
November 2000

Red Ink In The Silence

Olga Barrios

Follow this and additional works at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws>



Part of the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Barrios, Olga (2000). Red Ink In The Silence. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 2(1), 79-120.
Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol2/iss1/8>

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

This journal and its contents may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Authors share joint copyright with the JIWS. ©2022 Journal of International Women's Studies.

Red Ink In The Silence

By Olga Barrios

c. June 1989

2nd Revision: October 1990

3rd Revision: August 1997

LIST OF CHARACTERS

Three actors and six dancers are needed for the performance of this play.

DIRECTOR, DON QUIJOTE, QUIJOTE ACTOR, JUANA'S MOTHER, JUANA'S BROTHER, CAPTAIN and ALBA'S HUSBAND should be played by the same actor.

ALBA, PEPA, JUANA and MAURICE should be played by the same actress.

SHADOW MAN, TEACHER, SHADOW WOMAN, and ADELA should be played by the same actress.

One of the DANCERS can play the roles of I-AKI and BEGGAR

The DANCERS will be on stage on the scenes when the action is stopped by the MANAGER'S or DIRECTOR'S voice in the first scene and do all the scenes where a choreographed dance or movement is needed.

The TEACHER and the DIRECTOR are of a different nationality from ALBA, who is from Spain.

Note: Alba in Spanish means dawn.

TIME: Past, present, future [Then, now and after].

The ACTION takes place in an undetermined country other than Spain.

ACT I

[Backdrop of a painted street in perspective on stage right. The painting shows the slums of Madrid at the turn of the century. Stage left remains in darkness. From the street--upstage--towards the audience an adolescent girl in rags comes singing something that is unintelligible and sits on a bench of stone right stage. The girl is PEPA, a prostitute who lives in the slums of Madrid. PEPA should be the Spanish type of a pícaro and, in the Spanish version, should have an Andalusian accent; in the English version, she could speak in Black English. Once she is seated she begins, to arrange her stockings. A BEGGAR passes by and stares at her legs. When she realizes she lifts her skirt completely to show him her pants, making fun of him. When she does, the BEGGAR

runs away. She continues singing “larara...lara...rarara...” PEPA should be played with lower energy than corresponds to her character. A man in armor comes along the street and approaches PEPA. He looks like Don Quijote, although, instead of a horse, he is riding an ass]

DON QUIJOTE: Beautiful Lady of these streets, my soul is exhausted after a very long journey. Could you be so kind as to tell me where I could find a place to spend the night, dear Lady?

PEPA: [Aside, to the audience] Osú! Virgin of the Homeless! Where has this strange character come from? I should probably play his game... Maybe he's dangerous. He might have escaped from an asylum! [To DON QUIJOTE] Your Highness, Mister Knight, I don't think you will find in these streets a place appropriate to your rank.

DON QUIJOTE: My Beautiful Little Lady, I don't need much to rest my bony body. [Pause. He looks at PEPA attentively, gets off the ass with difficulty, approaches her and, then, surprised, exclaims:] ... But it is you. Why are you disguised in these clothes? [PEPA is becoming more and more perplexed] Oh, my sweet Dulcinea...

PEPA: [Interrupting him] ... Sorry to disappoint you, Sir, but my name, at home is Claudinita, and in these streets Pepa, and I ain't no sweet as that Dulcinea or whatever her name is...

DON QUIJOTE: [Continuing as if he had not heard PEPA's last words] ...I've finally found you. I've been looking for you all this time, and I finally can rest my heart on the light of those two eyes that are two magnificent stars... [PEPA is getting very impatient] You know I would come if you called for me. [DON QUIJOTE kneels down with great difficulty] Here I am, at your service, my Queen.

PEPA: [With nervousness and impatient] Sir, I don't know who you are and I've never called for you. [Getting closer and speaking graphically] I do the streets, Sir, the STREETS...

DON QUIJOTE: [Interrupting her with sweetness and reciting a small poem by Valle-Inclán]:

Oh, rose of the crazy laughter
that rhymes the keyboard of its tune
with the purpura of the mout
and the flights of the Illusion-Bird.

PEPA: Listen, sir, you sound very much like my father. Maybe you know him. His name is Max Estrella. He talks like you and look at the results [pointing at herself in the streets]. He don't get no bread for my mother and I. He lives so much in the world of his poetry that he don't even know I call myself Pepa here, in the streets and [proud] that I've become a very expensive piece to buy...

DON QUIJOTE: Oh, my Sweet Queen Dulcinea,...

PEPA: [Trying to interrupt him again] ...Sir,...

DON QUIJOTE: [He stands up and looks at PEPA as if he were hypnotized by her] ...let me look into your eyes and my soul will rest for ever.

PEPA: [Stepping back and stopping him with her hand] Sir, you're making me lose my patience. My name is PEPA, P-E-P-A, PE-PA. I'm no Lady, less a Queen, and if what you want is to touch my thighs, just say so. I don't need no sweet words. Just give me 10 cents and you can touch the merchandise [pointing graphically at her body].

DON QUIJOTE: My little Princess, Princess of the Firmament, the moon and the stars, let me hold your hand and take it to my...

PEPA: [Interrupting him] Ah, no! It don't make no difference between your hand touching me or my hand touching your... If you want my hand to do some work for you, it'll cost you 10 cents.

DON QUIJOTE: [Still hypnotized by her, as if he had not heard a word she has said] ...Your hand, let me kiss your hand... Lily of the fields... [PEPA is getting more and more impatient, while

DON QUIJOTE recites another stanza by Valle-Inclán:]

Fragrance of flowery lips
that modulate the song of a bird when they laugh.
Lips that the nightingale kisses
with the light of his divine tune.

PEPA: [As if she were now getting ready to work] I know, Sir... Now you start talkin' sense...Some like to begin with a kiss... But, don't be afraid to say it openly, man. You can kiss and touch as much as you want... Just gimme some money in advance and...

[Lights go up and illuminate both sides of the stage--stage left was in darkness. MANAGER's voice (one of the dancers) stops the scene that is being rehearsed so that everybody can take a break. Other actors (some of the dancers) will come to light and the MANAGER could be engaged in a conversation with assistant director or the technician, while we see ALBA--PEPA--talking to the QUIJOTE ACTOR. The QUIJOTE ACTOR should be about 39 years old, although he looks younger. He is of a different nationality than ALBA]

MANAGER'S VOICE: Let's take a 15 minute break. When we come back Ivan will give you some comments before we work on the scene a little more.

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [After winking to one of the actresses who is moving around, and smiling sweetly to another one, clearly flirting with them, approaches ALBA] Hey, babe! What's wrong with you tonight?

ALBA: What are you talking about?

QUIJOTE ACTOR: I don't see the vitality that Pepa's character should have and...

ALBA: [Distant] You're not the director of the show. And, as far as I know, he hasn't said a word about it. So, dear, just give me a break, will you?

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [Tickling her in a childish behavior] Oh, come on! Just a smile, will you?

ALBA: [Really angry] Will you stop it?

QUIJOTE ACTOR: O.K., O.K. [Pause] What's the matter with you? Have I done anything to you? [ALBA does not answer and tries to walk away from him without letting him know she is disturbed. He grabs her arm and stops her] Hey, wait a second!

ALBA: [Without turning to him] I'm tired. I'll see you later. I'll be there at the same time, as usual. Now I just want to be left alone for a few minutes. Please?

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [With a clear feeling of guilt. Hesitant] Well... Actually, I wanted to tell you... that... I won't be able to make it tonight. I have to... meet a film producer who seems to be interested in my work. He has seen my acting in a few plays and he'd like to talk to me about a project he is preparing with a director and... [Realizing he does not need to go on] Anyway, can I call you later, tonight?

ALBA: [Controlling her disappointment and anger. With an ironic tone in her voice] Sure. As usual? Waiting for the phone to ring? At the same time as always? [Pause, while she keeps looking at him as if she were waiting for an answer that could vanish her doubts] ... No. I don't think so... I don't think your voice will be a lullaby to my ears, so it's better if you don't call me. I need to sleep well tonight. Thank you very much [ALBA tries to walk away again, but he holds her arm].

QUIJOTE ACTOR: What's the matter with you tonight? What's wrong? [As she doesn't answer, while trying to pull her arm away] Oh... I love it! I love when you get angry! [Caressing her chin, making fun of her as with an angry child] Eh? Cuchi, cuchi, cu!

ALBA: [In a rage] Leave me alone. Enough is enough, all right? It seems quite odd to see you behave as if you were four years old when you're so close to your forties.

QUIJOTE ACTOR: Oh, come on! Let's make up now! I don't want you to get mad at me. Please?

ALBA: [Still quite angry] I'll get mad whenever I please, [sarcastically] honey! And, now, JUST LEAVE ME ALONE [Freeing herself from him].

[Everybody on stage freezes as lights slowly go off. Only a spot of light is on ALBA when she delivers the following. While she does, she is looking around her and to the audience]

ALBA: Does anybody see me?
Stop for a moment.

[To the spot where QUIJOTE ACTOR was]

You!
Wait a second.
Look at me.
See my hands,
my eyes,
my fingers grasping the grass.
[Getting impatient] Can you see me?

[Lights now are completely off on stage except for the spot on ALBA and we do not see QUIJOTE ACTOR]

I am in your way,
walking beside you,
and you don't even hear
the sound of other steps.
Mine.

[After the last word, ALBA sits down on a chair that someone has placed on stage, next to a table. She sits abruptly, and embraces her head. When lights come up again--on stage right only--we see that ALBA is with the same man, who now is dressed in normal clothes. ALBA is still dressed in rags. The scene is now a pub. ALBA is downstage, seated at a table and QUIJOTE ACTOR is coming from upstage with two drinks--they could be some of the dancers. There are two or three people around and a bar with a waitress serving drinks. The same conversation, however, continues]

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [To ALBA, after putting drinks on table, while he looks at the waitress behind the counter] Wait a second! I'll be back.

[He walks towards the waitress and we do not hear what he is telling her. We only see him talking to her softly, holding her hand for a few seconds. The waitress giggles from time to time. After this, he comes back to ALBA and signals her to wait one more minute. He goes back to talk to another waitress that he has just seen. He, finally, comes back to ALBA, who has remained seated at the table disguising her discomfort at being kept waiting]

ALBA: Who the hell do you think you are? [Silence. QUIJOTE ACTOR seems not to understand what she is referring to]. You like everybody to fly around you like flies around honey and wait until Your Excellency makes himself available, don't you? I'm sorry but I'm tired of being made to wait and wait over and over again! This is too much!

QUIJOTE ACTOR: What's the matter with you? [Silence. ALBA is constraining herself] I know... You think I don't know what's bothering you and I don't care about you. You don't believe me but I do care a lot about you. And I know what's wrong. [Smiling ironically, as the one who absolutely knows what is going on] My little woman, you're having your period, eh? That's why you are so irascible today...

