



## THE WASH

*Philip Kan Gotanda*

Philip Kan Gotanda, a sansei (third-generation Japanese American), was born in 1949 in Stockton, California. He originally planned to be a psychiatrist, but his interests in music and performance led him to playwriting. His first play, entitled *The Avocado Kid or Zen in the Art of Guacamole*, combines elements of a classic Japanese children's tale, music, dance, American popular culture, and colloquial language in an attempt to capture a "uniquely Asian American cultural aesthetic."<sup>1</sup> East West Players, an Asian American theater company based in Los Angeles, staged *The Avocado Kid* in 1978, and this successful initial foray into the world of drama encouraged Gotanda to pursue a career as a playwright. Other major works include *The Dream of Kitamura* (1982), *Song for a Nisei Fisherman* (1980), *Yankee Dawg You Die* (1988), *Fish Head Soup* (1991), and this anthology's selection, *The Wash* (1985).

Since his emergence as a playwright, Gotanda has also worked extensively with the Asian American Theatre Company, Northwest Asian American Theater, Pan Asian Repertory, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and the Manhattan Theatre Club. He also holds a law degree.

In *The Wash*, a nisei (second-generation) woman leaves her husband, takes a lover, and attempts to make a new life for herself. As Michael Omi has noted, such behavior from a second-generation Japanese American woman is "unthinkable," for many wives were expected to sacrifice their own desires for the sake of husband and family. Gotanda says that in the play he wanted to demonstrate that "traditions which worked before are subject to the winds of change. I wanted to depict people struggling to live their lives after a serious

rupture in the way things are." In addition to exploring one woman's break from an unfulfilling marriage, this play serves as a commentary on gender dynamics and sexuality in nisei culture.

Note carefully the playwright's descriptions of and directions for the props, lighting, gestures, and setting, for they tell a great deal about the characters and the themes of the play. Stage directions are given from the viewpoint of the performers. Therefore, stage right is on the audience's left, stage left is on the audience's right, upstage is at the back of the stage and downstage is at the front of the set. (J.I.)



## CHARACTERS

NOBU MATSUMOTO, Nisei (second-generation Japanese American), 68 years old, retired produce man. Separated from wife, Masi. Lives alone in the family house.

MASI MATSUMOTO, Nisei, 67 years old. Left Nobu. Does housework for a living. Lives in a small apartment by herself.

KIYOKO HASEGAWA, 55-ish, originally from Japan. Previously married to an American soldier. Widow. Seeing Nobu. Owns and runs a small Japanese restaurant.

SADAO NAKASOTO, Nisei, 65 years old, widower. Seeing Masi. Retired pharmacist.

MARSHA MATSUMOTO, Sansei (third-generation Japanese American), 33 years old, single. Older daughter of Nobu and Masi. Works as a dental hygienist in nearby big city.

JUDY ADAMS, Sansei, 29 years old, married to James with a baby. Younger daughter, fifth-grade teacher. Presently not working.

CHIYO FROELICH, originally from Japan, but has lived most of her adult life in the U.S. Late 40s, divorced, friend of Kiyoko. Owns and runs a small beauty salon next door to Kiyoko's restaurant.

BLACKIE, Hawaiian Nisei, 55-ish. Speaks with a thick pidgin accent. Works as the cook at Kiyoko's restaurant.

## SETTING

Stage center is Nobu's place, the "old family home." Stage right is Kiyoko's restaurant. Stage left is Masi's small bedroom

<sup>1</sup> Michael Omi, introduction to *Fish Head Soup and Other Plays*, Philip Kan Gotanda. Seattle: U of Washington P., 1995, page xv.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page xix.

apartment. A clothesline runs across the upstage area. The downstage area is used to play several scenes that take place elsewhere.

The set should be realistic but *elemental*, allowing for an underlying abstract feeling. Nobu's place is the most complete, with Masi's and Kiyoko's places more minimal, and Marsha's and Judy's places being represented by only a table and chairs.

The set as a whole must be constructed so that entrances, exits and crossovers may be easily viewed by the audience. This is because actors' movements from one area to another, both as focus action and as half-light action, are an integral part of the storytelling.

The play takes place in the present over a period of six months—July to January.

## ACT ONE

### SCENE I

*Nobu's place, the old family home. The kitchen is upstage. A sink, refrigerator, stove. There is a kitchen table with a pile of dirty clothes on it. On the stove, a pot of water is boiling. In the washrack there is a teapot, some dishes, chopsticks, etc. Stage left is a door that leads to the outside, the proverbial side-door entrance into the kitchen that everyone uses. Upstage right is a door leading to the hallway and bedrooms.*

*Down right, a TV. A long couch is angled facing it. On a long coffee table in front of the couch sits the yet undeveloped skeleton of a large kite Nobu is building. During the play, the kite becomes more and more pronounced in its construction.*

*The pile of dirty clothes is in a shaft of light. Lights come up to half revealing Nobu asleep lengthwise on the couch, facing the TV, a newspaper sprawled over his chest. Mouth open, snoring loudly. TV lights come up. Nobu can be seen in the flickering light of the television screen. Lights come up full. Nobu awakens with a start, newspaper falling to the floor. He pulls himself upright and just sits and stares into space for a moment, trying to awaken. Then he picks up the newspaper, tosses it in a heap on the couch. He checks to examine the progress he's making on the kite. He carefully sets the kite back on the table and shuffles over to the stove to shut the boiling water off. He gets a plate and a pair of chopsticks from the washrack, takes the two hot dogs that were cooking out of the pot and puts them on the plate. Then he gets some tea out and puts it into the teapot which he has taken from the rack. He moves to throw out the hot-dog water to boil some new water, then stops. Thinks. Proceeds to put the hot-dog water into the teapot and use it to make tea. Nobu reaches into the*

*refrigerator and pulls out a bowl of cold rice covered over in cellophane and a small bottle of French's mustard. He uncovers the rice, scoops some of it into a rice bowl using his chopsticks, pours hot tea over it. It starts to spill; he quickly bends down and slurps up the excess. He opens the mustard and, using his chopsticks again, shovels a healthy portion of mustard onto his hot dogs. He licks the mustard off his chopsticks. Then he carefully makes his way back to the couch with the plate of hot dogs and a bowl of rice. He sets the food down on the coffee table and begins to eat while working on the kite and watching television.*

*Masi enters through the side door with two large brown paper bags. She's struggling to open and close the door with both hands full. Nobu turns around and notices her but gives no greeting and makes no effort to help her. She is not upset by his actions. She appears to have no expectation for him to assist her. Masi sets both bags on the kitchen table and catches her breath.*

MASI: (*Putting tomatoes and Japanese eggplant from one of the bags into refrigerator*) If you have any more dirty clothes I can take them now. Nobu? Is this everything?

NOBU: (*Not turning, eating*) Want some hot dog?

MASI: No, I ate before. Got these from Mr. Rossi. The tomatoes are soft so eat them right away. (*She gets up, folds paper bag and puts it into drawer. She knows this place well. Walks over and checks his shirt collar from behind*) No more clothes?

NOBU: (*Brushing her hand away*) No, already.

(*Masi goes over to the other bag and begins unpacking the freshly washed clothes in neat piles on the kitchen table.*)

MASI: I just finished cleaning Dr. Harrison's place. You should see the bathrooms. If you see the family walk down the street, they look so clean and neat. But the toilets, *kitanai* [dirty].

(*Finished unpacking, Masi takes a cup out of the rack and pours herself a cup of tea. She walks over to the couch and sits down next to Nobu and watches TV. She takes a sip of tea and makes a face.*)

NOBU: Hot-dog water.

(*Masi decides not to drink it. She looks at the unfinished kite frame.*)

MASI: You gonna fly this one? (*Picks up the kite*) Nobu, why don't you at least try a different design this—

NOBU: *(Taking kite)* My old man did it this way.

*(Masi gets up and starts to pick up the old clothes on the floor, fold them and put them in the second bag.)*

MASI: Have you talked to the kids? *(No response)* Marsha said she stopped by. *(Beat)* You know if you don't see Judy's baby soon he's going to be all grown up. Nobu?

NOBU: No.

*(Masi gives up trying to talk to him at all. Finishes putting old clothes into the bag.)*

MASI: No more dirty clothes, Nobu? *(Nobu shakes his head without turning away from the TV)* All right, then I'm going.

*(Masi leaves with the bag of old clothes. Nobu continues to watch TV for a few moments, then turns and stares at the door. Dim to half with the TV light illuminating Nobu. Marsha appears in a pool of light looking towards Nobu.)*

MARSHA: Dad?

*(Nobu turns to look at Marsha momentarily then back to the television. Judy appears in a pool of light, holding Timothy. Marsha fades out.)*

JUDY: Mom?

*(Masi, moving away, turns to look at Judy momentarily, then exits. Judy fades out. Lights fade on Nobu and Masi. We hear Japanese restaurant Muzak.)*

## SCENE 2

*Kiyoko's restaurant, afternoon, next day, upstage right. On upstage side wall there is a service window. Left of it is a swinging door that leads into kitchen. There is a small counter space with three or four small stools. Downstage there are one or two small tables with chairs.*

*Lights come up. Blackie can be seen in the service window. He is taking a big swig of Budweiser. Kiyoko appears and gives him a dirty look. Blackie's been caught in the act.*

KIYOKO: Blackie.

BLACKIE: It make my cooking get mo' better. *(Kiyoko stares, no response)* It make me get mo' better. *(Kiyoko continues to stare)* I'm thirsty. I wanted a beer.

KIYOKO: *(Taking bottle away)* You're always thirsty, you're always hungry. You're the cook. You're supposed to cook the food, not eat it all up. Now go wipe the tables.

*(She hands him a towel and scoots him out the swinging door.)*

BLACKIE: It makes my cooking get mo' better. If I feel better, my cooking get mo' better. No bull lie, yo.

KIYOKO: Your face gets red like a tomato and everything tastes like shoyu [soy sauce].

*(Blackie stops and scratches his butt. Kiyoko knocks his hand away.)*

Don't scratch your *oshiri*. You're the cook, 'member?

*(Nobu enters.)*

NOBU: Kiyoko, *dō desu ka* [how are you]?

KIYOKO: *(Grabbing towel away from Blackie)* Give me that. *(Walks past Nobu, ignoring him)*

BLACKIE: Hey, brudda, you in the doghouse!

NOBU: What?

*(Kiyoko finishes taking a few swipes at a tabletop.)*

Kiyoko, tempura special, *onagai* [please] . . .

*(Kiyoko ignores him again, moving behind the counter, wiping.)*

BLACKIE: *(To Nobu)* You in the doghouse. But it going pass. *(He exits into kitchen area)*

NOBU: *(Moving to counter and seating himself)* What? What?

