

Logic in Laughter

written by

Eitan Perlin

329 Rutland Rd, Unit 3L Brooklyn, NY 11225  
412-613-4585  
Eitanm1999@gmail.com

#### General notes:

All real people enter from stage left. Imaginary characters enter from stage right. Every time a new philosopher comes in, sneak the specified book onto the side table. Michael, Kai, and Wittgenstein must be male presenting. All other genders are flexible.

Each philosopher represents a different stage of grief in order. Berkeley is Denial, Nietzsche is Anger, Kierkegaard is Bargaining, Kant is Depression, and Wittgenstein is Acceptance.

#### Physical Descriptions

Michael: Man in his early thirties, attractive with boyish features. Between 5'5 and 5'10. Blonde/Brown Hair. Is a people pleaser who does not put himself first.

Kai: Man in his early thirties, tall, dark, and handsome, 6'0+. Black hair. Aloof and oblivious. Cool in a gamer/skater boy way.

Berkeley/Ricky: Height unimportant. Mid-twenties. Polite, pleasant Irish/UK man. Possibly rotund. Friendly, but not aggressively so. When speaking he should sound perfectly rational, cool, and collected.

Nietzsche/Zachary: A wild man in his late 20s who moves with dynamism and no regard for others. He is aggressive and passionate. He should have sunken, intense eyes, a sharp nose, and a glorious mustache. Average height, in real life he was 5'8".

Kierkegaard/Russel: Flamboyant, zero self-awareness. Over the top but sincere. He speaks condescendingly because he believes everyone around him is suffering. French or Danish man in his mid-thirties with pretty features. Slender and tall.

Kant/Hanz: Matter of fact and stern, domineering German man between 40-55. Dry humor. To him everything has an order and a place. Not emotionless, but difficult to get a response from. Like a disapproving father helping with math homework. Very short. In real life he was 5'2".

Wittgenstein/Aiden: Considerate but deeply sad. He speaks. He should have dark slender features and be slightly shorter than Michael, but similar in age. His partner wrote about him, "sensitive, nervous, and attuned to the tiniest slight or change in mood from Pinsent. Pinsent also writes of Wittgenstein being 'absolutely sulky and snappish' at times, as well." In real life he was 5'6".

Miss Lexington Dupree Dubois the Third: CIS female drag queen performer at brunch. Comedy host type, not dancer. More Kasha Davis or Bianca Del Rio, less La Ganga Estranga or Morphine Love Dion.

*MICHAEL sits with KAI, AIDEN, ZACHARY, HANZ, and RICKY drinking mimosas while bubblegum pop music plays. Everyone is hammered.*

ZACHARY

Shut UP you dumb slut. We don't believe you.

RUSSEL

(threateningly waggles his  
mimosa)

Those are fighting words! You want me to go real housewives on your ass?

ZACHARY

Maybe you can do something else there...

RUSSEL

You wish. You may be in a top drought, but I'm not THAT thirsty.

KAI

I call BS. I've seen your Grindr profile. Nothing but abs and ass.

RUSSEL

(flexes)

If you got 'em, flaunt 'em.

ZACHARY

They're clearly photoshopped.

RUSSEL

I'll take my shirt off right now.

AIDEN

I wish you would!

HANZ

I'd prefer it if you didn't.

*RUSSEL gets up on the table and starts to take his shirt off. Miss LEXINGTON DUPREE DUBOIS THE THIRD runs in from offstage.*

MISS LEXINGTON DUPREE DUBOIS III

Hey hey, this is MY show. I take your shirt off!

*She climbs up on the table in her stilettos and seductively drops down to start taking off RUSSEL's shirt to woos from the table.*

*RICKY and KAI disappear in the commotion. RICKY looks guilty, KAI does not, and MICHAEL gets dejected. While everyone else is partying, AIDEN gives him a comforting smile and a squeeze on the shoulder*

MISS LEXINGTON DUPREE DUBOIS

III (CONT'D)

Well, there's no WAY we're topping that. And let's be real, WHO WOULD WANT TO TOP THAT!?

RUSSEL

Hey!

MISS LEXINGTON DUPREE DUBOIS III

(thrusters)

Kisses. I'll see you all back next week! Don't forget to tip your servers, and if you're generous I may give you a tip back. Party at my place!

*Everyone gets up and starts to go offstage left with LEXINGTON, except for MICHAEL.*

AIDEN

Aren't you coming?

MICHAEL

No, I think I'm gonna head home. My switch is calling my name.

AIDEN

Oh, I didn't know you and Kai were open like that.

MICHAEL

What? No no no, like Nintendo, not-  
(mimes cracking a whip)

AIDEN

GOTCHA. So... you guys aren't open?

MICHAEL

Definitely not.

AIDEN

Oh. Um. Ok, I'll see you next week.

*AIDEN exits stage left.*

MICHAEL

(sighs)

See ya.

*MICHAEL begins to walk stage right to leave the brunch. We hear the sounds of cars honking and tires.*

RICKY (O.S)  
You have to tell him.

KAI (O.S)  
I don't want to.

RICKY (O.S)  
Fine, then I will.

MICHAEL  
(checks his phone)  
THAT CHEATING MOTHERF-

# BLACKOUT

*We hear screeching brakes and a crash, people run from stage left, among them are the philosophers in different clothing. An ambulance rings and flashing lights strobe from offstage left.*

ANNOUNCER (O.S)  
On July 18, a bus collided with a man on 7th Avenue and Christopher. He has fallen unconscious and is seemingly unresponsive.

MICHAEL  
HI  
I'M SOMEWHERE I GUESS  
IN THE MIDDLE OF MY OWN MESS  
IT'S MY FAULT, I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN  
TO PUT DOWN THE STUPID PHONE  
THOUGH I WONDER  
DID HE MEAN ANYTHING  
I CAN'T HELP WONDER  
IF I HAD JUST LET IT RING  
AND WHY DID I START TO CRY  
WHEN I SAW THROUGH HIS ALIBI  
MAYBE IGNORANCE IS BLISS  
AND ASKING QUESTIONS IS REMISS

*Paramedics rush a gurney onto stage with a person who looks like Michael on it. Next to him is a side bed table with "A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge" by Berkeley. All background noises die. Michael walks onstage and tries to interact with the doctors and nurses around him but fails. They do not notice him walking around and asking questions.*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
HI  
I'M STILL HERE I GUESS  
THOUGH I CAN'T TALK, MOVE, OR DRESS  
I'M STUCK THINKING ON MY OWN  
FORCED TO FACE MY FATE ALONE

THOUGH I WONDER  
 DID IT MEAN ANYTHING  
 I CAN'T HELP WONDER  
 IF MY LIFE HAD ANCHORING  
 AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DIE  
 WAS I EVER REALLY ALIVE  
 WHERE IS MY CONSCIOUSNESS  
 WHY CAN'T I FADE INTO THE MIST

*BERKELEY Enters stage right. He makes his presence known then interjects. He is enthusiastic and NOT sarcastic.*

BERKELEY

What a fascinating question.

MICHAEL

Who are you?

BERKELEY

George Berkeley, pleased to make your acquaintance. But if you want to know what death means, first you'll need to grasp life.

MICHAEL

Why can you see me?

BERKELEY

I've never seen anything before.

MICHAEL

What?

BERKELEY

Well I've only ever seen what I think I'm seeing, I've never seen a thing in my life.

MICHAEL

Am I nuts or are you?

BERKELEY

What a fascinating question. Would you prefer I leave?

MICHAEL

No! I don't want to be alone.

BERKELEY

Splendid, then when you're done with your little song we can discuss.

MICHAEL

Wait, is this music diegetic?

BERKELEY

What a fascinating question. Considering I'm probably not real, does it matter?

*MICHAEL Starts to speak then decides better of it.  
He sings instead*

MICHAEL

HI  
YOU'RE HERE WITH ME I GUESS  
THOUGH HERE IS NEBULOUS AT BEST  
I THINK I'M GOING INSANE  
BETTER THAN SPIRALING IN VAIN  
THOUGH I WONDER  
WILL IT MEAN ANYTHING  
I CAN'T HELP WONDER  
WHAT GOOD IS WONDERING  
I'D LOVE IT IF YOU COULD SPECIFY  
JUST WHAT WE WOULD DO IF I COMPLY  
LIKE WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS MADE THE LIST  
AND DO ANY ANSWERS EXIST

BERKELEY

Hello then. It sounds like you're done with your song this time. Let's have a proper introduction. You have my name, what's yours?

MICHAEL

Oh! Since you can somehow see me, I assumed you knew! I'm so sorry. My name is Michael.