[ALBA is about to blow up and is constraining her rage. Again everybody freezes and stage remains in darkness except for a spot of light on ALBA, who delivers her speech addressing it to the spot where QUIJOTE ACTOR was]

ALBA: [Extremely angry] Listen!

I am a woman,
not your private doll.

I am a woman. Yes.
I've got real flesh and skin
and my own brain.

I am a woman,
neither more nor less
than that word means.

[Anger has transformed into sadness] I am a woman. Yes. I am
I am a wandering being.

[In a self-confident tone] I am a woman.
I love myself.

I would not change.
[With tenderness] I am a woman and
I love you as you are,
neither more nor less: a man.

I am a woman.
Touch me and you will feel...
I am neither a nightmare,
nor a dream.

[With sadness] I am a woman. Yes. And...
I do bleed.

[ALBA, after saying the last word, bursts into tears turns her back to QUIJOTE ACTOR. Lights go up slowly on stage left and we are now in a park or a meadow. QUIJOTE ACTOR has different clothes--maybe just taking off his jacket or putting on a different one, ALBA has still the same rags and, although in a different setting, the conversation they were having continues]

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [As if he had heard the word bleed] I knew that was it. Come here, my love. Can you see, I know you better than you think... [Holding her from her back. He does not see she has been crying] Don't I? [When saying these words, it should be clear he doesn't mean them] You know I care about you. You know how much I love you...

ALBA: [Turning back, furious] Ha!

QUIJOTE ACTOR: What do you mean "ha!"?

ALBA: I mean that: HA!

QUIJOTE ACTOR: Why don't you ever believe me...

ALBA: [Interrupting him again]. Ha!

QUIJOTE ACTOR: Alba, I need you so much...! What could I do without you?

ALBA: Probably not much. You need to have someone beside you all the time. Someone to play with. You require someone who can entertain you; someone you can lean on and step on in order to keep yourself going; you need an audience so you can act all the time and escape the boredom of yourself.

QUIJOTE ACTOR: How can you be so cruel? [Silence. ALBA does not respond] Please, look at me. I want to see those beautiful eyes [As she turns to look at him, he uses her eyes as if they were a mirror and arranges his hair] How do I look?

[QUIJOTE ACTOR freezes, while ALBA delivers the following speech. This time there is not a fade-out, although there should be a spot of light on ALBA, in order to reinforce her speech]

ALBA: [Addressing QUIJOTE ACTOR] I can't believe it. [Raises her hand as if to slap him. To audience] Should I slap him?... [Goes around him] Should I kick his ass?... [Comes back to her first position, facing him and raising her knee as if to hit his genitals] What if I made him limp? [Finally she comes back to her constrained attitude. QUIJOTE ACTOR unfreezes]

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [To ALBA, getting closer] Look at those lips? Have I ever told you that you have very inviting lips...

ALBA: [Aside, turning her head towards one side, to the audience] I haven't written down the times, but I could estimate he has told me between one thousand eight hundred and two thousand times.

QUIJOTE ACTOR: And you know it, you little devil, don't you? [He is about to kiss her, but ALBA rejects him]

ALBA: These two inviting lips are not inviting you for dinner tonight. These two lips which form this cute little mouth are going to tell you the reason why Alba wanted to see you today. [Pause] I've decided that I want to see you a little less often...

QUIJOTE ACTOR: What are you talking about? I...

ALBA: ...because the more I stay with you the more I feel detached from myself. Your beautiful words and compliments have become too mellow and I don't melt like butter anymore whenever I hear them. I'm getting used to you and that habit is giving me cramps. You have flooded the ground I step on and I want to put my feet back on firm ground again. I don't want the hurt of your sweetness any longer; I prefer the aridity of my loneliness, filled with my own dust, than to carry the weight of yours and mine on my own. I want to be able to spit my thoughts out whenever I like. I don't want to swallow them because they might hurt you, for they've been hurting me.

QUIJOTE ACTOR: You're not listening to what you're saying, my dear. You're talking nonsense. I think you need a vacation. [Pause] Besides, how can you decide by yourself something that concerns us both? You've never asked me what I think, how I feel about this decision of yours, that should be ours.

ALBA: I'm sorry I'm not a doctor to cure your deafness. I think you should visit one the sooner the better, or you will even lose sense of the words you'll be speaking on stage...

QUIJOTE CHARACTER: You're just imagining things. You're not being reasonable. What have I done to you? You know how much you mean to me, how dependant I've become on you, don't you?

ALBA: I guess you have to seek a different audience if you want to continue playing the same role. I'm tired of being the passive audience who has to suffer through the same performance over and over again. I'm tired of being the understanding and silent psychologist. I also have a voice and I want to be heard too...

QUIJOTE ACTOR: ... But, of course..

ALBA: [Leaving] I have to leave now. I'll see you at the rehearsal. I'm meeting Ivan to talk about my scene and I don't want to be late. I'll see you later...

QUIJOTE ACTOR: [Almost talking to himself, in an unaffected, neutral voice] ... If that's what you want...

[BLACKOUT]

[Back to rehearsal on stage right. Scene with DON QUIJOTE. ALBA is now clearly acting her role more joyfully, with an energy that we did not see in the first scene. PEPA and DON QUIJOTE are still at the same place where we left them in the first scene]

PEPA: Listen, man! You're pissing me off. Pay me only five cents and ... you can feel me. [Pause. DON QUIJOTE does not react] Do you also want to drink my blood? [She forces him to his knees, takes DON QUIJOTE's head and puts it under her dress and when DON QUIJOTE's face comes out, there is blood on his nose and lips. Silence. DON QUIJOTE is absolutely bewildered] Do you like it, Your Excellency? [Pause] And now, gimme my 5 cents. [DON QUIJOTE does not respond. PEPA notices two BEGGARS that are passing by and whistles to them] Hey, you both! Help me with this vagabond... He don't want to pay for my services. [The two men grab DON QUIJOTE, who does not offer any resistance, and search him until they finally find a coin]

BEGGAR: I think it's a gold coin!

PEPA: [Quickly taking the coin from his hands] Lemme see [She looks at it] I think you're right, man.

[PEPA looks at DON QUIJOTE who is on the floor, kicks him and talks to the beggar who found the coin. Approaching him in a very seductive and sensual way] Hey, you,... would you like to feel me?

BEGGAR: Don't tempt me!

PEPA: I'm not temptin' nobody. I'm makin' business and I'm offerin' you some free merchandise for your help... [She is now rubbing herself against his body] Wouldn't you like me to take you around the world in two minutes, little sweet thing.

BEGGAR: [Getting very excited] How can I say no to such ripe fruit...

[PEPA takes BEGGAR by his arm and leaves with him. Lights up on the other side of stage. We hear the Stage MANAGER's voice: "Let's take a break." In order to give some time to QUIJOTE ACTOR to change into DIRECTOR's clothes and become the DIRECTOR, ALBA could continue talking to the BEGGAR actor for a few second until DIRECTOR comes out and congratulates her for her work. DIRECTOR should be about 27 years old, and he is of a different nationality than ALBA]

DIRECTOR: Alba, can I talk to you for a minute?

ALBA: [In a warning, threatening way] Don't tell me I have to change my attitude again. I'm tired. We've been rehearsing for four hours and I can't take it any longer...

DIRECTOR: [He holds her hands and congratulates her with a wide smile] No. You've done an excellent job tonight... But it's not Pepa I want to talk about... [Taking her aside, a little shy, as if trying to find the appropriate words to make himself clear] I... I... I've been thinking that we don't see each other much and the fact that we live so far away from each other is not especially helping our relationship... [Pause] I was thinking that maybe I could move to your place. [Pause] You live by yourself and there is enough

room for us both. [Pause] I want to spend more time with you... and we could even work on some of the scenes at home.

ALBA: [With a trait of sadness] I'm still recovering from my last relationship. [Pause] Besides, don't you think it's enough having you give me orders on stage? Do you also want to rule my life?

DIRECTOR: ... Alba, please, can you stop your cynicism at least once? [Pause] How long have we been seeing each other?

ALBA: ... I suppose we've been together for three or four months...

DIRECTOR: ... And, in all that time we've seen each other mainly during the weekends and that was it... [Pause] We're always so busy that there is no free time for ourselves. [Pause] Maybe you want to get rid of me...

ALBA: Don't be silly, Ivan. You know how I feel about you.

DIRECTOR: Then, let me move to your place...

ALBA: Listen! I get scared whenever I have to think of someone living with me.

DIRECTOR: Why?

ALBA: I wish I knew. [Turning her back on him. Pause] I never seem to be able to maintain a relationship with anybody. I always end up feeling imprisoned, unable to express myself... as if I were scared to voice my own will... [Pause] I guess that right now I'm in a deep searching process that I don't want anybody to interrupt... I just feel that I can continue that search more easily if I am on my own.

DIRECTOR: Do you feel I'm being oppressive with you? [Pause. ALBA, without facing him, denies with her head] Then, why can't we try? If it doesn't work we'll split. [Pause] Let's be practical, Alba. We are each paying a lot for rent and neither of us is swimming in money. We would nourish our relationship by seeing each other more often and we'd save some bucks, hmmm?

ALBA: I know. I understand what you're saying. [Pause] I guess I'm afraid of becoming dependant on you... [Pause] But let me think about it. [Silence. As if she were coming back to herself, facing him] Now... I want to go home. Tonight you wouldn't be able to get anything better from my role. [Getting closer and holding one of his hands, looking at him] Let me call you tomorrow. [She holds his neck sweetly and kisses him softly; hugs him and tenderly kisses one of his hands. She leaves]

[BLACKOUT]

[ALBA's place. She's in her room. Morning. She is smoking while pacing her living room. Goes to window and approaches phone. She sits down, puts out cigarette and dials]

ALBA: Good morning! It's me! [Pause] Did you sleep well? [...] That's good. I couldn't sleep. I was awake all night, tired but I couldn't close my eyes. [...] I was thinking about what you asked me last night... [...] Don't be silly! I don't mean whether Pepa should be more graceful or dull in the last scene. [Pause] Have you forgotten already? [...] [Getting angry] Sometimes I can't understand you. You keep me awake with your big ideas and, after a few hours, you've already forgotten them. [...] [Very angry] Yes. [...] Well, I don't know... I thought we could give it a try. [...] When? [Pause] Maybe at the end of the month,... in a week? [...] All right... I'll start making room for your things... [Pause] [Enthusiastically] Could we meet for dinner tonight before rehearsal? I thought of calling two or three close friends to celebrate... [...] [Disappointed] ...It's all right. [Pause] We'll have dinner another time. [Pause] I'll see you at rehearsal, then. [...] Bye.

[As ALBA hangs up the phone, she stands up and goes towards the corner where she has her guitar and begins to play it. She is trying to think of the words for a song... Lights dim while she starts singing, softly at beginning, then with intensity. Finally we only see a spot of light on her and the rest of the stage is in darkness]

ALBA: [Singing] Hmm.... Hm.... Hmmmm...
Hm... Larara...ra...ra...
I don't want a life of memories.
I want a now without fears,
I want to meet your look,
or a tear,
but I don't want more word games.
I'm tired of going round your body
and saying and hearing the same words
that confuse the meaning of dawn...
I don't want more games with words...

