

**SISYZECK**  
(THE CRACK QUEEN OF CABRINI GREEN)

by David Boles

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by David W. Boles

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*This play is dedicated to*  
*Camus for the "SIS" and to*  
*Büchner for the "ZECK."*



### CHARACTERS

\* SISYZECK: Hispanic female, 30.

ANGELICA: East Indian female, 50. SISYZECK's neighbor.

MOFO: Black Afrikaner male, 40. SISYZECK's common-law husband.

MONK: Mulatto male, 10. SISYZECK's bastard son.

SWEET: Caucasian female, 17.

COP: Chinese female, 37.

SOCIAL WORKER: Black African-American female, 45.

WORKER ONE: Italian female, 60.

WORKER TWO: American Indian female, 21.

\* NOTE: Sisyzeck is played by a man with a beard —→ in drag.

ONE

DARK STAGE. A SPECIAL FROM ABOVE WARMS TO AN ORANGE GLOW ON SISOZECK. SHE IS NINE MONTHS PREGNANT AND FLAT-ON-HER-BACK. AS THE SPECIAL GROWS INTENSELY WHITER, HOTTER, STARKER, SISOZECK AWAKENS VIOLENTLY FROM A DEEP TRANCE. DRIED BLOOD COVERS HER HANDS LIKE A GLOVE. WE ARE IN A CITY PARK.

SISOZECK: Is this my fate? Tugged to Hades by the hairs on my neck?

SISOZECK SITS UP, SEES HER BLOODY HANDS.

SISOZECK: The brand of a mortal.

SISOZECK SPITS ON HER HANDS, STANDS AND WIPES ALL THE BLOOD FROM HER HANDS ON HER SHIRT.

SISOZECK: What is this?

SISOZECK FEELS HER STOMACH.

SISOZECK: The rock? My arms!... singed clean from the flames? Face: smooth... nose, pointed... most delicate lobes. The Gods are witty. The Gods are truly witty.

SISOZECK FEELS HER CROTCH.

SISOZECK: No staff. Stoneless. The burden of a great man is bearing the laughter of the Gods.

SISOZECK WALKS IN A CIRCLE, TESTING THE WEIGHT OF HIS ROCK.

SISOZECK: My life is judged from Mount Olympus, my wife joins them and sips wine. (TO THE SKY) Dionysus! Drown her snarling chortle!

SISOZECK GENTLY CIRCLES HER STOMACH WITH HER FINGERTIPS.

SISOZECK: Me, the wisest and most prudent of all mortal men, condemned to serve his days pushing a rock that is not a mineral, but a bump holding tomorrow's promise. Condemned by Pluto to live in the skin of the creature I tested and tormented on earth. (TO THE SKY) Dear wife, take back my body from the public square!

NO RESPONSE FROM ABOVE.

SISOZECK: So be it.

SISYZECK BRAIDS HER LONG HAIR QUICKLY.

SISYZECK: Give me strands of silk, I'll beat them into a whip.  
Give me thicker lips, I'll suck the life sap from every tree.  
Divide my chest into two gourds round with milk, and I'll feed  
the hungry jackal as I skin him for a coat.

ANGELICA: (OFF, SINGS) Two men wuz layin' there,  
eatin' an' smokin' the green grass...

ANGELICA ENTERS.

ANGELICA: (SINGS) Eatin' an' smokin' the green grass...  
'Til their pockets were empty and bare.

ANGELICA STOPS WHEN SHE SEES SISYZECK.

ANGELICA: Sis! We've been searching for you.

SISYZECK: Who are you?

ANGELICA: Baby, don't let that record skip again. Your Angelica  
has been huntin' for yuh. You fall asleep again? I got the  
alarm.

ANGELICA OPENS HER PURSE AND DIGS HER PINKY FINGERNAIL INTO A  
PACKET OF COCAINE.

ANGELICA: Sniff the shoes of God!

ANGELICA PLACES THE COCAINE UNDER SISYZECK'S NOSE.

ANGELICA: C'mon! 'Vroom it up.

SISYZECK: When cast in the role of a player, act!

SISYZECK INHALES THE COCAINE, SHAKES HER HEAD AND FIGHTS OFF THE  
SHOCKING HIGH. ANGELICA TAKES A HIT OF COCAINE HERSELF.

ANGELICA: Mofo's sniffin' fer yuh ass. Better get home 'fore he  
pokes yuh with a club...

ANGELICA PUTS HER ARM AROUND SISYZECK AND BEGINS TO ESCORT HER  
OUT.

ANGELICA: ... a wood club, not the lovin' kind!

ANGELICA LAUGHS HYSTERICALLY. SISYZECK STOPS.

SISYZECK: Quiet! Can you hear it? Something's moving.

ANGELICA: That's the clouds, talkin' hon.

SISYZECK: Thump, thump. Struggling inside me, beneath me.

SISYZECK TRIES TO BEND HER EAR DOWN TO HER STOMACH.

SISYZECK: (WHISPERING TO HEAR) Listen. It's hollow like a melon. Feel the seeds rattling in brine?

ANGELICA: Kickin' again? Kickin' up his heels for another trip to the ozone?

GUNSHOTS ARE HEARD IN THE DISTANCE.

SISYZECK: So strange: quiet. Hold in the breath.

ANGELICA: What is your problem, now?

SISYZECK: Speak! Fire surrounds us, raging in the sky and clamoring at our ankles below like trumpets. The flesh you smell is ours!

SISYZECK GRABS ANGELICA INTO THE BUSHES.

SISYZECK: Hide! Before Death discovers I am the one who shackled him!

ANGELICA: Now you're talkin' gospel?

SISYZECK: Silence. Crackling flames are silenced. (FEELING HER STOMACH) As if the future were dead.

ANGELICA: Gunshots mean we gotta get home.

SISYZECK: Witty. The Gods are truly witty.

TWO

MOFO AND MONK STARE DOWN FROM A MATTRESS ON A FIRE ESCAPE. THEIR EYES ARE FIXED ON SWEET, WHO DANCES SILENTLY AND SEDUCTIVELY IN THE STREET GUTTER BELOW.

MOFO: Swing, baby! Smooth shake. I'm comin', Honeycomb. The bee's drippin' from above!

