

ADIRA'S SECRET



A ONE-ACT TRAGEDY

BY DAVE SOSS

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Character Descriptions

Adira, 8-16 in the past, 40 in the present. Determined, caring unaware—in denial of her secret.

Tower as voiceover. ADIRA's younger sister. Ages 8 - 14 & 37. As young teen, lacks confidence, looks up to Adira.

Bubbe, age 75 as voiceover. Traditional, religious, caring, Jewish grandmother with Yiddish-English accent.

Ruby, age 14 as voiceover. Quirky, fun, flighty adolescent girl with confident way.

Samuel or Sammy, age 35, as voiceover. Father of two daughters Adira and Tower. Speaks English with Polish accent. Cannot finish sentences or thoughts due to thought blocking disorder. (Impediment is not a stutter.)

Adult Male voiceover at beginning of play, briefly introduces play's background, times and story.

Orderly. Adult male in white institutional uniform, enters stage and speaks briefly at play's end.

Minimum number of actors:

Adira, protagonist on stage as adult.

2nd female actor in VOs as Tower, Bubbe and Ruby.

3rd male actor in VOs as Sammy-Samuel, adult male VO at beginning of play and Orderly as actor on stage at end of play.

Time, Place, Set Requirements

1960s Modest, American Home, shows adjoining Living, Dining area, BOS entrance, Back Stage Left door entrance perpendicular to stage view with lock to hidden room.

Props

Old-fashioned kitchen cupboard

Two glass mayonnaise jars, labels removed with matching blue lids within cupboard.

Old dining room table with pull-up chair with three-three-fold cardboard piano keyboard atop for Adira's piano playing moment in play.

Old steam radiator and rocking chair for play with Adira as girl and Sammy as father.

Old suitcase for end of play, Adira's exit to BOS door.

All other props left to the discretion of the director and producer.

Costumes

Adira wears all black 1960's top, pants and flats.

Orderly wears white orderly's uniform per a psychiatric home.

Algorithm for reading and understanding how the play works

ADIRA'S SECRET is essentially a monologue meant for a small theatre. A *dynamic* female protagonist, with the ability to quickly shift thought and emotion makes the theatrical experience.

Adira talks about her younger sister as maladjusted, in need to reside at an institutional home. Adira, in fact, is in denial that she, Adira, needs and will reside in a psychiatric facility.

Adira never shares her secret. The orderly unknowingly reveals the secret at play's end.

Everything Adira says, she knows as true. Every action, description, event informs that Adira takes her mission seriously—will do everything in her power to help her sister overcome their childhood misfortune.

Adira repeats what I term snippet metaphors during her descriptions of actions and events:

- All such descriptions are to be stated as if the actor, Adira, has no knowledge that she has said these words and descriptions previously. She is unaware of these repetitions because they derive from her unconscious.
- They are repeated sometimes few, sometimes many times with honesty and intention. By play's end, the audience will feel something is off, wonder why, what does this mean—should have a “what is going on here?” experience.

By play's end—*the reveal*—the audience realizes that Adira and her story is not at all what it seemed. Attendees should realize the complexity and severity of her mental illness as it relates to society's prohibitions regarding homosexuality during those times, and in some cultures, these times.

Special Effects / Imagery / Illusion

Woven into Adira's story, the imagery and symbols, i.e. water, rushing river, tadpole, frog, bramble, parts—separates, wedge, Ruby, driving out to the home—are real in regard to Adira's fantasies and perception of reality, not Tower's.

The play now reads with a minimum of recommended sound effects. Theatre Director and Staff could through visual and sound effect transform the illusion of Adira's imaginations, i.e. flood of water, rain, drowning, distributary, wedge, pool of water, and VO entrances into some visual experience—all that takes place during the play into a dramatic visual-aural experience, or leave the play essentially as presented herein.

ADIRA'S SECRET

(Male voiceover introduces play.)

MALE VOICEOVER

“Throughout much of the twentieth century, cultural notions about homosexuality as a mental disorder were so strong, some people were committed to institutions for treatment by the criminal justice system, some by their families, and some persons, desperate for some cure, voluntarily went into *homes*. This story of a woman and her family that takes place in the 1950s.”