[A figure, a SHADOW MAN has come out from the darkness, behind her, and stops, enraptured by her singing. The figure is a young man. This character should be played by the same actress who will play the TEACHER, dressed as younger than 27, with tender and delicate manners and voice. He is carrying a red carnation in his hands. During this scene ALBA will never face him]

SHADOW MAN: When I hear you playing your guitar and singing, I'd like to take you away with me, and not share you with anybody else. [Pause] You are so sweet and tender to me,... and your songs have such a power to me...!

ALBA: I always thought you made fun of me whenever you flattered my singing...
[ALBA is clearly thinking of the past]

SHADOW MAN: [Approaching her a little more] ... Do you remember the night when we slept under a starry night near Bilbao... while we heard Gardel, those beautiful tangos from Argentina, full of passion and life...? And all those boleros and beautiful songs such as [singing:] “Reloj no marques las horas, haz esta noche perpetua... (clock, don't strike the hours; make this night eternal); and “Perfidia” [“Perfidy”]...?

ALBA: [Leaves guitar on the floor and stands up. Pause] Yes. Many years have passed since then.

SHADOW MAN: Do you remember the times I would sing you songs with my accordion and read poems to you...

ALBA: I misinterpreted that. I thought...

SHADOW MAN: ... You were my special star, the only one who knew my inner thoughts, the only one who knew the real me...

ALBA: That is what you used to tell me... Yep! [Pause] I remember how I got used to your visits, your presence. How you became part of my life... And then I thought we were moving towards the same goal, but...

SHADOW MAN: Remember the night I came to your place asking for shelter? I was completely desperate...

ALBA: ...because you were...

SHADOW MAN: ...because my heart was torn into pieces. Because Rodolfo wouldn't respond to the love I felt for him. [Pause] He was the first man I was deeply in love with... [As SHADOW MAN leaves, he drops the carnation next to ALBA]

ALBA: Yes. That was a shock to me. [Pause] ... And while I was consoling your broken heart I was trying to quiet and heal mine [SHADOW MAN has already disappeared. Door bell rings] ... without letting you know what I felt for you. [Door bell rings again] ... I never heard from you again. [Door bell rings for a third time, lights up and ALBA goes to open the door]

[A woman, TEACHER, friend of ALBA enters. This character should be of a different nationality. She is a teacher of movement/dance that ALBA had in the past. She is about 50 years old, although she looks much younger and full of vitality, which does not imply that she is a nervous person. ALBA opens the door and lets her in]

TEACHER: Hi, Alba! How are you? [They embrace]

ALBA: [Happy to see her, as if she had rescued her from some pain] Hi, Marcia!

TEACHER: I've been ringing the bell for quite a while. I was about to leave.

ALBA: [Closing door and motioning TEACHER to come in] Well, in a way, I was sleeping but awake. [Looks at her watch] Oh, my God! Look at the time! [Pause] Just deep in some memories. [ALBA indicates her to sit down]

TEACHER: I hope they were good ones.

ALBA: Nostalgic ones. When we have doubts, fears, or miss something in the present, we go back to get some shelter in the past, as if in search of an answer we are unable to find now; to recapture moments in which we felt fully alive, ...enraptured by starry nights. [Pause] I've always unconsciously looked for someone to protect me and shoulder responsibilities for me. I guess that I'm still a child who wants to believe that the love one feels when one is 14 or 16 can still be found. At 38 I'm unable to act my age. I'm still waiting to find something that is missing in my life and I just can't find. [Pause] Now I have an urge to find out more about my past, the past of Spain,... my roots...

TEACHER: That's the story of our lives, Alba. All of us searching. And the moment you stop that search you're dead. [Pause] So, it means that you're still alive. Just don't forget to seek within yourself.

[Silence]

ALBA: [Who was seated, stands up] ...But, enough of talking about the "tragic sense of our lives" that Unamuno very accurately discussed in his philosophical essays...and I haven't offered you anything to drink. Coffee? Tea? A glass of wine?

TEACHER: A glass of wine would be perfect. I need to cheer up. I am always dead after my teaching. [Pause]

[ALBA goes to counter next to them to get two glasses and a bottle of Spanish wine]

ALBA: [Coming back with glasses and wine] I'm so glad you came! [Pause] Whenever I am with you I feel at peace with myself, and I need that now. At least I can talk to you, openly... [Pause]... You know that Ivan is moving to my apartment? He'll probably come by the end of the month.

TEACHER: Ivan is the director of the play you are in, isn't he?

ALBA: Yes.

TEACHER: That's good news! [She stands up with glass] Let's toast to it!

ALBA: [With her glass up, but with a note of discomfort, as if she were not sure] To the future! [They make a toast. Silence] Actually, I'm a little scared. Every time I have to go through a big change in the scheme of my life, it gives me chills!

TEACHER: [Looking at her and teasing her] I hope he's a strong man, because not everybody would be able to cope with you. [She laughs] You need a man with a capital M. [Pause] Do you love him?

ALBA: That's the problem. Yes. I do. [Pause] I wish I didn't take things to heart so easily. In most of my relationships with men, except maybe once or twice, I've always felt that they wanted to conquer me; and during the conquest period, they're all attention. Once that courting period ends, and they get the prize, I feel that they only start taking from me and that they don't give anything... As if they assumed that they don't have to enrich and nurture that relationship that both of us need to keep conquering every day. [Pause] I don't know how to distance myself enough so that I can be practical and love with moderation. [Pause] If I get involved, I get involved completely, and that always scares me. I always try to gain control so that I don't lose myself in these relationships.

TEACHER: Just let yourself go with the flow and enjoy while you are in it. Swim instead of diving to try to find how deep it is.

ALBA: I suppose you're right. [Pause] ...But, tell me a little about you. How are your classes going? Are you going to visit your country next Christmas?

TEACHER: If I got someone who could substitute for me a week of my classes, I'd like to go, but I don't know yet..., and, remember that, at school, I'm the only one who teaches movement.

ALBA: [Smiling, with sincere affection] I do remember. I miss your class. [Pause] When I came to this country, it took me quite a while to make enough money to be able to attend some classes. In Spain I didn't have a chance. I began to act when I was 18, doing all kinds of roles... But I really wanted to improve and learn some techniques I didn't have.

TEACHER: You know, you've never told me. Did you know anybody when you came? How did you manage to find a job?

[Lights dim a little and we see one of the woman dancers on the corner of stage right performing with movement ALBA's words, while ALBA speaks as if completely absorbed by those memories]

ALBA: [Standing up, facing audience] No, I didn't know anybody, and the way I started to make some money was to go to bars and tell the owners I could read the tarot cards. [The dancer should begin her performance at this time] I would sit in a corner of the bar and tell people about their future. [Pause] When I was a child, my grandmother taught me. She was from Galicia, in the northwest of Spain, where there is an old tradition of sorcery and fortune-telling. I had another grandmother--my mother's mother--who was from the Basque Country, but, unfortunately I didn't have a chance to learn much from her traditions.

TEACHER: I've never had anybody read the tarot cards for me? [Pause] Do you still read them?

ALBA: When I finally got those first, small roles, I gave up reading them, [Lights go up. Dancer disappears as lights go off on stage right] ...but I can try if you want.

TEACHER: [A little uncomfortable. Smiling as if she were afraid to know about her future] I think I can wait... Actually, I wanted to invite you to my Silver wedding anniversary. We're not inviting many people, just close friends, and you're a very special person to me. And now that I think of it, it might be fun if you read the tarot cards at the party if you want.

ALBA: [Getting very excited] I have a better idea. I'll prepare a queimada in honor of the occasion.

TEACHER: A queimada? What's that?

ALBA: It's a special drink that is prepared by following a ritual, originally attributed to witches, in Galicia. I'll need to find aguardiente (burning water) and I'll show you how to prepare it. I love the idea. In all the years I've spent here I'd never thought of preparing one. We can make a special spell that will create the appropriate atmosphere for the reading of the tarot cards. [As if to herself] It's funny how, lately, I find any excuse to carry out things that relate to Spain or dig into her traditions.

TEACHER: [Very excited, too] That sounds wonderful. [Pause. As if just remembering] Ah, by the way! I've invited to this party a Spaniard who is a professor of theater for children and his school needs a movement teacher for the next academic year. I thought you might be interested.

ALBA: [Not too excited] I'll consider it. [Gratefully] Thanks for thinking of me.

TEACHER: Sure. [Pause] This Rioja is already going to my head. [Pause] Why don't we go for dinner somewhere, that will cheer you up; then, we maybe could go dancing. My husband is out of town and my two sons are spending a few days with friends in the mountains.

ALBA: [With relief] That's an excellent idea. It's been such a long time since I've gone dancing. [Extremely happy] I love you [ALBA hugs TEACHER]. I'll be ready in a minute. In the meantime, you can listen to some flamenco music that I bought a few days ago, just to get into the mood. [ALBA has left room, TEACHER goes towards the record-player. ALBA's voice from inside] You can tell me if you'd like me to take some flamenco music to your party. [TEACHER picks up a flamenco record, plays it and dances a few steps as lights go off]

TEACHER: Oh, I'd love to!

[BLACKOUT]

ACT II

[Back to stage. A scene by a river, not far from a village. ALBA is now playing JUANA, a peasant. Dressed in dark clothes. She is about 25 years old. JUANA is alone, washing clothes in the river. She sings a song that reveals her sadness and desires to have a different life]

JUANA: [Singing a song by Atahualpa Yupanqui while washing]
I dreamt that the river was talking to me
with a voice from the snowy mountains
and sadly reminded me of the things I long for.
What a sad thing to be a river!
I wished I could be a pond
and hear the whistle of the canes
when the moon kisses them...

[ADELA had walked towards JUANA while she was singing and stopped some steps behind her, listening to her for a while. ADELA is about JUANA's age and should be played by the actress who played the TEACHER. Finally she greets JUANA]

ADELA: Hi, Juana!

JUANA: [Turning around suddenly] You gave me a fright. I didn't hear you coming.

ADELA: I heard you singing and I didn't want to interrupt you.

JUANA: I need to finish quickly. It's almost noon and I want to make it to Mass on time.

ADELA: I'm not going to go today.

JUANA: What do you mean? You're not coming to Mass?

ADELA: I'm leaving.

JUANA: Are you going to visit your relatives in Rionuevo?

ADELA: No. I'm leaving. I'm leaving the village.

JUANA: [Standing up. Facing ADELA] When did you decide that?

ADELA: You know, I've been thinking about it for quite a while, and I've reached the point where I can't stand it here any longer. [Pacing nervously] I can't bear the rotten

smell I breath when I walk along the streets, with all those old women with poisonous eyes watching me from the windows of their houses and gossiping every time I pass by. I'm tired of being told what I can't do. I'm tired of acting decent...