BERKELEY

I knew, it's just polite. I also know why you're in here. Though I suppose you've always been here. In fact, this is the only thing you've ever been in.

MICHAEL

You said something like that earlier too, what do you mean?

*BERKELEY Walks around the whole stage.*

BERKELEY

You don't have to worry about what's happened out there because this is it. There is nothing beyond your mind and spirit. All is either mind or of a mind.

MICHAEL

Oh, so you're the insane one, got it. That was a helpful clarification.

BERKELEY

Hardly. How about I ask you a simple question: have you ever known anything real in your life?

MICHAEL

Kai was real. I thought we were real. I loved him.

BERKELEY

What? That's not what I meant, I meant something tangible. The horrific collapse of your relationship aside, I was speaking more generally.

*Points to the bed Michael is on*

BERKELEY (CONT'D)

Take the bed you're in for instance.

MICHAEL

Harsh. I thought you said the relationship doesn't exist anyways.

BERKELEY

It doesn't and then it didn't,

*Gestures again to the bed crossing over to it*

BERKELEY (CONT'D)

but let's talk about your bed.

MICHAEL

It's a bed. I'm lying in it.

BERKELEY

You THINK you're lying in it. What makes you so certain?

*MICHAEL Walks over to the bed and pats it*

MICHAEL

What do you mean? I can see it. I can feel it. It's there. It's a bed.

BERKELEY

Well are you seeing and feeling it or are you seeing and feeling images and feelings?

MICHAEL

I'm feeling it.

BERKELEY

Listen to what I'm saying. Are you feeling the bed, or the sensations of the bed?

*MICHAEL Takes a step back and wipes his face*

MICHAEL

I am feeling the bed. And a little spit.



BERKELEY

Sorry. Break it down with me. You're lying down. Do you feel the bed or the comfort and softness on your back? You're looking at the bed, do you see the bed or colors and shapes of a bed processed by your eyes?

MICHAEL

Why are those not the same thing?

BERKELEY

Is a painting of the Irish countryside the same thing as the land itself? Are portraits people?

MICHAEL

No?

BERKELEY

Precisely! These are imitations of things, not the things themselves.

MICHAEL

But there are things... My bed is a thing, my pillow is a thing, Ireland is a thing.

BERKELEY

Actually, Ireland is two things, but it's not necessarily something at all. If all you've ever known are paintings, why would you assume there is a subject?

MICHAEL

Because there's clearly a bed here. When I lie down I don't fall to the ground randomly in the middle of the night.

*BERKELEY Not getting that Michael isn't getting it*

BERKELEY

No, the bed is immaterial. You don't fall because you perceive it, or something else perceives it.

MICHAEL

That's insane.

*BERKELEY Gingerly walks until he's behind Michael*

BERKELEY

Barely more insane than what you were doing living in a lie. Every morning you woke up next to a lie, made coffee for a lie, hung on the word of a lie. Your daily life was immaterial.

*Comfort and soothes Michael*

BERKELEY (CONT'D)

Why would you want to die in a lie too? It's just easier to realize that nothing you perceive exists, so it doesn't matter. I can think of a few things that would be better off not real.

*Flashback: Designate "Past Area." Kai enters stage right in a hurry and into the past with an untied tie and uncuffed shirt*

*KAI starts getting ready to go out*

KAI

Hey babe, I'm heading out, and I'll be back around 11.

*MICHAEL Steps into the past*

MICHAEL

What? No, we had plans tonight. I reminded you a week ago.

*Gets in Kai's way*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You've been so busy lately and I hardly get to see you. I booked a reservation at Semma a month ago! I know how much you love curry. And you know it's a special day! My special day!

*KAI Shrugs Michael off and resumes getting ready for a night out*

KAI

Oh yeah you did say something like that. Sorry. The thing is, Sienna needs me to meet with some Omani clients tonight. She asked me a week ago and I said I would walk them through the implementation process. It's a multi-million dollar deal and if it's successful the company won't have to worry about cash flow for a year. It'll give us time to expand to other services as well.

MICHAEL

Why didn't you tell me a week ago?

KAI

I guess I just forgot. Sorry. We can go next month.

MICHAEL

I mean I guess-

*KAI Rushes past Michael and gives him a kiss on the cheek on his way out*

KAI

Perfect. Thanks babe, I'll see you at 11. Happy birthday.  
Why don't you hang out with some friends?

MICHAEL

Yeah, uh, I'll... get on that.

*Kai exits stage right*

*Michael continues to stand uncomfortably for long  
enough that it's understood he has no one else*

*Everything returns to normal*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It wasn't always that way, and you just said none of it was  
real anyways, so the lies weren't real. But it did matter!  
Why are you making this so complicated? Why can't you just  
tell me the truth?

*With a sudden realization*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Also wait, did you just say I'm dying?

BERKELEY

Don't worry about that, it's not relevant. The truth is  
there is no truth, that's what I've been saying.

*Sometime during this number, sneak "Thus Spoke  
Zarathustra onto the stack."*

BERKELEY (CONT'D)

HERE'S THE ONLY TRUTH TO FIND  
WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW IS ALL PRETEND.  
A FANTASY INSIDE YOUR MIND  
LIES TO MAKE YOU THINK HE WAS YOUR FRIEND.  
WE'RE BORN ALONE  
AND THAT'S EXACTLY HOW WE'RE DYING  
EVERYTHING OUTSIDE YOU IS UNKNOWN  
NO ONE CAN DRY YOUR TEARS CAUSE YOU'RE NOT CRYING  
SCREAM INTO THE VOID  
IT WILL NEVER RESPOND  
YOU'RE NOT PARANOID  
YOU'RE PROPERLY ALARMED  
DON'T BOTHER TRUSTING ME  
ANYTHING YOU HEAR IS YOU TO YOU  
THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MAKE BELIEVE  
ANYTHING YOU THINK IS TRUE IS TRUE  
OBJECTIVITY BE DAMNED  
FACTS ARE FICTIONS IN THE MAKING  
THE UNIVERSE DRIVES ON UNMANNED  
A DREAM OF YOURS FROM WHICH THERE'S NO ESCAPING  
SCREAM INTO THE VOID

IT WILL NEVER RESPOND  
 YOU'RE NOT PARANOID  
 YOU'RE PROPERLY ALARMED  
 ILLUSION IS THE STATUS QUO  
 FABRICATIONS OF YOUR OWN CREATION  
 WISDOM IS YOUR ONLY FOE  
 PRETTY LIES FOR MENTAL CONSERVATION  
 YOU NEEDN'T HEED MY WARNING  
 SOUNDLESS WORDS FALL ON DEAF EARS  
 YOU'RE IN A STATE OF MOURNING  
 FOR THE GREATEST REALIZATION OF YOUR FEARS.

MICHAEL

I guess... I guess it didn't matter. I'm not dying, nothing happened, and nothing is going to happen. You're right.

NIETZSCHE

(Loudly from offstage)

He's not!

*NIETZSCHE runs from stage right panting and out of breath*

NIETZSCHE (CONT'D)

He's not right. You are alive, and what you do matters.

*Straightens up*

NIETZSCHE (CONT'D)

You can't go down that easily.

MICHAEL

CLEARLY, you don't know me well.

BERKELEY

(Rolls his eyes and speaks  
sarcastically)

Oh, I guess you're here now, too. Lovely.

*NIETZSCHE crosses over to stand opposite Berkeley.*

NIETZSCHE

See? I'm here. I'm Nietzsche.

BERKELEY

Shouldn't you be in an asylum?

NIETZSCHE

They mistook me for you.

MICHAEL

Me?

NIETZSCHE

No, him. You're in a hospital. And we're all somewhere in you in the hospital. It's just like that time on Halloween when you were dressed as a nurse and snuck in...

*MICHAEL Michael gets between the philosophers with his arms out to break them up. The actor in the bed makes it look like he is aroused.*

MICHAEL

All right we don't have to go there.

NIETZSCHE

Looks like you want to.

MICHAEL

Alright, no. Berkeley was much nicer.

BERKELEY

Thank you.

NIETZSCHE

Being nice is for weak men and soon-to-be boring children. It's a front, a con, a trap. I'm honest, and right now you need to be told to snap out of this. A lying nice man uprooted your life. Now is not the time to be nice.

MICHAEL

What do you think I should be then? Assuming I exist.

NIETZSCHE

(Walks down and talks to the audience growing ever more passionate)

Of course you exist! It's the only thing worthwhile about you. Look at your life, you ran around like a dog and laid down like a doormat! Even when you were happy you did nothing. You must seize your life by the horns and drive it through a window! Stop looking back at how pretty you thought it was and do something now. Shatter your disgusting complacency.