(Stage Lights rise.)

(Long pause.)

(Adira opens door BOS Left, walks down to DC Proscenium, commences her story.)

ADIRA

You may know my sister, Tower.

We were close.

You know—

Go to the stores— Goodwill, St. Anthony's.

Didn't have much—

But that didn't matter.

(Pause.)

(Excited.)

We loved Woolworth's!

Woolworth's Five and Dime!

Tower and I—

We'd run down—buy Allan hot lips, fun dips, candy cigarettes—

Stretch and snap our bazooka gum.

(Pause.)

(As adult, Adira amused, prods Tower.)

Remember, Tower?

I'd tell you—

“Never swallow your bazooka.”

“It stays in your stomach for seven years—”

(Pause.)

(As adult.)

And you believed me!

(Pause.)

(Tower, in VO as adult, annoyed, responds.)

TOWER

Why’d you do that Adira?

Tell me those wives’ tales.

(Pause.)

After dinner?

We’d eat dessert.

I’d try to enjoy a piece of watermelon—

You’d say to me—

(Pause.)

(Imitates Adira.)

“If you eat any of the seeds, Tower...”

“Watermelons will grow in your stomach.”

(Tower VO in her adult voice, annoyed.)

How was that funny, Adira?

(Pause.)

(Adira laughs, recalls.)

Tower—

We had fun—

As kids—

Didn’t we?

(Brief pause.)

(Excited, shares.)

Remember the creek?

That winter.

Remember, Tower?

(Pause.)

Each of us took a jar.

A glass jar.

(Pause.)

(Quiet music in background.) (0:00-0:24)

Only A Dream Away (Retro Vocal) – Old Radio Mix

(Special effect sound of cabinet being opened.)

(Two glass jars taken out of cupboard, unscrewed

(Tower in fantasy adult VO recalls.)

TOWER

I remember, Adira...like it happened this morning.

Those mayonnaise jars—

In the cupboard?

And their lids—in that side drawer.

You took down two.

Kept one—

Gave me the other.

We grabbed their lids—the blue ones.

From that side drawer—with rubber bands, tape, scissors—

All sorts of stuff.

A bram-bull!

Put on our Converse—

You know—All Stars!

You wore red—

Mine blue.

With those matching rain coats!

From that store—

Where we shopped for school—

Salvation, Army, wasn't it?

(Special effect, soft rain background fade-in.) (0:00-0:39)
(Adira, excited.)

ADIRA

Matching rain coats!

Oilskins!

That's what they call-em—

For seamen.

Goodwill had them for kids, too.

And those rain hats—Sou'westers—

With those bonnet strings—

Stampede straps—that's what they called-em.

Kept our hats in place—especially when it rains hard—

With that wind!

Pull the strings with that strap hook—up our chins.
Helped you, Tower, didn't I?

Pulled your strap hook up—tight enough, but not too much—

So, we could chew bazooka.

(Pause.)
(Shares with audience.)

Our mom, Ruth?

Taught us about oilskins and Sou'westers.

(Pause.)
(Shares.)

Mom was a seamstress—

Tried to teach Tower and me a little sewing.

And our father, Sammy?

Sammy was good with his hands—

Mechanical—that's what they called him.

Because the Singer—a lockstitch—

When it arrived—

Had to be fitted.

The gear wheels were cast iron.

Dad filed and ground them by hand, then assembled the thing.

Tower and I watched.

(Pause.)

We'd get down on our knees—take turns.

Press the foot pedal down.

The lockstitch went slow, faster, fastest—

(Pause.)

Cause and effect—

That's what they call it.

We learned that in junior high.

(Pause.)

But the sewing?

No—we didn't enjoy that.

Especially seeing mom work so hard.

All day—at this dry cleaner.

Mom got to sit near the front window, which was a plus—

Do her alterations—

Look up at customers when they arrive—

When no one noticed, Ruth would look up—

Out the shop window—

Watch people go by.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

We needed the money.