*(Kiyoko tosses a small plate of tsukemono [pickles] in front of him and continues to wipe around him. Nobu looks at the plate.)*

You know I don't like this kind of pickle.  
KIYOKO: *(Looks at him hard, tossing towel on the counter)* I'll get your tea.  
*(She exits into kitchen)*

BLACKIE: *(Pokes head out of service window holding Nobu's plate in one hand)* We drop food on the floor, we pick it up. If we like you . . . *(Mimes throwing the food away)* But, if you in the doghouse . . . *(Mimes dropping food back on plate, then barks at it)*

*(Blackie withdraws as Kiyoko enters with Nobu's tea.)*

- NOBU: *(To Kiyoko)* I like eggplant. You know that. You always give me eggplant pickle.
- KIYOKO: *(Pouring tea)* Out of season.
- NOBU: Masi brought some by yesterday with the wash.
- KIYOKO: Nobu-chan, I said I'd do the wash for you. You gotta washing machine at your place. I can just come over and—
- NOBU: No, no, too much trouble. I can do it myself. I don't like cucumber pickle.
- KIYOKO: Nobu, how could you forget?
- NOBU: I didn't. You did.
- KIYOKO: I kept dropping hints . . .
- NOBU: I like eggplant. You know that.
- KIYOKO: All last week.
- NOBU: Eggplant! Eggplant!
- KIYOKO: *(Pause, glaring at him)* WE RAN OUT!

*(Kiyoko stomps into the kitchen. Nobu sits there stunned and very puzzled. Blackie enters carrying a plate of food and sets it down in front of Nobu.)*

BLACKIE: Tempura special.

*(Blackie watches while sipping on a beer. Nobu is about to put a fork-load into his mouth, then stops. Looks at food, then at Blackie. Blackie makes a barking sound and grins. Suddenly something dawns on Nobu.)*

NOBU: Her birthday, I forgot her birthday. . .

*(Cross-fade to Masi's apartment.)*

### SCENE 3

*Masi's place, three weeks later. Small apartment, with bedroom downstage from main room. Sadao, seated on sofa, in a pool of light. Masi is in half-light at counter fixing two cups of Sanka.*

SADAO: We were all sitting around in somebody's living room, when someone said, "How come you still wear your wedding ring?" They weren't being mean. That's why we were there. To ask those kinds of things. I didn't know what to say. Speechless. Then someone else said, "Sadao, you always complain about not

meeting people, not being able to start a new life—how come you still wear your ring?" I began to cry. Like a little boy. I remember thinking, "How strange I am crying in front of all these people that I don't know. And yet I feel no shame." The room was so still. All you could hear was my crying. Then I heard a tapping sound. I looked up and noticed a woman sitting across from me, slapping the sandals she was wearing against the bottom of her feet. Tap, tap, tap. . . I said I didn't know why. It just never crossed my mind to take it off. "Why should I take the ring off?" Then one of the widows, the one who formed the group, said, "Because you're not married anymore."

*(Lights come up on the rest of the apartment area. Masi wasn't quite prepared for Sadao's sharing such personal details and is a bit unsure how to respond. Sadao in turn fears he may have gotten a bit carried away.)*

- MASI: *(Bringing coffee over)* Cream? It's nondairy creamer. *(Sadao shakes head)* If you want tea?
- SADAO: No, this is fine. I ran on a bit, didn't I?
- MASI: No, no, it's all right. *(Pause)* It's just Sanka.
- SADAO: Good. Otherwise the caffeine keeps me up all night. Have you tried decaffeinated coffee?

*(Masi motions to the Sanka, unsure of what he means.)*

- No, the bean. They actually make a decaffeinated bean.
- MASI: No, we never did anything like that. Just instant. Yuban makes a good instant coffee. That's what I usually drink. But I don't have any since I moved over here.
- SADAO: No, I've never tried it.
- MASI: I'll have to get some next time I go shopping.
- SADAO: They have this process they use. On the bean. I mean they don't grow a decaffeinated bean. I don't know what's worse. The caffeine in it or the chemicals they use to get the caffeine out. *(Laughs at his own joke, gathering momentum)* I have a little grinder. A Braun? You know a Braun?

*(Masi doesn't know what it is. Awkward pause.)*

- MASI: We never did anything like that. We just drink instant.
- SADAO: I like Sanka. I have to drink it all the time. Doctor's orders. *(Imitating)* "If you drink coffee, Sadao, drink Sanka!" *(He*

*laughs valiantly at his attempt at humor. Masi stares at her cup. He notices and offers a feeble explanation*) Blood pressure . . .

*(They both drink in silence. Suddenly Sadao remembers something.)*

Oh. Excuse me. I'll be right back. I left something in the car . . .  
*(Sadao's voice trails off as he exits. Masi sits there uncomfortably. This isn't working out. Sadao returns with a fishing pole and reel wrapped up like presents. Nobu appears in half-light at his place watching TV, his face illuminated by the flickering screen's glow.)*

MASI: *(Surprised)* Sadao, what's this?

*(Sadao holds out pole.)*

I can't.

SADAO: No, no, it's for you.

MASI: But Sadao . . .

SADAO: No, no, it's for you.

MASI: *(One hand on it)* Sadao, you shouldn't have.

SADAO: Go 'head. Open it up.

MASI: *(Takes it and begins unwrapping it)* No, I can't accept this. I don't have anything for you.

*(Masi unwraps pole, which is broken down into pieces. Sadao sets reel on table and takes pole from Masi.)*

SADAO: Here, let me show you. *(Puts it together)* There. *(Hands it back. Remembers reel, hands it to her)* Oh, and here's this.

*(Masi now has a reel and pole in her hands. Sadao realizes she can't unwrap the reel with both hands full and takes pole away. She unwraps the reel. Sadao promptly takes it away from her and puts the pole and reel together.)*

See, it goes like this. And then you're all set to catch fish. *(Hands it back to Masi)* I told you I was going to take you. Now you can't refuse.

MASI: Yeah, but . . .

SADAO: Thought I was kidding, huh?

MASI: But this is so expensive. I know how much these things cost, 'cause of Nobu. I don't know anything about fishing. He's the fisherman. I just pack the lunch and off he goes.

SADAO: Well, this time you're going and it's lots of fun. Economical, too. You get to eat what you catch.

MASI: But you have to do all that walking.

SADAO: No, who said that? We sit on the bank and fish from there. We'll pack a good lunch—I'll make it—you bring the cards so we can play blackjack. We have to practice.

MASI: I don't play.

SADAO: That's why we have to practice so we can go to Tahoe. If there's a good game on we'll have to watch it. I'll bring my portable TV. I love the Giants.

MASI: What about fishing?

SADAO: Only if we have time. See, this is how you cast out. *(Demonstrating)* You hook your index finger around the line here. Turn the bail and . . . *(He casts)*

*(Nobu, still in half-light, gets up to phone Masi. Phone rings. Masi goes over and answers it. It's Nobu. Slowly lights dim on Sadao and rest of apartment so that just Masi and Nobu are lit.)*

MASI: Hello.

NOBU: You coming to pick up the clothes?

MASI: Nobu I was just there. You mean next week? Don't worry, I'll be there. I do it every week, don't I? Nobu?

NOBU: I'm not worried. You all right?

MASI: Yes, I'm all right. Did you want something? *(No response)* I got more vegetables. Do you need some more?

NOBU: No. *(Pause)* Can you bring more eggplant?

MASI: I don't have any more.

NOBU: All right, then.

MASI: I'll ask Mr. Rossi. He can always get lots more. *(Pause)* Was there something else? Did you want something?

NOBU: No.

*(Pause)*

MASI: Nobu, I have to go now.

NOBU: I went fishing so I got a lot of dirty clothes.

MASI: All right. Don't worry, I'll be by.

NOBU: I'm not worried.

MASI: Bye.

NOBU: Bye.

*(Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 4

*Kiyoko's restaurant, three weeks later, night. Kiyoko, Chiyo, Blackie are playing five-card stud. When the scene starts they each have one card down and two up. Chiyo is in the process of dealing the next card, Kiyoko to her left, Blackie to her right. Chiyo wears a poker visor. Five empty beer bottles sit in front of Blackie, who is working on a sixth. He is not drunk, though. Hawaiian music is playing on his large portable tape player.*

CHIYO: *(Examining her hand)* He's got a wife. You said so yourself.  
 KIYOKO: They're separated.  
 CHIYO: He wants to get back together. I know his kind. She left him. They can't get over that. He only wants you for one thing—your “tempura.” Yeah. He's over your restaurant everyday, *desho* [isn't that so]? You feeding him. He's eating up all your profits.

*(Chiyo and Kiyoko notice Blackie chugging down the rest of his beer, making strange gurgling sounds. They stare.)*

BLACKIE: You gotta drink beer when you're playing poker or you aren't playing poker. You're just playing cards. I don't like cards, hate cards. *(Holds up another beer)* I love poker.  
 KIYOKO: Nobu is a good man.  
 CHIYO: You like to mother him, you like that kind of thing. But you don't know about men.  
 KIYOKO: And you do, heh?  
 CHIYO: You don't get out of this restaurant of yours, I tell you, “Go out, go out.” “No, I gotta work, work . . .” *(Noticing something)* Wait, wait, someone didn't ante. We only bet once, a nickel, right? *(Counting)* See. Someone didn't ante.  
 KIYOKO: I did.  
 CHIYO: So did I.

*(They turn to Blackie, who's guzzling a beer.)*

BLACKIE: Huh? Oh, yeah. *(Innocently tosses money in)*  
 CHIYO: *(Begins to deal, to Kiyoko)* Two sixes—a pair of saxophones. *(To Blackie)* A three of diamonds gives you . . . nothing. *(To self)* Eight of puppy toes to the dealer, working on a possible club flush. *(To Kiyoko)* Pair of saxes high. I just can't see myself going out with him.

KIYOKO: Nobu is an honest man. Not like that guy you've been seeing. Check.  
 CHIYO: Ray, his name is Ray. Blackie.  
 BLACKIE: *(Carefully examining his cards)* Yeah, I know.  
 KIYOKO: That time Blackie gave Nobu too much change. Remember? He walked all the way back from his house to return it—twenty-five cents.  
 CHIYO: Good investment. He gets a \$4.50 combo plate free now. *(To Blackie)* Your bet.  
 BLACKIE: Don't rush me, don't rush me.  
 CHIYO: *(To Blackie)* You're queen high, working on a possible nothing. *(Motioning to her own cards)* Possible club flush here and . . . *(Pointing to Kiyoko's hand)* A pair of saxes there, possible three-of-a-kind. *(To Kiyoko)* I just think you can do better, that's all I'm saying. Besides, he's so old.  
 KIYOKO: I don't want to talk about it.

