



Beverley Simons / IF I TURN AROUND QUICK

A Film Script, with Journal Entries & a Note

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Photograph: Tony Westman

JOURNAL ENTRIES

July 21 / 66

I'm working on a ½ hr. television play for George Robertson. On marriage, the love hate relationship. Right now the question is not "what" but "how" to write. The play could easily become as drab as the life it's to depict. I'm tired of slice of life technique. The daily papers and court reports give enough morbid details to satisfy anyone.

Having decided that — i.e. no sociological thesis or psychological report — I have two choices:

(1) The play can work within a conventional frame. It will be gentle on the surface. The variations and tensions will lie in the rhythm of the dialogue and movement (physical action). They will only half express their feelings and memories, but they will have poetry. I'll use the one beach flashback in broken moments. The effect of the piece will be like a series of cries, half-heard, still sounding . . .

(2) This would be an extravagant, highly visual piece, syncopated in rhythm, i.e. Bartok's Sonata for 2 pianos & percussion. Sounds would be used suddenly and seemingly without reason as each of the two characters pursue their own thoughts & objectives; only occasionally would they bump against each other, perhaps for a moment mesh.

The second is more experimental and artificial than the first. I must consider the medium, the annoying change in effect between videotape & film, the feasible expense, the time limit, and the producer. Though George is flexible I think he would prefer the first treatment. If only it could be written without being mundane!

July 22 / 66

This morning the problem seemed to have broken. As I suspected concept (1) (yesterday's note) was the most appealing to George. He wants to reach "the man in the street." I'm satisfied. I suspect I'm not ready for what non-writers erroneously call — a freer form. My language isn't tight enough rich enough.

So this morning I began to write dialogue. I didn't begin soon enough & while trying to let the myriad impressions & the rush of voices from my characters, Sadie & Philip, sort themselves into some order — I lost the first thrust. The way they spoke, the sequence of key scenes, all gone. Now I must do the job of the craftsman & piece them or a facsimile of them back together again. Oh for the day when I can ride these moments, when I will have the energy & the skill!

As I worked a strange thing happened. I no longer believed in the couple's indifference to each other. There developed a Saturday night dress-up game between them. As soon as I saw this my interest was fired. The trouble in writing about the humdrum is that it's humdrum to write, and so I am once again with eccentrics. But, I hope, with characteristics exaggerating & therefore making newly clear, the same as exist in many couples.

The second thing that surprised me in the writing was the brutality. I wonder if George will accept this. He's such a gentle soul. I suspect he considers violence & brutality in bad taste. He's right in a way, at least in a work of art. There must be shading. People don't have the energy to live in a state of active hate, or of any active passion. There are moments of truce, indifference, routine.

Problem — They must be painfully real people moving in the rhythm of their relationship. Yet the ½ hour must encompass days of their relationship & a number of different moods.

The theme has become the struggle to beat routine. Sadie says something like: "We've lived together too long. How can we make an evening together at home an event? We must. Or else we're nothing."

Problem — How to accomplish theme, moods, suggestive succinct language (prosaic in content but somehow crystalline) — without consciously thinking about it? If I do I go dry. If I don't the dialogue escapes me. It breaks the structure of the frame & becomes frightening in its venom. Too many solos too long. As is this entry in the journal.

Tuesday, July —

The dimensions of the play are now clearly established. I see the people, I see them move, I have a sense of the rhythm in & out of the flashbacks, but the dialogue! — Sadie changes constantly. Reminiscences of the Southern belle in her. Not what I want. She is coarse & intense without being stupid. She has insights and is rich in natural metaphor. But she is not witty with control. She is not an intellectual.

I feel much the same way I did when I began *Green Lawn Rest Home*. It's all there. Now comes the compression into tight meaningful dialogue, and the arrangement of scenes. The context is everything.

This seems mechanical. Do other writers let their work go as it will — as so many of them pretend they do? Perhaps I am still just an apprentice craftsman.

Thursday

Today the first glimmer of action — that is, melding of characters, their physical presence, their past, their isolation, in a theatrical moment. The lighting of the candles, the momentary glow from the lighthouse. But I lost it as soon as I found it. Got bogged down again in concepts.

I'm getting closer all the time now. The sense of duet & counterpoint with their past selves is crystallizing.

Their language is the most difficult. I want to condense powerful feelings in simple language. But simple so easily fritters into trivial. This is the dilemma of the modern playwright. We're denied artificiality, our people can't use poetry in contemporary situations.

Without being pretentious I must somehow evolve a rich language.

How to keep a simple flow yet still have rich texture.

August the 6th

An unfortunate development. I seem to be quite capable of theorizing about my work. The characters are clearly formed & I know the line I hope the play will follow. Perhaps I've become too dogmatic about

it. I'm unable to write the dialogue. Like Gide, if I hadn't already struggled through the process, I'd give up. I'm left with a sheaf of notes, including snippets and sometimes pages of dialogue, but I can't summon the psychic energy to follow through an impulse. I look for every excuse to delay the confrontation. I've spent three days staring at the typewriter, reading and re-reading short speeches, and at the end of each day suffered intense feelings of guilt, frustration, and general resentment against everyone and everything — as though everyone in the world but me was responsible for my suspended condition.

George is due back in town tomorrow. Nothing concrete to show him. There is a deadline intrinsic in the play itself. The lighthouse scenes must be shot in the summertime.

Problem in part seems to be how far will I let these people go in their eccentricities — how much control so as to be recognizable to audience — as ordinary people. How much boredom, etc. of couple —

Oct. 2, Alberni

Over here on a trial. Have been thwarted time after time, wanting to write out ideas, character sketches —

Saturday Night, or Turn Around Quick is almost in working draft form. Not completely satisfied with it. The natural & the strange still not satisfactorily married, but I'm anxious to move ahead into something else. Development from piece to piece.

IF I TURN AROUND QUICK

[POSSIBLE OPENING

This is to give a sense of universal social ritual, in itself peculiar as Philip and Sadie's, but familiar and therefore acceptable.

It's Saturday night. The tinny sound of rock 'n roll comes from a transistor radio lying on a beach log. It creates dissonance with Sadie's and Philip's theme which is heard at the outset, a 1940's tune from their "good days." Behind the log a teenage couple are necking. This whole sequence is swift, taken at eye level from a moving vehicle. The rock 'n roll fades and the theme grows in strength as we see couples dressed up for a night out getting into cars. Past a church, now still as a mortuary. Continuing on Marine Drive a group of teenagers straggle from the drugstore down to the pier. There is a line of waiting patrons at the local theatres. Ahead the flashing lights of the bridge. The song is loud now, but underneath it the voices of Philip and Sadie can already be heard. Mostly Sadie's voice. Continue on to the British Properties with an abrupt change of music, as on a radio dial, to the singing strings of CHQM, but the theme though muted soon re-enters underneath. Swing elegantly past elegant homes where cocktail chatter and the clink of glasses float through imitation French, imitation Tudor, and imitation Spanish windows. A door opens suddenly. A man stumbles out and bends over, as if to retch. Cut to apartment buildings. The camera scans up and down over the blind windows.