MONK: I she sweeter 'n Mamma?

MOFO: Your Mamma's a lime compared to her.

SWEET WAVES SEDUCTIVELY AT MOFO.

MONK: She don't wave like that to anyone else.

MOFO: (SINGS) I want you, to sin with my skin...

MONK: Mamma don't make your eyes shine like that.

MOFO: Shuttup. Lookin' ain't touchin'.

MONK WAVES BACK AT SWEET. MOFO BATS DOWN HIS ARM.

MOFO: Get yuh own.

MONK: I'm tellin' Mamma.

MOFO: Tell yuh Mamma, yuh a log from her ass, not mine.

MONK WAVES TO SWEET SLOWLY. SISYZECK STICKS HER HEAD OUT THE LIVING ROOM WINDOW AND ONTO THE FIRE ESCAPE.

SISYZECK: Are you Mofo?

MOFO: Don't sneak up to scare me like that, Stupid! I coulda been doin' business.

SISYZECK: 'And behold, there came forth a smoke from the land like the smoke of an oven.'

SISYZECK EXITS.

MOFO: Not that church crap again!

MONK: Didn't even say 'hi' to me.

MOFO: Scared of her own reflection. Frightened of saying hello to her baby boy. She thinks too much, her brain's bent like a fishin' pole... one day it'll snap like a finger. Don't be like your Mamma, son. She'll make you blind. Stay with me in the light. The night buries its young like corpses.

THREE

THE STREET. WORKER ONE STANDS ON THE CORNER WITH WORKER TWO.  
SWEET STANDS BEHIND WORKER TWO.

WORKER ONE/WORKER TWO: (SINGS) We want to die but money pays  
To keep us living another day  
No one but us can make us stay.

MOFO, MONK AND SISYZECK ENTER. THEY ARE ALL HOLDING HANDS,  
SISYZECK IS IN THE MIDDLE.

SISYZECK: The sound of Joy and tribulation.

MOFO: Ah, they're crazy. Crazy, but beautiful.

WORKER ONE: C'mon, looker! A Lincoln'll buy you a show you can  
only draw for your grandchildren. Tellin' it out loud, even in a  
whisper, 'll get you arrested for perversion.

SISYZECK: The rock rolls up...

MOFO: Done. Pay it.

MOFO MOTIONS TO MONK. MONK TAKES OUT FIVE ONE DOLLAR BILLS FROM  
HIS SOCK. SWEET WAVES AT MONK AND LAUGHS.

SISYZECK: ...Then falls again.

SWEET: (WHISPERS TO WORKER TWO ABOUT MOFO) That is one fine  
man.

WORKER TWO: Fine muscle. Toothy smile.

SISYZECK: The night reflects in their cat eyes.

MOFO: Hush, I can't hear.

WORKER ONE: This fine example of flesh is built like no other  
piece of plumbing around. She's a temple created to worship the  
God of Beauty. Man born of dust and pebble, and woman is born  
from crime: we're only thefted bits of rib cage. Cursed in the  
garden and spat upon in the cradle, we've perfected our  
abnormalities. We nurture, then flash, the freak in us all...  
and in the instant you turn your head to avert our eyes... we  
become special. No longer nameless, we've take on the stench of  
the living, our pulse regulates heat, and we have become a sty  
poking your eye blind.

SISYZECK: She isn't Venus incarnate.

MOFO: Don't interrupt. This cost five bucks.

WORKER TWO STEPS UP AND LIFTS UP HER SKIRT A BIT. SWEET STEPS BACK.

WORKER ONE: You may think this is a human being...

WORKER TWO BELCHES.

WORKER ONE: But this isn't. You may think this is an animal. It isn't that either. This is... a malformed... remarkable... machine. A machine made to conquer any man. You can be too small, but never too large. Within the count of the ten most inconceivable seconds you will ever brave, I'll plunge my arm, from fingertip to elbow, deep into this gearbox.

SISYZECK: I feel a rapping at my throat.

WORKER ONE: Does anyone have a watch?

MONK: I do!

MONK OPENS HIS COAT TO REVEAL ROWS OF CHEAP WATCHES.

WORKER ONE: Time me, baby. I'll meet ecstasy in ten seconds or triple your money back.

SISYZECK: Knocking from below...

SISYZECK BREAKS HOLDING HANDS AND TURNS AWAY, CHOKING BACK VOMIT.

MONK: Mamma?

MOFO: Mornin' sickness. (MOTIONS FOR MONK TO WATCH WORKER ONE) Pay attention like you should in school.

MONK: Go!

SISYZECK EXITS CHOKING BACK BILE. WE SEE WORKER ONE AND WORKER TWO THROUGH THE SPACE SISYZECK JUST VACATED.

MONK: One.

WORKER ONE KNEELS. WORKER TWO LIFTS HER SKIRT AND SPREADS HER LEGS. WORKER ONE MAKES A FIST AND SLOWLY AIMS TO ENTER WORKER TWO.

MONK: F-f-f-five....

MOFO: This I gotta see.



SWEET STEPS INTO THE SPACE VACATED BY SISYZECK TO BLOCK OUR VIEW OF THE GRAPHIC DEMONSTRATION.

MONK: ...s-s-s-seconds....

SWEET HOLDS HANDS WITH MOFO AND MONK. WORKER TWO CRIES OUT IN PAIN.

WORKER ONE: Struggle to oil the metal button that'll turn back the dark with light.

MONK: S-s-s-even...

MOFO LAUGHS. MONK LOOKS TO MOFO AND WEAKLY IMITATES HIS LAUGH. SWEET PUTS HER HEAD ON MOFO'S SHOULDER AND GIGGLES.

MONK: Th-th-that's ten seconds.

WORKER ONE: And that's an inch past the elbow!

SWEET AND MOFO APPLAUD WILDLY. MONK KNEELS ON THE GROUND.

FOUR

SISYZECK'S BEDROOM. MOFO ENTERS.

MONK: I can't sleep.

MOFO: Close your eyes or you'll go blind.

MONK: I keep seeing it. I can still smell the blood.

MOFO: It's your armpits you smell.

MONK: Where did you go?

MOFO: I came home.

