you're talk—

KID ON BICYCLE —First you jus' wanna ask me some questions. Then you wanna grab me by the arm. Then you wanna stick something in my mouth so I can't scream. Then you wanna push me in a car and step on the gas. Then you're gonna blindfold me so I can't tell 'em what I've seen. An-and then we get to your place and you let me loose and you starve me and you make me do really dirty things so that all I wanna do is hide under tables and stay in bed all day and never come out again. And then-then I have ta grow up and I have ta see a doctor 'cause they never believe me when I tell them. I know all about men like you-my mother's told me all about men like you and I think you're terrible. I think you're sick! I hate you. I HATE YOU I HATE YOU I HATE YOU! MOMMY! *(KID zooms off suddenly, right)* MOMMY! *(from far*

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*off right)* MMOOOOMMMMMMMMMMYYY-  
YYYYYYYYYY!

YOUNG MAN *(pause; in a sudden outburst)* GO! SEE IF I CARE!

*(But after a moment the KID ON BICYCLE  
coasts back on from right, stops under YOUNG  
MAN. Stares up at him for a moment.)*

KID ON BICYCLE My mother wasn't home. *(pause)* You can't get  
down.

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* No.

KID ON BICYCLE What're you doing up there, anyways?

YOUNG MAN I told you. I don't know.

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Are you scared?

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* No.

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Yes you are, you are, you're scared 'cause  
you can't get down. Scaredy cat, scaredy cat...

YOUNG MAN Don't do—

KID ON BICYCLE ...scaredy cat, scaredy—

YOUNG MAN —I said don't do that!

KID ON BICYCLE —scaredy cat-!

*(YOUNG MAN tries to suddenly reach for the KID,  
and almost falls off the wall. THE KID jumps back,  
afraid.)*

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Sorry.

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* Don't you have anything better to do than just  
stand there and stare at me?

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* No.

YOUNG MAN Why don't you go play with some kid or something?

KID ON BICYCLE You wanna watch me ride? I can do it to the end there-see? You jus' sit and watch me ride to the end there, 'kay?

YOUNG MAN Look kid, get this straight, will you, I am not interested in watching you ride. I am not interested in watching you ride to the end there, or to any-I don't wanna watch you, okay! You got it? Huh? Huh!

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Why not? Why don't you wanna watch me ride? You're not doing anything. You're just—

YOUNG MAN I said *no!*

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* You're no fun.

YOUNG MAN No, I'm not, okay?

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* I'll help you down.

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* What? What did you say?

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* I'll get the ladder if you watch me ride.

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* Okay.

KID ON BICYCLE You'll watch me?

YOUNG MAN Yes.

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* You promise?

YOUNG MAN Uh-huh, yup.

(KID ON BICYCLE *starts off, left.*)

KID ON BICYCLE I can do it to the end there, you watch me, I won't go past the end, you watch me and you'll see...

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(KID ON BICYCLE *is off, left. Pause.*  
YOUNG MAN *looks up at the sky, stares.*)

(*off*) YOU'RE NOT WATCHING!

(YOUNG MAN *turns quickly, KID ON BICYCLE coasts back on from left.*)

KID ON BICYCLE (*stopping under YOUNG MAN*) You didn't watch me. You promised. You shouldn't lie like that, you promised!

YOUNG MAN Look, just, just-go and get the ladder.

KID ON BICYCLE But you didn't watch me.

YOUNG MAN —Just-just-get the ladder, will you?

KID ON BICYCLE (*pause*) No.

YOUNG MAN —Look, kid, go and get the stupid ladder, will you!

KID ON BICYCLE No! I won't! You didn't watch me so I'm not getting the stupid ladder! I'm not going to help you!

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) GO! GET! THE! LADDER!

KID ON BICYCLE NO! You lied! Liar liar, pants on fire.

YOUNG MAN (*overlapping*) Shut up!

KID ON BICYCLE (*pause*) Now you're mad at me.

YOUNG MAN (*pause*) I am not mad.

KID ON BICYCLE Yes you are. You're mad and now you don't like me.

YOUNG MAN (*beat*) I like you.

KID ON BICYCLE No you don't, no you don't, you hate me, you hate me and now you want to hit me or something! Well I



hate you too! *(pause)* And you can't get down! *(long pause as they stare each other down)* How'd you get up there, anyways?

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* I told you already. I don't remember.

KID ON BICYCLE What?

YOUNG MAN I CAN'T REMEMBER! I CAN'T REMEMBER!

KID ON BICYCLE You don't have to scream at me, I'm standing right here. *(pause)* You can't remember?

YOUNG MAN No.

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Oh. *(pause)* So how come you can't remember?

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* I woke up like this.

KID ON BICYCLE You mean you were sleeping up there? Like that? That's pretty stupid of you.