JUANA: Oh, Jesus, Adela. How can you say such a thing? You say it as if you'd like to be indecent.

ADELA: If indecent means to enjoy life, yes, I do. I feel the heat of the summer in my whole body and I can't keep it cool any longer...

JUANA: Adela, you shouldn't say those thoughts out loud. Someone might hear you.

ADELA: I don't care any more. [Pause] During Mass, when all are praying for forgiveness of their sins, I'll be leaving with Rogelio, one of the reapers who came to work here for the summer. We're going to cross the battlefield and fight the Nationalists.

JUANA: [Crosses herself] Dear God! Adela, you've lost your mind! You're speaking with a devilish tongue and should go to church right now and confess.

ADELA: It's a little late to go to confession, for I don't feel remorse. Besides, for me to confess the things you think are a sin wouldn't change my ideas, so I would be a hypocrite,... and there are already plenty of those in the village.

JUANA: I can't understand what has gotten into you, Adela. Since we were small and played together, I always noticed you wanted to be different from us; you couldn't behave like the other girls. You were always breaking all the rules, wouldn't obey any orders except your own... Always with the boys, letting them touch you...

ADELA: [Sensually happy] I enjoyed it. [Smiling] It was heaven...

JUANA: Adela, please, don't mix heaven with lust!

ADELA: [Feeling sad for JUANA] I hope you'll have a chance some day to find that kind of heaven. It's the only one we have. You should know by now. Haven't you told me you read some of the poetry your brother brings home...?

JUANA: [Suddenly scared, interrupts her] Shhh! Don't say it so loud! Someone might hear you! [Pause] The poems I read refer to a special love... [Dreamy expression]

ADELA: Don't wait too long for that prince you expect to come and rescue you. Princes exist only in fairy tales, remember, and your head is too full of those. Try to wake up, Juana, before it's too late. [Pause] Now, I have to leave to pick up my things and get ready.

JUANA: [Goes towards ADELA with tears in her eyes]. Promise me you will write. I'm going to miss you. You're the only friend I can talk to openly.

ADELA: [Holding JUANA by her shoulders] Take care of yourself and don't wait too long for that prince. There are plenty of attractive men in the village who want to take you to heaven here on earth.

JUANA: [Blushing] Oh, don't say that!

ADELA: [After looking into JUANA's eyes with intensity as if she wanted to help her] Why don't you come with me, Juana? You could enjoy life, be happier with the people on the other side...!

JUANA: [Confused] I have parents and brothers here. [Evasively] I can't leave them. Maybe when this war is over, I'll be able to visit you.

ADELA: [Gives JUANA a big hug] Goodbye, Juana. Take care of yourself.

JUANA: You too, Adela. God be with you both.

[ADELA leaves. JUANA remains thinking for a few seconds and, then, goes back to her washing]

[BLACKOUT]

[ALBA's place: Living room. She is writing on the floor next to her guitar. She has a glass of wine next to her. DIRECTOR is sitting at a desk, smoking, working on the play he is directing. He is having coffee]

DIRECTOR: [After a silence] I never thought about the possibility of your being the dramaturg for the play. Since you're a Spaniard, you could have done it quite well, I'm sure. It could have helped you to get into your character more easily.

ALBA: Uh huh! [Pause] I've been reading about the history of my country since we started the rehearsals. [As if to herself; the DIRECTOR does not hear the last words] I guess I've begun to realize how much I miss it.

DIRECTOR: Have you? I didn't know that.

ALBA: You never asked!

DIRECTOR: Did I hear a little note of resentment in your voice? [Pause. ALBA does not answer] ... Well, it's great if you've been reading some stuff. Maybe you can help me with the last part of the play. I've been talking to Maurice and we're not sure about the third act...

ALBA: Sure! It's the only way I can help YOU. I am a Spaniard, acting in your play,... anything else I can do for you?

DIRECTOR: Are you being sarcastic again? I thought you were happy working on this project.

[Clearly he does not want to talk about anything else. After a pause, he continues]

You know, it's a pity I can't find any Spanish women playwrights we could take sketches from for the last act, where the NEW WOMAN should appear.

[ALBA continues writing and drinking wine. DIRECTOR goes on as if talking to himself for program notes]

We have a Pepa and a Don Quijote to represent Valle-Inclán's idea of the esperpento--the absurd, the grotesque. Valle-Inclán said that the tragic reality of Spanish life can only be conveyed by a systematic deformation, "because Spain is a grotesque deformation of European civilization."

[Pause. ALBA continues writing and does not respond. He continues]

Later, for the second Act, we have Juana, a peasant and her family and friends, as an idea taken from Lorca's rural tragedies, at the time of the Civil War... [Pause] But, what kind of woman should we have for the third Act?

[Pause. ALBA does not answer. He goes towards ALBA]

I'd like to have a woman that shows the new Spain... and, if possible, from the point of view of a woman writer...

ALBA: [Sarcastically again, but DIRECTOR does not get it] It's more interesting to have the objectivity of a foreigner, like you, who visited the country and...

DIRECTOR: [Interrupting her, as if she had understood his wonderful idea, agreeing with her] ...That's exactly what I thought.

[ALBA is now looking at him with desire, forgetting her cynicism, and approaches him after drinking the wine that was left in her glass]

ALBA: How did you get the idea of doing a production about Spain? Why did you want to have a woman as a protagonist to dramatize the story of my country? [Pause] Were you in love with a Spanish woman who bewitched you? [ALBA is adopting a seductive attitude that reveals her desire for him, which she has been able to show thanks to the effect of the wine]

DIRECTOR: I can't deny I love Spanish women. They have a passion and a courage that I deeply admire. I love their temperament,... although, at times, they frighten me.

ALBA: [Now very close to him. Smiling while she puts her face in front of his very close] Do I frighten you?

DIRECTOR: [Defensive, freeing himself from her] Don't be silly, Alba. Of course you don't. [Pause. Continues with his speech] And what would be better than a woman to represent the Spanish country? [Pause. ALBA has gone back to him and she is behind him and puts her arms around his neck. She kisses one of his ears. After a few seconds, he stands up and walks away from her. Lights another cigarette] Spanish history has always interested me and Lorca was my favorite poet, my idol, when I was younger. He was considered a hero in my country, whereas in yours he was buried for many years... I always wanted to dramatize the idea I had in my mind: about Spanish people, about the two Spains that you see all throughout your history: the idealist and magic Spain and the one that is realistic and inquisitional. Spain as the mother of those two opposites: Don Quijote and Sancho. [Pause. ALBA has seated herself trying to follow his conversation. DIRECTOR turns to ALBA] You know, I met Maurice when I was in Spain, and I told him about my idea. He was very much interested in Spanish literature, and, as he was a playwright, we decided to carry out this project together.

ALBA: I'm glad you did. [Standing up and going towards DIRECTOR again]. It's how I got my role. Nobody wanted me on stage because of my Spanish accent and,...voilà, I met the Director--you--who was looking for an actress with precisely that accent: me. [She is hugging him from behind, without getting any reaction from him]

DIRECTOR: [Turning around and facing her, which is a way of freeing himself from her hug] I've told Maurice to talk to you. You might help him with some ideas for the last Act. [Pause] What do you think?

ALBA: [A little disappointed. Giving up trying to seduce him. Aside. To audience] Isn't this amazing? Years and years of sexual repression in Spain, and now that I'm trying to overcome it and blatantly show my desires... I'm rejected! [To DIRECTOR] Sure, why not?

DIRECTOR: [Looking at his watch] Well, it's a little late and I need to be fresh for tomorrow. [He yawns] I'm a little sleepy. You'll have to excuse me, Alba. It's better that I go to bed. [Pause] If you're staying up for a little longer, you should work on your character a bit more...

ALBA: [She has not heard the last words. Lights have dimmed on stage and only a spot of light is on her. DIRECTOR character freezes. She delivers the following poem addressed to him, almost in a sensual dance, movement around his body, while reciting poem]

I wish I could shout,
spit,
vomit,
the feeling of my loving you.
I'd like to spill over the wine

of my wanting you tonight
and let you drink from it.
And drink it back
from your eyes,
from your ears,
from your mouth,
from your savage tenderness.
I wish you would allow me to give you
TONIGHT
all the feeling,
pure,
unpolluted,
the whole meaning of a passion
running wild through the drunkenness
of my veins...

[Lights up. DIRECTOR unfreezes]

DIRECTOR: Don't stay up too late. You should have a good rest. Tomorrow we will be having a long rehearsal. [He kisses her forehead. She closes her eyes and keeps them closed until he leaves] Goodnight, darling.

ALBA: [Still with her eyes closed] Goodnight. You sleep tight. [Aside] It won't be easy for me after having got so horny...

[ALBA finally opens her eyes. She dims lights of living room. Lights a cigarette, and goes to pour more wine in her glass. Chooses a record by Lluís Llach and plays "Tinc un clavell per tu" (I Have a Carnation for You). This music should be kept on softly throughout this whole scene. Then, goes towards the place where she was writing before. She sits with her back to bedroom. She closes her eyes, listening to the music, feeling happy within herself. It would be nice if there were a window at that corner and the moonlight could reflect on ALBA's face. She continues drinking. Then, puts out her cigarette and begins to caress her body very smoothly and slowly. Lights dim a little more and a slight spot of light is on ALBA only, as A SHADOW WOMAN--performed by the actress who plays the TEACHER--comes out from the darkness, from the same direction DIRECTOR left. SHADOW WOMAN stays behind her, towards stage right not too close to her. ALBA has her eyes closed during this whole scene, while she keeps touching herself and obtaining pleasure out of it]

SHADOW WOMAN: Do you remember the times we spent together when we were small? [No answer] We used to try on different clothes and play roles. [Pause] One of those summers we spent several days in a kind of mansion that belonged to Natalia, do you remember? One night we had a sort of party. Her parents let us have it and we got some whiskey without them knowing. Everybody, including Natalia, went to bed, except you and me. I dressed as a bride and you dressed as the groom and we started playing a married couple on their wedding night. [ALBA is clearly enjoying those memories and

she smiles] It was probably the first time we discovered what obtaining pleasure out of our body meant. [ALBA actually comes and gives a brief, small cry of pleasurable release] ... [SHADOW WOMAN could make a sound of pleasure, too]... and we slept together the whole night. [Pause] Next morning we told Natalia that we had been in heaven; that we had finally understood what heaven meant and we laughed the whole morning. We explained to her how she could do it to herself. [Pause] After that experience, I kept doing it to myself quite often. [Pause] It's a pity you were so ashamed of that experience just because the nuns considered masturbation a sin. [Pause] You should have continued doing it, or maybe you did...! Did you? [No answer. Pause, while she starts disappearing through the darkness]

[Lights come up slowly, although still dim, after SHADOW WOMAN has disappeared. ALBA opens her eyes, yawns and goes to bedroom, with an expression of happiness in her face. Lluís Llach's music goes louder as lights dim]

[BLACKOUT]