MICHAEL

That's kind of hard to do when you're... wherever we are.

*NIETZSCHE Walks directly and quickly back to Michael*

NIETZSCHE

But not impossible! Start right now, here with me. Take my hand and I'll show you what life is really about.

*BERKELEY Gently pulls Nietzsche away from Michael. Michael walks away towards the bed but does not lie down.*

BERKELEY

(assertively)

All you can show him is how to be miserable. You never found love in your life, don't try to screw up his. You're just an angry man with nothing to offer.

*BERKELEY walks to Michael and tries to soothe Michael. Nietzsche walks up behind Berkeley.*

BERKELEY (CONT'D)

Look, Michael, he's about to launch into his spiel, but none of what he's saying matters. Nothing happened, and you can be at peace with that.

*NIETZSCHE throws Berkeley to the ground and pulls Michael to center stage.*

NIETZSCHE

Screw peace, life is dynamic! Peace is death. You're obligated to be the best you that you can be through your own power. To destroy the stagnation in yourself and the world around you and remake it better. History is written by those who refused their conditions and had the imagination to see new ones. Kai didn't want you. So what? Make a new world without him. A better future. He always told you no, so say yes to yourself.

MICHAEL

Why'd you go there?

NIETZSCHE

Ask yourself, I'm not real.

MICHAEL

(Angrily)

I thought you just said everything was real!

NIETZSCHE

Yeah but I'm not.

MICHAEL

(Gets more animated and angry. Stands tall.)

That's stupid! Why do you people keep appearing and lecturing me about my life?

*NIETZSCHE Walks to be side-by-side to Michael, looks out to the audience and egg him on. Berkeley slowly makes his way to the other side of Michael unnoticed by the other two*

NIETZSCHE

I don't know, but that's the spirit! Get enraged, get impassioned, be a lion!

MICHAEL

A lion?

NIETZSCHE

Yeah you silly camel.

MICHAEL

What are you even saying?

BERKELEY

(Loudly interjects)

Is this madman really who you want to listen to?

*NIETZSCHE Pulls Michael away from Berkeley and stands between them.*

NIETZSCHE

Shut up George! Look, it's obvious. You're a camel right now, but soon you figure things out and evolve into a lion.

BERKELEY

The theory of evolution wasn't around when I was alive, but even I'm pretty sure that's not how it works.

NIETZSCHE

Of course it is, it's so simple. Look,

NIETZSCHE (CONT'D)

YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF A CAMEL IN THE ENDLESS BURNING  
SANDS  
PARCHED AND OVERBURDENED BUCKLING UNDER THEIR COMMANDS  
THEY CONDEMN YOU TO THE DIRT AND THEN KICK YOU WHEN  
YOU'RE DOWN  
UNTIL YOU'VE FALLEN TO YOUR KNEES UNCONSCIOUS ON THE  
GROUND  
YOU FEEL THE RIGHTEOUS ANGER BUBBLE UP AND OVERFLOW  
YOU'RE PULLING AT YOUR TETHER FIGHTING ALL YOU'VE EVER  
KNOWN  
YOU'VE TAKEN BRUTAL LUMPS AND NOW YOUR HUMPS BECOME A  
MANE  
AND YOUR TEETH ALL TURN TO FANGS SO THAT YOU'LL FEAR NO  
MAN AGAIN  
ZARATHUSTRA SPOKE FROM MOUNTAIN TOPS TO ANYONE WHO'D  
LISTEN  
HE TOLD US OF THE UBERMENSCH AND THEIR ETERNAL CYCLIC  
MISSION  
HE WALKS ALONG A BRIDGE OF ENDLESS STRIVING FOR  
PERFECTION  
BUT ONLY FOOLS WOULD THINK IT HAS AN END BEYOND  
DIRECTION  
YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF A LION; FEROCIOUS AND ENRAGED  
ROARING AT THE SUN TO CHALLENGE ANY LEASH OR CAGE  
STALK THE DUNES AND HUNT FOR ANY RULES THAT ONCE HAD  
WRONGED YOU  
WITH ABSOLUTE CONVICTION FUELED BY HUNGER YOU BELONG TO  
IN YOUR FIGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION YOU MUST SURELY FIND A  
FOE

CONSTRUCTED OF THE TABLETS CARVED WITH ALL THE LAWS  
 THEY KNOW  
 THIS GOLDEN DRAGON SPEWS THEIR FLAMES: THOU SHAN'T, NOR  
 WILL, NOR SHOULD  
 AND YOU MANGLE REND AND TEAR IT WITH YOUR CLAWS AS BEST  
 YOU COULD  
 ZARATHUSTRA SPOKE FROM MOUNTAIN TOPS TO ANYONE WHO'D  
 LISTEN  
 HE TOLD US OF THE UBERMENSCH AND THEIR ETERNAL CYCLIC  
 MISSION  
 HE WALKS ALONG A BRIDGE OF ENDLESS STRIVING FOR  
 PERFECTION  
 BUT ONLY FOOLS WOULD THINK IT HAS AN END BEYOND  
 DIRECTION  
 YOUR MUZZLE CATCHES SUNSET SOAKED THROUGH WITH GOLDEN  
 ICHOR  
 YOU TAKE THE ONLY PRIZE AFFORDED TO THE MORAL VICTOR  
 BREAK THEIR ANCIENT CODEX AND REPLACE IT WITH YOUR OWN  
 MOUNT YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE UPON THE DESSERTS LONELY  
 THRONE  
 RISE NOW AS A CHILD OVER-BRIMMING WITH INVENTION  
 IMAGINE ALL THAT YOU COULD BUILD AND SET AS NEW  
 CONVENTIONS  
 CONSTRUCT YOUR OWN OASIS AND CARVE IT FROM THE SAND  
 DRAW THE WATERS FORTH AND PLANT NEW TREES WHERE YOU  
 STAND  
 LOOK DOWN AND YOU MAY NOTICE THAT YOUR SKIN HAS TURNED  
 TO SCALES  
 AND ON THEIR SURFACE ETCHED YOUR EXPLOITS WOVEN INTO  
 TALES  
 THEN ONE DAY YOU SPOT A CAMEL FALL AND RISE A PANTHER  
 FINALLY, YOU GRASP ZARATHUSTRA'S EXISTENTIAL ANSWER  
 ZARATHUSTRA SPOKE FROM MOUNTAIN TOPS TO ANYONE WHO'D  
 LISTEN  
 HE TOLD US OF THE UBERMENSCH AND THEIR ETERNAL CYCLIC  
 MISSION  
 HE WALKS ALONG A BRIDGE OF ENDLESS STRIVING FOR  
 PERFECTION  
 BUT ONLY FOOLS WOULD THINK IT HAS AN END BEYOND  
 DIRECTION

NIETZSCHE (CONT'D)

(Revels in his last note then  
 turns back to Michael)

You see, you are the camel. You bore a shit relationship,  
 you bore an empty life, and you bore all the times you went  
 along because you lacked the guts to tell Kai what you  
 wanted. What did you want?

MICHAEL

I wanted a Paris wedding with the sun setting over the  
 Siene!

NIETZSCHE

And what else?!

MICHAEL

I wanted a 30 carat ring with sapphires and diamonds!

BERKELEY



NIETZSCHE

Okay I feel like this is still Kai-centric but I like the energy! Become a lion and tell me: WHAT DO YOU WANT?!

MICHAEL

I want... I don't know. Everything I wanted was with my life with Kai. My life... oh my god I'm dying.

NIETZSCHE

No no no, don't think about that, think about what you can do with your life. Get passionate, get excited, get angry.

BERKELEY

No, remember you're not dying because you never truly lived. You have nothing to lose because you never had anything.

NIETZSCHE

Shut up! Why must you be like this?

MICHAEL

No, Nietzsche's right. I'm dying and it's all that bastard's fault. I only got hit because Ricky was texting me to confess the whole affair. I had so much more to do, and everything I had went into a worthless sack of shit. It's all his fault.

*Berkeley trudges off stage right defeated*

BERKELEY

Well, you can't deny I tried.

NIETZSCHE

Good riddance. Fantastic, you feel alive! Now, let's try again. What do you want?

MICHAEL

I want to live my own life!

*Michael begins the first reprise of his intro song, sneak Fear and Trembling onto the Side Table.*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

HELLO!

I'M HERE NOW I KNOW

BUT IT'S NOT MY TIME TO GO

IT'S HIS FAULT, THAT CHEATING SNAKE

HE'LL ALWAYS BE MY WORST MISTAKE

SO I WONDER

WHY COULD I NEVER SEE

I CAN'T HELP WONDER

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR ME

AND WHERE WILL I GO WHEN I'M AWAKE

NOW THAT REALITY'S OPAQUE

NO ONE CAN SHAPE MY DESTINY

NO ONE CAN CHANGE THAT I AM FREE!