YOUNG MAN Thank you.

KID ON BICYCLE You're welcome. *(pause)* You were flapping.

YOUNG MAN *(slight pause)* Pardon me?

KID ON BICYCLE You were flapping. I told you you were strange.

YOUNG MAN What do you mean, I was...I was-?

KID ON BICYCLE —Flapping?

YOUNG MAN Yes. What does that mean?

KID ON BICYCLE I dunno. You were doing it.

YOUNG MAN But-but...what was I *doing*?

KID ON BICYCLE I just told you, you were flapping, weren't you

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listening?

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* Can you describe it to me?

KID ON BICYCLE ...well...your arms were kind of-oh, and, and then your body was going all weird like, kind of spastic, and...and...well, that's when you woke up.

YOUNG MAN What was happening before that? Can you tell me what was happening before that?

KID ON BICYCLE Of course. You were sitting there. And, and then you started-mumbling something, I dunno. Oh-and then you started screaming!

YOUNG MAN —I started what?

KID ON BICYCLE Screaming. Real loud, too. I was watching you. From over there, you see? Over at the end of the—

YOUNG MAN —Ya, ya, then what happened?

KID ON BICYCLE *(pause)* Flup, flup, flup.

YOUNG MAN *(beat)* Flup.

KID ON BICYCLE That's when you started screaming: FLUP, FLUP, FLUP!

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* And then what happened?

KID ON BICYCLE Then your arms started to, um, they started-well, like this—

*(He imitates the YOUNG MAN from the beginning, flapping his arms, up and down.)*

YOUNG MAN *(pause)* Are you telling me the truth?

KID ON BICYCLE I never lie. That's a sin.

YOUNG MAN *(to himself)* ...what does that mean?

KID ON BICYCLE I dunno.

YOUNGMAN (*pause*) Were you-uh, maybe you were on a different block, or something?

KID ON BICYCLE Uh-huh. My mother told me never to pass that sign there. I am always here. I can see everything. I can see the whole block from down there, the whole block! And I was watching you, I could see you and you looked really stupid!

YOUNG MAN (*pause, increasing desperation*) Listen to me for a second. I don't know what's going on here, but... I don't know where I am or how I got up here. I feel confused. I don't know what I'm doing here and I don't know how to get down. Now, I want you to help me. Please. I don't want to hurt you, I just want to get off of here. Do you understand? I want to get down from here. You'll help me, okay? You just help me get down from here and then you can go ride or something, I don't know, you can do whatever you want! Do whatever you want to do, but-please-just-help me down, okay? Will you help me down from here? Please? Please?

KID ON BICYCLE Uh-I gotta go, my mother's home—

YOUNG MAN —NO! PLEASE! DON'T-!

KID ON BICYCLE —My mother's home, I gotta go—

YOUNG MAN —NO!

KID ON BICYCLE —NO! I gotta go, I gotta—

(*And the KID ON BICYCLE is off, right, in a flash.*)

YOUNG MAN ...no...please...don't go...

WOMAN (*looking over*) What? I'm not going anywhere...I'm

staying right here. There's nothing to worry about, I'm right here.

*(There is an awkward silence as they stare at each other for a moment, then she looks back out front, still holding up her umbrella. He looks back off right, then, after a moment tries to imitate what the KID described to him.)*

YOUNG MAN ...flup...flup...flup...(pause, looking up at the sky)  
Flup...FLUP...FLUP...(pause) Flup? (slight pause, then he tries moving his arms like the KID described, up and down, quite awkwardly at first, then becoming quite natural and faster) ...flup...flup...flupflupflup  
FLUPFLUPFLUPFLUPFLUPFLUPFLUPFLUPFLUP—

WOMAN —Don't do that!

YOUNG MAN —What? Why? I'm-I'm just trying to remember. I'm just-I can almost remember-something. There's something— I was just trying to remember something that might have happened to me. OH! I was just trying to remember something that, oh, I don't know, that could have happened!

*(WOMAN stares back out front. YOUNG MAN looks slowly up at the sky, then begins flapping his arms, slowly, and mouthing the words, "Flup...flup..flup" and then "Swoosh!")*

YOUNG MAN I said "swoosh"! That's what I said, I did, I remember, I said "swoosh"!

*(But he gets no response from her. He slumps forward, deflated. His eyes close slowly, his arms fall forward, his body jerks and his eyes suddenly flash back open.)*

I was inside! I was inside-something. I could feel it. I can feel it. It was warm. I was warm and...it was soft. Blue. I think it was blue. (beat) Maybe it was the sea.