Cut in to Sadie's and Philip's bedroom. Sound suddenly off. We see Philip from the side.]

THE FIRST IMAGE is that of rain falling on a putrefying starfish. It gradually fades to the interior shot of Philip.

It's a hot Saturday night during a Vancouver Indian summer, late in September or early October. The heat is unnatural, oppressive. The air is a cloying blanket and it's difficult to breathe in the bed-sitting room belonging to Sadie and Philip.

The room is in semi-darkness. We see Philip from the side, in formal dress, although he hasn't put the jacket on yet. It hangs behind him over the rungs of the chair. On closer inspection his suit is not new, it's not well pressed, and it's visibly soiled. He's wearing tattered backless slippers. The daily newspaper is spread out in front of him, but he's only half concentrating on it. He's listening for sounds in the bathroom that adjoins the bed-sitting room.

The room contains a cheap but pretentious bed in French provincial style. The cover is pink chenille pocked by tufts of fluff wound with gold thread. There is a large shabby scatter rug; a wall bookshelf holding a disorderly array of pulp magazines and books, with bottles of liquor acting as bookends; the desk at which Philip is sitting; two kitchen chairs; an armchair and footstool; a clothes cupboard; and a vanity table with drawers. A picture of Bets in a summer dress is on the desk. Lipstick, powder, rouge, mascara are scattered on the counter of the vanity. Their drippings make a gooey colourful mess. There is a pile of dirty clothes in the corner under which lurks a case of beer. A box of groceries sits beside it. In another corner a tatty collection of autumn leaves is squashed in a milk bottle. Most of the leaves have fallen from the branches and lie unswept on the floor.

Philip would have been considered good-looking in high school. Now he is crumbling. When he stands he is slightly stooped and he has what Sadie affectionately calls "a beer belly."

There is occasional illumination of the room by the lighthouse. The glow may be considered real or imaginary.

Off the bedroom is the bathroom, the kitchen, and through separate French doors, the patio. This is part of an aging West Vancouver home on the waterfront.

The use of the lighthouse as an evaporating glow in the room, in distance shots, and then in close rhythmic shots almost blinding in intensity, should give the effect of a strobe.

ACTION SEEN

While Philip sits in the semi-darkness Sadie's voice is heard. As she talks the titles appear over the picture.

SOUND OVER

SADIE: The girl at the Safeway, you know, the one I call Miss Prigg, she told me you were in to buy two dozen eggs. It'll take more than a diet to work off that beer belly of yours. Philip? You ready? Can you see the lighthouse yet? God, it's bright for this time a year. You think maybe it won't come on tonight? When the man flicks the switch it's like it's me he's turning on. You know? In my head. I can't stop my head working at night. About Bets, whether I did right with her since the day she was born, about you and me, yah, sweet Philip and Sadie. And silly things, too, like what work I oughta do tomorrow, in what order. Over and over until I think my head's gonna bust. Funny thing, though, daytime it's empty inside my head, white, kinda, and scary. There're times, you know? I can't go from room to room. Not even to the kitchen for a coffee. I been stuck in one chair even. Wouldn't look behind me. Not until you got home and come in the room. Not because I'm scared if I turn around quick I'll see something, a monster or a ghost . . . There might be nothing. Wouldn't it be awful to fall into nothing? You listening? Philip? I know you're in there. Your breathing's as bad as your snores. Like a stuck pig. Are you ready?

During this speech Philip stirs, pulls one formal shoe out from under the chair, starts to lace it up, thinks better of it, kicks it off. He looks longingly at his briefcase which holds work he wants to get at over the weekend. Returns to the newspaper.

Philip stirs then subsides.

Cut here to Sadie in bathroom. Speech is over picture as she chooses from assortment of makeup on the sink counter. Above the counter is the mirror.

SADIE: I been getting that pain again, across my shoulders and down the left side a my back. You suppose I ought to go see Dr. Johnson? You don't know what it is to be a woman. We used to have a name for it when I was a kid. The Curse. Yah. We'd mark it on the calendar with a red pencil. Next comes Change of Life. You think that's what's bothering me? I know it disgusts you to talk about these things, but turning your back won't make em go away. Which reminds me, I saw ants in the cupboard. *(She pauses for a reply)* Philip? The office called. I told em you were busy.

If you're so goddam restless why don't you go on out? Yah, go on downtown and make whoopee. Where would you go? To the movies? Big deal! You seen em all. I know where you are Saturday afternoons. "I got clients." Hey! How about Main and Hastings? You could pick up some fat floozy and . . .

PHILIP: (*Barely audible*) Shut up.

SADIE: Philip's too delicate. He'd slip on the spit in the street and disappear.

Now the lines come directly from Sadie. She watches herself form the words in the mirror.

SADIE: Poof! No Philip. I'm sure of you and that's the truth of it.

Some of Sadie's monologue should come over the picture, some of it directly from her. That is, much of what she says is "in the air," ad eternum. It was said and will be said again. There is a fusion of time as the couple is caught in the continuum of their arguments and experience.

Sadie purses up her lips, adds a purple lipstick to the bright red she already has on, pinches her eyelashes to make them curl, smiles at herself experimentally. When she stops posing she has a tired face. The viciousness that comes from her at times comes out of her fatigue. Although her face is heavily made up she makes no attempt to do anything about her hair which is dry and straggly.

SADIE: (*Continuing*) About that pain, don't worry, I won't die of it. I'll stick around until you pop off. We'll be buried side by side, real respectable. That means our bones'll mix when they crumble. You won't be able to help yourself. (*Sings*) "And from his bones a true rose grew and from hers a briar." Wha' do you think, Philip? A laburnum tree, more like. Anyone that eats the pods from us'd drop dead.

Sadie begins to hum to herself in excitement, steps back to examine her figure. She is in bra and pants.

She breathes in hard to flatten her stomach and pinches at the loose pieces of flesh that frame her waist.

Cut to Philip. Sadie is quiet. Philip glances at the bathroom door, grows concerned, shuffles to the door, looks in.

PHILIP: (*With disgust*) Can't you shut the door at least?

He closes it, shuffles to patio doors, opens one of them. More heat floods in. He closes the door.

SADIE: Not bad for a girl in her 40's.

SADIE: Even if I did die I'd stick around to spook the joint.

SADIE: (*Off picture has opened the bathroom door and calls out*)
We're none of us any different.
Even the queen goes to the pot.
(*She slams the door.*)

PHILIP: For Christ's sake . . .

He takes a large dirty handkerchief from his pocket, mops his brow and neck, puts it back in his pocket. Now it's noticeable that his tuxedo pants are slit at the sides to make room for his belly. He goes to check the statistic in the paper, grunts to himself as he reads the temperature, glances again at his briefcase, then toward bathroom. Opens the case and starts to go through papers.

SADIE: (*Suddenly behind him*)
That's against the rules.

PHILIP: (*Frightened, aggressive*)
Who made up these dumb rules, anyway?

SADIE: They were agreed on.

PHILIP: Never out loud.

SADIE: They were agreed on.