*(Blackie finally decides to bet but Chiyo ignores him and goes right ahead.)*

CHIYO: Dealer bets a nickel.  
 KIYOKO: He's not old.  
 CHIYO: Is he good in bed?  
 KIYOKO: He's sixty-eight years old, Chiyo. I raise you a dime.  
 CHIYO: So he really is old. See you and I bump you a quarter.  
 BLACKIE: I love it when the wahines talk dirt. *(They stare at him)* Jeez, just joking. Don't lose your coconut.

*(As Blackie begins putting in the bets he missed Kiyoko and Chiyo continue on.)*

KIYOKO: *(Tossing quarter in)* I call.  
 CHIYO: *(Starting to deal, to Kiyoko)* Nine of spades. No help there. *(To Blackie)* A trois. Oh, a pair of threes. *(To self)* And for the dealer . . . another club. Read 'em and weep. Four puppy toes looking mighty pretty. Hush, very possible. *(To Kiyoko)* Pair of saxes still high.  
 KIYOKO: Chiyo, you don't know him like I do. Check.

*(She notices Blackie sucking on his beer.)*

He checks, too.  
 CHIYO: I'm just saying you could find someone else. Someone younger, more fun.

KIYOKO: (*Irritated*) You watch too many soap operas, Chiyo. Life's not like that. Men don't fall into your lap.  
 CHIYO: (*Upset at being lectured to*) Fifty cents. . .  
 BLACKIE: (*Impressed*) Fifty cents . . .  
 Kiyoko: *I like Nobu.* One dollar.  
 BLACKIE: (*In disbelief*) One dollar . . .  
 CHIYO: All right, all right, white hair doesn't bother me. It's no hair I can't stand. (*Tosses in dollar*) Call you. You got the three-of-kind?  
 Kiyoko: Pair of sixes, that's all. You got the flush?  
 CHIYO: Pair of eights! Hah!

(*Kiyoko's disgusted. Chiyo's about to grab the pot when Blackie puts down his cards. Kiyoko and Chiyo stare in disbelief.*)

BLACKIE: (*Puffing up like a rooster*) Excusez-moi's but I got three trois's.  
 CHIYO: Blackie . . .

(*Blackie shovels the pot in. Kiyoko pushes the cards to Chiyo, who examines them skeptically.*)

KIYOKO: (*To Chiyo*) Your wash. (*To Blackie*) Blackie, cut.

(*Blackie cuts the shuffled deck and Kiyoko begins to deal.*)

BLACKIE: (*Holding up beer*) Hate cards. Love poker. (*He starts to guzzle*)  
 Kiyoko: (*Dealing*) Today is the fifteenth, *neh* [isn't it]? (*Stops, reflecting*)  
 Harry would have been fifty-nine this week.

(*Chiyo and Blackie exchange glances. Cross fade to Nobu's place.*)

## SCENE 5

*Nobu's place, same day as previous scene. Nobu's seated and Marsha's working in the kitchen.*

NOBU: What do you mean, "Be nice to Mama"?  
 MARSHA: All I'm saying is, just try to be nice to her when she gets here. Say something nice about the way she looks or about her—  
 NOBU: I'm always nice to Mama. I'm always good to her. (*Pause*) Why the hell she has to live over there? Huh? How come Mama's got to live way over there?

(*Masi enters, carrying a small paper bag.*)

MARSHA: Hi Mom, come on in. (*Taking bag*) Here let me help you. Dad's already here.

MASI: (*To Nobu*) Just some leftover fruit that was in the icebox. Starting to rot so eat it right away.

(*Masi and Nobu acknowledge each other awkwardly.*)

MARSHA: Judy and the baby couldn't make it.

MASI: She called me.

(*Nobu's expression reveals he didn't know they were coming.*)

MARSHA: (*Offering explanation to Nobu*) Jimmy wasn't going to come. (*Pause*) Sit down, sit down. Dinner's almost ready in a minute. Roast beef. Dad, coffee? Tea for you, Mom?

(*Marsha goes to kitchen. Silence.*)

NOBU: I told her we can eat at her place. (*Beat*) She wanted to cook dinner here.

(*Pause*)

MASI: Her place is cozy, *neh*?

NOBU: Marsha's? Looks like the rooms back in Camp.

MASI: Nobu, the Camps were over forty years ago. At least she's clean. Not like the younger one.

(*Pause*)

NOBU: How you been?

MASI: All right.

NOBU: *Isogashi no* [Busy]?

MASI: No. The usual.

NOBU: I called the other night, no one answered. (*Masi doesn't offer an explanation*) How you been?

MARSHA: (*Interrupts, carrying in an ashtray*) Dad, Mom's taking a ceramics class. Judy got her to go. (*Hands him the ashtray*) She made this. (*Nobu stares at it*)

MASI: It's an ashtray.

NOBU: You don't smoke.

MASI: I'll get Daddy's coffee. (*She exits with cup*)

MARSHA: Dad, just say you like it. That's all you have to say. Just say it's nice.

NOBU: Yeah, but she doesn't smoke. Why make an ashtray if you don't smoke?

*(Masi returns with a cup of coffee for Nobu and tea for herself. Marsha gives Nobu an encouraging nudge and exits into kitchen.)*

*(Holding ashtray)* It's a nice ashtray. Is this where you go all the time? I call in the evening. I guess that's where you must be. *(Pause)* Remember those dances they used to have in the Camps? You were a good dancer. You were. Best in the Camps.

MASI: You couldn't dance at all. You were awful.

NOBU: Remember that fellow Chester Yoshikawa? That friend of yours?

MASI: He could dance so good.

NOBU: Remember that dance you were supposed to meet me out front of the canteen? We were all going to meet there and then go to the dance together. Shig, Chester, and a couple others. Everybody else, they went on ahead. I waited and waited . . .

MASI: Nobu, that was forty years ago.

NOBU: Yeah, I know, but remember you were supposed to meet—

MASI: That's over forty years ago. How can I remember something like that?

NOBU: You didn't show up. Chester didn't show up either.

*(Masi puts cream and sugar into Nobu's coffee.)*

MASI: Nobu, didn't we talk about this? I'm sure we did. Probably something came up and I had to help Mama and Papa.

NOBU: Where were you, huh?

MASI: How am I supposed to remember that far back? Chester died in Italy with the rest of the 442 boys.

NOBU: Where the hell were you?

MASI: How in the hell am I supposed to remember that far back?

NOBU: *(Noticing his coffee)* You put the cream and sugar in. That's not mine. *(Pushes coffee away)*

MASI: That's right. You like to put the cream and sugar in yourself.

NOBU: I like to put it in myself.

MASI: *(Pushing the cup towards him)* It's the way you like it, the same thing.

NOBU: *(Pushes it back)* No, it's not the same thing.

MASI: All right, all right, I'll drink it myself. Here, you can drink mine. *(She shoves her tea to Nobu and grabs the coffee cup)*

NOBU: What are you doing—wait, wait.

MASI: I don't mind.

*(Masi starts to raise cup, but Nobu reaches for it.)*

NOBU: It's no good for you, Mama. Your blood pressure. Remember what Doc Takei—

MASI: *(Clinging to cup)* Who gives a damn. You make such a fuss about it. *Monku, monku, monku* [Kvetch, kvetch, kvetch]. I'll drink it.

NOBU: *(Struggling with Masi)* It's no good for you, Mama.

*(Coffee spills onto table. Marsha appears with a towel.)*

NOBU: *(To Masi)* Clean it up.

MASI: I'm not going to clean it up.

MARSHA: I'll clean it up.

*(While Marsha starts to wipe the table, Masi grabs Nobu's coffee cup and exits into the kitchen.)*

MASI: I'll get him more coffee.

MARSHA: Dad.

*(Masi returns with Nobu's coffee and sets it down in front of him, turns and quickly exits.)*

*(Chasing after Masi)* Mom . . .

*(Nobu is left alone with his cup of coffee. He slowly puts in the cream and sugar himself. Raises the cup to his lips but cannot drink. Sets it back down and stares at it. Marsha returns and sadly watches her father. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 6

*Masi's place, three weeks later, afternoon. Masi's at the clothesline. Judy's visiting with Timothy.*

JUDY: I don't see how you had two of us, Mom. I need sleep. Large doses of it. Jimmy's so lazy sometimes. I even kick him "accidentally" when Timothy starts crying. Think he gets up to feed the baby?

MASI: Daddy used to.

JUDY: Used to what?

MASI: Get up at night and feed you kids.

JUDY: Dad? You're kidding.



MAJI: He used to sing to you. No wonder you kids would cry.

*(They laugh.)*

JUDY: I saw your new phone-answering machine.  
 MAJI: *(Proud)* Yeah. For messages.  
 JUDY: *(Kidding)* What? You got a new boyfriend?  
 MAJI: Judy.  
 JUDY: Well, why not Mom? You moved out. It's about time you start meeting new people. Once you get a divorce you're going to have to do that anyway.  
 MAJI: I'm not getting a divorce.  
 JUDY: What are you going to do? You live here, Dad's over there. . .  
 MAJI: *(No response)* You can't do that forever.  
 MAJI: I just do his wash. That's all I do. Just his wash. *(Pause, she hangs clothes)* I think you should call Dad.  
 JUDY: Mom, what can I say to him? I can't talk about my husband, I can't talk about my baby. All he can talk about is how he can't show his face at Tak's barber shop because I married a *kurochan* [black].  
 MAJI: Judy, he's not going to call you.  
 JUDY: That's because he might get Jimmy. *(Beat)* Can you imagine Dad trying to talk to Jimmy?

*(They laugh, settle down.)*

MAJI: Judy. He needs you.  
 JUDY: Why can't he accept it? Why can't he just say, "It's okay, it's okay, Judy"? I just need him to say that much.  
 MAJI: He can't.

*(Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 7

*Kiyoko's restaurant, that same evening. We hear the rhythmic pounding of fists on flesh. A pool of light comes up on Nobu and Kiyoko. Kiyoko is standing in back of Nobu pounding his back with her fists. She is massaging Nobu. This is a supreme joy for him. Kiyoko likes doing it for him.*

KIYOKO: *(Not stopping)* Enough?  
 NOBU: *(Voice vibrating from the steady blows)* Nooo . . .