So, mom took sewing jobs home, too.

Tower and I—

We didn't get to know her.
Then, there was that illness.
By junior high, mom passed.

(Pause.)
(Reflects.)

It was hard on all of us—Tower, myself and father, Samuel.

(Pause.)
(Surmises.)

Maybe it's harder when you never really know someone you're supposed to love—a parent
at home, but not long and not really.

As kids, we imagine things—

About mom and dad.

Things that aren't, because we didn't get a chance—

Get to know them—

Then, make sense of things by thinking of them in some wrong way.

We would compensate—

Deny the hurt—

That's what they call it, isn't it?

Denial?

(Pause.)

And—when you're sensitive—

Like Tower was?

(Pause.)
(Wonders.)

Who wouldn't want to run out—escape?

Our place was small—cramped.

Cinder block, state sponsored housing—

That's what it was.

As a kid, you don't care.

But when you get older, as a teen, you look around—

Notice things—

See what classmates have.

Tower and me?

We looked around—wanted something more—

Projected what we had into some fantasy.

(Long pause.)

(Sound: light rain tapping on roof builds in volume/intensity.)

(Rain special effect starts quietly, builds in volume and intensity.)

You hear it, don't you?

The rain?

Rains a lot here.

This was the fun kind, though—so we thought.

(Pause.)

(Pivots, confides.)

We had a secret.

We'd gone there for years—

The creek.

We all keep them—from our childhood—

Secrets—

Some we remember because we can't forget.

We try to deny them and they come out other ways.

It gets confusing—for me, anyway—

(Pause.)

Like walking down some steep bank.

Maybe you'll stand taller—if others appreciate your courage.

(Pause.)

(Realizes.)

Maybe you'll tumble and flail.

(Pause.)

Things before one knows?

Predetermined—that's what they call it.

It tells after you try—

How you interpret predetermined—

Fixes the confusion.

(Pause.)

(Excited.)

Tower received an invitation!

Tower's new friend, Ruby.

Ruby invited Tower to meet at the creek.

This was a big deal—a friend!

So, I came along.

Watch out for my kid sister.

(Long pause.)

(Rain sound effect dissipates to silence.)

Tower and Ruby—

They met at one of those dances.

You know—junior high.

(Pause.)

(Quiet background dance music commences.)

(1950s Jitterbug 0:00 to end of clip as script indicates.)

(Explains.)

Sock hops, record hops, or just hops—

That's what they called 'em.

Our principal didn't allow shoes in the gym.

The floor was waxed.

Scuffs weren't permitted.

So—we danced in our socks.

(Pause.)

(Shares.)

You remember—

Boys on one side.

Girls on the other.

Girls—we gossip—and wait—

Wait for a boy to come over.

Pair up and dance—

Jitterbug, Swing, Madison, Stroll, Hand Jive—

I knew'em all!

(Pause.)

(Recalls.)

Tower sat up the bleacher.

Sit alone and look down at the other kids—

On the gym floor—

Just watch—

Watch me, older sister Adira, dress up, go have fun—

Chat with my circle—

Dance with the boys.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

I think Tower felt obligated to be there—

Peer pressure—

But without peers—

And without friends.

Alone, disappointed, up that bleacher ledge, looking down some bank—

Hoping for something better—

Tower couldn't hide her feelings—and she didn't try.

(Pause.)

Then—something happened!

This girl, Ruby?

Walks into the gym—all confident.

Wedges off her saddle shoes.

Pries one shoe off, kicks it in a corner, looks around, spots Tower, pries, kicks off the other.

(Pause.)
(Reflects.)

I don't know—maybe she saw something in Tower.

This Ruby walks up the bleacher—like she knew something—

And Tower?

Tower sat up, hoping—

Maybe be noticed.

Maybe talk with someone.

Maybe—make a friend.

(Pause.)
(VO of Ruby and Tower as young teens talking to each other.)

RUBY

Hey!

Ruby—

That's my name!

Who are you—sittin' up here on your own?

(Pause.)

What's your name.

(Tower, insecure, responds.)