[Back to stage again. JUANA is in a garret, sitting on the floor and it is clear she is hiding while she reads]

JUANA: [Reading aloud names of poets, while she is searching, in a pile of books] Neruda, Twenty Poems of Love and a Desperate Song,... Miguel Hernández,... Lorca, The Gypsy Ballads... [She keeps this last one by Lorca and reads some stanzas out loud]

Y que yo me la llevé al río creyendo que era mozueta, pero tenía marido.	And, well I took her down to the river, Believing her a maiden girl, But she had a husband.
--	---

[JUANA's voice trembles as she reads the following:]

En las últimas esquinas toqué sus pechos dormidos y se me abrieron de pronto como ramos de jacintos. El almidón de su enagua me sonaba en el oído, como una pieza de seda rasgada por diez cuchillos	Beyond the last turn of the road I touched her sleeping breasts Like clusters of the hyacinth They opened to my caress. The starch in all her underskirts A sound in my ear made Just like a piece of heavy silk Being ripped by ten knife blades.
---	---

Pasadas las zarzadoras, los juncos y los espinos, bajo su mata de pelo hice un hoyo sobre el limo. Yo me quité la corbata. Ella se quitó el vestido. Yo el cinturón con revólver.	We left behind the hawthorn bush The reeds, and clumps of brier I made beneath her crop of hair A hollow in the mire. First I took off my neckerchief. Her dress she took off then. I my revolver and holster belt
---	--

Ella sus cuatro corpiños. Ni nardos ni caracolas tienen el cutis tan fino ni los cristales con luna relumbran con ese brillo Sus muslos se me escapaban como peces sorprendidos, la mitad llenos de lumbre la mitad llenos de frío. Aquella noche corrí el mejor de los caminos. montado en potra de nácar sin bridas y sin estribos.	And she four crinolines. No petaled rose, no fragile shell Ever boasted a skin so fine; No crystal glass touched by the moon Ever glistened with such shine Her thighs kept slipping away from me The way fish dart in surprise, Just halfway charged with blazing fire, And halfway charged with ice. That far-off night I traveled upon The best road anywhere, Without a bridle, without stirrups, Astride that pearly mare.
---	---

[JUANA's brother has appeared and remains listening to the last two stanzas that ALBA is reading]

Sucia de besos y arena, yo me la llevé del río. Con el aire se batían las espadas de los lirios. Me porté como quien soy. Como un gitano legítimo.	I led her back from the river banks Her soiled with kisses and sand. The sword-blades of wild iris plants Were beating against night-wind. I acted just the way I am, Like a gypsy that's all man.
---	---

[JUANA's BROTHER interrupts the last stanza. Her BROTHER is about 27 and should be played by the actor who plays DIRECTOR]

BROTHER: Juana! [She drops the book on her lap as if someone had caught her doing something wrong] It's all right. It's only me. Don't worry. [Pause] I never thought you might like poetry. [Pause] Anyway, I'm sure you can't understand those poems, my little sister. [Pause. Approaches her and, as she stands up, he hugs her sweetly, in a paternalistic way, and kisses her forehead] We're waiting for you. [He remains in front of her holding both her hands] Your little brother and I want you to iron our shirts. Could you do it quickly? We don't have much time left to go to Mass [They look at each other for a moment. A beat]

JUANA: [Frees herself from him] Of course, brother. You don't need your sweet talk to convince me to do my task. You know perfectly that I always do. [Pause. Suddenly anxious] Will you take me to town next Sunday to see a movie?

BROTHER: [Acting again in a clear paternalistic way] We'll see. If you behave yourself, I might. [A voice from downstairs, JUANA's second brother: "Juana, can you bring me my shoes? We're going to be late."]

JUANA: I'm coming. [JUANA and BROTHER go together downstairs]

[FADE-OUT]

[Lights up. Scene in JUANA's home, downstairs. Kitchen. After Mass. The men are not there. We see only JUANA and her MOTHER, who are cleaning up table. MOTHER should be played by the same actor who played BROTHER and DIRECTOR]

JUANA: Mother, don't you think it rather unfair that we have to stay here cleaning up the mess after lunch every Sunday, while men go to enjoy themselves in the bar? And play cards or domino? We work in the fields like them [MOTHER does not answer, as if being aware what JUANA says is childish] I wish I were a man, so I could go to the bar too.

MOTHER: Juana, stop talking nonsense. You're not a child anymore; you are 25, so act your age. You know very well that the bar is a man's place; it has always been. A woman's place is in the home.

JUANA: But, wouldn't you like to go also to the bar and chat with other women, and play cards,...?

MOTHER: I don't want to listen, child. I'm sure your dear friend Adela put those ideas in your mind. [Pause. Showing her disapproval] That whore who ran away with one of those reapers.

[Loud voices, shouting, off stage]

JUANA: What is that? [Pause. She listens] Something has happened. [She runs out to find out. She comes back]

MOTHER: What is it?

JUANA: They can't find Tico! They say the last time they saw him he was in the river!

MOTHER: His father and brother never looked well after him. It had to happen some day. Let's go and see if we can help. [MOTHER and JUANA take off apron and go out. Brief FADE-OUT. MOTHER and JUANA come in again]

JUANA: [Pale. Frightened] It's terrible, mother! I will never forget Tico's sweet smile on his face, although his whole body was swollen by the water.

MOTHER: We should go and help them to prepare everything for the funeral. Remember they don't have a woman in the house and no relatives either. Tico's father can have his own faults, but he has helped your father in the fields many times. Now it is our duty to help him. [Pause] We can take turns sitting with the corpse. Let me go now while you finish tidying up the kitchen. You can go later in the evening. [MOTHER leaves. JUANA is expressionless, while some tears are shown in her eyes. She stays that way for a few seconds, then continues cleaning up kitchen]

[BLACKOUT]

[ALBA's place. Living room. ALBA is reading. Phone rings]

ALBA: [Happy to hear MAURICE's voice] Maurice! Hi, how are you? [...] No, you didn't interrupt me. I was just reading some poems. [...] By different poets: Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Alfonsina Storni, Gloria Fuertes... [...] It's very kind of you to say that. But I still have to learn some technique to be able to express myself... more clearly. Actually, you're the first person I've read some of my writings... [Pause] Listen, I want to thank you for the wonderful time I had with you the other day. You make me feel comfortable with myself... Thanks for your friendship, Maurice. [...] What? [...] Of course I like painting! [...] Frida what? [...] No, I don't know her work, but I'm looking forward to seeing it. [...] This Saturday, then? At 1:00? [...] Great! I'm really excited and looking forward to it. I'll tell Ivan... [...] [Disappointed] ...you've already asked? [...] It would be rare that he could make it, anyway. [Pause. Trying to cheer up again] Better for us. It's good to free oneself from his orders from time to time, don't you think? [...] Then, I'll see you Saturday at 1:00. [...] Bye, Maurice. Thanks. [ALBA hangs up]

[BLACKOUT]

[ALBA's place. Living room. DIRECTOR is working at desk. He is smoking. Door bell rings. He goes to open the door. It is MAURICE. MAURICE should be played by the same actress who plays ALBA]

DIRECTOR: [At the door] Come in, Maurice. I was waiting for you.

MAURICE: [He should show contrast with the DIRECTOR. MAURICE should be sweeter and more sensitive and perceptive] Thanks. [Walking in with a bunch of irises] I brought Alba some flowers.

DIRECTOR: [Without paying much attention] You can put them somewhere. She's not here.

[Pause] I have some ideas in mind I wanted to discuss with you. But I still don't know how we are going to work out the end of JUANA's scene and link it to the third Act. [Pause. Realizing he has not offered MAURICE a drink] Forgive me. I haven't offered you anything to drink. What would you like?

MAURICE: A beer will be fine. Thanks.

[Phone rings]

DIRECTOR: Maurice, can you pick it up?

MAURICE: Sure. [Picks up the phone] Hi, Alba! [...] Yes, he's here. Do you want to talk to...?

[...]. I'll tell him. And don't worry. Enjoy yourself. We're going to be working together on the script for a while. [...] Bye. [Hangs up] It was Alba. She said she'll be back late tonight. She's gone to a party and asked me to tell you to go to bed without waiting for her.

DIRECTOR: [Indifferent] That's fine. We'll be working on the script for several hours and we'll do it better alone.

MAURICE: It's what I told her. [Silence. DIRECTOR brings a beer to MAURICE] Thanks. [Pause] How are things going between Alba and you?

DIRECTOR: Quite well, I would say. She's working really hard on her character. I wouldn't have been able to find a better actress for these roles. I'm really excited about this project.

MAURICE: [A little shy] I didn't mean your professional relationship. I meant your living together...

DIRECTOR: Everything is fine. Why do you ask?

MAURICE: I was just wondering. [Pause] Alba seems a very warm person, with a lot of energy, but, ironically, I never see that when she is with you...

DIRECTOR: [Smiling with double meaning] ... Maybe she keeps all of it for bed....and I'm sorry I can't invite you to see us together at those moments... [Pause] Oh, let's leave it. I was just joking.

MAURICE: I don't know why I think you're seeing her as an actress, and forgetting about the woman who is behind the role. I never see you going out with her...

DIRECTOR: Oh, Maurice! Stop it! What is this? A test of conscience? [Pause] You know very well I don't have the time to go anywhere right now. The most important thing for me at this very moment is this play we're working on. And, for Alba too. You can ask her, if you want, and she'll confirm my own words.

[At this point, lights on Stage right should go up slowly. That part of the stage should have been in darkness during the whole talk kept by MAURICE and DIRECTOR. Lights should be dim, though. What we should see on stage right is only a fire, with blue flames, that emanate from the making of a queimada. It is the TEACHER's party, to which ALBA has gone. In this scene we should never be able to distinguish the figures, just the silhouettes of 3 men and 3 women, dancers, around the fire. They have cups in their hands and they are waiting for ALBA--now one of the dancers--to pour some queimada into them. ALBA is making a spell--mimed by a woman dancer. In the background we

should hear folk music from Galicia--celtic music or muñeiras. The music, however, should not be too loud yet, for both men on stage left continue with their conversation]

MAURICE: I've spent some time with her and she seems anxious to talk. She's been telling me about her experience and feelings since she began to play the roles of these Spanish women.

DIRECTOR: Probably she told you she's reading a lot about Spanish history and literature.

MAURICE: I have also read some and it's really insightful and deep. [Pause] Has she shown anything to you?

DIRECTOR: [Defensive] ... Well, I suppose she understands how involved I am with my work and tries not to distract me from it... And, anyway, I think that she feels more comfortable if she doesn't show it to me ... and keeps it for herself. I don't want to intrude on her privacy, you know?

MAURICE: I've come to the conclusion that you have at home the character we need to write about in the third act. [Pause] Probably she could tell you about her own past, her life... How much of that do you know?

DIRECTOR: Again, Maurice, if Alba doesn't want to tell me about her past, I don't want to bother her with impertinent questions. She has the right to her privacy.