Sea's blue. *(pause)* But I could breathe. I was breathing. And I was thinking...I never wanted to leave. It was so warm. It felt...safe. I felt so...I was inside and I felt so...protected. I remember. I can see it. It was real. I remember. *(pause)* Something happened. I opened my eyes. My eyes were closed but...then I opened them. But...it was...black. The air...it was something happened to the air. It was black and-thick. And hard. It was hard to breathe. I couldn't...I was trying to but...I was choking. I felt like I was suffocating. *(pause, looks up at the sky, stares)* I had to go up. To breathe. But...I didn't know how. I...I started-pumping. I was pumping my arms and then I was up. I was up, I was far away and...I was...I was holding my breath so I didn't pass out but then I was up and I could breathe again. I started breathing again. Slowly. The air, I could feel the air. It was rushing right inside me. I could feel it in my stomach. The cool air, I can feel it, I can...I was getting so high, higher and higher, I was breathing, deeper and deeper, I was taking more and more of it inside me, and I was feeling so, so...oh! I felt so...*big!* Nobody gets that high! I was looking everywhere, all around, and I could see there was no one there, I was by myself, but, but...ohh, it was so...amazing! There was this, this-blue, no, purple, and this, this orange. All these colours and they're all around me, and then, then I...I...I looked down. I didn't...I was looking all around but then I looked back down. By accident. I'd forgotten. I could see them. The people. There were these-people, and they looked so-tiny. And weak. They were...they were holding their breath. They were breathing that air and I could see it, it was black and it was down below, I was far away, but I could see it and they were breathing it in. They were trying to hold their breath but-they couldn't. They were choking. And they didn't even know they were choking. They looked so...sad. *(pause)* And then I'm falling. Suddenly I'm falling, really fast, and, and I can't make it stop. I try and, and grab onto something, someone, but, but-my arms, my arms are gone, I don't have any arms and, and the air, it's getting hot, it's, it's black, the air, I can see it, the, the air, it's black again and

it's slicing back into me, it's, it's filling me up and I have to shut my eyes 'cause I'm scared, and I don't wanna see it, I don't want to look, and, and there's this-voice! There's this voice and it's in my head, it's screaming, it's pounding inside and it's saying that it's time and I will not survive, I cannot escape this time and I will...I will...I am going to...no! I try and, and get away, pump, but, but it's filling me up, the black, I'm blacking out and it's screaming that I'm going to...I will...I am going to...I'm gonna-die! I am going to-die!

*(He is shaken by the memory. He looks at her. She has been sitting quite still with her open umbrella, not listening to a word of this.)*

Am I dead?

WOMAN *(pause, looking over at him)* Tea?

YOUNG MAN *(slight pause)*...what?

WOMAN How about a nice hot cup of chamomile tea?

YOUNG MAN ...but...

*(But she has already unfolded her umbrella and placed it in between them, quickly lowered the TV behind the wall, then she pulls up a silver tray with matching teapot, two china cups, a sugar bowl, a cream server, and two silver stirring spoons. Moves down to make room for it between them.)*

WOMAN One lump or two?

*(He doesn't answer, he is dazed, staring out front.)*

Too much sugar isn't good for the best of us, though, is it? No, you're right, I know I should cut back.

*(Three lumps in her tea and then she's pouring*

*both cups.)*

Here you are, hot and-well, here.

*(Hands him a cup, he doesn't move, she places it in his hands. He looks slowly right, then left, then a bit up.)*

That's the way...nice and...good. Drink up, now. It'll only stay hot for...well, drink up.

*(Sipping her tea; he doesn't move.)*

...mmm...oh, how I love my afternoon tea. Nothing quite like a good hot cup of steaming chamomile, is there? Mmmm...You're not drinking your tea. What's the matter? Is it too strong? Here, let me.

*(She picks up his cup and puts it to his mouth, it dribbles down his chin.)*

Good...good...that's the way.

YOUNG MAN *(staring into his cup)* What...what is this?

WOMAN Chamomile...mmm...*(sipping)*

YOUNG MAN *(still staring, sees the teapot, lifts the lid, stares inside; pause)* This isn't tea. This is hot water. There isn't any tea in this tea. This is hot water.

WOMAN *(sipping)* ...mmm...

*(She continues sipping. He places the lid back on the teapot, sits back up straight while looking out front, looks over at her, back out front, then, after a moment, suddenly stands up on the edge of the wall.)*

What are you doing!

YOUNG MAN Nothing.