Through the following, Sadie opens a drawer, digs out a fancy slip that has been rolled up and shoved in the back, smooths it out over her knees, puts it on.

PHILIP: I was bullied into them.

SADIE: So much the worse for you. You could've fought.

PHILIP: With a woman? I got better things to do.

SADIE: With your mate. For better or for worse, until death do us . . .

PHILIP: Until I walk out.

SADIE: You just do that. Go on. My God, I'd dance for joy. Do you know what I think sometimes? Maybe today he'll die. Why not? There's hundreds of car accidents everyday. Please God, why leave the sad widow and the moaning kids? Choose mine, him, that . . . slug. (*During this speech she struggles into the slip.*)

PHILIP: (*Applauds*) Hey, not bad. You oughta sell it to Ladies Home Journal.

SADIE: Cheap with your fists just like everything else. What time is it?

She sits at the vanity, starts swiftly to set her hair with curlers.

PHILIP: Nine-twenty.

SADIE: Got a letter from Bets.

PHILIP: Yah? (*Trying to conceal his interest*)

SADIE: She needs money. For getting her teeth fixed.

PHILIP: How much?

SADIE: She'll send the bill when she's finished. How come you don't look pale when it's for her?

PHILIP: She's my kid.

SADIE: Our kid. That's one thing you got no choice about sharing.

PHILIP: Don't you make me out a miser. If I let you handle the money it'd go in one day, on junk.

SADIE: Yah? What kinda?

PHILIP: (*Gesturing to makeup*)
It makes me want to scrub when I look at it.

SADIE: A pink baby'd make you want to scrub. I got no clothes to wear makeup with. Not that I want any. Six days a week I feel like a spider. It's only right I should look like one. Can you see the lighthouse yet?

PHILIP: It's not dark enough. This weather's unnatural. The summer won't let go.

SADIE: Maybe the trees'll start sprouting leaves again.

PHILIP: They'll get their ass froze off if they do.

SADIE: Time?

PHILIP: Nine twenty-five.

Sadie hurriedly goes to the cupboard, pulls down a dress, steps into it, turns around so that Philip may tie her in. Where the zipper no longer meets she has pinned in ribbons on either side.

She shoves her stockingless feet into heels, throws the towel she has carried in from the bathroom on the pile of clothes in the corner, touches her head, remembers the curlers, wraps a bright coloured bandana over them, knotting it at the back. Several curlers poke through a tear in the scarf. Philip puts on the jacket, does up the top button of the shirt and stands facing her. They are both suddenly self-conscious and shy.

SADIE: (*Remembering*) The candles!

She rushes to the vanity table, searches through the mess on top, comes back with two stubs of what must have once been long, graceful, dinner candles. The holders are big shiny porcelain circles with flowers and birds painted on them. Sadie pushes the newspaper off the desk and reverently places the candles.

This mime sequence is broken with giggles and dialogue from the lovemaking scene in the park, Scene 2. Inarticulate whispers at first, they rise.

SADIE: Don't.

PHILIP: Why not? We're going to be married.

Fade out.

SADIE: Time?

PHILIP: Nine-thirty.

He takes a match from a large box of house matches, strikes one and bends to light the stubs.

SADIE: Your shoes. You haven't got your shoes on.

PHILIP: Ah, come on, Sadie, what does it . . .

He's stopped by the look on her face, bends grunting to get them from under his chair, slides them on without doing up the laces. Sadie stands in dignity, waiting. Philip lights the stubs.

SADIE: There.

The room becomes momentarily illumined with a soft glow. When it withdraws it leaves the room in the dim light of the candle. The glow was the first appearance of the lighthouse, and with it comes more whispers.

SADIE: What're you thinking?

PHILIP: Sadie, Sadie.

SADIE: I don't know you. I'm scared.

PHILIP: We'll take him home for a decoration.

SADIE: (*Awkward and self-conscious*) Well . . . so, here it is . . .

PHILIP: Yah.

Sadie smooths her dress with her hands. She looks around as if trying to find something. Philip pulls the chair over, offers it to her. She sits.

PHILIP: You . . . ah . . . ready for a drink?

SADIE: Thank you.

He starts across the room to fetch it. Philip pauses, rocks back and forth experimentally on one foot, takes off the shoe, reaches in and pulls out . . .

PHILIP: A bobbypin.

SADIE: You should've shook it before you put it on.

PHILIP: *(Still holding it)* This whole thing, it's stupid. I'm a monkey in my own house.

SADIE: You say that every time.

PHILIP: This time it's 75 degrees. In the paper. Read it.

He's loosening his tie to take it off. Sadie runs to him terrified.

SADIE: No. Don't. First it'll be your tie, then your shoes. You had your jacket off before. You'll end up walking around here in your underwear like the rest of the week.

PHILIP: So?

SADIE: This is Saturday night. Look. The Queen goes by. How do you know she's the queen, huh? (*As she talks Sadie fixes Philip's tie. He moves away, revolted by her attentions. She follows, kneels and ties his shoes. Or simply hold on Sadie, momentarily transformed by her speech.*) It's the way she dresses, the way she walks, the crown she has on her hair. And she doesn't always feel like being queen, either. Sometimes she'd probably like to stay home and sit in a corner, yah, in her underwear, why not, maybe do some petit-point. But this stuff she wears, it's like calling for something special to happen to her. The church, they understand . . . The statues, the stained glass windows . . .

PHILIP: Are you turning into . . .

SADIE: Shut up. I'm talking! . . . the priest tall and beautiful in his robes, like when we were married, and the people dressed just so, saying chants together. They're tempting the spirit.

PHILIP: You are . . . turning into a religious nut.

SADIE: Put on your slippers.

PHILIP: But you just . . .

SADIE: What the Hell. It's hot.

(*Possible whispers*)

SADIE: I don't believe in life after death, do you?

PHILIP: He takes over empty ones where the animal insides's already died.

The last three words are heard behind the next part of Sadie's speech.

PHILIP: I think better in my shoes.

SADIE: Then you've been in slippers since I met ya. The beer's under there. Keeps it cool.

She kicks the clothes on her way out to the patio.

Cut into Scene 6. Sadie and Philip are standing in the lighthouse room. The windows are covered with a cloth to protect the light. Or perhaps it is getting dark now, and the light starts to turn on its axle.

SADIE: Take me down. You look strange. Like somebody else.

Cut to Lighthouse Park, Scene 2. Sadie and Philip are running freely over the rock outcropping, between the trees in Lighthouse Park. The colours are almost painful in the richness of summer. Philip catches up with Sadie, pulls her down roughly. He starts to kiss her. Possible freeze frame on Sadie trying to free herself.

Voices start over image of beer.

SADIE: Philip? I'm scared. It's so high up here. And hot.

Voices over (from discussion C and A).

SADIE: The starfish, it's gone all soggy.

PHILIP: It stinks.

SADIE: Leave it in the sun.

Cut to a distant shot of the lighthouse as seen by Sadie from the patio of their house.

SADIE: Blink.

Cut to Sadie on the patio.