[Stage right: We see now only a man and a woman at the fire. Manuel de Falla's main theme from El amor brujo (Love, the Magician) is now starting, a little louder, but not much yet. We see only a sensuous dance in silhouettes, carried out by a man and a woman--presumably ALBA]

DIRECTOR: [Evasive] In any case, Maurice, maybe you should work with Alba. It seems that she is being open with you. You should ask her to contribute to the writing of...

MAURICE: [Interrupting him] ... I've already told her, and we've got some ideas. [Pause] I simply wanted to talk to you about her and... remind you that maybe she needs a little more attention from you... You might lose her...

DIRECTOR: [More aggressive] I've heard enough, Maurice. You don't need to be so suspicious.

I know Alba perfectly well. We've been together for quite a while now and I assure you she loves me...

MAURICE: [As if to himself] Yes... but, do you love her?

[We don't hear an answer. Falla's music is now louder. Lights dim on DIRECTOR and MAURICE, who are now working at desk, although we don't hear them any longer. Dance between man and woman. They end up embracing passionately and finally they lie down on the floor as miming their love making]

[FADE-OUT]

[ALBA's place: bedroom. Stage left--stage right remains in darkness. ALBA opens door and enters quietly. We realize it is almost dawn. As ALBA enters, she takes off shoes and most of her clothes and goes into bed quietly. DIRECTOR moves a little bit, then turns around as if looking for ALBA's body. He starts touching her, first, softly and, then, aggressively, until he finally reaches his climax, then he gives her a sweet kiss and turns to his original position to continue sleeping. ALBA, during all his ritual, has remained passive, and once he has finished, she gets off bed, picks up JUANA's clothes and gets dressed. Walks with a painful sadness towards stage right. Lights dim, then, on stage left and go up on stage right. We are back on stage, on a scene by the river. JUANA is walking alone towards the river of the village with more laundry to wash. Two PEASANT women from the village, dressed in black--who could be played by the actress who plays TEACHER and the actor who plays DIRECTOR--or by two of the dancers--although we should not be able to recognize them--are walking in opposite direction to JUANA. They cross and stop her to tell her the news]

PEASANT WOMAN 1: [With malice] Juanita, child. Do you know about your friend Adelita?

JUANA: [Suspicious] What about her?

PEASANT WOMAN1: She was killed on the enemy lines!

JUANA: [Aggressive and angry] Who told you that? [Pause] They're lying! It's not true!

PEASANT WOMAN 2: My son read the telegram that he took to Adela's relatives. [Pause] You see, my child, it is God's punishment for her sins; for running away with that man and crossing to the enemy lines. [Pause] She should have followed your example and stayed where her place was, here in the village...

JUANA: [Almost to herself] and get rotten... like me. [Almost voiceless, to the PEASANTS] Yes... Thank you for telling me.

[The two women leave. JUANA continues walking towards the river, like a zombie, crying. She finally reaches the bank and drops the basket with laundry. She falls on her knees and begins to cry, with big sobbs. A figure, a Nationalist CAPTAIN, approaches riding a white horse. He sees JUANA on the ground and stops. Gets off the horse. The CAPTAIN should be played by the actor who plays the DIRECTOR. He should be about 40 years old]

CAPTAIN: What's the matter, sweetheart? [No answer] Can I do something for you? Let me help you up [He holds JUANA by her arms and helps her to stand up. He takes a handkerchief to dry the tears from her eyes. This scene should remind the audience of the Don Juan character first, and then, of the Comendador--character of Fuenteovejuna (the Sheepwell), by Lope de Vega] Let me wipe the tears from those two bright stars. [JUANA looks at him for the first time and seems hypnotized by this man's manners, by her way he is taking care of her] What's the name of this beautiful girl?

JUANA: Juana, Sir. At your service.

CAPTAIN: Look at those beautiful eyes! Oh, my! Your tears have made them even brighter!

JUANA: Please, sir, don't make fun of me at this moment.

CAPTAIN: Oh, God forbid. You shouldn't be afraid of hearing the truth. I'm bewitched by your exquisite beauty. [He caresses her face] What a cute face you have, and... can you open your mouth a little bit? [She opens her mouth] Yes, that's it... Let me have a look at your teeth.... Hmmmm, what a treasure of pearls you keep inside! And those pink cheeks... and, what appetizing lips! May I kiss them?

JUANA: Please, sir, don't tease me this way. I need to start washing these clothes [Pointing at her basket]. Otherwise, it will get dark and my mother will scold me. [She tries to get back to her washing but CAPTAIN holds her by an arm and pulls her back to him]

CAPTAIN: How can you think I'm teasing you? You've put a spell on me and I can't go away from you. [He looks at her body] Your figure and manners, are not those of a peasant, but those of a Castilian Queen. You're made to be a King's wife. [Pause. While looking at her] Cupid has trespassed my heart with one of his arrows and I'm madly in love with you. [JUANA is bewitched by his manners. She does not show any resistance to his pulling her towards him] This love I feel for you, that is so sudden, is all the effect of your exquisite beauty. A man comes to love you as much in ten minutes as he might someone else in three years.

JUANA: Please, Sir, don't talk to me like that. I'd been taught that one must never believe what the soldier or gentleman say, because they just try to take advantage of peasant girls.

CAPTAIN: But, I'm not one of those, my girl.

JUANA: You see, Sir, I might be a poor peasant girl, but I rather see myself dead than dishonored.

CAPTAIN: I know that, Juana. How would I have such a wicked soul as to take advantage of a girl like you? I'll marry you, do anything you wish! [He is about to kiss

her and she does not oppose to it. He does kiss her. Suddenly, he begins to touch her with aggressiveness and brutality, as he gets more and more excited. JUANA tries to free herself from him. Finally she escapes from him trembling and begins to run towards village, leaving her laundry behind]

CAPTAIN: [Calling her] Juana, wait! [She stops] Please. Forgive me. I was carried away. Don't get frightened. I love you. Please don't leave me like this. Let's make up first and then you can go. [He extends his hand towards her, waiting for hers. JUANA hesitates]

JUANA: Promise me that you'll let me go.

CAPTAIN: You have my word of honor, dear child. [JUANA goes towards him, gives him her hand] And now, just kiss me good bye. [CAPTAIN closes his eyes and waits for JUANA's kiss. She hesitates, but finally she kisses him, and when she does, he takes a good hold of her, so that she will not go this time. He forces her on the floor while putting a hand on her mouth. His tone of voice and attitude have completely changed] Stop kicking me. Who do you think you are? You should be kissing my feet for making love to one of your class. [She continues offering resistance] ... And, on the other hand, I love when you women get angry, because it means they want IT... And I'm going to give it to you... Don't be impatient.

[BLACKOUT]

[ALBA's place. She's on the phone and we realize she's on a long distance call]

ALBA: [Very excited] Mariona, are you still there? [...] I barely hear you... Now it's better. [...] So, how is everything going? I still can't believe I'm talking to you, after so many years. It sounds as if you were next door! [...] I'm all right... [Pause] ... Well, just a little depressed, but that's nothing new for you. Remember how easily I cried when I was little? And even later, when I was older. [...] Why? [...] Well, I still don't know. I'd like to find out myself... I feel I've spent my life obeying others' orders,... and running and running away from my own self, never listening to what it had to say to myself... I just feel as if life were slipping away from me... But, what about you? Do you still write? [...] I understand. In the moment you create a family you have to concentrate on them and you don't have much time left for yourself. [...] [Suddenly disturbed, uncomfortable and more aggressive] No. Don't. [...] Yes, I'm still dealing with that past, but I don't think I'm ready to cope with it. Lately, I keep longing for my country, as if I had an urge, as if only there I could find what I'm missing. But, Mariona, [...] Oh, really? [...] In Seville? That's great! [...] I am going to start teaching movement here pretty soon. [...] What? [...] I don't know, but what I know is that I need to take out something that is knotting my stomach. I need to find out what it is, though. I feel as if I were a volcano that is about to explode. [...] Yes, I'll let you know [...]. Thanks. [...] Please, make some time to write me, even if it's only a few words. You can't imagine how much I love to receive letters from you [ALBA is about to cry] [...] All right [...] Write soon. [...] A big kiss for you, too. [...] Bye. [ALBA hangs up]

[FADE-OUT except for a spot of light on ALBA. I-AKI, her son, killed in the war, comes out from darkness. ALBA never turns around. She faces the audience. A few seconds after he shows up, another figure, opposite to I-AKI, appears. It is ALBA's HUSBAND, in military custom. The HUSBAND should be played by the same actor who plays DIRECTOR. I-AKI could be performed by one of the dancers and should be about 15 years old; blood is covering his face and body and he's wearing a Republican uniform. For this scene there should be three spots of light, the one falling on ALBA being more intense, forming a triangle, with ALBA downstage center. Both men will address ALBA, and not each other]

I-AKI: Why did you abandon me? You knew how much I loved you and needed you at that age. And you left me with a step-brother who hated me, and a step-father...

ALBA: [Without turning around. Trying to contain her tears] I thought you would understand that I couldn't continue living in that hell... I believed that, with the passing of time, you'd come to understand...

I-AKI: [In a loud cry of pain] They killed me! They killed me! Did you know? [Pause. [We see that ALBA reacts as if someone were stabbing her with each of his sentences] ... And you weren't there to rescue me...

ALBA: [Crying] Please, forgive me.... I've always been so weak... Never learned how to fight adversity... So I'd rather run away... and be silent, swallowing my cowardice.

HUSBAND: Adulteress! Whore! Your weakness was your body. How did you dare leave me with a child that you had conceived with another man, a man from the enemy lines? [Pause] I suppose you didn't have enough with what I gave you in bed, did you?