Peter Gajdics

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- WOMAN Sit back down here!
- YOUNG MAN *(calmly)* Uh-oh.
- WOMAN —I told you to sit back down here!
- YOUNG MAN *(with his arms outstretched to his sides, calmly)* No. I won't.
- WOMAN *(pause)* I said sit!
- YOUNG MAN *(arms still out for balance)* I said no! I WON'T I WON'T I WON'T! *(walking the edge like a trapeze artist, right, then back to centre, closing his eyes, breathing deeply, in, out)*
- WOMAN *(pause)* Come on now, sit back down here like a good—
- YOUNG MAN —I can't.
- WOMAN *(beat)* What do you mean, you can't?
- YOUNG MAN I can't. It's too far.
- WOMAN Here, just-give me your—*(reaching up for his hand)*
- YOUNG MAN GET AWAY!
- WOMAN *(pause)* Your tea's getting cold.
- YOUNG MAN You drink it for me.
- WOMAN *(pause)* What do you think you're going to do?
- (He looks up, she grabs him suddenly by the leg.)*
- YOUNG MAN What're you doing! Let go of me!
- WOMAN No.



YOUNG MAN Don't-don't touch me, will you let go of me!

WOMAN *(overlapping)* I won't!

YOUNG MAN *(beat)* Fine.

WOMAN ...what are you going to do? We, we don't have to drink the tea, we could...we could...we could watch some TV. Would you like to watch some TV?

YOUNG MAN I don't think so. *(staring up)*

WOMAN *(pause)* I'm not going to just sit here and watch this!

YOUNG MAN *(beat)* Then don't. Close your eyes. *(beat)* Now...let go of me.

*(They stare at each other for a moment. When he crouches low to spring, she quickly lets go and looks the other way, but he stops, looks out front, looks behind, turns around, facing behind, then crouches low and springs, jumping off the wall and disappearing silently of sight. Lights begin to fade slowly to the end of the play. After a long pause, she turns back front, not once looking behind. Sees the tea, takes a sip, goes to put it back down but the cups, the tray, everything falls off the edge and crashes on the unseen ground behind. She doesn't even flinch, sees the umbrella, opens it, and staring out front, becomes frozen, almost comatose, as in the beginning. Lights are almost down. Short pause. The KID enters from right, walking the edge of the wall, gets to the WOMAN, tries, but can't get around, sits down on the edge, where the YOUNG MAN was before. Yawns. His eyes close slowly. His head drops forward. His arms hang limply by his side. His body twitches slightly. Lights have faded to a black.)*

CURTAIN



# Contributors Notes

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**Yvette Brend**, a militant cubist, resides in Coombs, B.C., where she sculpts sheep and writes poetry. Her recent works have appeared in *Quadrate International*, and *The Fundamentalist Quarterly*.

**Bill Chalmers** is a third year student, majoring in Creative Writing (Fiction) and English. He has lived in Nanaimo for the past ten years, attending Malaspina College and working at a variety of jobs.

**Edmond Chen** was born in Taipei, Taiwan. His family immigrated to Canada when he was ten. His is a second year CW student at the University of Victoria.

**Katy Ellis** is from Seattle but was drawn to the island rocks that make Victoria such a rich place. She hopes to continue writing and learning on Vancouver Island or perhaps find another "place in the sun."

**Peter Gajdics** was born and raised in Vancouver. He recently moved to Victoria to continue his studies. His play *Off the Wall* was produced at the 1990 Fine Arts Festival at the University of Victoria.

**Tom Henry** is a seventh year student at the University of Victoria. He was born and raised in the Cowichan Valley, misses it, and plans to return there if he graduates.

**Carolynn Hunter** is graduating from UVic's Creative Writing Department in April 1990. Through the Co-op program she has worked as a reporter, photographer, and editor.

**Sahm Jalbert** studies fiction, journalism, and poetry at the University of Victoria.

**Debra Kerr**, the heir to a Sunshine Coast bowling alley dynasty, is a fourth year Creative Writing student and bakes a mean scone.

**Tanya Klaes** is a first year Creative Writing student at the University of Victoria. She is a graduate of Selkirk College's Applied Writing Program and has been published in *Imagazine* and elsewhere.

**Laurelle Larmand** hopes her mother never reads her work. She is currently working on a collection of Metro-Fiction set in Salmon Arm, BC.

**David Leach** migrated to Victoria to study Creative Writing and Biochemistry after one term at Carleton University and a year travelling through Israel and Egypt.

**Rhonda Roy** is a lonely young woman currently living with seven little men in exchange for her housekeeping skills. She works as a computer systems operator, bowls professionally, and maintains her lithe figure and youthful good-looks by tap-dancing on Sundays in local nursing homes.

**Deborah Vansickle's** three wishes would be to live happily, die peacefully, and have her ashes scattered at 6500 feet over Kicking Horse Pass from the bar-car of the ghost of The Canadian.

**Grace Yuen** is a third year Creative Writing student at the University of Victoria. She immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong at the age of eleven.

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FICTION

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DRAMA

*Peter Gajdics*  
*Grace Yuen*

NON-FICTION

*Carolynn Hunter*  
*Tanya Klaes*  
*Deborah Vansickle*

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*Paul Bennett*  
*Carolynn Hunter*  
*Yvette Brend*  
*Darlene Emery*  
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