TOWER

Oh—

U-h-h—I'm—Tower.

Nice of you to—

(Ruby, confident, jumps in.)

Tower!

I like that.

Looking down from the Tower.

I know a little Tarot—

You know—tell your fortune?

You look, sound like the card.

Hard to meet people up here Tower, ain't it?

(Pause.)

(Jovial.)

Tower—wanna dance?

(Laughs.)

(Tower, uncertain, responds.)

TOWER

I—I don't—

Don't know if I can—we should.

I mean—

I haven't...danced before—

Not really.

What if I mess up?

(Ruby laughs, responds.)

RUBY

I seen you, Tower.

At lunch—

The wedge.

(Long pause.)

(Background music fades out.)

(Adira, as adult, incredulous, explains.)

ADIRA

I was amazed!

Tower was awkward.

Sat alone at these dances—

And this Ruby?

I think she sensed that.

Maybe liked it.

Maybe the chase aspect.

I couldn't tell.

(Pause.)

(Recounts.)

Maybe more than she liked Tower—

That's the confusion part—what the secret is telling me.

(Pause.)

(Recounts.)

They talked and laughed—ignored the boys.

(Realizes.)

Tower became infatuated—

That's what it was.

(Pause.)

After the dance, Tower and I?

We walk back to our place.

But Tower—she was different.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

There's a kind of rapture that goes without knowing someone—

Losing your sense about things.

Infatuated—that's what it was.

Can't stop thinking about another person—

But it's about yourself—really.

The feeling comes on—then the thinking.

Project, compensate, fantasize—without reason.

Tower wasn't really there—

In her mind, nor was I.

On the walk home, for Tower?

There was just Ruby.

My sister—making up things about herself with this girl.

(Concludes.)

Tower longed for Ruby to notice.

(Pause.)

(Recalls.)

At school, Ruby would laugh with her friends—

And there were many.

Cliques, social circles—

You know how junior high goes.

(Pause.)

This Ruby would come over to Tower.

Bail out my kid sister, so to speak—

(Pause.)

(Surmises.)

Some people have a knack for doing just enough for others—then vanishing—

Move on to someone new, exhilarate—without obligation.

That was my first impression of Ruby—

(Pause.)

(Concludes.)

And I was concerned.

(Pause.)

(Pleads.)

This was a friend!

Tower's first friend!

I had to encourage that, didn't I?

(Long pause.)

(River flow after rain. Quiet at first, grows to distinct volume.)

(Calm, again recounts events.)

It was raining again.

We put our Sou'westers on, and walked.

(Pause.)
(Surprised.)

She was there!

Ruby.

Bottom edge of the creek—

Looking up, cheering, waving to Tower.

(Pause.)
(River flow after rain now loud sound effect.)

But this was not a creek—

It poured.

A river—

That's what it was—

A torrent!

(Pause with silence.)
(Quiet start special effect grows to volume.)
(River Stream Water Flowing Ambience.)
(Concerned, recalls.)

Ruby looked up from the edge—

Waves to Tower.

Ebullient—that was Ruby—

Like at that dance.

(Pause.)

Now, at this bank—

Mud, water sliding down everywhere—

Rain pouring.

Yet Tower just saw Ruby—

Without considering.

(Pause.)
(Concerned.)

Ruby signaled for Tower to come down.

Unlike the dance, Tower waved back, down to Ruby.

This time, my sister wasn't going to watch.

(Pause.)

(VO as teen, Adira exclaims to Tower.)

ADIRA

“Wait, Tower!”

“Don't!”

“Not this time!”

(Long pause.)

(River Stream Water Flowing Ambience continues louder.)

(Adira again as adult, incredulous, explains.)

Never seen her like that.

Reach out.

Stop her.

That's what I'll do.

(Pause.)

(Resigned.)

Tried to, anyway.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

You see, Tower lacked sense.

Went off—

Tangents—that's what it was.

One thing to the next.

Yet, anything for one thing—

Someone that cared for her.

(Pause.)

(Anxious, recounts.)

Reach out. I thought.