*(They continue in silence, both enjoying the activity.)*

KIYOKO: Enough?  
 NOBU: Noo . . .  
 KIYOKO: *(Her arms are just too tired, stopping)* Ahh . . .  
 NOBU: *(Stretching)* Oisho [Ahh]! Masi used to do it. Sometimes Marsha does it now.  
 KIYOKO: *(Pouring tea)* You're lucky you have children, Nobu. Especially daughters. Harry and I wanted children. They're good, *neh*?

*(Nobu wants to give her something but can't bring himself to do it. Makes small talk instead.)*

NOBU: How come you take the bus? *(Kiyoko doesn't understand his comment)* You have that Honda. At your place, *desho*?  
 KIYOKO: Ahh. Datsun. Just to work. Just to work I take the bus. Got into the habit after Harry died.

*(Awkward silence. Nobu abruptly pulls out a small gift-wrapped box and holds it out to Kiyoko.)*

NOBU: Here.

*(Kiyoko is too surprised to take it.)*

*Anato no tanjobi no puresento. Hayo akanesai.* [Your birthday present. Hurry, open it.]  
 KIYOKO: *(Taking it)* Ara! Nobu . . . *(Opens it and holds up the earrings)* Nobu-chan.  
 NOBU: Earrings. *Inamasu Jewelry Store no neki o tōtara me ni tsuitanda ne.* [I was walking by Inamasu's store when I spotted them.]  
 KIYOKO: Mah, kirei, Nobu-chan. Tsukete mitu. [They're pretty, Nobu. Let me try them on.]

*(Kiyoko exits. Nobu in pool of light. Memory sequence. Masi appears in pool of light.)*

MAJI: Why don't you want me anymore? *(No response)* We don't sleep . . . You know what I mean and don't give me that kind of look. Is it me? The way my body . . . I've seen those magazines you keep in the back closet with your fishing gear. I mean, it's all right. I'm just trying to know about us. What happened?  
 NOBU: Nothing. Nothing happened. What's gotten into you?

MASI: Then why don't you . . . sleep with me?  
 NOBU: By the time I get home from work I'm tired. I work all day long, I'm standing the whole time. I told you never to touch my fishing equipment.  
 MASI: What about those magazines?  
 NOBU: I'll throw 'em out, okay? First thing tomorrow I'll throw 'em in the trash and burn 'em. That make you feel better? (*Masi is hurt by his angry response*) Masi? (*No response*) Masi. You're pretty. You are.  
 MASI: Don't lie to me. I hate it when you lie to me.  
 NOBU: I'm not lying. (*Masi refuses to believe him*) What the hell do you expect? We got old. Not just you. Me. Me. Look. Look at me. You call this a catch? You still want this?  
 MASI: (*Quietly*) Yes. (*Nobu doesn't know what to say*) Why don't you want me?

(*Memory ends. Masi withdraws into shadows. Kiyoko returns to Nobu with the earrings on. Lights come up.*)

KIYOKO: (*Posing*) Nobu-chan?  
 NOBU: *Suteki da-nah* [Looks beautiful].

(*Kiyoko attempts to embrace Nobu. It's too uncomfortable for Nobu and he gently pushes her away. Kiyoko is quite embarrassed.*)

KIYOKO: How come you do that to me? (*No response*) Don't you like it?  
 NOBU: I like it. But I don't like it, too.

(*Dim to darkness.*)

## SCENE 8

*Masi's apartment, three weeks later. Couch has a rumpled blanket on it. Morning. Sadao is standing holding the door open for a surprised Marsha. Sadao is dressed only in pants and an undershirt. Marsha is holding a box of manju [Japanese pastry]. They have never met.*

SADAO: Good morning.  
 MARSHA: Is my mother . . . Is Mrs. Matsumoto here?  
 MASI: (*Off*) Who is it?  
 SADAO: Come on in, please come in.

(*Masi enters in a bathrobe with her hair tied up in a towel, as if just washed.*)

MASI: (*Momentarily caught off guard*) Oh, hi, Marsha. Come in.  
 MARSHA: (*Entering hesitantly*) Hello, Mom.  
 MASI: This is Sadao Nakasato. (*To Sadao*) My eldest one, Marsha.  
 SADAO: Hello Marsha.  
 MARSHA: Hello.

(*Awkward pause. Marsha remembers her package.*)

Oh, I just thought I'd bring some *manju* by. (*Hands it to Masi*) I didn't think it was that early. Next time I guess I'll call first.

(*Masi gives the package to Sadao, who sets it on the counter.*)

SADAO: Hmm, love *manju*. One of my favorites. Especially the ones with the *kinako* on top. The brown powdery stuff?  
 MARSHA: I meant to drop it off last night but I called and no one was here.  
 MASI: Oh, we got in late from fishing.  
 SADAO: We caught the limit.  
 MASI: (*Looking at phone-answering machine*) I have to remember to turn this machine on.  
 SADAO: In fact, Masi caught more than me.  
 MASI: Teamwork. I catch them and Sadao takes them off the hook. Sit down and have breakfast with us. Sit, sit.  
 MARSHA: That's okay, Mom.  
 MASI: It was so late last night, I told Sadao to sleep on the couch. So he did. He said he would cook breakfast for me in the morning. Right over there on the couch.

(*Masi and Sadao are nodding to each other in agreement. Marsha doesn't move.*)

SADAO: Waffles.  
 MASI: You sure you know how?  
 SADAO: I can make them, good ones. From scratch. And they're low cholesterol.  
 MASI: Sit down, sit down.  
 MARSHA: No, no, Mom. I really should be going. I'm going to stop over at the house. To see Dad, too.  
 MASI: Wait, wait . . . (*Wrapping up two packages of fish in newspaper*)  
 MARSHA: Mom, I don't want any fish.  
 MASI: (*Handing her a package*) Then give some to Brad. Here.  
 MARSHA: Mom, remember? I'm not seeing him anymore.  
 MASI: Then give them to Dad.

MARSHA: What do I tell him?

MASI: (*Momentary pause*) Just give it to him. No use wasting it. He can eat fish morning, noon, and night.

(*Masi hustles Marsha towards the door.*)

SADAO: No waffles? They're low cholesterol.

MARSHA: Uh, no thanks. Nice to meet you, Mr. Nakasato.

(*Marsha pauses at the door. She and Masi exchange glances.*)

Bye, Mom. (*She exits*)

MASI: (*Calling after*) Tell Daddy I'll bring his clothes, that I've been busy. And tell him to put his old clothes in a pile where I can see it. Last time I couldn't find one of his underwear and he got mad at me. (*Closes door*) It was under the icebox.

(*As Sadao rambles on, Masi seems lost in her thoughts.*)

SADAO: (*Caught up in his cooking*) Everything's low cholesterol. Except for the Cool Whip. But that doesn't count because that's optional. Where's the MSG? That's my secret. My daughter gets so mad at me, "Dad, you're a pharmacist, you should know better than to use MSG." She's a health-food nut . . .

(*Sadao is bending down to look in a lower cabinet for the MSG. As he disappears, Masi moves into a pool of light. Memory sequence: Nobu appears in a pool of light.*)

NOBU: No, Masi, I said size eight, size eight hooks.

MASI: You told me to buy size six, not size eight. That's not what you told me.

NOBU: I get home from the store I expect you to . . . Jesus Christ . . . (*Starting to pace*) Shig, all day long ordering me around, "Do this, do that." I even gotta get up five o'clock this morning to pick up the produce 'cause his own damn son-in-law's a lazy son-of-a-bitch. And he yells at me if it don't look good in the cases. (*Mimicking*) "No, that's wrong, Nobu, that's all wrong—do it this way."

MASI: Nobu. Nobu, you didn't tell me to get size eight hooks. You told me size. . .

NOBU: I said size eight. I said size eight hooks. (*Pause*) This is my house. Masi! After I come home from that damn store—here . . . This is my house.

(*Silence.*)

MASI: (*Quietly*) I'm sorry. I'm wrong. You said size eight hooks.

(*Nobu withdraws. Lights up. Sadao gets up with the MSG.*)

SADAO: You don't mind, do you? Masi? The *ajinomoto* [MSG]. Is it okay with you?

MASI: Yes, yes, it's fine.

SADAO: (*Aware of Masi's pensiveness*) Sometimes I add prune juice but then you have to go easy on the MSG. The flavor doesn't mix. It's mostly for medicinal reasons, though. The prune juice. But it really does add a nice hint of flavor to the waffles, but you really can't overdo it. Everything in moderation. I think these people got a little carried away with the MSG thing. Of course, I'm not running a Chinese restaurant, either, I'm just talking about a tiny pinch of the stuff . . .

(*During this speech, Nobu is seen lit in half-light looking at his unfinished kite frame. As lights go to half on Sadao and Masi, Nobu is fully lit in a pool of light. He lifts the kite above his head and begins to move it as if it were flying. For a moment Nobu appears like a child making believe his kite is soaring high above in the clouds. As Nobu goes to half-light, Judy is lit carrying Timothy in front of her with a papoose carrier.*)

## SCENE 9

*Kiyoko and Chiyo approach Judy as she passes by carrying Timothy.*

KIYOKO: You are Judy, *neh*.

JUDY: (*Cautious*) Yes?

KIYOKO: I am a friend of your father. My name is Kiyoko Hasegawa.

CHIYO: Chiyo Froelich.

KIYOKO: I run this restaurant. Hasegawa's.

CHIYO: Chiyo's Hair Salon, right next door.

JUDY: (*Still unsure*) Hi.

KIYOKO: We are having a small get-together at my place for your father.

CHIYO: A birthday party.

(*They notice the baby.*)

KIYOKO: Oh, hello, Timothy.

CHIYO: Nobu should see him.

*(Awkward pause)*

JUDY: *(Starting to leave)* It's nice meeting you. Excuse me . . .  
 CHIYO: *(To Kiyoko)* Show Judy your earrings. Kiyoko, show her.  
 KIYOKO: Chiyo.  
 CHIYO: He gave them to her. Your father. For her birthday.  
 KIYOKO: For my birthday. He comes to my restaurant almost every day.  
 He likes my cooking. That's how come I know him so good.  
 CHIYO: *(Kidding)* He's so *mendokusai* [troublesome]. I don't like  
 cucumber pickle, I like eggplant. *Monku, monku* all the time.

*(Lights start to fade.)*

KIYOKO: Oh, it is no trouble at all. I like to do things like that. I like to  
 cook for Nobu . . .