MONK: I came home. You went with her.

MOFO PUTS ON A PAIR OF GOLD SUNGLASSES AND ADMIRES HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR.

MOFO: Close your eyes. Don't think anymore.

SISYZECK ENTERS.

SISYZECK: What's that?

MOFO RIPS THE GLASSES FROM HIS FACE AND HIDES THEM BEHIND HIS BACK.

MOFO: Nothin'.

SISYZECK: I saw gold sparking.

MOFO: Sunglasses. Found 'em.

SISYZECK: I never found an expensive 'nothing' like that.

MOFO: You sayin' I stole 'em?

SISYZECK: Jostle on, jostle on. This boy's brow glistens. We work in the sun and sweat in our dreams. Poor child.

MONK: I'll be okay Mamma.

SISYZECK: Mamma?

MOFO: Don't bother her. Sleep.

SISYZECK KISSES MONK ON THE FOREHEAD.

SISYZECK: Bitter. The kind of salt found in tears.

MONK: I can sleep better now, Mamma.

SISYZECK GOES TO MOFO AND HANDS HIM A FEW DOLLARS.

SISYZECK: I found this in my apron. Buy a fan for the child.

SISYZECK EXITS. MOFO THROWS HIS SUNGLASSES ON THE GROUND AND CRUSHES THE LENSES WITH HIS HEEL.

MOFO: I'm a son-of-a-bitch! Drag a knife 'cross muh throat! What kinda world am I spinnin' on? Direct bounce t' Hell. All of us. All of us burnin' like pearls in the night sky.

FIVE

ALLEY. SISYZECK IS ON HER KNEES SHINING THE COP'S SHOES.

COP: Careful, Sis, slow down the buffing action. One stroke follows the other like a pendulum in a clock. Better... it tickles. I got another ten minutes for lunch, don't rush. You're so young. What're you gonna do with another hundred years of living?

SISYZECK: Roll, roll, roll.

COP: Around, around, around. Yeah, I'm worried about the future too, Sis. The thought of immortality gets soiled by all these pissers with a machine gun and an attitude. But immortality's really the same instant over and over again, eh? Let 'em shoot me in the head. Gimme ten sutures and an aspirin and I'll live again. Medicine's stronger than evil. Ludicrous how fast the world turns in a day. Spin, spin, sun up, then down. One Cop dead, another aspirin sold. Invest in suture futures and retire in a week. Why does the sun bother with the sky?

SISYZECK: Pleasure... Apollo likes to race his chariot.

COP: (IGNORING SISYZECK) I can't bear looking at the hands of my wristwatch anymore. Seconds tick, another Cop dressed in his best blue having church music sung over her. That's why I went digital. Chronological numbers give you a context for the past. There's serenity in a liquid crystal display... one number fades, another waits to replace it... tidy like a morgue. Line us up so they can blast us down again. One right on top of the other.

SISYZECK: Yes, ma'am.

COP: Why so formal? You act guilty, what are you hiding? Speak, Sis!

SISYZECK: The heavens will weep today.

COP: Now that's more like it. A good rain'll wash off the urine from the sidewalk... won't be able to smell gunpowder through a downpour. You're a good worker, Sis, but in the end, you're like the turds... you lack morality. You have no sense between what's right and almost right. You have a child by one man, and now another lump broods within you from another man's germ! Keep them lumps comin' hard and hungry, Sis. Teach 'em to blast me down to feed their luxury.

SISYZECK: We play the role we are given.

COP: You're changing the topic.

SISYZECK: This world does not cherish the poor: nickels, dimes, and half-dollars are the yardsticks of morality. Sinew and muscle are valuable only if fleshed-out with money. What we need is luck, and it can't be bought here or hereafter. If we all touched heaven, we'd be struck back by lightning. We must find happiness in the simple act of reaching to the sky.

COP: Sis, your static returns a shock! I keep telling myself, 'You're happy, you're delighted, you're sublime,' and so I am! I won a blue ribbon for persuasion in high school.

SISYZECK: People like us, we don't need happiness, or lies, or awards. We have what we have. But if we all were lucky enough to have pewter badges and nickels singing in unison with dimes in our pockets, we'd be happy alright. Must be a great thing, happiness.

COP: You think too much. You've ground down the cells in your brain so they're duller than a matchstick. This discussion's made me late. Go on.

SISYZECK TAKES HER PORTABLE SHOE SHINE STAND.

COP: Leave! Cross the street at the corner or I'll ticket you for jaywalking. Move, move, go!

SISYZECK RUNS AND EXITS.

SIX

SISYZECK IS BEHIND A TRASH BIN IN THE ALLEY. SHE SHOOTS UP HEROINE INTO HER ARM WITH A SYRINGE. SOCIAL WORKER ENTERS.

SOCIAL WORKER: Been looking for you for a week, Sis.

SISYZECK RIPS THE NEEDLE FROM HER ARM.

SISYZECK: Who are you?

SOCIAL WORKER: Stuff the attitude, please. I suppose your next question is... "What syringe?"

SOCIAL WORKER HOLDS OUT HER HAND. SISYZECK PLACES THE SYRINGE IN HER HAND.

SISYZECK: I don't know why... I did it....

SOCIAL WORKER: You're an addict. You promised me you'd stopped for the welfare of your child. I'm cutting off your benefits until your arms heal. You're fortunate you can't be arrested for bleeding scabs.

SISYZECK: I have a pit right here that hurts.

SOCIAL WORKER: Those are the pangs of withdrawal. I offered you a stay in the metal shop, but you wanted to kick it on your own.

SISYZECK: Help me.

SOCIAL WORKER: Another rescue? You only repent when you're caught. You don't want to change. You want to keep inching yourself further into the abyss. You love jeopardy... see how far you can push me before you fall backwards yourself. I'm finished lifting you up. You're ungrateful.

SISYZECK: Just once more! This time I'll change!

SOCIAL WORKER: Change?! How can you change yourself genetically? Your laziness, your unwillingness to be honest is inbred like a seedless watermelon! You're caught by your own DNA. You've picked away all the charity I have to offer.