NIETZSCHE

Fantastic! I smell copious bullshit, but I'm sure you'll find something you actually want to do.

MICHAEL

I do know what I want, and it's whatever comes next.

KIERKEGAARD

(Calls from off stage right  
dramatically)

Even if that something is death?

MICHAEL

(Whips around to the source  
of the voice)

What?

NIETZSCHE

Not this guy.

*KIERKEGAARD Flamboyantly enters the stage. Walks to Michael then puts his hand out. Everything has a dramatic flair.*

KIERKEGAARD

Yes. This guy. Hello Michael, my name is Sorin Kierkegaard. I'm sure you're charmed, delighted, etc.

MICHAEL

(Mirrors Nietzsche's posture)

Who are you now? I was fine with Nietzsche.

KIERKEGAARD

No. You weren't. All he's given you is empty confidence and pointless anger. You still have nothing to show for it.

NIETZSCHE

He's self-actualizing, not self-actualized. It's a long cyclical process that never truly ends...

KIERKEGAARD

(With EXTREME condescension.  
Strokes Michael's face)

No, he's suffering. And the poor thing can't even see it.

MICHAEL

(Bats the hand away and  
recoils)

What?

KIERKEGAARD

(Cups his hands to yell  
directly in Michael's ear)

I said you're suffering!!! My goodness, you're deaf now too. You really have had a bad time of it.

MICHAEL

No, I'm not suffering anymore. Other than my eardrums.

KIERKEGAARD

You poor, pitiful, poor fool, you just don't know that you're suffering. You must be so very disconnected from your eternal self to not feel it. That's one of the worst kinds of suffering you know.

MICHAEL

...what?

NIETZSCHE

...what?

KIERKEGAARD

Oh good, now Nietzsche's deaf too. I shall blow out my voice.

*Kierkegaard Cups his hands again and yells*

KIERKEGAARD (CONT'D)

You are your actions, but your actions must align within three relations. Or else you suffer.

MICHAEL

(Michael shouts back)

Why is it always three with you people?

KIERKEGAARD

Because God wills it so.

NIETZSCHE

Always the God stuff with him. Doesn't he know God's dead?

KIERKEGAARD

(In one breath and at an accelerating pace)

The only thing I know, Nietzsche, is that balance must be found within oneself through God. You see the self is not the self.

"The self is a relation, which relates to itself, or is precisely that in the relation that the relation relates to itself; the self is not the relation but that the relation relates to itself. Man is a synthesis of infinitude and finitude, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short a synthesis."

...That's a real quote by the way.

MICHAEL

Okay but what the actual fuck does that mean.

KIERKEGAARD

I mean it's so simple.

NIETZSCHE

You're simple.

KIERKEGAARD

Alas no human can be simple, and so we are all equal. Michael, in order to end your suffering, you must deal with your own imbalances. You cannot gain without giving something up. Me? I gave up my beloved to remain true to God.

NIETZSCHE

And how did that turn out for you?

KIERKEGAARD

Quiet you syphilitic troll.

MICHAEL

Ok, how did that turn out for you?

*Nietzsche giggles*

KIERKEGAARD

Thank you for asking, MICHAEL. I alleviated the suffering in myself.

MICHAEL

So, you were happy?

KIERKEGAARD

(Laughs off the idea that joy  
can exist)

Oh God no. Despair is essential. Anxiety propels us. Without it we are nothing.

MICHAEL

So why should I not be angry and passionate?

KIERKEGAARD

Because life is your one chance to find balance before the end.

*Dramatically turns to Michael*

KIERKEGAARD (CONT'D)

And your end is coming soon.

*Slowly walking to Michael*

KIERKEGAARD (CONT'D)

Can't you feel it slipping through your fingers? Haven't you sensed it draining? And not just from Nietzsche sucking all the air in the room.

*Reaches Michael and puts a hand over his chest*

KIERKEGAARD (CONT'D)

I could hear you start to feel it before he distracted you.

MICHAEL

(Begins to deflate and sink  
into Kierkegaard)

Now that you mention it I've been a bit tired

*Woozily sits down on the bed his body double is  
lying in*

KIERKEGAARD

(Sits beside Michael and  
comforts him)

There, there. He made you so focused on your temporal life and the finite things you forgot about eternity. It's so easy to just be angry at the world, angry at Michael, and angry at yourself. But something must be given up to sustain it.

NIETZSCHE

Let me guess, it's his soul-

KIERKEGAARD

Your soul! You're so tired, you can feel I'm right. Listen to me, I've never been wrong about anything ever.

NIETZSCHE

Weren't you wrong about literally everything?

KIERKEGAARD

(Soothingly, almost sing-song  
while resting Michael's head  
on his lap)

Quiet you syphilitic troll. Michael please listen to me.

YOU MUST GIVE YOURSELF COMPLETELY  
YOU MUST SACRIFICE WITH JOY  
PUT YOUR FAITH INTO THE DEITY  
WHO DEMANDS YOUR ONLY BOY  
LIKE ABRAHAM BEFORE  
RAISE YOUR KNIFE TOWARDS THE HEAVENS  
IF YOU'RE RESOLUTE  
IT'S ABSOLUTE YOU'LL BE GRANTED YOUR REWARD  
WE ARE BORN TO SUFFER,  
IT'S THE NATURE OF OUR SOULS  
IT CAN ONLY MAKE YOU TOUGHER  
ALL YOUR TEARS WILL PAY THE TOLLS  
YOU ARE INFINITE YET FINITE,  
FREE BUT TIGHTLY BOUND,  
ETERNAL IN A MOMENT  
ONLY IN GOD IS BALANCE FOUND  
SO GIVE UP ON THE HOLLOW  
THE HEDONISTIC NIGHT

TRADE YOUR SINNERS SOULFUL SORROW  
 AND REJOICE IN HOLY LIGHT  
 REPENT RELENT AND LESSEN  
 YOU WERE MEANT TO SHED YOUR SIN  
 YOU'LL BE CLEANSED IN FULL CONFESSION  
 JUST LET THE GOOD LORD IN  
 WE ARE BORN TO SUFFER,  
 IT'S THE NATURE OF OUR SOULS  
 IT CAN ONLY MAKE YOU TOUGHER  
 ALL YOUR TEARS WILL PAY THE TOLLS  
 YOU ARE A INFINITE YET FINITE,  
 FREE BUT TIGHTLY BOUND,  
 ETERNAL IN A MOMENT  
 ONLY IN GOD IS BALANCE FOUND  
 YOU LOVED KAI MORE THAN LIFE  
 AND SO, IT'S ONLY FITTING  
 TO SACRIFICE YOUR RAGE AND LOVE  
 AND HEED GOD'S HEALING BIDDING  
 I PROMISE THERE'S A GREENER PASTURE  
 JUST OUTSIDE YOUR SIGHT  
 SO ALIGN YOURSELF WITH RAPTURE  
 AND RECEIVE WHAT'S YOURS BY RIGHT

MICHAEL

(Yawns and stretches)

I think... I think you may be right. Hating Kai isn't the same as getting over him. That's just the opposite side of the same coin. I have to let him go. And maybe if I let him go, I can wake up and move on. Even if I don't wake up it's better. Please just let me wake up...

*NIETZSCHE runs over to Michael and tries to shake him. Michael does not react*

NIETZSCHE

Don't listen to him! You were so close! Remember what he did! You must become the ubermensch and build your own future!

KIERKEGAARD

No, he fully understands now. Kai was not the source of Michael's suffering, it was from himself all along. He needs to be ready for the next steps.

MICHAEL

Nietzsche, I appreciate what you tried to do, but I have to be ready in case I don't wake up. I have to get myself in order and try to be at peace. Kai's in the way of that. My love for him, my hatred of him, it's just a distraction, don't you see? I have to cut out that part of myself. I'd give anything to live yesterday over again, but I only have tomorrow. I don't even know if I have tomorrow. If I wake up Kai won't be there, and if I don't wake up he definitely won't be there.

Giving him all of my attention in what could be my last night on Earth is wrong. So, I'm done with all of it. I'm done with him.

NIETZSCHE

First of all, it was never that great to begin with. And secondly it's been more like 3 months, but regardless you don't mean that.

MICHAEL

Wait wha-

*KIERKEGAARD stands up aggressively accidentally pushing the dumbfounded Michael back onto the bed.*

KIERKEGAARD

How could you just dump that on him?

NIETZSCHE

He's been dumped worse. How could you coddle him?