Grab Tower's arm.

Pull my sister up—again.
But when Tower saw Ruby?
She saw someone that cared.
Maybe the mother we lost.
Or, the father we never had—
Samuel.

(Long pause.)
(Rain sound effect off.)

Daddy came over from Poland—Gdansk.
Actually, mom went over and got him.
A shidduch.
That's the Yiddish—
A match—
An arranged marriage.

(Long pause.)
(Recounts.)

Ruth and Sammy worked at raising us kids—
Yet, it wasn't together, so to speak
And, when you get older—become teens?
We could tell—
They didn't click.
Daddy—Samuel—
Didn't know—
He had a secret—from the family—
And himself.

(Pause.)
(Explains.)

You know how it works.
Start with a dream.
Like everyone, build what they call—a foundation.

(Pause.)

But Sammy—he got this feeling.

Something wasn't right—wasn't working.
The feeling swells—and it scares you.
Like rain that grows to what they call a torrent—
And you can't swim.

(Pause.)
(Concludes.)

Denial.
That's what it is.
Stumble, fall, and flounder into some creek—
Not a creek, though—
A torrent.

(Pause.)
(Surmises.)

But daddy's story was different than Tower's.
Sammy wanted to be a good father—and husband.
Provide for the family.

(Pause.)
(Surmises.)

Ever notice?
When something goes wrong—it's not just one thing.
One thing causes everything else—
Everything else makes that one thing worse.
Cause and effect—
A bramble—

(Pause.)

As adults, we face failure different than kids.
As kids, we look to our parents to pull us up—
Through this bramble called childhood.

(Long pause.)
(Explains.)

Tower and I?

We were kids without a mom.

Father?

Samuel was trying to keep things going—

Finances—home—

Make enough stocking cartons of cigarettes into those vending machines.

(Pause.)

You see, daddy had no education.

Couldn't apply himself in school.

Tower and I were affected.

(Pause.)

In one respect, us kids?

We were lucky.

We had grandma—Bubbe.

(Pause.)

Bubbe was ambitious.

Wanted something for us—

She stepped in.

(No pause.)

(Bubbe in VO talks to Adira in Yiddish and English with Yiddish accent.)

BUBBE

Mach dir a zachen, meydlech, Adira!

Adira—make something of yourself.

Gemakht mir shtolts.

(Pause.)

(Adira, amused, explains.)

ADIRA

Bubbe would, how do you say?

Conclude how things were to be done—

Especially in regard to Tower.

(Bubbe in VO, incredulous to audience.)

BUBBE

Vos ken ikh ton?

Es iz geven turem—

Aun, es iz geven Adira.

(Pause.)

(Exasperated, exclaims.)

Ikh krn nidhy helfn Tower!

Ver ken helfn Turem?!

Farloy den mame?

Demolt den fater!

(Pause.)

(More reasoned, asks Adira.)

What could I do, Adira?

With your sister, Tower—

She had such problems.

(Pleads.)

I couldn't help Tower!

Losing the mom?

Then—the father?

(Pause.)

(Admiring.)

But you, Adira—

We had a closeness.

We shared goals.

And you—you made something of your life.

(Long pause.)

(Adira as adult, outraged, booms.)

ADIRA

Who is this Ruby?!

Some girl— a stranger—waving up to Tower!

Was she really Tower's first friend?!

(Pause.)
(Explains.)

Ruby is one of those kids that belongs—
Socially ambitious—
One clique isn't enough.

(Pause.)
(Explains.)

Some people love the chase.
They like the beginning and the end of a relationship.

(Pause.)

First—there's the excitement—
Buzz, rapture—especially when it's the other person's.
The middle part—working at things?
Well—that's distasteful.

(Pause.)

The middle part calls for reason, reflection, tolerance.
Not for the Rubies—the ones that belong.
That brings things to the end—
Relief—for one side of the wedge—
Panic for the other.

(Pause.)
(Realizes, exclaims.)

That's what it was!
The two were like a wedge—
One goes one way—
The other—well, opposite—with the current.

(Pause.)
(Laughs, then serious, concludes.)

