

Prologue

Up follow spot on Flannel. supranatural lighting. Flannel enters the performing space from the east. each footstep is inaudibly inscribed in the floor (the past forever leading to our future). he arrives at the apex of the triangle. all the while, it appears he is engaged in an internal struggle. it is nothing new. he looks haggard, unshaven and half-dressed in a rumpled gray flannel sackcloth. he speaks in fits and starts. his movements are likewise agitated, herky-jerky, sudden. thru the scene Flannel periodically throws stones. before his opening lines, he throws one stone after another. in the darkness we hear them...open scene off camera.

Flannel “what comes first?...hunger!?...well, i’m hungry. i am so hungry... i’m...so hungry...i’m starving. nothing seems to be able to satisfy my hunger. nothing...separate tables. separate worlds. (pause) why am i so famished? why do i hunger? what is it i want? (touches mouth, then face) my face...my face...i am in this face. somewhere. i am in his face. she’s been in my face... she, the only...one...one, one, one...goodness, she...i, worthless, by comparison; she...so self righteous, judgmental, the bastion of morality...(on camera) your deceitfulness has been evident for quite some time. you are incredulous i did not speak to you? do you mean beg? (breathing) such rage, such unmitigated anger. what a way...(couple of deep breaths) i’m in a dreadful way. i cannot live being judged. (slides into) still acting the part of hate?...oh, (louder, into camera) oh, such difficult days. dayyyyys of darkness, uncertainty. days of pain. transitory days. the days when a hand reaches...(throws a stone) nothing, nothing to hold. these are the days we have nothing to say; no comfort to offer; no salutation...(normal tone of voice) i admit, i’m depressed. i’m alone, okay? i am no longer nice to those around me. i hunt for an elusive, fictive sense of what i’m missing. i finish the play in my head, or another chapter in the novel i am not writing... brutal. everything’s crumbling. where is the intimacy? (breathing...off camera) we sat in darkness...we spoke about the children...yes, my tendency to push those i love away...(cries) we fit together. it was like meeting the missing piece. felt so good to be understood; felt so good to touch...and be touched...in ways... that...so good to feel...in a woman, that sense of woman i’d carried for so long, so very long...her silence is killing me...”

—we see Flannel hurl a stone in the same instant the spot goes to **Blackout**. in the next instant we hear the sound of the stone hitting glass, then we see the glass shatter in slow motion...

...brief pause. exit Flannel...voices. echoes, ghosts of the past. we hear them initially as gibberish, before we comprehend their words. their lines are delivered recitativo unless otherwise noted, from the space between theatres

Scene I

Fade spot up on Flannel as he enters stage from the west. he wanders about, though there is a general movement toward his desk.

Flannel “i wear this garment, this coarse, woolen thing, this...this...what? this, flannel cloth? hmmm. am i the showy flower within—the yellowed flour de lice? the lobed pod? pas de deux? occipital lobe? (raises brow) which hemisphere?...cilice, cilice. oh, so cilice. (grasps garment) this, is cilice and it is from cilicia. and how come i ain’t laughin’? how come i wanna scream? how come, how come?...abandon your dreams, abandon your self. pack off your freedom and allow sumpthin’ inside, somethin’ which ain’t you, and this something begins to dictate your behavior; this something makes ya into a funny person, actin’ all kinds a strange ways which ain’t really

you, ways you'd never choose if you'd kept your dream. ya become, enslaved... without even noticing. yep, when you surrender your soul to the comforts of style, small cracks appear in your heart. and these cracks become fissures, and emptiness comes and fills them full."

—**Blackout.** Flannel continues trek toward desk—

—lights up brighter as Flannel arrives at desk. he tries to open a drawer. can't. begins banging on drawer with shoe

Flannel "why is it everytime i want something in this drawer it's stuck. it took me, i don't know how long—a long damn time—a lifetime, to get everything i need into one place and everytime i wanna have a look at it—goddammit—i gotta deal with this (looks around) *fucking* drawer. (yells at drawer) i'm tryin' to get my life in order you, you...you sonofabitch...what if i were to die, huh? how is he gonna walk in and take over if he can't get what he needs (opens the goddamn drawer?)...how is he going pick up where i left off..."

—**Blackout.** one emphatic bang of shoe—

Flannel "without missin' a beat?"

-brief pause in darkness...

...lights up. Flannel still hovering over desk holding shoe-

Flannel "most difficult part a growin' old is dealin' with the mistakes, the same goddamn mistakes...i led my life—been a full life—yet i feel as though i've done nothing...nothin'. not a goddamn thing, nothin' of value, nothing worth...(sits momentarily) standin' up and jabberin' on about, (stands) and at the same time never been able to put aside the persistent thought, 'what is there to do? what's there to do? what? is there some necessity, some imperative; is there something essential, something we need, or must do? something we gotta do to keep us going?...well what is it? what?...is it something that'll last past the grave, something other people find, what? great? importante? smart? insightful? wise? erudite?...i feel i haven't done enough for others...that's what i feel."

—quick **Blackout**...in the darkness Flannel whistles [**what tune?**]—

Flannel "don't remember the whistling. i don't remember, the fog dripping down the side of the building, where the pigeons gathered, as day turned to nite, and the light slowly faded, and the reflections on the glass buildings ceased to exist, when the noise of the city came to an end. a minyan. they cooed and prayed and the sun dropped beneath the horizon. then silence, a dark and eery silence."

—deep exhale...end music...**Silence**...