SISYZECK: The world is dark and I'm feeling my way with my fingertips. I can't move forward. I have to touch everything around me to see if it's safe to move on. But there's a fire in the distance. I can smell the flames blowing in the West and I'm scared.

SOCIAL WORKER: You're groping like an insect.

SISYZECK: I'm struggling to find an order here, a reason for all the bodies stacked wet and limp in the street. If I could only figure out the pattern... find the logic....

SOCIAL WORKER: What do you want me to do?

SISYZECK: Help me... push... Nature's pulled wrong side out. Take on a little of the weight that's crushing me.

SOCIAL WORKER: I can't bear your child. I struggled enough with my own.

SEVEN

SWEET'S ROOM. MOFO IS KISSING HER ON THE BED. THEY ARE NAKED.

SWEET: Ready?

MOFO: Show me the moon again. Breasts heavy with milk, nipples purple and swollen like plums...if I had cereal, you'd be a healthy breakfast.

SWEET: The Devil's in your eyes. I can see his red horns dripping fire.

MOFO: No sin sweeter'n a woman's moan.

SWEET: You're stupid like an animal.

MOFO HOWLS LIKE A WOLF AT THE MOON.

SWEET: But your desire is like my own.

THEY EMBRACE AND KISS.



EIGHT

A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM. SISYZECK SITS. WRISTS ARE BANDAGED WITH THE TORN BITS FROM A RED AND WHITE CHECKERED RESTAURANT TABLECLOTH. HER BLOOD HAS SOAKED THE CLOTH. SOCIAL WORKER ENTERS.

SISYZECK: It was biting me. Scratched from elbow to wrist...

SOCIAL WORKER: What did you use? A mirror shard? The jagged stem from a long-necked beer? Those eye teeth of yours sure are pointed.

SISYZECK: Everything's gone dark.

SOCIAL WORKER: Have you tried wiggling your ears? Make a poster and scotch tape it to your forehead. You're starved for attention, Sis. You dialed for help and I answered the phone -- again -- I'm changing my number.

SISYZECK: It's biting me again!

SISYZECK SCRATCHES HER ARMS FROM WRIST TO ELBOW ROUGHLY. IF HER ARMS WERE BARE, HER NAILS WOULD DRAW BLOOD.

SOCIAL WORKER: You're losing your cleverness. Has your husband been chipping it away for mementos? When you've taken your pill, the Cop wants to see you.

SISYZECK: Yes, ma'am.

NINE

THE STREET. SOCIAL WORKER WALKS BRISKLY DOWN THE STREET, THE COP RUNS AFTER HER.

COP: Hey! Social worker! Shorten that step, you'll scuff your new shoes! Running like that'll only bring you back to the start again. Guilty people don't put that much push into a stride. Why are you escaping?

SOCIAL WORKER TRIES TO AVOID THE COP. THE COP COUNTERS THE EVASIVE MOVE.

SOCIAL WORKER: I have caseloads to close!

COP: My dear fiend, you'll wear your feet down to bloody stumps!

SOCIAL WORKER: We'll all be dead in four weeks. Complete breakdown of order. History's seen it twenty times: each generation died and took their inventions to the grave. Get used to the idea of worms on your eyebrows.

COP: Life is depressing enough, I don't want to imagine what comes after. I'm seeing things. I can't look at my watch anymore without bursting into tears.

SOCIAL WORKER: It's started! Dark circles. Saliva dried in the corner of your mouth. You're a body without compassion or muscle: that's the definition of a skeleton. Your skin has the consistency of overcooked macaroni. Yes, you'll be dead in a month, although there's a possibility you might still be used in a casserole dish.

COP: Don't scare me like that. People can die imagining death. Your eyes are plagued, too. There's no depth for light penetrate and excite the rods and cones. A doctor would pronounce you brain dead: eyes fixed and dilated. Yes, you're definitely comatose. I can see the turds lining up to mourn, pinching themselves purple to draw out a tear. They'll laugh and dance while they pee on your rubbery face.

SOCIAL WORKER: Ha! Do you see this?

SOCIAL WORKER TAKES OUT HER FOUNTAIN PEN, PUTS THE CAP ON THE END.

SOCIAL WORKER: ...This is a dart that poisons as it dries!

COP: And this...

COP HOLDS OUT HER GUN, FIRES IT SIX TIME.

COP: This is a joke that gets no laughter!

SISYZECK STAGGERS DOWN THE STREET STILL PREGNANT, STILL BOUND AT THE WRISTS WITH THE BLOOD-SOAKED TABLECLOTH.

COP: Sis! Going home for another round? You plod though the world like a knife through an ear lobe. One day you'll leave a scar.

SOCIAL WORKER: Knives are illegal.

COP: Yes, always check your casseroles for ear lobes. Or fingers. Or flesh from your own wrist. Right, Sis? You take care of a good husband, eh? No body parts in your dinners, hmm?

SISYZECK: Yes, ma'am. What do you mean, ma'am?

COP: Look at her face! She has her ear lobes! But peek around that corner and you'll see your husband -- earlobeless! They've been chewed off by a knife named Sweet! Your face is fuzzy like the erased numerals on a schoolhouse blackboard... you're chalk-powder white!

SISYZECK: Don't tease me about him.

COP: Tease you? Why would I tease you?

SOCIAL WORKER: Push, Sis, push! Shoulder down, knee bent, hip wedged against the side. Roll 'er back up!

SISYZECK: The street's hotter than Hades... but I'm shivering. Cold. Cold. Hades wasn't mean to be frigid... the logic is impossible! The Gods are dying and my husband's sleeping... he's a whore... not possible.

COP: Stop staring at me. Your eyes are ice picks. I'll have you arrested for assaulting an officer. I'm only helping clarify your life, Sis. Information is the lever you need to keep moving.

SOCIAL WORKER: Eyes unfocused. Palpitating heartbeat. Rigid fists. Unforgiving face. Yes, she's ready to explode.

SISYZECK: Good-bye. Even sanity has its logic. The whore!

SISYZECK BEGINS TO LEAVE. SOCIAL WORKER FOLLOWS HER.

SOCIAL WORKER: Run, Sis! Give in to the rage in your belly!

SISYZECK AND THE SOCIAL WORKER ARE GONE. COP RELOADS THE GUN.