I couldn't tell about Ruby.
Whether Ruby looked forward to the end—
To vanish, and hide—
Announce to her friends—

“Made it!”

“I’m free!”

(Pause.)

I knew our life, though—

Tower’s and mine.

The past—

The cause of my sister’s thinking—

(Pause.)

(Exclaims.)

But the effect!

This wasn’t a pedal on some lockstitch.

I feared what could happen.

Besides me, Tower had no one to pick her up.

(Pause.)

Rain on river—distinct volume, clip continuously plays.)

(Growing anxious now, continues.)

The rain was coming down now.

Tower stepped down the bank—determined.

Water, mud, pouring over her ankles.

I couldn’t stop her!

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

Tower wouldn’t reflect—consider.

Impulses do that, don’t they?

Find some cause—

Make no thought to the consequence.

(Pause.)

Ruby called up to Tower—

Waved—and laughed.

(VO of Ruby laughing, then calling out to Tower.)

RUBY

Come on!

Come on, Tower!

It's okay—

Just follow me—

I used to be scared, too.

But not today.

(Pause.)

(Adira as adult, anxious, explains.)

ADIRA

I don't think Ruby considered cause and effect, either.

The rain, the river was an afterthought.

The beginning of what Tower hoped for?

A relationship?

The way Ruby ordered Tower about—

To get down this bank.

(Pause.)

(Ruby in VO as a girl, toys with Tower.)

RUBY

Sideways, Tower!

Shoulder wide!

Front of you—

Don't look down!

(Laughs.)

Not out!

The creek!

The creek!

Not the creek!

(Laughs longer, harder, then barks out more commands.)

The water!

Don't. Look. Down!

Sidestep!

Hurry!

(Pause.)

(Adira when young, as older sister in VO, implores Tower.)

ADIRA as older sister

Tower—

Don't you see what she's doing?

This Ruby—

She's toying with you.

(Pause.)

(Exclaims.)

Friends don't boss you around!

(Long pause.)

(Adira, in her adult voice, explains.)

ADIRA

But Tower?

Tower wouldn't listen—

My sister compensated for something.

(Pause.)

Infatuation does that—

Blocks things out that should be heard.

(Pause.)

(Pleads.)

I had to make a choice!

Do nothing—

Watch my sister fall down some bank.

(Pause.)

Or—follow—

Help my Tower—

Grab her arm.

Pull her up, again.

(Pause.)

(Admits.)

That's what I should have done.

But Tower—

She wouldn't listen, would she?

(Pause.)

(Ruby in VO, calls out to Tower.)

RUBY

Everything will be alright, Tower.

Follow.

Do what I do.

This is the way.

(Adira as adult, distressed, exclaims.)

ADIRA

An illusion!

A fantasy!

That's what Ruby is!

(Long pause.)

(Roaring river sound effect.)

(Adira exclaims.)

Then—it happened!

Tower fell.

Collapsed!

Tumbled, rolled—

Down!

(Long pause.)

(Rain and river clip suddenly off.)

(Adira, hurt, explains.)

Tower?

She tried—

Tried that walk—

Down that bank, like the others—that had friends.

(In disbelief.)

Many times.

As did Samuel—

Only to fall, tumble—flail.

(Pause.)

(Pleads.)

Those friends—

They hid.

Once they knew—knew my family's secret—they vanished.

(Long pause.)

(Adira, anxious, recounts.)

Quiet—

Suddenly quiet.

Tower and Sammy both—

Tumble—

Headlong—

Down that bank.

Pushed down, really, and for the same reason.

(Pause.)

And out of earshot, keeping secrets, watching, laughing, hiding—was Ruby.

(Long pause.)

(Recollects.)

At school—Tower.

She tried to sit with the other girls.

At the wedge—

That's what they called it.

(Pause.)

We ate lunch there.
Those long benches.
Landscape between—
Trees, not too high—
We would observe.
Three sides—a triangle.
All of us face in and watch—
Who's with whom—
Couples, cliques—
Those welcome to one group, those to another.
Those not welcome at all.
A social order—
A pecking order.