KIERKEGAARD

*Nietzsche!*

MICHAEL

(Dazed, lying in the bed)

THREE MONTHS?! How? That doesn't even make sense.

NIETZSCHE

To be fair it would make less sense for you to get over your partner of 10 years in one day. Or roughly 20 minutes depending on line reads. You're in a coma. Your internal clock breaks, but you retain snippets of what you hear.

KIERKEGAARD

I have had it with you! You insensitive, angry man. Your worldview does not entitle you to trample upon and disregard the emotions of others. Michael was beginning to find balance, no thanks to the vitriol you planted in his head.

MICHAEL

(Sits up bewildered)

It's been three months... I wonder if Kai even bothered to visit me.

*NIETZSCHE pushes Kierkegaard*

NIETZSCHE

You see? You gave him nothing but empty bullshit. He tried giving up Kai and it got him nowhere. He's right back where he started. Let's get angry again!

MICHAEL

(Begins crying)

He hasn't even visited me.

NIETZSCHE

Sooo, we'll get mad later then?

KIERKEGAARD

Honestly you are hopeless! He's suffering! He obviously has to pray more. Come on Michael, let's think of more mortal material attachments you can give up to attain happiness and focus on god.

NIETZSCHE

I'm hopeless?! What about you? All you suggest is losing more, hasn't he lost enough? He has to do something about it, not sit on his ass and feel sorry for himself!

*Nietzsche and Kierkegaard pause, heaving, before they have a mini slap fight*

MICHAEL

Will both of you please shut up and knock it off?!

*Nietzsche and Kierkegaard turn to Michael as Kierkegaard gets one last slap in*

NIETZSCHE

(Hurt by the words and slaps)

I'm trying to help, but what would you honestly have wanted to hear? What could Kai have said to fix everything?

MICHAEL

I don't know? 'I'm sorry' would have been a good start.

KIERKEGAARD

Nothing would ever substitute the eternal joy of fixing yourself through Jesus Christ.

NIETZSCHE

No, let's hear it. What could that bastard have possibly said to begin to make up for screwing your three best friends and getting you into a coma for three months?

*Kai enters from stage right*

KAI

Michael! I'm so sorry it's been three months. I was stuck in traffic.

MICHAEL

Kai?



*KAI Runs to Michael and wraps him up in a hug. Everything he says is stilted and he moves jerkily. He wears either an overexaggerated fake smile or deep frown alternating between the two*

KAI

Yes it's me, I'm so sorry for everything. It was all my fault, we were perfect and I ruined us.

NIETZSCHE

God this is such bull-sheise.

KIERKEGAARD

For once I agree with this Godless troll. This is going backwards Michael. Think of all the progress you made, you were so close to being eternally happy.

*MICHAEL ignores the philosophers, but pushes Kai away to arm's length*

MICHAEL

Kai, wait.

KAI

(Immediately rushes back in and hugs him)

No, I'm so sorry. For everything

*Kai dances almost puppet or robotic like. Sneak Kant's Critique of Pure reason onto the side table*

KAI (CONT'D)

HEY, IT'S YOUR EX  
YOU'RE THE BEST  
I REGRET I EVER MESSED  
AROUND WITH RICKY, BOB, AND SEAMUS  
ALSO SORRY FOR THE TEXT  
AND THE REST  
YEAH THE WRECK I CONFESS  
IT WAS ALL MY FAULT, YOU'RE BLAMELESS  
YOU DESERVE EVERYTHING  
YOUR PARIS WEDDING AND A 30-CARAT RING  
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE ASTRAY  
AND PUSHED YOU AWAY

NIETZSCHE

This is clearly not real

KAI

No Michael, I AM real. This is real. We are real. Let me make everything up to you.

MICHAEL

I believe you. I believe in us.

KAI

MICHAEL THE ADONIS  
 ADMONISH ME PLEASE  
 I'M ON MY KNEES  
 AND I'M BEGGING FOR FORGIVENESS  
 ALSO, YOU'RE FLAWLESS  
 AND HONESTLY  
 A BEAST IN BED I PROMISE  
 YOU SUCK BETTER THAN CHARYBDIS  
 YOU DESERVE EVERYTHING  
 YOUR PARIS WEDDING AND A 30-CARAT RING  
 I SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE ASTRAY  
 AND PUSHED YOU AWAY

KIERKEGAARD

Nietzsche, why are you being so cruel? Michael please give up on this charade.

MICHAEL

No! Why are you trying to ruin this for me?

NIETZSCHE

Because it isn't real.

MICHAEL

Neither are you.

NIETZSCHE

Fair. But be honest with yourself. You have to know that part of self-actualization is recognizing your mistakes. What Kai did was inexcusable. But what would he really have said? Think back

*The past returns, Kai moves into it. Kai acts like his normal self, sits down nonchalantly and plays on his switch (or contemporary handheld gaming console)*

MICHAEL

(Calls from just outside the past)

Hey babe, I'm about to go make dinner. Do you want anything?

KAI

(Doesn't look up)

Whatever's fine.

MICHAEL

(Trying to be enthusiastic)

Ok, I'm gonna go make pasta!

KAI

Uh-huh

MICHAEL

I love you!

KAI

Uh huh. You too babe.

*MICHAEL, Still cheerful, steps into the past and tries to take away Kai's game*

MICHAEL

C'mon, stop playing and tell me you love me.

KAI

(Still not looking at Michael)

Stop.

MICHAEL

Nope, not until you tell me you love me!

KAI

(Looks up from the game)

Michael, stop!

MICHAEL

Nope!

*KAI Forcefully tears his game back and walks out of the past leaving Michael alone*

KAI

I asked you to stop.

MICHAEL

Sorry babe. I love you!

KAI

(Back on his game)

Uh-huh.

*MICHAEL Sighs. The music stops and when it starts again its slower and more somber.*

MICHAEL

Honestly?

*The music slows, Kai adopts a puppet-like mannerism again but more eerie*

KAI

MICHAEL YOU LOVED ME TOO MUCH  
AND YOU RUSHED  
SO AS SUCH  
I HAD TO MOVE ON AND FORGET YOU  
IF YOU WEREN'T A PUTZ

WITHOUT GUTS  
 I COULDN'T TRUST  
 I WOULDN'T HATE THE DAY I MET YOU  
 I WAS YOUR EVERYTHING  
 YOU WERE OBSESSIVELY DEMANDING  
 I SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO SAY  
 GO AWAY EVERYDAY

KAI (CONT'D)  
 (Breaks the happy pose)  
 For what it's worth, I am sorry.

*Exits stage right*

NIETZSCHE  
 It had to be done. You can't build your future on a foundation of lies. Especially when they're to yourself. How could you ever have truly loved someone like that anyways?

MICHAEL  
 Please leave.

KIERKEGAARD  
 See? You went too far this time. Michael don't worry, I can get you through this. All of it is nothing in the eternal majesty of-

MICHAEL  
 You too Kierkegaard.

KIERKEGAARD  
 What?

MICHAEL  
 I thought I could throw away a decade of love and history and emotions, but I was fooling myself. I-I just need to be alone.

NIETZSCHE  
 Fine, we'll leave. But, for the record - you were always alone.

*Nietzsche and Kierkegaard leave stage right*

MICHAEL  
 (Walks back to his body in the coma)  
 I think I'm finally starting to get that.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
 I ALWAYS THOUGHT WE'D LAST FOREVER  
 I THOUGHT WE MADE A PERFECT PAIR  
 I COULDN'T SEE A FUTURE WITHOUT US TOGETHER  
 NO HAPPINESS WE COULDN'T SHARE

BUT I GUESS YOU ALWAYS WERE THE ONE WITH VISION  
 AFTER ALL YOU SAID YOU'D PICK THE WEDDING THEME  
 I HAD FAITH IN YOU AND EVERY GRAND DECISION  
 I BELIEVED I HAD A PLACE IN YOUR DREAM  
 YOU WERE MY PERFECT COUNTERPART  
 YOU WERE THE BEATING OF MY HEART  
 I LOVED YOU MORE THAN COULD BE SMART  
 I LOVED YOU TOO MUCH FROM THE START  
 WE HAD OUR GOOD TIMES, RIGHT?  
 IT COULDN'T ALL BE IN MY HEAD  
 WE NEVER HAD TOO MANY BIG FIGHTS  
 BETTER WE SAT IN SILENCE INSTEAD

*Michael finishes and makes his way back to his bed.*

*After a long pause Kant enters from stage right. He strides and stands deliberately. Has a no-nonsense air about him. Speaks precisely.*

KANT

Hello.

MICHAEL

Didn't I tell you all to leave?

KANT

Not me, I'm new.

MICHAEL

Well who are you?

KANT

I'm Kant.