COP: The pissers give me gas. Look! They play a child's game of tag as if they were back on the sandlots of their youth. Like flame to kerosene, betrayal scalds the flesh and ignites the world. No man survives being a fool... why should it be different for her? Four more weeks of eating and crapping and chasing our tails like mutts. Finish.

TEN

SISYZECK'S BEDROOM. SISYZECK STARES INTENSELY AT MOFO.

SISYZECK: My sight is gone! Blind. I should be able to see the light, grab onto it and make it burn like a dagger.

MOFO: You're sweatin', peach. Sit down, hon. I'll put the fan on you.

SISYZECK: I don't know who I am.

MOFO: Don't start that again.

SISYZECK: I used to know so many things. I don't even answer to the same name anymore. So many ideas comforted me even when I was a fool. But here... my mind is no longer part of mind, my now heart beats in my stomach, my hands sweat more than my brow.... I'm a foreigner in a strange body.

MOFO: If didn't know better, I'd call you pre-menstrual. Hush, baby. I'll get yuh somethin' 't make yuh feel again.

SISYZECK DOUBLES OVER IN PAIN. SHE HOLDS HER ABDOMEN.

SISYZECK: Uhh... I am driven mad... that I've done nothing to you. I've been honest and good. Who am I? Why did you bring her here? So close to where we slept? If only I had been given the attention you put into her.

MOFO: Her who?

SISYZECK: Your earlobes were quite beautiful. It's a shame you couldn't give them to me.

MOFO: Jealousy ate your brain!

SISYZECK: Gnawing away the thoughts. The angels are falling out of the sky. That's why it's so dark now. Your ear lobes were soft. Beautiful as a God's. Why are we mortals so beautiful and yet so unhappy?

MOFO: You're drunk.

SISYZECK RELAXES, THE PAIN IN HER ABDOMEN FADES.

SISYZECK: Inebriated with the truth. Did she stand here? Hmm? Yes, or almost yes?

MOFO: Bleat, bleat, bleat.

SISYZECK: I can see her in your breath!

MOFO: So you ain't blind!

SISYZECK BEATS MOFO ON THE CHEST.

SISYZECK: Whore!

MOFO: Don't hit me! Stuff a knife in my belly and twist, but keep your hands off me. I'll hit a woman who hits me first.

SISYZECK: Slut! Don't look down. You can't fall any further. Punish you and she's still free. Dear virgin, there's a stain on your crotch. True? Why must we know?

SISYZECK EXITS.

ELEVEN

SISYZECK AND ANGELICA ON THE FRONT STOOP OF THEIR APARTMENT BUILDING. ANGELICA DRINKS A BEER.

ANGELICA: (SINGS) The mayor has an ugly wife,  
sits in the bathtub day and night;  
then sings as she spreads... waiting.

SISYZECK: Smell the air? Soon we'll be tasting rain.

ANGELICA: There'll still drink in the street. The workers're already out and the sun hasn't faded from yellow to orange yet.

SISYZECK: Dancing. All of them.

ANGELICA: And gettin' drunk. I love my life!

ANGELICA LAUGHS AS SHE SINGS.

ANGELICA: (SINGS) She sits in the bedroom waiting --  
Until the chimes strike five  
Even workers in the street start gaping.

SISYZECK: There must be a rational answer. Everything ends and then starts over without a pause? Dancing! His hands'll be sweaty on her back. Why does it matter? Damn these emotions, Angelica, and damn him for rubbing them.

ANGELICA: What's wrong?

SISYZECK: Nothing. No longer. Bulldoze ahead. Straight up the path, no stopping.

ANGELICA: Don't make trouble. He ain't worth a sniffle of snot from your nose.

SISYZECK: Straight. Play the tale I'm given. The logic's in the story. Can't breathe.

SISYZECK EXITS.

TWELVE

BLOCK PARTY IN THE STREET. MUSIC. FLASHING LIGHTS. STENCH OF STALE BEER. WORKER ONE AND WORKER TWO ENTER, DRUNK.

WORKER ONE: (SINGS) I have a hangover and it ain't mine,  
My soul is pickled in thunderclap wine.

WORKER TWO: Let me bite yuh nose off, sister, in the spirit of love. C'mon... I'm gonna start with your left nostril. I'm double the woman. Crush ev'ry crab on yuh body.

WORKER ONE: My soul is pickled in thunderclap wine. Even coins tarnish. Why are we so beautiful? I could cry the gutters full with the beauty in our lives. I wish our fingernails were knives, we could use them to cut each other's throats.

WORKER ONE AND WORKER TWO DANCE WITH EACH OTHER.

WORKER ONE/WORKER TWO: (SING)  
There were two rays of sunshine  
Bouncing off mirrors through grime.  
Yip-yap, Pippity-pap, we're guns in a rack.  
Wildly we go to the crown of a tree --  
A child's fate is the darkness in me!

SISYZECK ENTERS.

WORKER ONE/WORKER TWO: (SING-CONT'D)

A child's fate is the darkness in me!

SWEET AND MOFO BECOME VISIBLE IN THE CORNER DANCING TOGETHER.

SISYZECK: Them! Hades. Hades, Hades.

SWEET AND MOFO COME TOGETHER CLOSE AT THE HIPS AND SPIN.

MOFO: Push, push.

SWEET: Tip to root...

MOFO: Roll back down..

SWEET: Spin and circle...

MOFO: Eternally 'round, roll 'er up, roll 'er down...

SISYZECK CRUMPLES TO HER KNEES AS SHE WATCHES.



SISYZECK: Roll up. Roll down roll up then down!

SISYZECK BEATS HER FISTS AGAINST HER CHEST.

SISYZECK: Eternally! 'Round, 'round they waltz -- Spit on the sun, Poseidon! Force out the light with your tongue! We are all beasts: carnal, licking, ravaging.... They do it tauntingly outside. He's heated, heated!

SISYZECK CRUSHES HER HEAD BETWEEN HER HANDS.

SISYZECK: Groping her way 'round, circling his carcass. Her. She's caught him... as my past had caught him when there was light.

SISYZECK CRASHES TO THE GROUND. MUSIC FADES A BIT. LAUGHTER. VOICES. WORKER TWO GOES TO SISYZECK AND TURNS SISYZECK OVER ON HER BACK.