(Pause.)

Next to my friends, I observe.
Pairs and groups—
But not Tower.
Tower sat alone—watched, waited—
Hoped Ruby would come over.
And I?
I sat across the wedge—
Watched my sister—
Fall, tumble—flail.

(Pause.)

(Exasperated, exclaims.)

What could I do?!

Tell our parents—Samuel and Bubbe?!

(Long pause.)

(Quiet volume, Klezmer music in background, tum balalaika.)

(Explains.)

Bubbe was religious—
So—we attended orthodox temple.

Men on one side—

Women on the other.

(Pause.)

Sure, there was a seat for daddy.

But Samuel?

Sammy was ill—

And everybody knew it.

(Pause.)

(Adira as young girl in VO, pleads softly, as if to Sammy, yet not for him to hear.)

ADIRA as child

Please daddy.

Sit up.

Read the siddur—the prayer book.

Just pretend.

(Pause.)

Daddy—the same suit?

I know you can't hold a job.

It kills you—I know it does.

But the same suit?

(Pause.)

(Adira as an adult now, recounts.)

ADIRA

They made me run to my father.

After the service—

(Imitates as Bubbe at temple, encouraging.)

BUBBE

Adira—go give your father a hug!

(Long pause.)

(Music clip fades to silence.)

(Ashamed.)

My God—

I was so ashamed.

(Long pause.)

(Hopeful.)

I like beauty--culture.

Classical music—and poetry.

(Long pause.)

(Recalls fondly.)

When I was a kid—

Daddy got me a piano.

(Excited.)

It was a three-piece!

Black and white keys—

Just like the real ones!

And—

It was mine.

(Recalls.)

Take it out—

Top drawer of my dresser.

Fold it open—into three parts.

Place it down.

You know—the kitchen table—that table cloth.

Everyone knew—

That chair was my piano bench.

(Pause.)

Pull myself up—just so.

Then—set down the sheet music.

Front of my keyboard—

My favorite piece—

And practice.

You know?

The Bach.

And daddy?
Daddy would jump in—
We sang together!

(Male VO of Samuel with Adira sings.)
(Sing first eight measures of
Bach - Minuet in G Major BWV Anh. 114

Adira as child, Samuel as adult, sing tenderly to each
other in unison:

Deee—do-do-do-do / Dee-do-do /
Deee—do-do-do-do / Dee-do-do /
Daah-da-da-da-da / Dah-da-da-da-da /
Dah-da-da-da-da-da / Dah-da-a-h-h...

(Pause.)
(Samuel, disabled by thought blocking, compliments as
father would his daughter.)

SAMUEL

Adira—
You...
Have po...

(Pause.)

I—.
Am proud of—

(Adira as child VO, excited, hopeful, responds to
Samuel as if not noticing his medical condition.)

ADIRA as child

Daddy?
Really?
You think so?
Thank you, daddy!

(Long pause.)
(Adira, as adult, concludes.)

ADIRA

Father and I?

We had a closeness.

(Pause.)

(Rain starts coming down.)

We'd sit near the steam radiator—

In the living room.

Daddy on his rocking chair—

Let me turn the crank arm—on our gramophone.

Wind it all the way up.

Take the LP out of its sleeve.

Place it on the platter.

Flip the power switch.

Carefully—lower the tone arm onto the lead-in groove.

(Pause.)

Record Player Needle Down on Record (0:05)

(Splice to needle scratch clip and play music clip at quiet volume:)

Beethoven - String Quartet No. 6, Op. 18, No. 6, II: Adagio Ma
Non Troppo 0:00 – 0:18

(Adira gently recalls.)

I'd sit on my father's lap.

Together, we'd listen.

(Long pause while listening to music.)

(Continues.)

But over time—

Daddy couldn't manage.

This problem—speaking his thoughts?

And what followed—

The emotional problems—

Coping?

Was this also my sister's fate?

(Long pause.)

(Explains.)

Parents like to project confidence—certainty.

As if knowing their kids' stages—their development—

Their nature.

(Pause.)