*(Dim to darkness. Cross-fade to Nobu with kite. Masi in half-light moves  
 away from Sadao with the fishing pole. She begins to practice her cast.)*

## SCENE 10

*Nobu puts down the kite frame. Thinks. Picks up the phone and dials  
 Masi. In half-light at Masi's place, Sadao is at the counter making  
 waffles. He hears the phone machine click on but does not answer it.  
 Masi is off to the side, in a pool of light, engrossed in her casting.*

NObU: Masi? You got any . . . *(From his surprised expression we know that  
 he has gotten Masi's answering machine. He doesn't know how to  
 deal with it)* Masi? *(Listening to the message which finally ends)* I  
 am Nobu Matsumoto. My telephone number is 751-8263. *(Not  
 sure if he said his name)* I am Nobu Matsumoto.

*(He hangs up. Picks up his kite and stares at it. Masi is working on per-  
 fecting her casting technique, putting together all the little things that  
 Sadao has taught her. She goes through one complete cycle without a hitch.  
 Sadao has taught her. She goes through one complete cycle without a hitch.  
 Very smooth. Having done the whole thing without a mistake gives her  
 tremendous satisfaction. She smiles to herself. It feels good. She begins again.  
 Lights fade.)*

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

### SCENE II

*Kiyoko's restaurant, four weeks later. Surprise birthday party for Nobu.  
 Judy stands by herself out front, picking at the food. Blackie and Marsha are  
 in the kitchen and Kiyoko and Chiyo scurry about with last-minute prepa-  
 rations. Over the restaurant speakers we hear the forties tune "String of  
 Pearls."*

KIYOKO: *(Calling)* Blackie! Hurry up with the chicken teri! *(Checking the  
 food items)* Ara! I forgot the dip. Chiyo, go talk, go talk.

*(Kiyoko pushes Chiyo towards Judy, then hurries back into the kitchen as  
 Blackie and Marsha enter, carrying more food. Marsha is holding her nose.)*

CHIYO: *(To Judy in passing)* Nobu's favorite song. *(Stops momentarily,  
 touching Judy's hair)* You come see me, I know what to do  
 with it.

*(Chiyo heads back to the kitchen as Marsha and Blackie are setting their  
 dishes down.)*

BLACKIE: If you think that stink, wait till you try my famous *hom-yu*.

MARSHA: *(Attempting to be polite)* No, really, it wasn't that bad.

BLACKIE: All Orientals gotta have stink food. It's part of our culture. Chinese,  
 Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos—we all got one dish that is so stink.  
 Chinese got this thing they call *ham-ha*, shrimp paste. My mudda  
 used to cook with it. Whew! Stink like something went die.

*(Chiyo enters.)*

Filipinos got fish-gut paste, *bagaoong*. Koreans, *kimchee*. Whew!

CHIYO: *(Admonishing)* Blackie.

BLACKIE: *(Ignoring Chiyo)* And us Buddhaheads eat *takuan*, the pickled  
 horseradish. When you open up the bottle, the neighbors call to  
 see if your toilet went explode!

CHIYO: *(Poking her head into the kitchen)* Kiyoko! He's at it again!

BLACKIE: Next time you come I make you my *hom-yu*.

MARSHA: *Hom-yu?* *(To Judy)* You know *hom-yu*?

BLACKIE: Whatsa matter? You kids live on Mars? You never heard of *hom-  
 yu*? *Hom-yu*. Steamed pork hash. It's my specialty. Gotta have the  
 stinky fish on top. That's the secret. Lottsa *Pake* [Chinese] places  
 don't use that fish anymore. Know why? Too stink. Chase all the

*haole* [white] customers away. Take pork butt, chop it into small pieces. Four water chestnuts, chopped. Teaspoon of corn-starch—

*(Kiyoko enters with dip, Chiyo trailing.)*

KIYOKO: Blackie! Blackie! Go do the cake!  
 MARSHA: *(To Blackie)* I'll help you.  
 CHIYO: Kiyoko, when is he coming?  
 Kiyoko: *(To Marsha)* No, no . . . *(To Chiyo)* He should be on his way . . .  
*(To Marsha)* You shouldn't help anymore. Eat, eat. Talk to Chiyo.  
 MARSHA: *(Overlapping)* We met already . . .  
 Kiyoko: *(To Blackie)* Go, go, put the candles on the cake. No beer, either.  
 BLACKIE: *(Exiting, calling back to Marsha while scratching his butt)* Stinky fish. Don't forget the stinky fish . . .  
 Kiyoko: *(Following him out)* Don't scratch your . . . *(She remembers her guests)*

*(Chiyo approaches Judy and Marsha.)*

CHIYO: I've never seen her like this. She's acting like a kid back there.  
*(Catching her breath and looking the two daughters over)* You're Judy, *neh*, the fifth-grade teacher? And you're the dental . . .  
 MARSHA: *(Overlapping)* . . . hygienist, I told you earlier . . .  
 CHIYO: . . . hygienist—yeah, yeah you told me before. *(Quietly laughs about her mistake, calms down)* So. What do you think of the two of them? Nobu and Kiyoko?

*(Awkward pause)*

MARSHA: I think it's . . . good. I think it's good.

*(Chiyo looks to Judy, who is silent.)*

CHIYO: *(Touching Judy's hair gently)* You come see me. I know what to do with it. *(She turns and walks back towards the kitchen)*  
 MARSHA: Judy.  
 JUDY: This is stupid. What am I doing here?  
 MARSHA: We're doing this for Dad.  
 JUDY: You really think he's going to want us here? Do you?

*(Kiyoko enters tentatively, followed by Chiyo.)*

KIYOKO: Blackie called—Nobu's not home, so he's coming. *(To Marsha, feigning enthusiasm)* I'm so glad you could make it. Judy said you weren't sure whether you could all come or not.  
 MARSHA: Oh no, no. We wouldn't have missed it.  
 Kiyoko: Nobu-chan will be so happy you are here.  
 MARSHA: It was very kind of you to invite us.  
 Kiyoko: Oh no, no, no. I wanted all of you here. *(To Judy)* Where is the baby?  
 JUDY: Jimmy's home babysitting him.  
 CHIYO: Next time you bring him. We got plenty of room here.  
 Kiyoko: Yes, please, please. Next time you bring the baby and Jimmy, too. I want to get to know all of Nobu-chan's family.  
 BLACKIE: *(Rushing in with his ukulele)* HAYO [Hurry]! HAYO! THE BUGGA'S COMING! THE BUGGA'S COMING!  
 Kiyoko: I'll get the cake. Hide! Hide!  
 BLACKIE: I got the lights.  
 CHIYO: *(To Marsha and Judy)* Over here, over here. . .

*(Darkness. Nobu enters cautiously. The lights come up abruptly, then begin a slow fade through the rest of the scene.)*

ALL: SURPRISE!

*(Nobu sees Judy and Marsha. He is in shock. Chiyo and Blackie lead everyone in a rousing version of "Happy Birthday" as Kiyoko enters with a birthday cake decorated with burning candles. He is attempting to appear happy, but is becoming more and more upset that his daughters are there. Lights continue their slow fade through the song, which is beginning to fall apart. Kiyoko is now standing next to Nobu holding the cake out in front of him. She senses something is wrong. The song ends with Blackie and Kiyoko mumbling the last few lyrics. Silence. Nobu's face is illuminated by the glowing candles. Nobu makes no move to blow out the candles. The moment is now uncomfortable. Kiyoko is very upset.)*

KIYOKO: Nobu-chan, please.

*(Pause)*

JUDY: *(Irritated)* Dad.

*(Nobu still refuses to blow out the candles. The moment is now extremely awkward. No one knows what to do.)*

MARSHA: (*Gently*) Daddy.

(*Slowly Nobu leans forward and with a forceful breath extinguishes the candles. Blackout.*)

## SCENE 12

*Masi's place, same night. Sadao and Masi in bed. Both are propped up, Sadao intently watching TV and Masi peering at the TV over the magazine she holds in front of her. Sadao keeps switching the channels with his remote control. Each time Masi starts to settle into a program, Sadao switches the channel, causing her to jerk her head from the shock.*

MASI: Sadao! (*He's busy switching channels*) Sadao?  
 SADAO: Hmmmm?  
 MASI: Could you please keep it on one?  
 SADAO: (*Realizing what he's been doing*) Oh. I'm sorry. (*Starts switching channels again*) Which one? This one? How's this?  
 MASI: Fine, fine. That's fine. (*They settle into watching TV*) Sadao?  
 SADAO: Hmm?  
 MASI: I don't feel good. (*Pause*) I think something's wrong with me.  
 SADAO: What, what? Want me to call Doc Takei?  
 MASI: No, no . . .  
 SADAO: You have a fever? Headache? What's wrong?  
 MASI: No, no, nothing like that. (*Pause, thinking*) I'm too happy.  
 SADAO: What?  
 MASI: I feel . . . too happy. (*Sadao stares at her uncomprehending*) I used to feel like this as a kid, I think. But it was . . . different.  
 SADAO: You feel too happy?  
 MASI: When you're a kid you get ice cream and 'member how you used to feel? Happy, right? But then you eat it all up and it's gone, or, you eat too much of it and you throw up. But this just goes on and on.  
 SADAO: You mean us? (*Masi nods*) Yeah, but this is a little different than ice cream, don't you—  
 MASI: Of course, of course, Sadao.  
 SADAO: What about with Nobu? didn't you go through this with him?  
 (*Masi shakes her head*) I mean in the beginning when you first met? When you got married?  
 MASI: No, it wasn't like that. (*Pause*) I think something's wrong with me. You know how they say there's no such thing as an accident?

That you really wanted it to happen and so it did? I don't think I ever really cared for Nobu. Not the way he cared for me. There was someone else who liked me in Camp. I liked him, too. I married Nobu. Something's wrong with me, huh? Now you make me feel too happy. I don't like it. It makes me . . . unhappy.

(*They both laugh. Sadao reaches out and places his hand on top of hers. They exchange warm smiles.*)

Was she in a lot of pain? (*Sadao doesn't follow her comment*) Your wife. Towards the end. In the hospital.  
 SADAO: She just slept all the time. No, not too much. After about two weeks she went into a coma and that was it. You can't tell. Cancer's like that. Mary was pretty lucky, I guess. (*Pause, thinking*) There's nothing wrong with you. Really, there isn't. (*Pause; trying to decide whether to say something or not*) You scare me. You know that? Sometimes you scare me half to death. I don't want to go through that again. I told myself, "Never, ever again." Dead is better than feeling that kind of pain. But this . . . this is . . . I don't know . . . to get a second chance . . . (*Pause*) There's nothing good about growing old. You spend most of your time taking medicine and going to the doctor so you won't die. The rest of the time you spend going to the funerals of your friends who did die, and they were taking the same medicine and seeing the same doctors so what's the use, anyway? Huh? (*Sarcastically*) The golden years . . . Look at us. Here we are. At our age. In bed together. Not even married. Can you imagine what the kids are thinking?  
 MASI: We're not doing anything wrong.  
 SADAO: Of course, I know, I know.  
 MASI: We're not doing anything wrong, Sadao. We're not.  
 SADAO: I know. But when I really think about what we're doing . . . it embarrasses the hell out of me!