WORKER TWO: (TO THE WORLD) Children, look down at this fetus, sprawled on her stomach, searching for faith in a storm gutter asking... "Who am I? What purpose am I?" Would our lives be worse if this bit of flesh had instead been spewed out as waste during her mother's four-week cycle? Should any of us bother to lick our fingers for the direction of the wind when we use the same finger to pick our noses? We only stand and wait for coins to corrode and wax to yellow in our ears. Let's be done with boredom, pull down your pants and squat a long one for our children's children's grandchildren! Leave proof of our inventions behind!

SISYZECK STAGGERS TO HER FEET AND EXITS RUNNING.

THIRTEEN

A CITY PARK.

SISYZECK: 'Round and 'round! Eternally! Roll, roll, spin!  
Silence the rhythm of my heart and the fainter one under my  
chest! Hush...

SISYZECK THROWS HERSELF TO THE GROUND.

SISYZECK: There is no elusion from the truth. Truth defined by  
a lie. Blast the werewolf, dead. Can I? Dare I? Even the wind  
prods me to act.

SISYZECK STANDS. ROUGHLY MASSAGES HER ABDOMEN.

SISYZECK: Encircled by condition. Wound 'round me, tighter,  
tighter, slicing flesh like a blade... spinning, wrapping,  
slashing, winding gashes... dissected. Blast him. Numb, numb --  
numb!!

SISYZECK EXITS RUNNING.

FOURTEEN

ANGELICA IS PASSED OUT ON THE STOOP. SISYZECK ENTERS RUNNING.

SISYZECK: Angelica, Angelica! There's no sleep allowed. The stars blind my eyes when I pinch the lids closed. Hear my heart? It has the rhythm of a drum... rump-'ound, rump-'ound, ka-kunk, ka-kunk. Can you hear it?

ANGELICA: (MUMBLING) Yes. Go to the party and let 'em dance to the beat of your chest. (FIGHTS TO OPEN EYES TO SISYZECK) All God's children can't save us. Bless you.

SISYZECK: No change...Boom! Boom! It's between my eyebrows, poking like a bayonet.

ANGELICA: Sleep away the noise...

ANGELICA PASSES OUT FOR GOOD. SISYZECK EXITS RUNNING.

FIFTEEN

THE PAVEMENT IS GLISTENING WET. SWEET DANCES ALONE IN THE STREET. A CRACK PIPE SMOKES IN HER HAND. MONK SITS IN THE GUTT NURSING A FIFTH OF VODKA. SISYZECK ENTERS.

SWEET: I'm a woman!

SWEET BEATS HER CHEST LIKE AN APE.

SWEET: A woman! Listen up! Who wants me to prove it? If you ain't got the venom of a Vampire bat, fly off. No? Then I'll stab yuh fangs in yuh wings, then pick muh teeth clean with yuh claws.

SWEET GOES TO SISYZECK.

SWEET: Hey, molasses. Sip a little rock. We're all tattered 'round here. Suck. I wish I had beer inside me 'stead 'f blood, I'd get a better price for the foam. You ain't suckin'. Suck!

SISYZECK WHISTLES.

SWEET: Think you're better'n me? I'll suffocate you with your own hand!

SWEET LEAPS ON SISYZECK. THEY FIGHT. SWEET BLOCKS SISYZECK'S NOSE AND MOUTH WITH HER HANDS OVER SISYZECK'S. SWEET PUNCHES SISYZECK'S STOMACH. SISYZECK PASSES OUT.

SWEET: Bitch! Roach bait! I'll beat the poison from yuh kidneys. You won't have 'nuf water t' wet a cake 'f soap.

SWEET JUMPS ON SISYZECK AND KICKS HER.

SWEET: Now try whistling with kidney stones in yuh mouth. Whistle yuhself navy blue.

(SINGS) Oh, smoke is my cream.  
White rocks are my dream.

SWEET LIGHTS UP THE CRACK IN HER PIPE AGAIN AND SUCKS.

MONK: You're bleedin', Mamma?

SISYZECK STARTS TO GET UP, FALLS DOWN AGAIN.

SISYZECK: Everlasting-never-ending.

SIXTEEN

ANGELICA'S BEDROOM. ANGELICA IS WRAPPED IN A TOWEL. SISYZECK ENTERS FROM THE BATHROOM.

SISYZECK: Did he help you bring me home?

ANGELICA: He was with his friends.

SISYZECK: What did he say when you told him?

ANGELICA: Don't matter.

SISYZECK: So that was his response. Last night I had an vision to blast him. Dreams can be terrible.

SISYZECK OPENS THE DOOR, STOPS IN PAIN.

SISYZECK: Uhh. Striking inside like a mallet to a gong.

ANGELICA: Another kick, honey? Rest with me here. You sneeze wrong and your water'll break.

SISYZECK: There was no one like him.

ANGELICA: Like who?

SISYZECK: It'll all turn back on itself again.

SISYZECK EXITS DOUBLED OVER IN PAIN.

SEVENTEEN

WORKER ONE IN THE ALLEY. SISYZECK ENTERS.

WORKER ONE: You're late.

SISYZECK: How much?

WORKER ONE TAKES OUT A .22 CALIBER HANDGUN.

WORKER ONE: Chrome plating, rubber handle. Shame to let you waste it on clearing out your brain. For you? I'll rent it. Do the business, and I'll lift it back from your moldering hand. You get death at a markdown.

SISYZECK TAKES THE GUN.

SISYZECK: This'll puncture more than an eardrum.

WORKER ONE: Fifteen.

SISYZECK: Complete.

SISYZECK PAYS WORKER ONE AND EXITS.

WORKER ONE: (TO HERSELF) Complete, as if she's finished a painting. (SHOUTING TO SISYZECK) Don't rust the metal with sweat! Keep the palm dry!

EIGHTEEN

SISYZECK'S BEDROOM. MONK TRIES TO SLEEP. MOFO IS WATCHING A WOMAN PREACHER ON TELEVISION.

TELEVISION: ... "Guile was found in his mouth."

MOFO: Don't look at me like that.