MICHAEL

You can't be serious.

KANT

I'm always serious, I'm German.

MICHAEL

What?

KANT

What?

*MICHAEL Melodramatically flops back onto his pillow*

MICHAEL

Whatever. I guess you're next in line. Go ahead, speak some nonsense then sing about it.

KANT

Well now I don't want to.

MICHAEL

Fine by me.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You really don't have anything to say?

KANT

I didn't say that. In fact I said nothing, as per your request. You spoke, and your words created a series of events, or more specifically a series of nonevents.

MICHAEL

(Fully sitting up now)

Yeah, that's how talking works.

*Kant Finally leaves his starting position and starts walking over to Michael*

KANT

It was a causal chain. Something uniquely human.

MICHAEL

Here we go.

KANT

See? Even then you tried to change my actions with your audible annoyance. However, what you failed to consider is that I don't pick up on social cues.

MICHAEL

Silly me.

KANT

Yes, that was quite silly of you.

*Kant has finishes his meander to Michael's bed and stands over him*

KANT (CONT'D)

Are you more amenable to my, as you call it, nonsense now?

MICHAEL

Is there another option?

*KANT Pulls Michael out of bed*

KANT

There's always another option. That's what's great about being human. You get to choose your actions.

MICHAEL

So no.

KANT

But yes. I'll ask you, would you like to hear my nonsense?

MICHAEL

I suppose so.

KANT

Very well. It's a good thing you agreed as I was going to speak anyway. However, I don't want to focus on why it's good we're moving along.

MICHAEL

Ok I'll bite. What do you want to focus on?

KANT

I want to focus on how something you did could be good.

MICHAEL

Why is it so shocking that I did something good?

KANT

No no that's not what I'm saying, although we can get there later. How can anything be good? What is goodness fundamentally, and how can it be attributed to something?

MICHAEL

I don't know, things are just good and bad. Helping someone in need is good and murder is bad. It feels obvious.

KANT

You should never trust what's obvious. If a tree grows apples that feed the hungry, is the tree good? If someone dies of hypothermia, is freezing rain bad?

MICHAEL

I mean I don't like when it's cold.

KANT

That's fine, but it doesn't make cold morally evil. In order for something to be evil, it must be able to separate from a natural sequence of events. It must create a chain of events of a will.

MICHAEL

Sure, whatever, but why is that what we're talking about?

*KANT Begins to walk towards center stage*

KANT

I'll get there, but things must be considered in the right order.

*MICHAEL Follows Kant*

MICHAEL

Would that be good?

*KANT Reaches center stage and stops*

KANT

I won't say yes or no, but I'll give you something to consider.

MICHAEL

Oh wow, a philosopher who won't say yes or no to a simple question. How original.

KANT

Oh wow, a snarky gay man. How original.

MICHAEL

Touché.

KANT

As I was saying, instead of telling you whether or not something is right or wrong, I will give you one simple rule to know if something is right or wrong. What would be the result if every rational being acted similarly?

MICHAEL

I think that makes sense? Like if everyone committed murder, there wouldn't be anyone left alive, so it's bad?

KANT

Precisely.

MICHAEL

Huh, thanks. I thought you were going to sing it at me. That's what the last guys did.

KANT

That's because they weren't German. Germans do things in the proper order. I'll sing once you've already understood.

MICHAEL

I thought Nietzsche was German?

KANT

Yes but he was always a bit overzealous and a bit... touched in the head. Once again, as I was saying, let us apply that rule to whether or not things occurring in the right order is good or not.

MICHAEL

Well?

KANT

You tell me.



MICHAEL

Well if things were done in the wrong order some things would be fine. Like, I can eat dessert before breakfast.

KANT

Can you think of something that wouldn't work?

MICHAEL

Cars wouldn't work. I can't drive if I'm using the pedals before turning on the engine.

KANT

There you go. So performing actions in their proper sequence is good.

MICHAEL

Well that was simple enough. So now I guess, was I good? Can you leave me alone?

KANT

That depends. Can you give me an example of something you did? An action you took?

MICHAEL

I mean I'm in a coma.

KANT

Obviously. But before then?

MICHAEL

I cooked dinner a lot.

KANT

Is that all? Your entire human experience consisted of cooking?

MICHAEL

I... I don't know, I kept the house for Kai. He worked and I stayed home. We'd go out with his friends, play games together sometimes. My life revolved around him. He was everything I wanted.

KANT

Did you ever do anything that affected anyone else in any way? Did you volunteer? Create? Do anything that affected other human beings?

MICHAEL

I mean I must have, right?

KANT

I see. I don't know that you must have. But now I can answer your question. You asked, "was I good." Things must be done in the proper order, so first, a review.

## KANT (CONT'D)

WHAT IS IMMORAL?  
 WELL BEFORE YOU DELVE THAT RABBIT HOLE  
 WHAT'S A MORAL?  
 WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ACTIONS TO BE WRONG  
 HOW DO WE KNOW?  
 WHERE DOES A SENSE OF JUSTICE BELONG  
 HOW DO WE KNOW?  
 ACTIONS MUST HAVE CONSEQUENCES  
 BUT ARE INTENTIONS CONSEQUENTIAL  
 WHY ARE WE DISTINCT FROM  
 A HURRICANE THAT BLOWS  
 ARE WE LINKS IN CAUSAL CHAINS  
 JUST AS MOISTURE TURNS TO RAIN  
 OR CAN WE DIFFERENTIATE  
 BY OUR POWER TO INSTANTIATE  
 WHAT IS A MORAL?  
 WE'RE CLEARLY NOT THE SAME AS RAIN  
 SO NOW WHAT'S AMORAL?  
 IMAGINE EVERYTHING YOU DO WAS DONE BY EVERYONE YOU KNEW  
 WHAT WOULD THAT ENTAIL  
 AND NOW SUPPOSE YOU NEVER LEFT AN INDENT TO REVIEW  
 WHAT WOULD ENTAIL  
 WELL THE FORMER IS UTOPIA  
 A MORAL CORNUCOPIA  
 THE GOLDEN RULE APPLIED  
 TO UNIVERSAL SCALE  
 THE SECONDS JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE  
 SINCE YOUR ACTIONS ONLY WENT SO FAR  
 WE'LL NEVER KNOW YOUR INNER NATURE  
 THOUGH IF PRESSED I'D SAY A GLACIER  
 SO  
 NOW WE CAN ASK:  
 ARE YOU AMORAL  
 SINCE YOU CAN'T MOVE AND YOUR KINDA SCREWED  
 CAN YOU BE IMMORAL  
 YOU'RE HUNG UP ON A PAST YOU CANNOT CHANGE  
 IS THAT WISE  
 YOU'RE STRUNG UP SINGING SONGS WITH SPECTERS STRANGE  
 IS THAT WISE  
 YOU'RE BROKEN HEARTED MAYBE DYING  
 AND EVEN IN YOUR MIND YOU'RE CRYING  
 BUT YOU CANNOT BE EVIL  
 IN YOUR COMATOSE DEMISE  
 YOUR WILL DOES NOT EXTEND  
 BEYOND THE CONFINES OF YOUR BED  
 AND FROM EVERYTHING YOU'VE SAID  
 YOU'VE NEVER MADE A SINGLE CAUSAL THREAD  
 SO YOU ARE NOT IMMORAL  
 YOU ARE AMORAL  
 CAUSE YOU'VE NEVER HAD A MORAL

MICHAEL

So... what exactly are you saying?

KANT

I thought I sang it clearly, but I don't mind reiterating. You squandered your humanity. You let yourself be dragged along by someone else's will. You weren't good or bad, you just were. You had all of the moral content of a marshmallow.

MICHAEL

I don't think that's fair. Nietzsche talked about actualizing, about changing the world!

KANT

How have you changed the world?

MICHAEL

Well I haven't yet but I will!

KANT

I don't doubt that you may, but you asked me about you as you are. The things you have done, or lack thereof. You asked for my opinion. I gave you my argumentation. You're free to ignore it. However, before you do, let me ask you: do you disagree because you want me to be wrong, or because you think I am wrong.

MICHAEL

I think I just want you to be wrong.

KANT

Then I think you have your answer.

*MICHAEL Crosses back to his bed and sits down*

MICHAEL

So, nothing I did ever mattered. To anyone. And now I'm not sure if I'll ever get another chance to do something good.

KANT

That would be my conclusion.

*KANT indicates he will be leaving e.g. puts on a hat/coat or picks up briefcase while standing up*

KANT (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have somewhere else to be.

MICHAEL

Wait, you're leaving?

KANT

Yes I believe I just said that.

MICHAEL

But the other guys only left when I asked them to.