SADIE: Blink. *(She is talking quietly to the light.)* So there you are. Starlight Star bright, will there be a crash tonight? What if you went dark? Pow! A freighter hits the rocks. Pow! A steamer. Look at the sailors scream and slip on the decks. Pow! A tugboat. Now all the lights in the houses are off. Cars and buses go crash like toys kids play with and people roll like marbles in the streets. A sports-car, thwoop, over the edge of the bridge . . . Philip? *(Calling to him)* What's a lighthouse for?

PHILIP: *(From inside)* You ask me that a hundred times.

SADIE: Who needs it, anyway, with radar and rockets to the moon?

PHILIP: *(Resigned)* The lighthouse is to stop the boats from breaking up on the rocks.

SADIE: *(Quietly)* Yah. Watch out for the rocks. Watch out for the rocks. If I had a motorboat I'd zoom in and out real close. Like those guys on motor-cycles.

I almost died when I was a kid.
Did I ever tell ya? I caught flu
and when I came awake every-
thing had this glow on it, see. It
was the same room. There was
my mom, the bed, the same
picture on the wall, the Blue Boy,
yah. But different, too. I used to
wish it'd happen again.

PHILIP: (*Wearing slippers
again*) Here's your drink.

SADIE: Hey, I got new ones.

PHILIP: These are good enough.

*Sadie takes the glass from him.
It's an incongruously delicate
piece of stemware. Philip pours.*

PHILIP: (*Raising his glass for-
mally*) To Saturday night.

*They clink glasses. Once again
they are lit up with the glow
from the lighthouse.*

*They drink. Cut to Scene 1 in
Lighthouse Park.*

SADIE: Oh, look at the animals.

*We see Philip and Sadie from
the point of view of the starfish,
that is, through the water look-
ing up at them.*

SADIE: Aren't they strange? I
didn't know those things could
move. Philip! That starfish, it's
going to . . .

SADIE: It's hard to believe there's
another life inside a me. You
wanna feel it?

Her face freezes in horror. Cut to the water in the crevice where innumerable small sea creatures: starfish, snails, minnows, plankton, hermit crabs, have been trapped. They seem quite still and one wonders what worried Sadie until the tiniest movement of an anemone, perhaps, and the disappearance of a small shrimp suggest the death and survival struggle of the sea. Or simply remain with the first shot steady on Sadie's face.

SADIE: He ate em.

PHILIP: He's gotta live. Look, there's a hermit crab. *(He points at a shell with a long stick)* That's not his shell. He takes over empty ones, where the animal inside's already died.

Perhaps a closeup of this strange creature peeking out from its adopted shell. It begins to move.

PHILIP: Boo. *(It withdraws.)*

Philip runs his stick through the water raising clouds of sand. The animals scurry to escape him.

SADIE: Leave them alone.

Philip has climbed down into the crevice. He scrambles up carrying a large purple starfish, and presents it to Sadie.

SADIE: No. I don't want to touch it.

Scraping sounds can be heard. Sadie is pulling the record player out from under the bed. This is the one occasion a week it's used. She puts on a disc, jazz of the 40's, which filters into the scene.

PHILIP: They're stuck on the ledge anyway. The tide's out. We'll take him home and dry him.

SADIE: Will he die?

PHILIP: It's an ornament. You can put him on the coffeetable.

He puts it in a plastic bag, seals the top.

SADIE: Like a souvenir, huh?

PHILIP: Yah, that's it.

Cut back to the room. Philip is seated at the desk where food is spread out on a newspaper.

Mostly cheap canned goods, the keys are still visible in the cans. Sadie and Philip use crackers to dip directly from them, though Philip occasionally uses a spoon and Sadie her fingers. They have had several drinks. Sadie is changing the record. Philip looks up. She returns to the desk, tries something. Licks her fingers. The flicker of excitement caused by their earlier preparation has disappeared.

Music throughout.

SADIE: This brand of pork's not so good.

PHILIP: Use your spoon.

SADIE: What's the difference. It goes down the same place.

Sadie tips juice from a fish tin onto the page in front of Philip and rubs it in with the bottom of the tin.

SADIE: You were reading. What are you thinking, Sweet Philip? Say whatever's in your head. I won't be shocked. No? So I'll tell you what I'm thinking. That you're a virgin. If you were a girl I'd call you Vir-gin-ia. You haven't given yourself to anybody. Maybe Bets a little. But even with her mostly you liked to watch.

Jazz continues.

PHILIP: Knock it off.

SADIE: Yah. You got five or six cute little sayings like that. "Knock it off. Skip it. Forget it."

PHILIP: I'm warning you, Sadie . . .

SADIE: That's another one. You oughta use placards, you know? Like when they're picketing. It would take less outa you. (*She begins to snap her fingers to the music and sings*) Self-sufficient. Independent. (*The next word spoken*) Scared.

Philip walks to the window to escape. Sadie dances after him.

SADIE: Do you ever dream,
Philip?

*Philip begins to whistle. Oddly,
it's Good King Wenceslas.*

SADIE: Or is it gray behind your
eyes like the ocean?

PHILIP: There's a boat out there.
I can hear its motor.

SADIE: It's time to dance.

PHILIP: It's too hot.

SADIE: I dance for you in bed.
Now it's your turn.

Music gets louder.

PHILIP: The boat has two, no,
four lights on the end of two
poles. It's an insect crawling
over the water.

SADIE: Don't try to shortchange
me!

PHILIP: The poles are its
stingers.

(Perhaps the lighthouse glows)

SADIE: *(Grabs Philip's hand and
pulls him into an open jive posi-
tion)* What about Mr. Schultz?
Do you think about him?

They freeze for a moment.

This is the beginning of the dance sequence. Sadie and Philip will move in a formal version of the old-fashioned jive. This "dance bit" breaks with segments of flashback, sometimes the arguing voices of the present over past action, sometimes the couple in the past speak their words while seen, sometimes the voices from the past are heard over the ludicrous moments of the present, and sometimes two, three, or all points of time interweave in a polyphony, a solo cry rising above the others. The following, then, may be considered fragments in an interchangeable pastiche. The jazz gradually changes from the comforting regular rhythm of the '40's to an unrelenting hammer of sound (i.e. Al Neil, John Coltrane). The glow from the lighthouse appears and re-appears at closer and closer intervals. The experience for the audience in this collage of sound and sight should become almost unbearable nearing the climax.

A few seconds of dance. Cut to Philip chasing Sadie, lighthouse Scene 2 repeated, but a variant.

Sadie's voice from the present continues over.

Sadie and Philip are running freely over the rock outcropping, between the trees in Lighthouse Park. The colours are almost painful in the richness of summer.

SADIE: He tried to commit suicide. You don't even want to know why.

Philip starts to whistle Good King Wenceslas again.

Philip catches Sadie, pulls her down roughly, starts to kiss her. He's shocked to discover she's turned old, the Sadie as seen in present action.

SADIE: Don't.

Freeze for a split second, then Sadie is young again.

SADIE: I feel like walking.

PHILIP: I don't.

He starts to kiss her. She giggles. He begins to unbutton her blouse.

SADIE: Not here.

She rolls away from him, stands up and runs with Philip after her. On a secluded ledge over the water they undress. Shot over bushes at first they are just heard, then their heads and shoulders are seen.