TELEVISION: "And the scribes and the pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and set her in the midst... And Jesus said unto her, 'Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.'"

MOFO: Now that's my kinda man!

MONK: When's Mamma comin' home? I'm so hot.

MOFO: Don't look at me with wet eyes. You got fingers. You got a fan. Put 'em together and get cool.

MONK TURNS ON THE FAN AND POINTS IT ON HIM.

TELEVISION: "And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with an ointment."

MOFO TICKLES HIS CHEST.

MOFO: Oooo, to have a woman like that!

MOFO LEANS IN CLOSE TO THE TELEVISION.

MOFO: Hmm, you ain't too bad yuhself, honey. Let me oil yuh up real good! Anoint me! Anoint me!

NINETEEN

ON A BRIDGE OVERLOOKING THE WATERFRONT. ANGELICA AND SISYZECK STAND FACING THE WATER.

SISYZECK: I won't need this shawl where I'm going, Angelica. Take it, and when it warms you, think of me.

SISYZECK WRAPS THE SHAWL AROUND ANGELICA. SISYZECK TAKES OUT A SYRINGE AND HOLDS IT UP TO THE LIGHT.

SISYZECK: This crucifix is yours now. Maybe you can find a God to answer you in the Holy Water. The hunger to be loved is fed through a needle. Save yourself first, Angelica. Ignore the others, close your eyes and smile when you take in the pleasure prick... then pass it on. Only then, when everyone has communed from the same grail, will we finally breach the tyranny of loneliness.

ANGELICA TAKES THE SYRINGE.

ANGELICA: The water's gone black.

SISYZECK: Soon we'll be growing roots from being damp too long in the dark.

SISYZECK TAKES OUT HER BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND READS ALOUD WITH DIFFICULTY.

SISYZECK: "Federica Sisar Francesca Woyzeck. Father unknown. Hispanic. Thirty years old. Born on the Feast of The Annunciation." I'm thirty years old? Thirty plus twenty-eight weeks plus twelve days.

ANGELICA OFFERS HER A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH.

ANGELICA: Here's a prayer for you.

SISYZECK FINISHED THE SCOTCH IN ONE SWALLOW, THEN TEARS UP THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND TOSSES THE PIECES INTO THE WATER AS IF THEY WERE CONFETTI.

SISYZECK: The ground has erupted, the mountain is now a valley. Only a moment to reflect as the earth cures. When the carpenter sweeps up the shavings for the box, no-one knows what corpse will crush them.



TWENTY

MOFO SITS ON A FIRE HYDRANT MASSAGING HIS TEMPLES. MONK MAKES A PINK RUBBER BALL BOUNCE FROM SIDEWALK, TO BRICK WALL, THEN BACK.

MONK: (SINGS) In the movies the sky is blue,  
and blood is made from glue.  
People smile like they're happy,  
but they stumble 'round like they're napping.  
Give 'em one day on the street,  
they'll grovel and lick muh feet.  
I'll kick the powdered ass through the air --

MOFO: (INTERRUPTS) Enough, Enough!

MONK: Requests?

MOFO: Somethin' quieter.

MONK: Don't know anything quiet.

MOFO: I want you to simmering on low.

MONK: Then you want a story. Okay, there was this kid, right? No Mamma. No Dad. Not rich, but the kid could fill a fist with Franklins if he wanted. But the world was dead, no customers, no friends... nothin'. So he cried to himself 'til his shirt was wet. Every night he hung his shirt on the radiator to dry. So this kid goes up to heaven to live on the moon. He's heard a lot about it, but when he gets there, he finds it's a termite-eaten two-by-four. No different than the earth. So, he goes to the sun instead. But the sun's a dried up sunflower, only shells left... the pigeons ate all the seeds before him. The kid jumps over to stars, but they're shiny-black like the tar he coughs up each the morning. So, he decides to go back to earth, but the earth had become an unflushed toilet with puke dried on the seat. So, this kid was still alone. He sat on the puke and drained every hole he had. He still sittin' there, all alone, with leg cramps and a cold ass.

SISYZECK ENTERS.

MOFO: (STARTS) Where you been?

SISYZECK: We need to leave, Mofo. It's time.

MOFO: Where we goin'?

SISYZECK: It won't make a difference to you.

MOFO AND SISYZECK EXIT.

TWENTY-ONE

THE FOOT OF A BRIDGE. MOFO FOLLOWS SISYZECK SLOWLY.

MOFO: Babe, it's getting dark and home's an about-face.

SISYZECK: Come and sit next to me.

MOFO: It's Thursday. There's good TV tonight.

SISYZECK: How long has it been?

MOFO: Two years.

SISYZECK: How long will it be?

MOFO: Huh? I... I better be gettin' home.

SISYZECK DOUBLES OVER WITH PAIN.

SISYZECK: Uhh... even a breath stings.

MOFO PUTS HIS ARM UNDER HERS TO STEADY HER.

MOFO: You ready baby? You havin' the baby?

SISYZECK: Uhh...again! I must act during the pause.

SISYZECK STANDS UPRIGHT.

SISYZECK: You're warm, yet your brain is cold. And your lobeless ears are hot, the sign of embarrassment. When the entire body is cold, you don't feel the sun anymore. You won't feel the morning dew, either.

MOFO: What is all this talk?

SISYZECK: Never mind.

MOFO: You wanna go t' the hospital, I'll take yuh now.

SILENCE.

MOFO: Moon's out full, rising and red.

SISYZECK: Like blood on iron.

MOFO: You gonna grow fangs and a mane?

MOFO LAUGHS UNEASILY AS SISYZECK DRAWS THE HANDGUN FROM HER BOOT.

MOFO: Girl? No... God, no! Help! Help!

SISYZECK SHOOTS MOFO ONCE IN THE HEART. MOFO FALLS INTO SISYZECK'S ARMS.

SISYZECK: There! There! Aren't you dead yet? Die, die Ahh, still a twitch left?

SISYZECK FIRES THE REST OF THE ROUNDS INTO MOFO RAPIDLY.

SISYZECK: Still lurching? Are you through? Finished. Finished.