(*They look at each other, then suddenly burst out laughing. They gradually calm down.*)

MASI: I scare you half to death. And you . . . you make me feel so good I feel awful.

(*They look at each other for a moment, then slowly reach out and embrace. Dim to darkness.*)

## SCENE 13

*Kiyoko's restaurant, one week later. Nobu is sitting at the counter sipping sake and eating eggplant pickles. Blackie is watching him from the service window. He comes out sipping on a beer.*

BLACKIE: *(Takes a big gulp)* Know why I like to drink beer? Know why? *(As Nobu looks up, he answers his own question with a loud satisfying burp)* Ahh. I like to let things out. Makes me feel good. Don't like to keep things bottled up inside. Not good for you. Give you an ulcer. Cancer. Maybe you just blow up and disappear altogether, huh. *(Laughs at his own joke. Notices Nobu isn't laughing)* That's the problem with you *katonks*. You buggas from the mainland all the time too serious. *(Nobu glances back towards the door)* No worry, no worry. Kiyoko going be back soon. Chiyo's place—yak, yak, yak. Hey, you had lots of girlfriends when you was small-kid time? *(Nobu shrugs)* Strong silent type, huh. Me? Lottsa wahines. All the time like to play with Blackie. *(Mimicking the girls)* "Blackie, darling, you're so cute . . . you're so funny . . . But I not all the time cute. I not all the time funny. How come you all the time come around here and you still got one wife?"

NOBU: We're separated.

BLACKIE: So when you gonna get the divorce?

NOBU: No. *(Blackie doesn't understand)* No.

BLACKIE: What about Kiyoko? *(No response. Nobu keeps drinking)* I don't like you. I like you. I don't like you 'cause you make Kiyoko feel lousy. I like you 'cause you make her happy. Hey, she's my boss—who you think catch hell if she not feeling good? Hey, I don't like catching hell for what you do—

NOBU: It's none of your business—Kiyoko and me.

BLACKIE: None of my business? Hey, brudda, Kiyoko may be feeding your face but I'm the guy who's cooking your meals. *(Nobu stares down at his pickles)* Nobu?

NOBU: What?

BLACKIE: You like Kiyoko? *(No response)* Well, do you?

NOBU: *(Under his breath)* Yeah, I guess so.

BLACKIE: "Yeah, I guess so" what?

NOBU: *(Mumbling)* I like Kiyoko.

BLACKIE: Jesus. Talking to you *katonks* is like pulling teeth.

NOBU: I LIKE KIYOKO! I like Kiyoko.

*(Blackie sips on beer while Nobu glares at him. Blackie leans forward towards Nobu and burps loudly.)*

BLACKIE: Feels good, huh?

*(Dim to darkness)*

## SCENE 14

*Nobu's place one week later. Evening. Masi enters carrying the wash in a brown paper bag. She unloads the clothes and stacks them neatly on the kitchen table. She picks up the old clothes off the floor, folds them, and puts them in the bag. As she looks up, one gets the sense that she is trying to decide whether to say hello to Nobu or just leave. She looks for a moment towards the hallway, then decides otherwise. Just as she turns and starts to make her way towards the door with the bag, Nobu enters from the hallway.*

NOBU: Masi, is that you?

*(Nobu realizes that she's leaving without bothering to say hello. Masi senses this and feels guilty.)*

MASI: I was going. I'm a little late. I was just going to leave the clothes and go. *(As she speaks, she notices the dirty dishes on the coffee table. She puts down the bag and proceeds to clean up the mess as she continues to talk)* I didn't know you were in the back . . . *(She takes the dishes to the sink. Nobu just watches)* Nobu, why don't you wash the dishes once in a while? Clean up.

NOBU: Place is a dump anyway. *(Masi stops and looks at him. He presses point)* Place is a dump, Mama. Neighborhood's no good. Full of colored people, Mexicans . . .

MASI: *(Putting dishes in sink)* Well, move then. Move to the north side like me. I kept saying that all along. For the kids—better schools, better neighborhood. . . . Think you listen to me? *(Mimicking Nobu)* "I don't like *Hakujin*—white people make me nervous." So you don't like white people, you don't like black people, you don't like Mexicans. . . . So who do you like? Huh? *Monku, monku, monku* . . .

NOBU: *(Muttering)* I don't mind Mexicans. *(Pause)* I told Shig, "You can't keep stocking all that Japanese things when the *Nihonjins* [Japanese] are moving out of the neighborhood. You gotta sell to the Mexicans and not all that cheap crap, too, 'cause they can

tell." Think Shig listens to me? He's the big store owner. The big man. If I was running the store it woulda been different. *(Pause)* And your old man said he'd get me that store.

MASI: It wasn't his fault. He didn't plan on the war, Nobu.

NOBU: He promised he could set me . . .

MASI: *(Overlapping)* It wasn't his fault.

NOBU: . . . up in business or anything else I wanted to do.

MASI: IT WASN'T HIS FAULT!

*(Silence)*

Who wanted to be in the relocation camps? Did you? Do you think he wanted to be in there? It broke Papa's heart. He spent his entire life building up that farm. Papa was a proud man. A very proud man. It broke his heart when he lost it.

NOBU: I'm just saying I'd run the business different. Shig is a baka [fool]. That's all I'm saying.

MASI: You're retired. Shig passed away eight years ago. The store's not even . . .

NOBU: *(Overlapping)* If all the Japanese move out you can't keep selling all that Japanese things, you can't. That's all I'm saying.

MASI: . . . there anymore. It's a cleaners.

*(Silence. Masi picks up the paper bag of old clothes and starts to move towards the door. She's had enough.)*

NOBU: Masi?

MASI: *(Stops)* What?

NOBU: Mr. Rossi give you any more fish?

MASI: *(Uncomfortable, lying)* No. Not lately.

*(Pause)*

NOBU: Mama?

MASI: Is your back bothering you, Nobu? *(No response)* Want me to momo [massage] it for you?

*(Nobu nods. As Masi moves to put the bag down, Nobu removes his undershirt. He seats himself. Masi begins to massage his shoulders from behind. They continue in silence. Nobu is enjoying the moment. He begins to laugh quietly to himself.)*

What?

NOBU: When I started work at your papa's farm, he wanted to put me in the packing shed. I said, "No, I want to work in the fields." It was so hot, 110 degrees out there. He thought I was nuts. But I knew every day at eight in the morning and twelve noon, you and your sister would bring the water out to us.

MASI: *(Laughing as she recalls)* Nobu.

NOBU: I wanted to watch you.

MASI: You would just stand there with your cup, staring at me.

NOBU: Hell, I didn't know what to say.

MASI: You drank so much water, Lila and I thought maybe you had rabies. We used to call you "Nobu, the Mad Dog."

*(They laugh.)*

Papa liked you.

NOBU: Boy, he was a tough son-of-a-bitch.

MASI: I didn't think anyone could keep up with Papa. But you could work like a horse. You and Papa. Proud. Stubborn.

*(Masi massages Nobu in silence.)*

NOBU: Mama? Why don't you cook me breakfast?

MASI: What?

NOBU: Cook me breakfast. I miss my hot rice and raw egg in the morning.

MASI: It's late Nobu. You have your wash. I'm not going to come all the way back over here just to cook you—

NOBU: Just breakfast. Then in the morning when we get up you can go back to your place.

*(Masi stops, realizing he is asking her to spend the night. Silence. Masi does not move. Nobu stares ahead. More silence. Then, tentatively, she moves her hands forward and begins to massage him. A faint smile appears on Nobu's face. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 15

*Kiyoko's restaurant, one week later. Blackie, after hours, is seated in semidarkness, feet up on table, accompany himself on the ukulele and singing a sad Hawaiian folk song, "Manuela Boy."*

BLACKIE: *(Singing)*

Manuela Boy, my dear boy  
You no mo' hila, hila.



No mo' five cent, no mo' house  
You go Aala Paka hia moe.

Mama work at the big hotel,  
Brudda go to school.  
Sister go with the haole boy,  
Papa make his living shooting pool.

The tourist like filet mignon  
And caviar it's true,  
But they never lived till they went taste  
Papa's Friday ole Hawaiian stew . . .

*(As Blackie sings, lights up on Masi's place. Sadao stands before the door Masi has just opened. In Sadao's right hand he holds a suitcase and in his left, several fishing poles. On his head sits a fishing hat. Sadao has come to move in with Masi. For a moment they look at each other in silence. Then Masi invites him in. Sadao enters. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 16

*(Nobu's place, three days later, late afternoon. Judy has stopped by with Timothy. Judy sets the baby down on the kitchen table upstage of Nobu. Nobu turns to look at Judy, then returns to working on the kite and watching TV. This is the first time Judy has visited Nobu since their breakup over her marriage. He has never seen Timothy.)*

JUDY: *(Moving down towards Nobu)* I was just driving by and I thought I'd stop in. *(No response)* You doing okay, Dad? *(Silence)* You know, Mom? I just wanted to say—

NOBU: Did he come?

JUDY: *(Exasperated)* No, he did not.

NOBU: He can come to the house now.

JUDY: "He can come to the house now"? Jesus Christ. Dad, he isn't one of your children. He doesn't need your permission. He's . . .

NOBU: *(Overlapping)* This is my house. He needs my permission.

JUDY: . . . a grown man. I don't want to fight. I didn't come here to fight with you, Dad.

NOBU: I said he can come—

JUDY: He won't come, he doesn't like you!

*(Silence)*

NOBU: Damn *kurochan* . . .

JUDY: He's black, not *kurochan*—it's black. *(Pause)* Everybody marries out, okay? *Sanseis* don't like *Sanseis*.

NOBU: Tak's son married a *Nihonjin*, Shig's daughter did, your cousin Patsy . . .

JUDY: *(Overlapping)* Okay, okay, I didn't, I didn't, all right?

NOBU: . . . did, Marsha's going to.

*(Pause. Nobu looks back to Timothy.)*

JUDY: But *happa* [multiracial] kids are the next generation, too.

NOBU: No. Japanese marry other Japanese, their kids are *Yonsei* [fourth-generation Japanese American]—not these damn *ainoko* [multiracial]!

*(Silence)*

JUDY: You're gonna die out, you know that. You're gonna be extinct and nobody's gonna give a goddamn.