SADIE: Are you sure no-one can see us here?

A pause here in the whistling.

The whistling resumes.

SADIE: We were having a love affair. He was afraid you'd find out.

PHILIP: All the time, all the time, even when she's lying beside me and I'm ready to have a nice piece, she has to start . . .

SADIE: You'd a handed him the keys to the place, wouldn't you of?

PHILIP: About how we ought to be feeling, what it means . . .

SADIE: So long as he didn't muck up your routine.

PHILIP: What it ought to mean, what it ought not to mean.

She hangs a final piece of clothing beside the others where they hang on a shrub, then she stretches out beside Philip.

SADIE: It's funny to think there's another life inside of me. You wanna feel it kick?

Sadie takes Philip's hand to guide it to her stomach.

PHILIP: (*Anxious to make love*)
Sadie. Sadie. (*He starts to kiss her*)

SADIE: What are you thinking about?

PHILIP: Ah, come on, Sadie.

SADIE: No, I mean *really* thinking. I don't believe in life after death, do you? That makes every minute so important I'm almost afraid to do anything. Because I might spoil it.

She is silent for a moment. He takes advantage, grabs her and kisses her.

SADIE: Supposing somebody sees us?

PHILIP: We're getting married, aren't we?

SADIE: (*Giggles*) We'll have the funniest burns.

PHILIP: Shut up, can't you?

They disappear. Sadie is still giggling.

SADIE: Shall I tell you how it was with him? He's a better lover than you. He takes detours.

Throughout the rest of the scene Philip's whistling continues.

Cut back to the present. Sadie and Philip are dancing, each holding a fresh drink which occasionally sloshes over the edge of the glasses. They are shot from the neck to the knees.

Sadie stumbles into Philip's stomach.

SADIE: Whoo! Philip is constipated. Swoll up with all the things he won't share. What you got in there that's so precious, eh? It's even a secret what you eat for lunch. Your hate's locked up in your bowel, Sweet Philip. Philip has got a pearl. (*This sung like a child*) Right . . . in . . . there. (*She plants a finger delicately on his belly.*)

During this speech they have been dancing to the hiss of the record needle stuck in the last groove. Philip puts the needle back to the beginning of the record, but it's progressive jazz now.

The glasses rise up out of the frame as each of them takes a drink. Philip's hand grabs Sadie's. They begin to dance again.

Hiss of needle stuck in groove.

The voices start and progressive jazz.

Selected lines from the starfish arguments A to D gone through, and when finished they start again, gradually speeded.

PHILIP: Shouldn't we take it in the basement to dry?

SADIE: The sun'll come out. It's summer.

PHILIP: If you think you know so much . . .

SADIE: I didn't say that. Don't touch it. It's not alive. (*With wonder*)

PHILIP: Of course not, stupid.

SADIE: When it was wet before, it was alive.

PHILIP: It stinks. We shoulda took it in the basement like I said.

SADIE: It's lost its shape. It's gone.

PHILIP: A dog musta grabbed it. I saw one take off around the corner.

SADIE: What'll he do with it?

PHILIP: (*Brutally*) Wha' do you think?

SADIE: (*Sick*) My God!

Getting faster.

PHILIP: I only said . . .

SADIE: You gave it to the dog.

PHILIP: I didn't.

SADIE: You're glad he took it, then.

PHILIP: I got sick of looking at the thing. You wanna hang on to everything.

The above is repeated, but quieter, so the next set of voices can be heard. Next sequence faster. It begins before the last is over, a verbal "round."

PHILIP: Shouldn't we take it in the basement?

SADIE: Leave it in the sun. It's more natural.

PHILIP: It stinks.

SADIE: It's not alive.

PHILIP: It stank.

SADIE: My God!

PHILIP: I told you we . . .

SADIE: You gave it to the dog.

PHILIP: I didn't.

SADIE: You're glad he took it then.

SADIE: What are you thinking?
Dance, Philip. *(He has paused.)*

Second set begins again. Over two voice lines.

The following rises in solo:

PHILIP: Glad, yes!

SADIE: You have a beautiful soul.

PHILIP: All the time! All the time!

PHILIP: What do you want me to say? That I'm thinking about Bets? And my work?

SADIE: And me.

PHILIP: Yah.

SADIE: What about me? Do you hate me? Say it. *(She jerks him again.)*

PHILIP: I want some peace!

Voices end abruptly.

He breaks away. Goes for another drink.

SADIE: I know what kind of piece you want.

PHILIP: You're right. That's the only reason I'm here. An easy skirt.

SADIE: And free, too, huh? A housekeeper that comes across.

PHILIP: It's in the contract. You ask any lawyer. You make me feel like I got to get down on my knees and beg your forgiveness after. You want my skin.

SADIE: More than that.

PHILIP: You hunt me like an animal. When I sleep I feel you breathing over me. You're jealous of my dreams, of my beer.

SADIE: You are a violent man.

PHILIP: I am not a violent man.

(He slams his fist on the desk to emphasize his point and breaks one of the glasses.)

SADIE: (*Sweetly*) You see?

PHILIP: I am a gentle man.
Animals love me. They run to
me, not you. I can't count how
many dogs follow me home. And
kids, too. Bets . . .

SADIE: Yah? What about her?

PHILIP: It's because of you she
wanted to get out. Complaining
all the time.

Heavy breathing starts over.

You told her things about us you
shouldn't have. You read her
diary.

SADIE: It's a mother's right. You
skulked after her like a lovesick
calf.

PHILIP: That's a lie.

SADIE: I caught you covering her
up in bed. In the middle of the
night.

PHILIP: She was only fourteen
years old then and she called out.
You didn't move to go to her.

SADIE: She told me after she was
scared half to death you'd
attack her.

PHILIP: You want me to confess
about dirty feelings, eh?

SADIE: That wasn't true, what I
said about Schultz just now. I
made it up.

PHILIP: Yah, sure, you vomit your guts all over the floor and I'm supposed to lick it up and then spill mine.

Cut to Sadie and Philip climbing the ladder inside the lighthouse, Scene 5. To Sadie the steps seem to rise interminably. The trapdoor at the top is more distant than when she began. She looks down. The steps below her shift.

SADIE: I'm feeling dizzy.

They begin to climb again. Philip looks down at her. From his point of view Sadie no longer looks frightened. She is determined in pursuit of him. No matter how quickly he goes she seems to be gaining on him. He becomes terrified.

The trapdoor is endlessly receding.

Philip seems to break through the trap door. Cut to a shot of a summer sky, a sense of expanse and relief, Scene 3.

SADIE: Just think who mighta been lying here a thousand years ago.

We now recognize the sound as the hard breathing of a man trying to escape. Over the breathing comes Sadie's voice.

SADIE: Death's not a miser. He doesn't say "I'll take your hair but not your feet, your smiles but not your sickness." Man, when he comes, he takes everything you got. He doesn't spit anything back. Not toenails, not cancer, nothin. I see how you turn from me when I'm sick. And Death gives Himself, too. All the way. And no false timing. Whammo! Right on. First time round.