SISYZECK KISSES MOFO FOR THE FIRST TIME LIGHTLY ON THE FOREHEAD. SHE LETS HIS DEAD BODY FALL. HIS BLOOD RINGS HER MOUTH LIKE LIPSTICK.

TWENTY-TWO

THE STREET. MUSIC. DANCING. SISYZECK ENTERS RUNNING.

SISYZECK: Dance! Dance! All together! Sweat, stink, spin up then down! He'll get you all in the end.

SISYZECK DANCES FOR THE FIRST TIME.

SISYZECK: (SINGS)      Baby man, now forever sick,  
                                 He won't pound or yell.  
                                 What dangles from his neck,  
                                 a rope with a cow bell?

SISYZECK GIGGLES, GRABS MONK AND DANCES WITH HIM HOLDING HANDS.

SISYZECK: I'm so hot, Monk. But that's a pre-requisite. Hades takes one and spares the other. You're hot like an ember too, son. Why? You'll cool to ash. Yes. Watch your back. Sing for your Mamma.

MONK: (SINGS)      To the Heavens I won't go,  
                                 I'll stay at home on the commode.  
                                 My bloody boogers I'll lose  
                                 as snot drips and threads my shoes...

SISYZECK: No. No shoes. You don't need shoes to visit Hades.

MONK: (SINGS)      With feet bared I'll make the girls moan,  
                                 and charge them for sleeping alone.

SISYZECK: Noble! There's a price for getting wet.

MONK: What's that on your hand?

SISYZECK: That's your hand you see.

MOFO PULLS HIS HANDS FROM HERS AND STOPS DANCING.

MONK: You're sticky with blood!

SISYZECK: With blood? With blood?

A CROWD GATHERS.

WORKER ONE: She's bleeding.

SISYZECK: I must've cut my hand on a bottle.

WORKER TWO: Your hand is on your elbow?

SISYZECK: I wiped off the blood.

WORKER TWO: Wipe that hand on the same elbow? Now that's a contortion I'd pay to see!

MONK: Hee-hee ho-dee-hum. I smell the blood of my grandfather's son.

SISYZECK: Stay away. I've nothing to offer! Give me air to breathe. You think I'm a killer? You need more time to ponder. Don't judge me! Vote on your own silhouetted face in a cracked mirror!

SISYZECK PUSHES PAST THEM.

SISYZECK: Clear away! Away!

SISYZECK EXITS RUNNING.

TWENTY-THREE

THE FOOT OF THE BRIDGE. SISYZECK ENTERS THROUGH SHADOWS. MOFO'S BODY IS UNMOVING.

SISYZECK: I can smell you. Closer. Hush! Something stirring... Mofo? Are you awake? Mofo!

SISYZECK TRIPS OVER THE BODY.

SISYZECK: Ah, so you did move! Mofo. So serene. Nothing moves. Why are you so pale? What's this? A chain ringing your neck? Your payment as a mutt for a night of warmth with her? You blew out your own fire, Mofo. You blackened yourself. Have I washed you clean again? Your hair is tangled with leaves. Where's your comb? The gun! Where is it? Here! Now there. Into the water.

SISYZECK THROWS THE GUN INTO THE WATER.

SISYZECK: Ripples like a stone in an ebony pond. They'll smell the rust. Farther. Uhh!

SISYZECK DOUBLES OVER IN PAIN. SHE FORCES BOTH HANDS DOWN ON HER CROTCH. HER BODY LURCHES WITH PAIN. SHE LIFTS UP A SOAKED HAND AND EXAMINES IT.

SISYZECK: Burst like a child's balloon. The mark... the mark.

SISYZECK ENTERS THE WATER TO GET THE GUN. SISYZECK PICKS UP THE GUN AND TOSSES IT FARTHER STILL. ON THE BRIDGE ABOVE, WORKER ONE AND WORKER TWO PEER OUT OVER THE WATER AND TALK TO EACH OTHER WITHOUT SEEING OR HEARING SISYZECK. SISYZECK USES BOTH HANDS AGAIN TO PRESS AGAINST HER CROTCH.

SISYZECK: Go back in. Back in.

WORKER TWO: What's wrong?

SISYZECK: Safe! Finally.

SISYZECK TURNS TO LEAVE THE WATER, THEN STOPS.

WORKER ONE: You don't smell it? There.

SISYZECK: No. They'll smell it when they fish for mussels.

SISYZECK GOES DEEPER INTO THE WATER UP TO MID-THIGH. SHE STILL PUSHES HARDER AGAINST HER CROTCH.

SISYZECK: Bah. It'll grow thick with seaweed. Why didn't I burn it first?

THE WATER IS AT SISYZECK'S CHEST. SHE CONTINUES TO WALK INTO THE WATER.

WORKER TWO: Ugh. The stench.

SISYZECK: I can still smell the blood on me: covering my hands like a glove. Nature is clever, but I am the more cunning mother. Oh... is that an ear I feel slipping by? And another. Now a pink nose... then... the kiss of a toothless mouth?

SISYZECK DISAPPEARS INTO THE WATER.

WORKER ONE: It's the water's breath from a belch. No one's drowned here for a long time. It's a curse to breathe this air. Let's go.

WORKER TWO: There! Again. It smells like a child's diaper.

WORKER ONE: Uncanny... even the beetles can smell it. Hear them clicking like cracked bells? Fog washes in to clean the water grey. The mist cinches tight around our throats like a noose. Let's go!

TWENTY-FOUR

DARK STAGE. A SPECIAL FROM ABOVE WARMS TO AN ORANGE GLOW ON SISYZECK. SHE IS NINE MONTHS PREGNANT AND FLAT-ON-HER-BACK. AS THE SPECIAL GROWS INTENSELY WHITER, HOTTER, STARKER, SISYZECK AWAKENS VIOLENTLY FROM A DEEP TRANCE. DRIED BLOOD COVERS HER HANDS LIKE A GLOVE. WE ARE IN A CITY PARK.

SISYZECK: Still branded as a mortal?

ANGELICA: (OFF) Sis!

SISYZECK FEELS HER ABDOMEN.

SISYZECK: The rock is unbroken.

ANGELICA: (OFF) Sis? Where are you honey?

SISYZECK: Witty. The Gods are truly witty.

BLACKOUT.