*(Timothy has begun to cry softly. Judy goes over and picks the baby up, trying to soothe him. Composing herself, Judy decides to try one last time to say what she came to tell her father. She walks back to Nobu, this time carrying Timothy with her.)*

Dad? *(No response)* Dad, you know, Mom's moving out of the house? I didn't put her up to it. Honest. *(Silence. Nobu stares straight ahead. She begins to cry)* If I did . . . I'm sorry.

*(More silence from Nobu. Judy gives up trying to talk to this man. As she turns to leave, she notices Nobu. He is looking towards her, at Timothy. Something in his expression makes Judy bring the baby over to Nobu. She holds the baby out to him.)*

Timothy. Your grandson.

*(For a moment there is hesitation. We are not sure whether Nobu is going to take the baby. Then, Nobu reaches out and takes Timothy. Judy watches as Nobu awkwardly holds his grandson for the first time. As Judy begins to withdraw from the scene upstage into a pool of light, Marsha also appears upstage in her own separate light. Nobu remains lit holding Timothy. He begins to hum the traditional Japanese lullaby "Donguri." Marsha and Judy watch Nobu and Timothy as they speak.)*

MARSHA: You didn't tell Dad, did you?  
 JUDY: No, I just brought the baby by.  
 MARSHA: It's going to kill him when he finds out.  
 JUDY: He's got that other woman.  
 MARSHA: Judy. (Pause) Maybe he already knows about Mom and Mr. Nakasato.  
 JUDY: I don't think so. I really don't think so.

*(They continue to watch as Nobu begins to sing the "Donguri" song to Timothy.)*

NOBU: *(Singing)*  
*Donguri kor koro, koro gatte*  
*O ike tu hamatte, saa taihen*  
*Dojo o ga dette kite, kon-nichiwa*  
*Botchan/Timothy issboni, asobimasho . . .*

*(Marsha and Judy fade out first. Nobu is left alone in pool of light singing to Timothy. As he fades out we hear the whir of a coffee grinder.)*

## SCENE 17

*Masi's place, two days later. Masi has asked Judy and Marsha over for a talk. She has just told them that she is going over to see Nobu. She is going to tell him that she wants a divorce and to marry again. The two daughters sit uneasily while Masi is at the counter preparing coffee. Masi is trying to get the Braun grinder to work. She's getting the feel of it by pushing the button. We hear the whir of the spinning rotor blade. She's ready. Takes the plastic top off and pours the beans in, then presses the start button. Just as the grinder picks up top-speed Masi accidentally pulls the plastic top off. Beans go flying every which way pelting her face, bouncing off the cabinets. Quiet. Masi peeks from behind her hands. A couple of beans embedded in her hair fall to the counter. Masi is upset. The daughters are embarrassed. Normally, this would be a funny situation for them.*

MARSHA: *(Getting up)* I'll clean it up.

*(Marsha starts to pick up the beans scattered on the floor. Judy starts to giggle—it's all too ridiculous.)*

JUDY: *(Trying to suppress her laughter)* I'm sorry, I'm sorry . . . *(Masi begins to laugh)* God, what a mess.  
 MASI: *(To Marsha)* Let it go, don't bother. I'll take care of it later.  
 JUDY: *(Finds a man's sock; teasing)* What's this? This belong to Mr. Nakasato?  
 MASI: *(Grabbing it)* Judy.  
 MARSHA: Why didn't you just leave sooner? You didn't have to stick around for us.  
 MASI: I didn't. *(Pause)* I was . . . I was scared.  
 MARSHA: Of Dad?  
 MASI: I don't know. Everything.  
 JUDY: Was it 'cause I kept harping on you to move out on him all those years? Is that why you left?  
 MARSHA: What's the difference?  
 JUDY: Marsha.

*(Pause.)*

MASI: Dad was always trying to beat me down, every little thing. "How come you can't do this, how come you can't do that"—nothing was ever right. Every time I opened my mouth I was always wrong—he was always right. He always had to be right. *(Pause)* There are things you kids don't know. I didn't want to talk about them to you, but . . . Daddy and I, we didn't sleep . . .  
 JUDY: *(Overlapping)* That's okay, Mom. Really, it's okay . . .  
 MASI: . . . together. Every time I wanted to, he would push me away. Ten, fifteen years he didn't want me. *(Pause)* We were having one of our arguments, just like always. And he was going on and on about how it was my fault this and my fault that. And I was trying to explain my side of it, when he turned on me, "Shut up, Mama. You don't know anything. You're stupid." Stupid. After forty-two years of letting him be right he called me that. And I understood. He didn't even need me to make him be right anymore. He just needed me to be stupid. I was tired. I couldn't fight him anymore. He won. He finally made me feel like garbage. *(Judy and Marsha are shocked by her strong language)* That was the night I left him and came over to your place. *(Nodding towards Judy)* I like Sadao. I like Sadao very much.

*(Dim to darkness)*

## SCENE 18

*(Nobu's place, same day. "String of Pearls" can be heard playing faintly in the background. He's fixing himself in front of a small wall mirror. He adjusts the collar of his shirt and tugs at his sweater until it looks right. Nobu checks his watch. As he begins to pick up some of the scattered clothes on the floor, Masi enters. Music ends. Nobu quickly moves to the sofa. Masi goes over to the kitchen area and takes clothes out of the bag, setting them neatly on the table. She picks up the dirty clothes off the floor, folds them, and puts them into the bag. As she's doing this, Nobu gets up, shuffles over to the stove, and turns on the flame to heat some water. He stands there and watches the water heat up.)*

MASI: *(Sits down on sofa)* I want to talk, Nobu.

*(No response. Nobu gets tea out and pours some into pot.)*

I have something to tell you.

NOBU: *(Moving back to couch)* Want some tea?

*(As Nobu sits, Masi gets up and moves towards the sink area. She gets a sponge and wipes off the tea leaves he has spilled on the counter. Nobu turns the TV on and stares at it.)*

MASI: You know Dorothy and Henry's son, George?

NOBU: The pharmacist or something?

MASI: No, the lawyer one. He's the lawyer one. I went to see him. *(Turns off the stove flame)* I went to see about a divorce. About getting one. *(No response)* I want to get married again. So I went to George to see about a divorce. I wanted to tell you first so you'd know. I didn't want you to hear from someone else. I know how you hate that kind of thing. Thinking something's going on behind your back.

NOBU: Wait, wait, wait a second. . . . You want a divorce? You want to get. . . . What? What's all this?

MASI: It's the best thing, Nobu. We've been separated how long now? How long have we been living different places?

NOBU: I don't know. I never thought about it. Not too long.

MASI: Thirteen months.

NOBU: Thirteen months, who cares? I never thought about it. I don't understand, Masi.

MASI: It's the same thing as being divorced isn't it?

NOBU: It doesn't seem that long. You moved out of this house. It wasn't my idea. It was your idea. I never liked it.

MASI: It doesn't matter whose idea it was. It's been over a year since we—

NOBU: You want to get married? Yeah, I know it's been over a year, but I always thought . . . you know, that we'd—

MASI: It's been over a year, Nobu.

NOBU: I know! I said I know.

MASI: I've been seeing someone. It wasn't planned or anything. It just happened.

NOBU: What do you mean, "seeing someone"? What do you mean?

MASI: He's very nice. A widower. He takes me fishing. He has a nice vegetable garden that he—

NOBU: Who is he? Do I know him? Is it someone I know?

MASI: His name is Sadao Nakasato. His wife died about two years ago. He's related to Dorothy and Henry. Nobu, it's the best thing for both of us.

NOBU: You keep saying it's the best thing, the best thing. *(Pause)* Masi, why did you sleep with me that night?

*(Silence.)*

MASI: Aren't you seeing somebody?

NOBU: No. Not like that.

MASI: But the kids said she's very nice. That she invited—

NOBU: It's totally different! I'm not seeing anyone! *(Pause)* How long have you been seeing this guy? How long?

MASI: Please, Nobu. You always get what *you* want. I always let you have your way. For once just let—

NOBU: HOW LONG?

MASI: About five months.

NOBU: FIVE MONTHS! How come you never told me? Do the girls know too? The girls know! Everybody knows? Five months. FIVE DAMN MONTHS AND I DON'T KNOW!! *(He breaks the kite)*

MASI: I asked them not to tell you.

NOBU: Why? Why the hell not? Don't I have a right to know??

MASI: Because I knew you'd react this way. Just like this. Yelling and screaming just like you always do.

NOBU: Everybody in this whole damn town knows except me! How could you do this to me! Masi! HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?? *(He has her by the shoulders and is shaking her violently)*

MASI: *(Quietly)* Are you going to hit me?

*(Pause. Nobu slowly composes himself and lets her go.)*

Because I want to be happy, Nobu. I have the right to be happy.

*(Masi exits. Nobu is left standing alone. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 19

*Kiyoko's restaurant, same day, evening. Chiyo and Kiyoko seated at table in pool of light.*

KIYOKO: Nine years. That is how long it has been. Nine years since Harry passed away. He never treated me like this. I call, I go over there. Harry never treated me like this.

CHIYO: Kiyoko. Maybe you have to stop thinking about Nobu. Hmm? Maybe . . . maybe you should give him up. *(Silence)* Kiyoko. Lots more fish in the ocean. Lots more. Go out with us. Come on.

KIYOKO: I don't do those kinds of things.

CHIYO: I'll introduce you to some new guys. Remember Ray—you met him? I've been telling him about—

KIYOKO: I don't do those kinds of things. *(Pause)* It's not easy for me, Chiyo. *(Silence)* when Harry died, right after? I started taking the bus to work. I had a car, I could drive. It was easier to drive. I took the bus. For twenty-five years you go to sleep with him, wake up next to him. He shaves while you shower, comes in from the yard all sweaty. Then he's gone. No more Harry in bed. No more the smell of aftershave in the towel you're drying off with. No more sweaty Harry coming up and hugging me. I had a car. I took the bus. I missed men's smells. I missed the smell of men. Every morning I would get up and walk to the corner to take the bus. It would be full of all these men going to work. And it would be full of all these men coming home from work. I would sit there pretending to read my magazine . . . *(Inhales, discovering the different smells)* Soap . . . just-washed skin . . . aftershave lotion . . . sweat . . .

*(Lights come up to half in the restaurant. Blackie bursts through the kitchen doors holding a plate of his famous hom-yu. Brings it over and sets it down on the table which is now in a full pool of light.)*

BLACKIE: *Hom-yu! Hom-yu!*

CHIYO: *Kusai yo [Stinky]!*

KIYOKO: Blackie!

BLACKIE: I know stink. But stink goooooood!