KANT

That was their prerogative. If it's any consolation, you won't be alone long.

MICHAEL

Is there another philosopher coming?

KANT

I didn't say that.

*Kant exits stage right.*

MICHAEL

Great, now I'm depressed and lonely again. Kant didn't say how long it's been. I could have been in this bed for years now.

*MICHAEL Touches at his face, takes a look at the body double*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Maybe I'm an old man with wrinkles... I wonder if my parents are still alive.

*Kai enters from stage left with a chair and Philosophical investigations. He puts the chair down next to Michael's bed and sits.*

KAI

Hi Michael. It's been a while.

*MICHAEL Gets up and stands in front of Kai*

MICHAEL

Oh god I'm imagining Kai again. What is wrong with me? Am I so pathetic that I fantasized about my cheating ex twice before even thinking about my parents? Kant was right.

*KAI Looks towards to body double ignoring Michael*

KAI

I'm sorry I haven't been able to bring myself to visit you before now. I kept hoping you'd just wake up and then we could talk, but the doctors say they don't know if you'll make it another year.

MICHAEL

Go away. You're just another thing in my head.

*KAI Stands and places Philosophical Investigations on the pile of books after staring at it, walking straight past Michael*

KAI

I know Ricky has been coming in and reading some of his Philosophy grad school books, but I should have been here. I actually came to give you the last one in his course.

*Kai lovingly places a hand on Michael's body double then catches himself, smooths the sheets and stands straight*

KAI (CONT'D)

He's busy with finals right now. I figured if I was going to come I may as well make it the anniversary of our break up. Well I guess we never technically broke up... but Ricky showed me the texts. I know you know. And that made it so much harder to say what I needed to.

MICHAEL

Say what, that you're sorry? That you were wrong? It's a little la-

KAI

I never loved you.

*MICHAEL Choked up, he uncrosses his arms and turns to Kai bewildered*

MICHAEL

What? Why would you say that?

KAI

(Breathes a sigh of relief)

Oh God I've been holding that in for so long.

*MICHAEL gets Increasingly upset and in Kai's face. Kai continues to ignore him*

MICHAEL

Why would you say that? Why won't you answer me? You're in my imagination damn it. Look at me!

KAI

(with genuine remorse)

It should never have gone so long. I never wanted it to. But I cared for you and didn't want to hurt you. I'm sorry, I'm so, so sorry.

*MICHAEL waves in front of Kai's face. Kai Doesn't react. Michael Takes several shocked steps back*

MICHAEL

Oh my God you're real.

*Michael becomes more horrified as Kai speaks*

*KAI walks to the Michael in bed and holds his hand*

KAI

It went too far, and we'd put in so much time I couldn't...

I felt stuck.

I just felt stuck you know, like no matter what I did I'd hurt you. And I didn't want to. So I did nothing. It was fine at first. But over time I started to resent it, resent you. And that just grew, and grew, and I felt lost. And I knew I was hurting you anyways. I couldn't be the person you wanted me to be. Then one night I said I was working late but I went over to Bob's house.

*MICHAEL Wrings his hands and looks up*

MICHAEL

Please sing a song about it, please.

*MICHAEL walks over to KAI and tries to shake him  
but there's no reaction and he gives up*

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Just show me that you're not real. Please don't let this be real. Please, please, please...

*Michael stands defeated*

KAI

I told him everything and I was so emotional. I felt like finally I could breathe again, but I was fragile, and I was vulnerable, and Bob used the opportunity to sleep with me. And I liked it. I really liked it. I felt free again. For the first time in 8 years I felt like my life was mine again. We kept sleeping together for a year. Then Seamus just happened after a brunch one day, and Ricky... Ricky and I have been dating for the past year. It was awkward at first- considering, but we made it work. And it's good, it's really good. We love each other. For the first time in my life I know what it means to be in love.

MICHAEL

You bastard

KAI

(freely)

He makes me laugh, he makes it easier to cry, and it's just so easy. It's natural. I can tell we belong together. I hope you can find some way to forgive me. Just know I'm happier now. That's it. I'm sorry it took so long to say. You deserved to hear it from me. Goodbye I guess.

If you wake up I hope you find the same happiness I've found. I really mean it.

*KAI sighs, stands up and leaves*

*Michael collapses to the floor where he's standing and cries.*

*Eventually, the crying becomes sniffles, and the sniffles become deep breaths.*

MICHAEL

I ALWAYS HOPED WE'D LAST FOREVER  
I PRAYED WE MADE A PERFECT PAIR  
I WAS BLIND IN FUTURES WITHOUT US TOGETHER  
NO HAPPINESS WITHOUT YOU THERE  
WE WERE INCONGRUENT COUNTERPARTS  
YOU WERE THE MIRROR OF MY HEART  
I LOVED YOU MORE THAN COULD BE SMART  
I ALWAYS LOVED YOU MORE FROM THE START  
AND I CAN SEE IT NOW, PAST THE FINISH LINE  
I'D NEVER BE ENOUGH NO MATTER WHAT I'D DO  
YOU ALWAYS HAD ONE EYE ON THE EXIT SIGN  
I WAS JUST THE SAFE CHOICE FOR YOU  
NOW I KNOW BETTER THAN TO LET YOU LEAD ME BLINDLY  
I WISH I'D KNOWN YOU'RE JUST AS LOST  
YOU LET ME CLING TOO LONG TO BE KINDLY  
I'M GLAD I KNOW, BUT IT WASN'T WORTH THE COST

*WITTGENSTEIN walks awkwardly and nervously onto stage from stage right with his hands together.*

WITTGENSTEIN

Um, hello, hi.

*Michael does not notice while crying.*

WITTGENSTEIN (CONT'D)  
(Skittishly approaches  
Michael)

Hello?

*WITTGENSTEIN continues to approach and starts to slowly reach out a hand to touch Michael's shoulder*

WITTGENSTEIN (CONT'D)

Michael?

*MICHAEL snaps to Wittgenstein, throws up his arms without looking at him*

MICHAEL

No, no more. I can't take anything else.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Softly)

You don't mean that

*Michael turns to face Wittgenstein and speaks while rising both from the ground, and in intensity and volume*

MICHAEL

I really really do. I feel like shit, my life is ruined, my death is soon, and I'm all alone. There's no hope for me. Even if I could get out of bed, I wouldn't. Let me waste away here. It wouldn't be any different than if we never existed.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Dismissive)

That's absurd.

MICHAEL

(Puts his foot down,  
literally and figuratively.)

No, that's reality. I'm fed up with these philosophers, I'm fed up with...

WITTGENSTEIN

Well there we agree.

MICHAEL

Where?

WITTGENSTEIN

(Hesitant but with  
enthusiasm)

Philosophers are generally stupid and dishonest. They make terribly obvious mistakes.

MICHAEL

(Even more confused)

So who are you then?

WITTGENSTEIN

(cheeky)

A philosopher.

*MICHAEL turns and walks away*

MICHAEL

Go fuck yourself.

*WITTGENSTEIN starts after him, reaches to grab him and accidentally gets his hand*

WITTGENSTEIN

No wait, hear me out.



*MICHAEL turns in a way that they are still holding hands but he doesn't realize it*

MICHAEL

You cannot possibly understand the pain and suffering I'm going through.

*WITTGENSTEIN pauses, looking into Michael's face and gets flustered when he realizes that they're holding hands.*

*He sharply pulls it back to his chest before composing himself*

WITTGENSTEIN

Well, I mean I'm a gay jew who fled Nazi Germany and fought in World War I.

*MICHAEL realizes that he has fucked up*

MICHAEL

Oh...

WITTGENSTEIN

(playfully sarcastic)

Yeah. But by all means continue to wallow.

MICHAEL

Well now I feel like an asshole.

*WITTGENSTEIN turns to walk away*

WITTGENSTEIN

Maybe you should.

*MICHAEL's turn to reach for Wittgenstein and accidentally grab his hand*

MICHAEL

No please, stay. I'm sorry.

*Looking into each others eyes again, it's time after the pause they BOTH realize they're holding hands and snatch them back before trying to play it off.*

WITTGENSTEIN

Your words mean nothing. Even if you're cute.

MICHAEL

Ok, is there anything I can do to make it up to you?

...  
Wait what?

WITTGENSTEIN

(Coyly)

No you misunderstand. Your words. Mean. Nothing. Because words don't have meaning by themselves.

MICHAEL

Oh, so we're doing this.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Deflates )

No, I mean not if you don't want to...

MICHAEL

(Tries to recover and mirrors Wittgenstein)

No, no, please. It's the least I can do.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Bashful)

Ok well if you're sure.

MICHAEL

(Flirtatiously)

I'm sure.