Heavy breathing ends.

Cut to Sadie and Philip. After lovemaking they lie naked in the sun. Philip's eyes are closed, but Sadie is looking up at the sky.

SADIE: Do you think people felt the same as us? Philip?

He grunts but doesn't open his eyes.

SADIE: You have a beautiful soul.

PHILIP: Who, me?

SADIE: I know you think it's not manly, but everybody has one. I don't mean the religious kind. One a these days it'll pop up and surprise you. But not me.

You'll tell me how you feel about all kinds of things. (I wouldn't be surprised you end up a painter. You know, an artist.)

Philip grunts.

She stops, but there is a happy knowing smile on her face.

Sadie continues to smile happily at the sky.

SADIE: I heard a joke. Shall I tell ya? This man and this woman come to a lake. And they've got to get to the other side, see? N the woman says to the man "Take me on your back." N the man answers . . . "Sorry, lady, but my back's worn right through carrying you all these years."

*Cut back to Sadie and Philip
lying on the floor, heads propped
against the bed, smoking cigars.
Open beer bottles.*

SADIE: (Cont.) And this lady,
know what she answers? "That's
alright, cause *all* a me's worn
through with carrying you n
there's nothing left a me but my
voice."

PHILIP: Did he carry her?

SADIE: I dunno.

PHILIP: What a crumby story.
What's the point . . .

SADIE: You don't understand
anything.

PHILIP: Yah, only you have the
feelings around here.

*A sudden blast of rock 'n roll
music coming from the beach.*

SADIE: Shhh. (*She goes un-
steadily to the window*)
I think . . .

PHILIP: Tell them to get the
Hell out.

SADIE: Leave them alone. It
makes me feel good.

*Philip goes to the window with
a flashlight and shines it out.*

PHILIP: Hey, you. You kids.
Beat it. It's the police. (*The
music ends.*) They'll get
hemorrhoids. (*He opens
another beer.*)

SADIE: I am a beautiful woman,
and you never once brought me
flowers.

PHILIP: Where were you when I
came home drunk that time, n
broke my leg falling on the
stairs? You didn't even wake up.

SADIE: What about when I had
the kid? You were off at some
lousy football game.

PHILIP: It was a final.

SADIE: While I was grunting it
out at the hospital.

PHILIP: Where's my boy? You
shoulda given me a boy.

SADIE: I figured you were only
temporary. I didn't want to
spoil my shape. A month after
we were married I knew it was
no good.

PHILIP: Did it take you so long?

SADIE: Every man I saw I looked
at real hard. Maybe he was the
one.

PHILIP: I started looking on our
honeymoon.

SADIE: You don't know the
places I've been in my head.

Closeups here as they're getting lost in their thoughts.

PHILIP: (*He sits with drink*) I could have been a happy man. I enjoy life, a bottle of beer, sitting in front of the TV watching a game, without some god-damn woman nattering at me about wasting my time . . .

SADIE: Sometimes I lie on the floor just here with the sun streaming in on me and I pretend the sun's a man. (*Sadie picks up a picnic basket or a bag of groceries and carries it to where Philip is seated. She seats herself beside him and continues with drunken self-pity. Perhaps tears.*) After I weaned the baby, and my breast was sore with milk. You remember? Just before I dried out? That's how it is. You never ask anything from me. (You never give and you never ask.)

PHILIP: She's trying to depress me again. (*Mimicking Sadie*) Look up there, Philip. The sky is endless, but we're not. We're going to die, Philip. And then you looked at me as though it was a gift you'd given me. Holy Mother of Christ, what did she want me to say? I'm glad we're both going to die, that we're going to rot in the same grave together? Always taking the juice out of me.

A man keeps exposing his guts
and he dries out.

SADIE: Sometimes when you're
out swimming and I'm watching
you, I close my eyes real tight
and think of a shark. If I think
of it real hard I'll make one. Or
maybe you'll drown. (*Taking out
food, cheese, chocolates, fruit*) I
can see ya sinking down, down,
to the bottom of the ocean and
laying there with the other
sponges. (*Sadie offers Philip
some grapes to eat, has some
herself.*) Then I lie back on the
sand and feel like a girl. But you
always scramble up beside me
again. (*This speech given quite
calmly.*)

*They continue eating throughout
the following. Their actions are
amiable, belying the words.*

PHILIP: (You gnaw at me like a
dog at a bone.) Why do you
always got to have things to
confess? That time you told me
you were picked up for shop-
lifting . . . You hadn't been any-
where. You never leave this
house. Except to pick leaves.

SADIE: I've imagined you dead a hundred different ways. Falling off the verandah. Heart attack. At first I'd feel sad and cry a little for ya. Not now. If you could see the knives and snakes, the naked black men with spears, and the doctors all holding my hand and comforting me. You been pronounced dead more times than you've had birthdays.

PHILIP: I don't understand. I've never understood. You want an orange? I'll peel it for you. I go to work all day while you sit around in this pigsty and dream and somehow I'm guilty.

SADIE: One of these days I'm going to walk out.

PHILIP: How would you make a living?

SADIE: I'd walk the streets.

PHILIP: You'd starve.

She throws her glass at him, misses. It breaks.

SADIE: There. We're even.

She walks to a box, takes out another set of stemware, presents one to him.

Next set, these are gigs . . . Lighthouse flashes illuminating their room, brighter now.

SADIE: (*Mock solemnity, holding up glass*) Why is this night different than any other night?

PHILIP: The place is filthy. It smells. You smell. Like an animal.

SADIE: That's what we all are.

PHILIP: You never once made me a birthday cake.

SADIE: You snore. (*Almost in ecstasy*)

Perhaps here bits of argument start faintly in the background.

PHILIP: You burn the carrots.

SADIE: You eat too much.

PHILIP: You leave your dirty nylons on the floor.

SADIE: You gave the starfish to a dog.

PHILIP: I didn't.

SADIE: You sicked him on to taking it, then.

PHILIP: Sadie, you are crazy. (*Rises*) I'm leaving.

SADIE: Where'll you go? You've seen all the movies.

PHILIP: That's right.

SADIE: What about when your
cousin . . .

PHILIP: And that time . . . ?

SADIE: Still, you shouldn't
have . . .

*Philip snuggles against Sadie.
She arranges his head on her
shoulder. They nap.
Lighthouse flashes on them.
Philip rouses. Sadie slips to the
floor. She lifts her head and
opens her eyes.*

Argument fades out.

PHILIP: The letter from Bets? I
wanna read it.

SADIE: It's for a mother's eyes
only.

PHILIP: I wanna read it.

SADIE: She's sleeping with a
rodeo type. He jumps off his
bronc and on to her.

*Intercut lighthouse closeup at
night.*

PHILIP: What're you talking
about? Where is it? (*Starts to
search for letter*)

SADIE: She says to give you her
love. (*Holds out her arms
mockingly*)

PHILIP: A girl seventeen hitch-
hiking across the country.

SADIE: Don't worry. I taught her
how to look after herself. Not
like my mother. This is a new
generation.

Philip goes to vanity table, looks on top, his hands get dirty, he opens drawers.