ALBA: You never gave me anything. You just wanted to find your own pleasure and used me to get it. I was beaten by you so often! Do you remember? ...and that gave you pleasure too... I ended up thinking, though, that pleasure didn't exist for me... Until I found out with someone else what love was,... but he was killed, and I couldn't go back to hell after having tasted a piece of heaven. [She has been crying throughout whole scene]

[Phone rings. Lights go up as the two figures disappear from stage. Phone continues ringing for a while... ALBA does not move until phone stops ringing. Then she walks toward guitar and reads out loud from a paper that is on the floor: "Alfonsina and the Sea," a poem written for the Argentinean poetess who committed suicide, Alfonsina Storni]

ALBA: [Reading in English part of the poem, while we start hearing Mercedes Sosa's voice--record--singing this song. Lights dim a little and, after we hear first or second stanza, ALBA disappears, going towards bedroom--stage right, while we continue listening to the song. After a few seconds, lights up on stage right. The river. JUANA is walking towards river. She is deep in thought and holds her belly with pain. She stays in

front of the water for a moment, then, begins to walk slowly into the water. FADE-OUT with end of song:]

Along the smooth sand licked by the sea your small footprint is not reappearing any more	Por la blanda arena que lame el mar tu pequeña huella no vuelve más
and a lonely path of grief and silence have reached the foam.	y un sendero solo de pena y silencio llegó hasta la espuma.
God knows what anguish accompanied you, which old griefs silenced your voice and kept you lulled by the singing of the seasnails, the song that is sung in the dark bottom of the sea by the seasnails.	Sabe Dios qué angustia te acompañó qué dolores viejos calló tu voz para recostarte arrullada en el canto de las caracolas marinas, la canción que canta en el fondo oscuro del mar la caracola.
You're leaving, Alfonsina, with your loneliness	Te vas, Alfonsina, con tu soledad.
What new poems did you go to seek? And an old voice of wind and salt is breaking your soul again and is calling you, and you walk over there, as in dreams, asleep, Alfonsina, dressed by the sea.	(¿Qué poemas nuevos fuiste a buscar! Y una voz antigua de viento y de sal, te requiebra el alma, y te está llamando, y te vas hacia allá, como en sueños, dormida, Alfonsina, vestida de mar.
Five mermaids will take you through paths of seaweeds and coral; and glowing seahorses will make a ring beside you.	Cinco sirenitas te llevarán por senderos de algas y de coral; y fosforescentes caballos marinos harán una ronda a tu lado.
And the sea dwellers will be playing very soon by your side.	Y los habitantes del agua van a jugar pronto a tu lado.
"Draw my lamp a little lower, let me sleep, wet-nurse, in peace.	"Bájame la lámpara un poco más, déjame que duerma, odriza, en paz.
And if he calls, don't ever tell him I'm here tell him I'm gone."	Y si llama él, no le digas nunca que estoy Di que me he ido."
And if he calls, don't ever tell him I'm here"	"Y si llama él, no le digas nunca que estoy
tell him that Alfonsina is not coming back You're leaving, Alfonsina, with your loneliness	di que Alfonsina no vuelve." Te vas Alfonsina, con tu soledad,

[BLACKOUT]

ACT III

[ALBA's place: bedroom. White screen upstage center. Projection of one of Frida Khalo's painting: "Henry Ford Hospital," (1932). ALBA is sleeping with a book of poems by Gloria Fuertes on her chest. She wears visible bandages on her wrists. Dim lights. Voice of a woman--deep voice--reading the following poem. The projection of the painting should be on screen until the voice finishes reciting poem: "Al borde," ("At the Edge") by Gloria Fuertes, from her book of poems Que estás en la tierra (You Who Are on the Earth)]

VOICE OVER [reverb]

He estado al borde de la tuberculosis	I've been on the edge of contracting tuberculosis
al borde de la cárcel	at the edge of being in jail
al borde de la amistad	at the edge of friendship
al borde del arte	at the edge of art
al borde del suicidio	at the edge of suicide
al borde de la misericordia	at the edge of mercy
al borde de la envidia	at the edge of envy
al borde de la fama	at the edge of fame
al borde del amor	at the edge of love
al borde de la playa	at the edge of the beach
y poco a poco me fue dando sueño	and little by little I began to get sleepy
y aquí estoy durmiendo al borde,	and here I am sleeping at the edge,
al borde de despertar.	at the edge of awakening.

[Projection of slide disappears. Dim lights. DIRECTOR comes in and goes towards her, sits beside her and kisses her forehead. ALBA wakes up and both remain looking at each other for a few seconds]

DIRECTOR: [Holding ALBA's hand] How are you feeling?

ALBA: [She seems to be very weak] A little better...

DIRECTOR: [Picking up the book that is on ALBA's chest] Did you fall asleep while you were reading? [ALBA nods. DIRECTOR reads from book] Gloria Fuertes, "At the Edge." [He looks at the floor and sees a page written by ALBA. He picks it up] Were you also writing today? [She nods] May I read it? [Pause] No, I have a better idea. Why don't you read it to me? [He gives piece of paper to ALBA]

ALBA: [Reads with a sad voice, as if she felt completely defeated:]

Today I feel all my hidden weakness
scattered on me.

A soft feeling of nothingness,
of numb senses, is giving me shape.

A rapist nonsense covers the absence,
and lets me read dark meanings
that fuse within an unknown revelation.
A quick and sharp shout,
a clear round cry,
the mystic renaissance of a dying voice
is growing inside.
The stage for the performance of an absurd philosophy
is trembling under my tiny fingers,
confused,
while trying to grasp a reason,
a reading of your look—
within the color of your eyes—
and...
the significance of mine.

DIRECTOR: [Feeling awkward, without really knowing what to tell her] It sounds very poetic, and, actually, dramatic. [Pause. And then, as if thinking he has found the correct words] You're always looking for the significance of everything...

ALBA: Yes. It's part of me. I can't help it. [Pause. Distant] And with the years I've become more and more rational... and also more practical, I suppose. I've come to rationalize even sex. Most of the times, even when I'm getting excited, I can't free myself from memories, from thoughts that don't let me enjoy the moment,... unless I drink some wine...

DIRECTOR: [Happy to hear the precise word to give conversation a turn] Well, darling, you'll have to forget about wine for a while now. The doctor said you should keep away from smoking, coffee and alcohol, and just rest. [He kisses her forehead and leaves]

ALBA: [As soon as DIRECTOR disappears, she vomits. While she does, we hear ALBA's voice--voice over--reciting the following poem:]

Today I can't find a signature
for my identity,
nor a robe for my body.
Today, an absence has trapped me
within its bitter nakedness,
without magic rituals,
and has driven me to the throne
of a despicable and corrupt
defeat.
Today I need to vomit, at the top of my lungs,
the gnashing of my heart
in its struggling for survival.

[FADE-OUT]

[Blue lights come up. Dream-like atmosphere. Music from Bizet's Carmen, while a woman dancer comes dancing into stage one of Carmen's main theme. Slowly one by one, five men--the women dancers that we had before could be dressed as men for this scene--come towards the woman, from different sides of the stage and dance in a very seductive way. One by one, they approach woman and obtain a sensual response from her. Suddenly there is a change in the music: theme of the scene where Carmen is killed. When one of the man dancers approaches her with a dagger to kill her, while the others look at them--now in the middle of a circle formed by the rest, the woman dancer--presumably "Carmen"--fights back and snatches the knife from man. At the moment she gets the dagger, all men step back, looking at her. She looks back at them, holding the dagger, walking backwards until she leaves stage. Slowly, men begin a zapateado (heel-tapping dance) that will increase as we see the woman and becomes very loud when she holds the dagger high over her head. Then, on white screen upstage, we see the projected silhouette of woman dancer walking from far away towards the men, growing bigger and bigger until she becomes a huge shadow--as if she were the Statue of Winged Victory, but with a difference: she is holding a dagger high. All the dancers have turned to look at her and seem bewildered]

[BLACKOUT]

[Stage should be divided in two parts. Lights will come up on one side or the other at different times. Stage right is in darkness. Stage left: Daylight in the country, open space. ALBA and TEACHER seated on a blanket, as if they were having a picnic. The shadow of a tree covers them. Although still a little weak and pale, ALBA's manners and way of speaking show that she is much more confident, as if all of a sudden she had come to feel comfortable with herself]

TEACHER: [Warmly] I'm very glad to see more color on your face. The open air and the sun will make you good.

ALBA: I'm slowly coming out of it. [Pause] Now, however, I'm having nightmares.

TEACHER: [Concerned] What kind of nightmares?

ALBA: [Stands up, turning her back to TEACHER and facing audience. Lights have dimmed on TEACHER and a spot of light is on ALBA. While she speaks, we could see ALBA's gigantic shadow projected on white screen] I only remember that I woke up at that point with a strange sensation, with mixed feelings; as if I were split between fear and the awareness of a new extraordinary power within me...

[Lights have dimmed on Stage Left and come up on Stage Right. Night time. We are in the exterior of a house, a porch. DIRECTOR is coming out from house. He calls ALBA, and when he does she comes out from darkness, from Stage Left, and walks towards him]

DIRECTOR: Are you thinking of staying outside here all night? Aren't you coming to sleep? It's almost one o'clock!

ALBA: [Who has walked slowly towards porch. She sits down on the steps, turning her back to him] It's hot tonight, and it's nice here, outside. [Pause] I don't want to close my eyes... I want to keep them open, so that I won't be haunted by shadows...

DIRECTOR: [Approaching her and putting his arms around her tenderly] I'll be at your side and I'll keep them away from you.

ALBA: [Does not move, as if she were far away] I'm afraid you can't help me with that...

DIRECTOR: [Showing difficulty in speaking openly] I... I... I feel as if you were very far away... [ALBA does not answer. Silence] ...very distant from me,... as if I were losing you...

ALBA: [As if she were talking to herself] You should have done something earlier to keep me... [To him] I don't think you ever realized that I was by your side.

DIRECTOR: [Nervous] Have I been making love to the air?

ALBA: [Trying to cut conversation, as if she knew there was no point in trying to talk to him. Defeated. Almost to herself] Relying on your lips didn't mean I believed the meaning of every word you said. [Pause. To DIRECTOR] Actually, it's not your fault. [Stands up] You've merely caused the blood to brim over. My veins were so swollen already, that finally they've begun to overflow. I'm not capable of constraining the blood any longer.

[ALBA has begun to walk towards Stage Left, into the darkness]

DIRECTOR: [Confused] I don't understand, Alba. You're speaking in riddles. [Stage Left: Lights come up slowly as lights dim on Stage Right. The scene now is in a garden. There is a table and two chairs. Daylight. ALBA and TEACHER walk towards table. They come out from the dark side of stage. It could be the TEACHER's garden in her house. ALBA has the same clothes, but TEACHER has changed. They continue with the conversation they were having before]

TEACHER: [Clearly quoting from a poem:] "Don't fly away from pain, because pain becomes more furious. Give yourself into it until the pain is fed up. Concentrate on it. The pain will finally freeze when you face it with indifferent mysticism." [In SPANISH: "Al dolor no le huyas": "No le huyas,/ se pone más furioso. / Entrégate al dolor hasta que se harte. / Concéntrate en él / y en el: que todo nada dura; / y no hagas aspavientos. / Así el dolor se enfriará asqueado / ante tu indiferente misticismo] It's what Gloria Fuertes says in one of her poems, from the book you gave me. [Pause] Once you touch the depths

of pain, you'll come out of it with a renewed strength. [Pause] I wish I could do something for you, but I'm afraid it is a journey you must take on your own...

[ALBA has started walking with quick steps towards Stage Right. Lights come up on Stage Right as ALBA walks and we see DIRECTOR seated on a stone bench, in new clothes, by a street lamp in a street. Night time. This time light remains on Stage Left, where we see TEACHER still listening to what ALBA is saying. ALBA speaks while she walks towards DIRECTOR. Both TEACHER and DIRECTOR are listening to her]

My nails have been growing in, under the bone, and I've accumulated too much blood, too much,...

[DIRECTOR stands up from stone bench to try to say something, but ALBA makes a sign with her hand for him not to say anything and continues talking with great passion, with all her power]

I want to open all my hidden scars and taste the terrible pain of imprisoned memories; of a reality that has been wrapped in torn veils; of the unbearable solitude of being a WOMAAAAAAN...