*WITTGENSTEIN Lights up and proceeds to word vomits the way only an overly enthusiastic nerd can*

WITTGENSTEIN

Okay! So here's my whole thing. Words only mean anything when they're used to communicate. Like they have a use, you know? You use them, and that's why they mean something. They don't mean anything unless someone is listening, and since it's unclear whether I'm you talking to yourself, I just mean that they don't mean anything. Know what I mean?

MICHAEL

(Chuckles)

No.

WITTGENSTEIN

Okay sorry, I'll try again with different words. Words, right, words mean something when they make a person hearing them understand. The meaning isn't the words, they just reflect the world around us. So there's no point to you trying to figure out a solution, you have to just embrace things as they are.

*MICHAEL gently takes Wittgenstein's hand and lowers it so that they're just holding hands*

MICHAEL

I don't really get it but keep talking. I like your voice.

*WITTGENSTEIN Takes a step in to Michael so they're closer*

WITTGENSTEIN

I mean that's it. No one ever really understands, and I'm not great at explaining it.

...  
Wait what?

*WITTGENSTEIN realizes what's going on and bashfully breaks the hand holding, taking a step back and retreats into himself looking down*

MICHAEL

Don't worry about it. And isn't that your job? Explaining it?

WITTGENSTEIN

Not really. A philosopher's job isn't to explain or deduce anything. Philosophy just lays out truth. Since it's all right there, there should be nothing to explain.

MICHAEL

But what did you get paid for?

WITTGENSTEIN

(Shrugs)

Writing and teaching, but no one got it. Even when I gave my dissertation, they didn't know what I was talking about. They just knew I was right. I've mostly given up on people understanding it.

MICHAEL

(Teasingly)

It sounds like you weren't very good at your job.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Angrily)

Oh, ok.

MICHAEL

Oh shit, sorry, sorry, I didn't mean it.

WITTGENSTEIN

(Huffy)

Maybe not, but I understood it.

MICHAEL

(Pleads)

Please, one more chance to make it up to you? I swear I won't put my foot in my mouth again.

*WITTGENSTEIN teasingly wiggles his foot towards Michael*

WITTGENSTEIN

Okay, but what about my foot?

MICHAEL

Um, what?

*WITTGENSTEIN walks up to Michael and nervously hugs him*

WITTGENSTEIN

You understood me, and my words. You get one more chance.  
But really try to listen this time.

YOU'RE PLAYING LITTLE GAMES  
INSIDE YOUR HANDSOME LITTLE HEAD  
BUT PROMISE ME YOU'LL LISTEN LOVE  
AND PLAY WITH ME INSTEAD  
LANGUAGE IS CONTEXTUAL  
IT ALL DEPENDS ON FACTS  
GRAMMAR IS TRANSACTIONAL  
A GAME OF HAPPENSTANCE  
DON'T GET HUNG UP DARLING  
DON'T TAKE HIS WORDS TO HEART  
CHOOSE TO BE YOUR OWN MAN  
AND MAKE YOUR OWN FRESH START  
YOU CAN WRITE YOUR MEANING  
YOU'RE THE AUTHOR OF YOUR WILL  
WORDS ARE ONLY WORDS  
AN EMPTY VESSEL THAT WE FILL  
YOU DECIDE WHAT LOVE IS  
YOU CONTROL YOUR FATE  
NOTHING JUST MEANS NOTHING  
TILL YOU CHANGE IT TO BE GREAT  
SO WHAT YOU SPENT SOME TIME  
WHILE YOU WERE SPINNING AT YOUR WHEEL  
YOU CAN'T LET THESE OTHER MEN  
DICTATE HOW YOU FEEL  
YOU CAN MAKE YOUR MEANING  
YOU'RE THE AUTHOR OF YOUR WILL  
WORDS ARE WHAT THEY SEEM  
AN EMPTY VESSEL THAT WE FILL

*Wittgenstein kisses Michael. As they break the kiss, they continue to look into each other's eyes*

MICHAEL

Ok, I think I understand.

*WITTGENSTEIN Reluctantly breaks embrace and turns away slightly*

WITTGENSTEIN

Good, because it's time for me to go.

MICHAEL  
(Crestfallen)

Already, why?

WITTGENSTEIN  
(Matter-of-factly)

Well for one, I'm not about to be your rebound. And also, I think you're done.

MICHAEL  
(Solemnly)

Am I finally dying?

WITTGENSTEIN  
(Scoffs)

Maybe but that's not what I meant. We went that whole conversation and you didn't mention Kai.

MICHAEL  
Oh I guess that's true. But I don't hurt less.

WITTGENSTEIN  
But you know it's done and you can begin healing.

MICHAEL  
(Excitedly)  
So I'm going to live?

WITTGENSTEIN  
(blurts out)  
Oh sorry, no that's not what I meant.

MICHAEL  
So I'm going to die.

WITTGENSTEIN  
(Frustrated)  
No, not that either. God can you stop assuming things?

NIETZSCHE  
(Loudly from offstage)  
GOD'S DEAD

*WITTGENSTEIN Rolls his eyes and ignores him*

WITTGENSTEIN  
I mean you're not struggling anymore. See?

*KIERKEGAARD loudly retorts from offstage, until he is muffled by a miffed Nietzsche*

KIERKEGAARD  
Life is struggling with the self, you see- argmph

WITTGENSTEIN

Will you idiots stop?!

*WITTGENSTEIN takes a step back towards Michael and tenderly puts a hand on his chest*

WITTGENSTEIN (CONT'D)

Even just now when you thought you were going to die, you didn't fall into a panic, or yell, or beg for your life.

*MICHAEL wraps his hand around Wittgensteins*

MICHAEL

I guess that's true.

*WITTGENSTEIN leans his head into Michael and strokes his hand with his thumb*

WITTGENSTEIN

It's just the truth laid out for you to see.

*MICHAEL makes the embrace a full hug and engulfs Wittgenstein*

MICHAEL

Thank you. I wish this could have gone on longer.

*WITTGENSTEIN slowly pushes Michael away and looks into his face one last time. Then he gives MICHAEL a quick kiss on the lips*

WITTGENSTEIN

I know. So do I.

*WITTGENSTEIN extricates himself fully and leaves stage right gazing longingly at Michael*

*MICHAEL Starts to walk a bit after Wittgenstein, then realizes he doesn't need him, the other philosophers or anyone else. He slowly walks back to center stage cheerfully with a relaxed smile on his face.*

MICHAEL

Right, we'll I guess that's it then. Onto, whatever's next I guess.

I THINK I'M READY

I THINK IT'S DUE

I'M MORE THAN TREADING WATER

I'VE GOT NOTHING LEFT TO PROVE

YOU'VE HELPED ME FIND A SENSE OF SELF

YOU'VE HELPED ME TO MY END

YOU'VE SHARED WITH ME YOUR WISEST WEALTH

AND NOW IT'S TIME TO SPEND

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM GOING

BUT I KNOW I'LL GET THERE STRONG  
AND THERE'S NO POINT TO PREDICTING  
CAUSE IT ALL COULD JUST BE WRONG  
I'M NOT HOLDING ON TO FANTASIES  
OF SOLVING ALL HUMANITY  
I GET IT'S ALL CONFLICTING  
THE GREATEST GIFT YOU GRANTED ME  
THANK YOU, OR ME, I'M STILL NOT SURE  
WITHOUT YOU I'D BE SCREWED  
THE BEST COMPANIONS NEVER ASKED FOR  
MY CHAMPIONS OF TRUTH  
GEORGE YOU SHATTERED MY ILLUSION  
NIETZSCHE GUIDED MY CONFUSION  
KIERKEGAARD... YOU WERE HERE  
KANT YOU MADE ME FACE MY FEAR  
I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM GOING  
BUT I KNOW I'LL GET THERE STRONG  
AND THERE'S NO POINT TO PREDICTING  
CAUSE IT ALL COULD JUST BE WRONG  
YOU'VE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I NEED  
TO HANDLE ANYTHING WITH EASE  
THOUGH KNOWLEDGE MAY BECOME CONSTRICTING  
I'LL SAIL ALONG LIFE'S ROUGHEST SEAS  
THEN WITTGENSTEIN, SWEET WITTGENSTEIN  
WHAT WORDS COULD EVER MOVE YOU  
THOUGH MEANINGS ALWAYS INTERTWINES  
JUST KNOW YOU HEALED A HEART IN TWO  
AND NO MATTER WHAT COMES NEXT FOR ME  
YOU'LL STAY WITH ME FOREVER  
AND NO PARADISE COULD TASTE AS SWEET  
AS THE FRUIT OF YOUR ENDEAVORS