Second lighthouse closeup.

SADIE: I told her "Bets, you keep right on going, because if you settle on one man and he closes you out, baby, you're nothing."
(She picks up a piece of paper and holds it calmly in front of her) Like I said, it's for a mother's eyes only. *(Philip tries to grab it)* Tell me what you're thinking? What happened today at the office, Philip? Did you see anyone interesting on the bus? What do you think of the election?

Philip wrestles with her for the paper, she kisses him, he knocks her to the floor. He has the paper.

PHILIP: It's the grocery list.

SADIE: She couldn't get out of here fast enough. She's free as a man.

Philip walks purposefully to her. Sadie moves away from him.

SADIE: No. Not yet. Philip.

He grabs at her, rips the front of her dress so it hangs down.

*Quick flashback to summer
Scene 2. They are running.
Philip roughly pulls Sadie down.
Cut to closeup flash of the light-
house at night. Then pull back
to see the light scurrying through
the undergrowth like small hid-
den animals. Cut to the hermit
crab beginning to crawl. Cut
back to present action. It's a
drunken pursuit. Furniture is
knocked over, more glasses
break.*

SADIE: You have no sense of
style. I am a beautiful woman
and you have never once brought
me flowers. I won't let you cheat
me.

*Though she pleads Philip can no
longer play the game. He grabs
her and pushes her toward the
bed.*

SADIE: There's more to be said.
Please. Please, Philip.

*Another montage of images
follows, this time with the lone
cry of a jazz saxophone over.*

Jazz saxophone

*A closeup of the lighthouse.
Cut to the starfish limp under
rain.*

SADIE: . . . an ornament . . .

*Cut to Sadie and Philip clinking
glasses at beginning of evening.
Cut to the two of them franti-
cally climbing the ladder inside
the lighthouse tower. They look
to the top. It becomes a closeup
of the lighthouse.*

*Her voice doubled, trebled, com-
bining and losing itself in the
saxophone.*

Cut to them making love on the ledge overlooking the ocean. Cut to them lying side by side in the same place, but now old and not touching. They stare up at the sky, not dead, but lonely.

Cut back to the room and freeze on a mundane detail, perhaps the candlesticks on the table.

With the cut, sound is turned off. After a moment's silence Sadie's voice over, in a dead tone:

I got this friend, I don't think you know her. Anyway, she told me the queerest thing. She was lying beside her husband n all of a sudden slip . . . slip . . . there wasn't a "her" anymore. She was both of em. When he moved, it was her moving. She could feel the air on his skin and his breath in and out. Like it was hers. You know what I mean? After it was over she was scared. She felt open, kinda. Wished I could feel like that.

Cut to the two of them lying in bed. Faint sound of foghorns in the distance. Philip's tuxedo and Sadie's gown are on the floor, or perhaps they're in bed with their clothes on, that is, Philip in underwear and dress shirt, Sadie still with her dress, even the intimacy of naked touch denied

*them. Empty bottles and tins,
overturned furniture in the early
dawn light.*

SADIE: Listen, you hear
anything?

PHILIP: No.

SADIE: I thought I heard the
foghorns. The fog must be thick
on the water. I guess you can't
see the lighthouse anymore.

Hear it? *(She imitates the
sound, deep then falling lower)*

Sounds like an animal crying.

(Pause) What do you want for
breakfast? Toast 'n eggs? Same's
usual?

*Philip is lying with his face in
the pillow. He still has on the
shirt and tie. Sadie climbs over
him.*

SADIE: Yah. Your game's start-
ing soon. I'll turn on the tele-
vision to warm it up.

*She goes into the bathroom.
Sound of running water. Philip
gets up, picks up pants and
jacket, stumbles to cupboard to
hang them up for the next
Saturday night ritual. He is
crying.*

SADIE: *(Calls from the bath-
room)* You say something?

PHILIP: No.

SADIE: That's what I thought.

LIGHTHOUSE PARK SCENES

(Before Sadie and Philip are married)

SCENE 1

SADIE: Oh, look at the animals. *(We see Philip and Sadie from the point of view of the starfish. That is, through the water looking up at them.)* Aren't they strange? I didn't know those things could move. Philip! That starfish, it's going to . . .

Her face freezes in horror. Cut to the water in the crevice where innumerable small sea creatures: starfish, snails, minnows, plankton, hermit crabs, etc., have been trapped. They seem quite still and one wonders what worried Sadie until the tiniest movement of an anemone, perhaps, and the disappearance of a small shrimp suggest the death and survival struggle of the sea. Or simply remain with the first shot steady on Sadie's face.

SADIE: He ate em.

PHILIP: He's gotta live. Look, there's a hermit crab. *(He points at a shell with a long stick.)* That's not his shell. He takes over empty ones, where the animal inside's already died.

Perhaps a closeup of this strange creature peeking out from its adopted shell, then beginning to move.

PHILIP: Boo.

It withdraws.

Philip runs his stick through the water raising clouds of sand. The animals scurry to escape him.

SADIE: Leave them alone.

Philip has climbed down into the crevice. He scrambles up carrying a large purple starfish and presents it to Sadie.

SADIE: No. I don't want to touch it.

PHILIP: They're stuck on the ledge, anyway. The tide's out. We'll take him home and dry him.

SADIE: Will he die?

PHILIP: It's an ornament. You can put him on the coffeetable.

He puts it in a plastic bag, seals the top.

SADIE: Like a souvenir, huh?

PHILIP: Yah, that's it.

SCENE 2

Sadie and Philip are running freely over the rock outcropping, between the trees. The colours are almost painful in the richness of summer. Philip catches up with Sadie and pulls her down roughly. He starts to kiss her.

SADIE: (*Resisting*) Don't. I feel like walking.

PHILIP: I don't.

She giggles. He begins to unbutton her blouse.

SADIE: Not here.

She rolls away from him, stands up and runs, with Philip after her. On a secluded ledge over the water they undress.

Shot over bushes, at first they are just heard, then their heads and shoulders are seen.

SADIE: Are you sure no one can see us here? (*She hangs a final piece of clothing beside the others on a shrub, then she stretches out beside Philip.*) It's funny to think there's another life inside a me. You wanna feel it kick?

Sadie takes Philip's hand to guide it to her stomach.

PHILIP: (*Anxious to make love*) Sadie. Sadie. (*He starts to kiss her.*)

SADIE: What are you thinking about?

PHILIP: Ah, come on, Sadie.

SADIE: No, I mean *really* thinking. I don't believe in life after death, do you? That makes every minute so important I'm almost afraid to do anything. Because I might spoil it.

She is silent for a moment. He takes advantage, grabs her and kisses her.

SADIE: Supposing somebody sees us?

PHILIP: We're getting married, aren't we?

SADIE: (*Giggles*) We'll have the funniest burns.

PHILIP: Shut up, can't you? (*They disappear. Sadie is still giggling*)

SCENE 3

A summer sky. The camera wanders as the eye would.

SADIE: Just think who mighta been lying here a thousand years ago. *Cut to Sadie and Philip. After making love they lie naked in the sun. Philip's eyes are closed, but not Sadie's, who is looking up.* Do you think people felt the same as us? Philip?