*(It stinks to holy hell. Chiyo can't stand it. Kiyoko is quite moved by Blackie's gesture, though she too is having a difficult time with its odor. Blackie grins proudly. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 20

*Nobu's place, two days later. Knock at the door and Marsha enters carrying a brown paper bag. Nobu watching TV.*

MARSHA: Mom asked me to drop these by and to pick up the dirty clothes. *(No response. She unpacks the newly washed clothes)* Kiyoko's been calling me. She's worried about you. She says you won't see anybody. Why don't you just talk to her, Dad?

NOBU: How come you didn't tell me? All the time you come here and you never mention it once. You. I feel so damned ashamed. How can I even show my face? All the time right under my nose. Everyone laughing at me behind my—

MARSHA: Dad, Dad, it's not like that at all. I just didn't think it was all that important to tell—

NOBU: Oh, come on! Mom told you not to tell me so she could go sneaking 'round with that son-of-a-bitch!

MARSHA: All right, all right, but it's not like that at all. No one's trying to hide anything from you and no one's laughing at you.

NOBU: *(Moving her towards the couch and pushing her down)* Sit down, sit down over here. Tell me about it. Who is he? What does he do? Tell me 'bout him! Tell me!

MARSHA: *(Seated)* What do you want me to say? Huh, Dad? They're happy. He's a nice man.

NOBU: "He's a nice man." What the hell's that supposed to mean?

MARSHA: He treats her like a very special person.

NOBU: Well, everyone does that in the beginning. In the beginning it's so easy to be—

MARSHA: She laughs. All the time she's laughing. They're like two little kids. They hold hands. Did you ever do that? I'm embarrassed to be around them. He takes her fishing. He has a little camper and they drive up to . . .

NOBU: All right, all right . . .

MARSHA: . . . Lake Berryessa and camp overnight. He teaches her how to bait the hook, cast it out, and even to tie the hook. I mean you never even took her fishing . . .

NOBU: She doesn't like fishing. I tried to take her lots of times, she wouldn't go.

MARSHA: They even dig up worms in his garden at his house. I saw them. Side by side . . .

NOBU: All right, I said.  
 MARSHA: . . . sitting on the ground digging up worms and putting them in a coffee can!  
 NOBU: *(Overlapping)* ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!  
 MARSHA: . . . I MEAN DID YOU EVER DO THAT FOR MOM!! *(Pause)*  
 Did you? *(Getting worked up again)* You're so . . . so stupid. You are. You're stupid. All you had to say was, "Come back. Please come back." You didn't even have to say, "I'm sorry."  
 NOBU: *(Overlapping)* I'm your father . . .  
 MARSHA: Mom would've come back. She would've. That's all you had to say. Three lousy words. "Please come back."  
 NOBU: *(Overlapping)* I'm your father . . .  
 MARSHA: You ruined everything. It's too late! YOU WRECKED EVERYTHING!! *(Pause. Composing herself)* I'm so mixed up. When I look at Mom I'm happy for her. When I think about you . . . I don't know. You have Kiyoko.  
 NOBU: That's not the same. I'm talking about your mama.  
 MARSHA: Dad, Kiyoko cares a great deal about you. She's been calling Judy and me day and night.  
 NOBU: She knocks on the door but I don't let her in. She's not Mama.  
 MARSHA: Dad. What do you want me to say? That's the way it is. I used to keep thinking you two would get back together. I couldn't imagine life any other way. But slowly I just got used to it. Mom over there and you here. Then all this happened. I mean, sometimes I can't recognize Mom anymore. . . . What do you want me to say? You'll get used to it.

*(Nobu pauses, upset.)*

NOBU: *(Stubbornly)* No.  
 MARSHA: *(Looks at her father sadly)* You'll get used to it.

*(Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 21

*(Judy's place, two days later. Masi is at the clothesline hanging clothes. Judy, holding Timothy, is with Masi. Nobu suddenly rushes in. Masi and Judy are surprised. Nobu appears very upset.)*

MASI: Nobu . . .  
 JUDY: Hello, Dad . . .  
 NOBU: *(To Masi, ignoring Judy)* It's no good, Mama. It's no good at all.

You come home. You come home now, Mama. You come home. It's no good . . .

JUDY: *(Overlapping, trying to calm Nobu down)* Dad? Dad, take it easy . . . take it easy . . . *(Trying to get him seated)* Sit down, sit down . . .

NOBU: *(Yanking arm away from Judy)* I DON'T WANT TO SIT! I WANT MAMA TO COME HOME!

*(Shocked silence.)*

JUDY: *(Upset, quietly)* I'll get some coffee for you, Dad.

*(Judy does not exit. Masi doesn't know what to do. She's never seen Nobu like this.)*

NOBU: You come home, Mama. Just like always. You don't need to live over here. You come home. Just like always. That's the way it is . . .

MASI: *(Overlapping)* Nobu, Nobu . . . You don't understand, Nobu. I can't come home. I can't come home anymore—

NOBU: I DON'T CARE! I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANY OF THAT STUFF, MAMA! *(Pause. Breaking down, he begins to plead)* I won't yell at you, anymore. I won't yell, I promise, Mama. I won't *monku* about the store or about your papa . . . I'm sorry . . . I'm sorry. Masi, it's no good. Please come home. Please come home . . . Please . . .

*(Neither Masi nor Judy knows how to cope with this situation. Nobu continues to plead. Dim to darkness.)*

## SCENE 22

*Lights up to Kiyoko's restaurant, one day later. Chiyo is dialing Nobu's number. A concerned Blackie stands guard next to her. Kiyoko has told them not to bother with him anymore. Kiyoko appears and watches them from the service window. She makes no attempt to stop them. In half-light, Nobu composes himself and leaves Judy's place. We follow him as he begins to make his way back home. However, he stops in front of Masi's place and stares at it. Chiyo lets the phone ring and ring. Finally she and Blackie exchange disappointed looks. At that point Kiyoko bursts in on them.*

KIYOKO: How come you keep doing that? Huh? Don't phone him anymore. I told you, didn't I?

*(Blackie and Chiyo look sheepishly at Kiyoko. Kiyoko's feigned anger is very transparent to all three parties and only adds to the discomfort of the situation. As the scene darkens, Nobu arrives at his house. Nobu appears in a pool of light. He stands there for a moment in silence, still carrying some of the emotional turmoil from his previous scene with Masi. He reaches behind the sofa and pulls up a long, narrow object wrapped in cloth. As he unwraps it, we see what it is: a shotgun. Nobu sits down in the chair with the gun across his lap, staring into the darkness. As the lights do a slow fade on Nobu, the mournful wail of a shakuhachi [bamboo flute] is heard.)*

## SCENE 23

*Masi's place, one week later. Nobu stands inside with the shotgun. In half-light, Sadao is asleep in the bedroom.*

NOBU: Where is he? *(Masi stares at the gun)*  
 MASI: He went to buy the newspaper.  
 NOBU: *(Notices Masi watching him cautiously)* It's not loaded. *(Pause)* At first I said, "No, no, no, I can't believe it. I can't believe it." I got so pissed off, I got my gun and drove over here. I drove around the block twenty or thirty times thinking "I'm gonna shoot this son-of-a-bitch, I'm gonna shoot him." I drove right up, rang the doorbell. No one answered. I kept ringing, ringing. . . . I went back to the car and waited. You cheated on me. How could you do that to me? I'm a good husband! I'm a good husband, Masi. . . . I kept seeing you two. The two of you together. I kept seeing that. It made me sick. I kept thinking, "I'm gonna shoot that son-of-a-bitch. I'm gonna shoot him." I waited in the car. It was three o'clock in the morning when I woke up. It was so cold in the car. You weren't back. I got worried I might catch a cold, and my back—you know how my back gets. I drove home, took a hot bath, and went to sleep. I've been sick in bed all week. I just wanted to show you. Both of you. That's why I brought it. Don't worry. It's not loaded. *(He cracks the shotgun and shows her that it is not loaded)* I just wanted to show both of you how it was, how I was feeling. But it's all right. You two. It's all right now.

*(Nobu sets the gun against the wall. Masi watches him, trying to decide if it is indeed safe.)*

MASI: Nobu.  
 NOBU: Yeah?  
 MASI: He's taking a nap. In the bedroom. He likes to do that after dinner

NOBU: What is he? An old man or something?  
 MASI: He just likes to take naps. You do too.  
 NOBU: In front of the TV. But I don't go into the bedroom and lie down. Well, where is he? Bring him out. Don't I get to meet him?  
 MASI: You sure? *(She looks at him for a long while. She believes him. She turns to go wake Sadao up, then stops)* Chester Yoshikawa? That night in the Camps when I didn't show up for the dance? Chester Yoshikawa? We just talked. That's all.

*(Masi leaves for the bedroom. Nobu looks slowly around the apartment. It's Masi and yet it isn't. Nobu suddenly has no desire to meet Sadao. He doesn't want to see them together in this apartment. Nobu exits abruptly. Masi appears cautiously leading out a yawning Sadao. They look around. No Nobu. All they see is his shotgun leaning against the wall.)*

## SCENE 24

*Same day. Marsha and Judy appear in a pool of light far upstage. Marsha is holding a small kite and slowly moves it above Timothy, who is held by Judy. They sit in silence for a time.*

JUDY: I can't believe he gave the kite to Timothy. He gets so mad if you even touch them. And he never flies them.

*(Pause)*

MARSHA: *(Moving the kite)* No. He never flies them.

*(The lights dim to half. They turn to watch the action taking place center stage.)*

## SCENE 25

*Two days later, darkness. The TV light comes on, lighting Nobu's face. A pool of light comes up on Nobu, seated on sofa, watching TV. No kite on the coffee table. Masi appears in another pool of light. She stands, staring pensively downstage into space. In her arms she is holding the brown paper bag of newly washed clothes. She turns and moves towards Nobu's place. As she enters the lights come up full on the house.*

*Masi goes over to the kitchen table and takes out the newly washed clothes, stacking them in neat piles on the table. She then proceeds to pick up the old clothes scattered on the floor and puts them*

*in the bag. She picks up the bag and moves towards the door, then stops. She makes up her mind about something she has been struggling with for a while. Masi returns to the kitchen and leaves the bag of old clothes on the table. As she opens the door to go, Masi looks back at Nobu and watches him for a brief moment. During this whole time, Nobu has never turned around to look at Masi, though he is very aware of what is going on. Masi sadly turns and exits.*

*Lights dim with Nobu silently watching TV. Briefly, Nobu's face is lit by the dancing light of the television screen. At this same instant, the brown paper bag of wash on the table is illuminated by a shaft of light. Nobu's phone begins to ring. He turns to look at it. Blackout on Nobu. The wash fades into darkness. The phone continues to ring for a few moments. Then, silence.)*

END OF PLAY