DIRECTOR: [A little scared. Going towards her and trying to calm her down] But, Alba,...

ALBA: [Stepping back] No. Don't you dare mention my name... [Going towards center stage.

DIRECTOR and TEACHER keep looking at her] I want to make myself bigger and bigger, so that I can inundate myself of my own self and with the magnificent beauty that irradiates the meaning of my name. [Bright lights come upon her]

[DIRECTOR and TEACHER have walked some steps towards ALBA. They should be forming a triangle, with ALBA in center downstage. Lights dim a little on TEACHER and DIRECTOR while ALBA delivers the following speech, facing audience. At the same time she speaks, we should see the images she refers to, impressed on the white screen upstage. The images should appear one by one as if ALBA's invisible hand were drawing a painting on a canvas. Her speech should be accompanied with a flamenco guitar. Soft music at the beginning, and increasing with the rhythm and tone of her voice, to end up with a loud cry produced by the strings of the guitar. ALBA could move, as if she were dancing, at the rhythm of words and music:]

ALBA: I'd like to do a painting:
A pair of green gloves that hide
behind an absent napkin.
A cord that stretches, ...
and stretches... and shudders.
Yes. And breaks.

And a hand that,
with each brush stroke,
rips the air that surrounds
the hermetic windows of my tiny room.
And then spit infuriated blood
that doesn't want to be detained.
And shout... shout...
shout out loud
at the rhythm of a wax style
that keeps evading the sun.
And thrust into the night a rainbow
which is vanishing through the cracks
of a stream
that cannot be stopped.

[Screen should go completely red with a rainbow crossing it from one side to the other]

[When ALBA finishes her speech, falls on her knees, exhausted on Stage Left, where she was with TEACHER earlier. She remains that way, until guitar concludes the last chords. Painting on screen slowly disappears and lights dim on Stage Left, until it becomes completely dark]

[Lights come up on Stage Right. DIRECTOR is at the same place where we left him before]

DIRECTOR: [To ALBA] You don't have to explain why you did it...

ALBA: [Interrupting] No. I do want to tell you. [Walking towards him with rage in her eyes] I did it because I wanted to FEEEEEEEL. I chose to feel the pain caused by a knife, tearing up the skin that covered my veins, rather than the pain caused by the piercing sword of your indifference. [Pause] I've played only one role for you: on stage, the actress.

DIRECTOR: [Louder] That's not true...

ALBA: Oh, please, shut UP! [Pause] For once in my life I want to be the LOVER, do you understand? the LO-VER! I want to play an equal part in a relationship, and be at the same level with my partner. I want love to FREE me, not to IMPRISON and KILL my SELF.

[ALBA has begun to walk towards the other side of stage, as lights dim on Stage Right. Scene at TEACHER's house, in the terrace. Late afternoon. TEACHER has changed clothes. The conversation that both women were having before continues]

TEACHER: [Approaching ALBA] So, it was Maurice who came that afternoon. Did he have a key?

ALBA: No. It wasn't Maurice. It was Sergio, the Spanish professor you introduced to me in your party. [Pause] While I was in front of the sink, looking at the blood running through my arms, I heard the door bell ringing several times. Then, I remembered that Sergio was supposed to come that afternoon to discuss the last details about my job. And, suddenly, I realized that I was bleeding, and bleeding, and that I would continue to be a coward if I let my life bleed away. I, then, although weak, took some towels, put them around my wrists and managed to walk to the door. [Pause]

[Lights dim on stage and a spot of light is on ALBA while she delivers her speech. A man and a woman could be dancing, miming, at the same time ALBA speaks. They should be upstage right, in the far corner. They should mime a fight between both, woman sending man away and staying alone, dancing, until ALBA concludes]

It was at that moment that I made the decision to stop running away from myself. I need to liberate my body from what I've been taking from others believing I was feeding my soul. I want to clean it and make room for all that is ME.

[Silence]

I'm leaving [Pause] I want to go back to Spain. I guess I've been missing her all this time, but I wasn't aware of it. I thought I despised her...and, actually, it was myself I despised the most.

[Silence]

Before I leave, I'd like to record for you the last song I've written, and this time I did it in Spanish. I've translated the lyrics for you. It's called "A Hut of Clouds." [ALBA gives TEACHER a piece of paper, from which TEACHER begins to read as ALBA leaves and as we hear the song sung in Spanish. Lights dim slowly until there is a FADE OUT, during which we continue to hear the song]

SONG: A Hut of Clouds
They've deprived me of my voice,
They've stolen my hopes away,
And I still keep a heart that is
Worn out by all that it desires.
They've detached me from love,
Illusion has said farewell to me
And I've been lost within the countryside
That a window of nothingness has shown to me.
I have cried in the silence,
I have screamed out loud,
And the walls have halted the impulses
Of my completely dark absurdity.
A blacksmith came over,

And also a locksmith, and a knifegrinder,
And they made of me the perfect bust
To fill in the space of one more empty corner.
They tore to pieces
Every gram of impatience I had within me.
They insulted me, they admired me and
They concluded by filling me up with more incoherences.
They stretched out my eyelids,
So that I could be alert to the eagles,
But they never managed to bring me down
From the clouds of the sky I had firmly built.

[In SPANISH: Me han quitado la voz.
Me han robado la esperanza.
Y aún e queda un corazón
magullado por sus ansias.
Me han desprendido del amor.
Me ha dicho adiós la ilusión.
Y me he perdido en el paisaje
que muestra la ventana de la nada.
He gritado en el silencio.
He llorado en alta voz.
Y las paredes han parado mis impulsos
de una oscura sinrazón.
Me visitó el herrero,
y el cerrajero y el afilador,
e hicieron de mí un busto perfecto
para llenar el hueco de cualquier otro rincón.
Me rasgaron tira a tira
cada gramo de impaciencia.
Me insultaron, me admiraron,
me llenaron de mayores incoherencias.
Me estiraron bien los párpados
para estar alerta a las águilas.
Pero no pudieron bajarme (bis)
de mis eternas nubes blancas]

[Lights up. ALBA's place. We continue hearing the same song, but now the sound comes from a radio-cassette. ALBA is finishing her packing. After a few seconds she goes towards the recorder and forwards song to listen to last stanza. Then, takes out tape and keeps it with her. Phone rings]

ALBA: Hello! [...] [With a sincere smile, happy to hear MAURICE's voice who has called] (ñMaurice!, I was going to call you right now. I thought it was better to talk to you over the phone. I can't stand farewells. [...] No, Maurice. Thanks. Marcia is talking to me. She's downstairs waiting for me. [...] I hope you'll come and visit me [...] Will

you? I'd love to work on it. I'll write you and give you my ideas. Actually, I've already written some down, but I need to give them a little more shape... [Pause] Maurice... [...] [Shy but showing she is very happy about it] I wanted you to be the first one to hear the news... [...] I went to the doctor early this morning to get the results... [...] No, I'm alright. It's just that... I'm pregnant. [...] [Changing tone] No, I haven't told Ivan, why should I? It's not his, anyway. He's sterile. [...] Who? You don't know him and I'm not absolutely certain. [...] Thanks. This is a new challenge for me [...] Well,... I've been always afraid of having more children, but now I'm really excited. I want to run the risk and face the responsibilities of having one. [...] Thank you, Maurice. I'll send you a picture when he'll be born. [...] I've left something in the apartment for you [She looks at or touches her guitar]... something that means much to me and I want you to keep. [...] You'll see when you come... Now, I have to leave. [...] Thanks for everything, Maurice, for being by my side and helping me with... Never mind... I hope I'll see you soon [...] A big kiss for you too... Hasta pronto!

[ALBA hangs up. Picks up her suitcases and goes off stage, without looking back. While she leaves, a woman dancer has come out from the darkness. Dim lights on the whole stage. On white screen upstage we see the projection of a gigantic full RED moon. This dancer should dance a dance to life, using all the space of stage. She should be accompanied by the music of a guitar--flamenco, flamenco/Arabic-Andalusian music with one or two African drums--while we hear the following poem, on voice over. VOICE should be the same we heard at the beginning of SCENE III, a deep woman's voice. We should hear Gloria Fuerte's, "Geografía humana"--"Human Geography"--from her book of poems *Cómo atar los bigotes del tigre*--How to Tie the Tiger's Whiskers]

VOICE:

Mirad mi continente conteniendo brazos, piernas y tronco inmesurado, pequeños son mis pies, chicas mis manos,	Look at my continent containing arms, legs and an unmeasurable trunk, small are my feet, tiny my hands,
hondos mis ojos, bastante bien mis senos.	deep my eyes, quiet well formed my breasts.
Tengo un lago debajo de la frente, a veces se desborda por las cuencas, donde se bañan las niñas de mis ojos, cuando el llanto me llega hasta las piernas	I have a lake underneath my forehead, sometimes it overflows into the sockets, where the apples of my eyes bathe, when the weeping reaches my legs
y mis volcanes tiemblan en la danza. Por el norte limito con la duda por el este limito con el otro por el oeste Corazón Abierto y por el sur con tierra castellana.	and my volcanos shake in a dance. The north borders on doubt, the east borders on the other, the west on an Open Heart and the south on Castilian lands.
Dentro del continente hay contenido, los estados unidos de mi cuerpo, el estado de pena por la noche,	Within the continent there is contained the united states of my body, the state of pain at night,

el estado de risa por el alma	the state of laughter in my soul
--estado de soltera todo el día.	--the state of being single, all day.
Al mediodía tengo terremotos	At noon I have earthquakes
si el viento de una carta no me llega,	if the wind of a letter doesn't arrive,
el fuego se enfurece y va y me arrasa	the fire becomes enraged and comes and devastates
las cosechas de trigo de mi pecho.	the harvests of wheat sheltered in my chest.
El bosque de mis pelos mal peinados	The forest of my tangled hair
se eriza cuando el río de la sangre	stands on end when the river of blood
recorre el continente,	goes across the continent,
y por no haber pecado me perdona.	and for not having sinned, it forgives me.
El mar que me rodea es muy variable,	The sea that surrounds me is quite changeable,
se llama Mar Mayor o Mar de Gente	it is called Great Sea or Sea of Peoples
a veces me acaricia suavemente;	and sometimes it caresses me with tenderness;
depende de las brisas o del tiempo,	it depends on the breeze or the weather,
del cielo o del ciclón, tal vez	on the sky or the hurricane, may be it depends,
depende,	
el caso es que mi caso es ser la isla	the case is that my case is to be the island
llamada a sumergirse o sumergirse	called to be immersed or to submerge
en las aguas del océano humano	into the waters of the human ocean
conocido por vulgo vulgarmente.	known commonly as common people.
Acabo mi lección de geografía.	I finish now my lesson of geography.
Mirad mi contenido continente.	Look at my contained continent.

[Lights dim, as music and dancer finish with poem]

[BLACKOUT]

-- END --