He grunts but doesn't open his eyes.

SADIE: You have a beautiful soul.

PHILIP: Who, me?

SADIE: I know you think it's not manly, but everybody has one. I don't mean the religious kind. One a these days it'll pop up and surprise you. But not me. You'll tell me how you feel about all kinds of things. I wouldn't be surprised you end up a painter. You know, an artist.

Philip grunts.

She stops, but there is a happy knowing smile on her face. Part of the love scene should be reshot with one of the couple old and the other young, then vice versa. Finally with both of them old lying side by side, not touching, in the summer sun.

Similarly the stair climbing scene, Scene 5, is to be reshot with first one, then the other, finally both old.

This change is hopefully worked into the texture of the play as the ugliness of the present superimposes itself over and erases the fragile beauty of the past.

SCENE 4

Sadie waits as Philip goes to the house of the lighthouse keeper. Philip approaches the door with self-conscious arrogant strides. The keeper emerges, they talk for a minute, Sadie joins them. And they continue down the path and over the bridge to the lighthouse.

SCENE 5

Sadie and Philip climb the stairs and ladder inside the lighthouse. To Sadie the steps seem to rise interminably. The trapdoor at the top is more distant than when she began. She looks down. The steps below her shift.

SADIE: I'm feeling dizzy.

They begin to climb again. Philip looks down at her. Sadie no longer looks frightened. Seen from his point of view, she is fiendishly determined in her pursuit of him. No matter how quickly he goes Sadie seems to be gaining on him. He becomes terrified.

SCENE 6

Sadie and Philip are standing in the lighthouse room, dark as a cave. The windows are covered with a cloth to protect the light. Or perhaps it is getting late, and the light starts to turn on its axle.

SADIE: Philip? (He turns to her. She steps back.) I'm scared. It's so high up here. And hot. Take me down. You look strange. Like somebody else.

SCENE 7

The starfish is out to dry displayed on a box in the yard of Sadie and Philip, newly married. Now rain falling on it. The rain sequence to be used again and again. The starfish dank, spreading. The voices are over the picture.

DISCUSSION A:

PHILIP: Shouldn't we take it in the basement to dry?

SADIE: No. Leave it in the sun. It's more natural.

PHILIP: It's up to you, but I think . . . (*Resignedly*) All right.

DISCUSSION B: (*Rain*)

PHILIP: I think we ought to take it in.

SADIE: The sun'll come out. It's still summer.

PHILIP: If you think you know so much . . .

SADIE: I didn't say that.

DISCUSSION C:

SADIE: Philip! The starfish's gone all soggy. Ich! Don't touch it.
(*Possibly hand seen entering frame*) It's not alive. (*With wonder*)

PHILIP: Of course not, stupid.

SADIE: When it was wet before, it was alive.

PHILIP: It stinks. We shoulda took it in the basement like I said.

SADIE: It's lost its shape.

DISCUSSION D:

SADIE: Philip! The starfish, it's gone.

PHILIP: A dog musta grabbed it. I saw one take off around the corner. Just as well. It stank.

SADIE: What'll he do with it?

PHILIP: (*Brutally*) Wha do you think?

SADIE: (*Sick*) My God!

PHILIP: I told you we shoulda put it in the basement.

SADIE: So it's all my fault.

PHILIP: I only said . . .

SADIE: You gave it to the dog.

PHILIP: I didn't . . .

SADIE: You're glad he took it, then.

PHILIP: Yes! I got sick of looking at the thing. You wanna hang on to everything.

SADIE: It was your idea to bring it home.

IN PRESENT ACTION, BUT PROBABLY OVER A SEQUENCE

SADIE: You gave the starfish to a dog!

PHILIP: I didn't.

SADIE: You sicked him on to taking it, then.

PHILIP: Sadie, you are crazy.

This argument should be taped. Counterpoint the points in time over flashback sequences and the present, fugally. Perhaps make a solo cry of one of them.

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POSTSCRIPT

When an editor called me to see if I had anything for *The Capilano Review* I had just come back from a walk in Lighthouse Park. As I walked I remembered Sadie and Philip. Perhaps because I'd just completed *Leela Means to Play*, which feels like the end of a cycle, I naturally returned to the beginning of it. So much in the short film I've drawn from, consciously and unconsciously — themes, techniques, character roots — borrowed freely because it had gone unproduced and unpublished. I hadn't thought of publishing it until that morning just before Bill called. I was about to call him.

Begun the summer of '66, a commission from George Robertson, producer-writer at the CBC, his first TV drama. "Beverley, I understand you're writing a play about marriage. How about a half-hour film?" The conditions intrigued me — low budget, a combination of video tape and film, that is, one scene could be shot on location, the rest had to be studio. As few characters as possible. Something that "the man on the street" could relate to. The danger — cliché. To write about the familiar, the banal, without becoming banal.

I had been working for several years on the problem of materializing "routines" — I mean routine arguments, routine relationships, those that begin with a roaring full scene but are refined by time and repetition to something like cue sheets — my bit sets off your bit which necessitates our shared bit and so on . . . Habitual patterns of action, a stuck record, elided, bouncing into the next "bit" — not smooth, though some groomed familiar enough to be reassuring. And memories evoked so often they, too, achieve shorthand, and ultimately synthesis.

I didn't want to just talk about it. I was tired of leaning on dialogue. I wanted to reveal the metaphor, materialize the process.

I had been attempting it on stage. I'd begun a script in which one character speaks in the usual surface social manner, the other as he

thinks, i.e. the unspoken. A second play in which one character was silent until he and his love had left the stage, then his compressed impotent thoughts/emotions break in a flood, sound over empty stage. But that was still dialogue. I made it physical. A couple unable to communicate except in telling each other wondrous stories about characters, a second couple, who appear and build their set within the set, until one of them runs berserk with an axe and destroys the fabrication — both of them. It was this last play I was working on when George called. The play was never finished. The energy drained into the film.

Considering the tools, I had two strands to play. I decided to use the film for a memory sequence in Lighthouse Park, to contrast with the caged sulkiness of the beach house. The film scenes had to be typed out separately to be shot all at one time. These scenes were like a deck of cards, to be played within the second line of action, the present. Memories and “routines.” Film and video.

The director was stunned. He expected a five finger exercise. It took him six months to be able to return to it, read it, say: “We’ll knock the country on its ass.” But it was too late. One of the very few periods CBC Vancouver was given access to a drama series was over. I put it away.

So it remains a pre-production script. Going back to it now I decided to let it be, with brackets and possibilities. I removed them only where I felt ten years surer. Not often.

I haven’t used all the potential of the structural concept described, in the script. Scene 4 is not in the script at all as it stands. I’ve decided to leave in an alternative intro scene, marked on my copy, “unsure.”

It was conceived as jazz. As in jazz I looked forward to group creativity . . . the director, the sound man and/or composer, the actors . . . who along with me would play it during production, test, develop, and discard. I didn’t have the heart to cut and tighten it to a closed unit.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Berkeley Simon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'B' and 'S'.