But the relationship is symbiotic.

Cause and effect—in a good way.

As long as the kids—and parents—don't have to think—or worry.

(Pause.)

(Beethoven music clip continues quietly.)

But not our home—

And not my childhood.

Daddy—

Sammy thought he was out of earshot—

But I heard him—

And it hurt.

(Pause.)

(Samuel in VO, as if alone, laments.)

SAMUEL

What—s wrong with—?

Why am I—?

Can't—

My—

Thoughts.

Can't—finish—my—

(Pause.)

(Music clip volume fades to al niente.)

(Adira in child's voice says gently to Samuel.)

ADIRA in child's voice VO

Daddy?

It'll be okay.

We have each other, don't we?

(Long pause.)

(Music clip now silent.)

(Adira, as adult, explains.)

ADIRA

My father Sammy was sent away—

To a residence—a home.

Tower and I weren't allowed to visit.

Too young, they said.

(Long pause.)

Until, one day—

(Excited.)

We were!

They let us visit daddy!

(Pause.)

(Describes.)

It's a long drive.

Outside this town—

A turn-off—

Leads to this grove.

(Pause.)

I remember—as a kid—

This large, old building—

Wooden windows.

Lots of rooms—their windows—separate.

On the outside—

Ivy colored brick.

(Pause.)

(Exclaims.)

We got to see Sammy!

(Pause.)

(Adira as child talks to Sammy.)

ADIRA as child

How are you daddy?

Tell us—

We came all the way to see you.

Are they treating you well?

Do you like your room?

(Long pause.)

(Adira in adult voice.)

ADIRA

It was a secret.

That's what it was.

But the others—

At temple—and school?

They talked in whispers—

As if they knew.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

When you're a kid—

You don't need to hear.

You observe—

See the whispers—and know.

(Pause.)

(Adira returns to the moment.)

Sammy took us outside—

Past this lawn.

(Pause.)

Commence quiet sound effect of flowing creek.)

(Describes.)

Down a hill—
To this creek—
There's this spot.
The water—
Behind this big rock?
The current goes by—
On the other side.

(Change to quiet creek sound effect.)

The rock parts the creek—
Like a wedge.
On one side—there's this cove.
We took off our shoes.
Waded in—barefoot.

(Pause.)

(Laments.)

When we visited Sammy—
I could tell.
It wouldn't happen again.
This was the one time—before he passed.

(Pause.)

(Adira, soft, hurt, recounts.)

Daddy and I?
We had a few minutes together—alone, didn't we?
Like in our living room, when I was a kid.

(Pause.)

(Pleads.)

I had to say something!
Not carry around some...regret.

(Pause.)

(Adira in child's voice.)

ADIRA in child's voice VO

Daddy, I want to tell you something—
Something I want to say.

(Pause.)

Daddy—

(Pause.)

(Emotional.)

You will always be my father.

(Long pause.)

(Adira in adult voice, confides.)

ADIRA

I ran out of his room crying.

(Long pause.)

(Rain louder.)

(Pleads.)

Don't you see?!

This was the times!

Guilt and shame!

It was our secret—

But it wasn't just ours.

No—

For everybody else—

It was shameful.

It was theirs too—

Wasn't it?

(Pause.)

(Laments)

They went silent, didn't they?

(Pause.)

They kept my family's secret—

Like it was some toy.

(Long pause.)

But secrets like that—

They weigh you down, don't they?

(Long pause.)

(Calm, recalls.)

All the kids at the wedge—

They knew that scent.

Jasmine—

You know—spring.

Tells you something good will happen—

A promise—

Something better—and soon.

(Pause.)

But not for Tower.

You can't enjoy Jasmine—

When the scent reminds you of what you can't have or become.

(Pause.)

At the wedge—

The others—

They smile and laugh--together.

Tower looks at the Jasmine in the wedge—

Smells the scent.

Becomes confused—

A thicket of discouragement.

Like a bramble.

(Long pause.)

(Transition into Flowing River to loud volume.)

(Exclaims.)

Tower was terrified!

My sister cries out!

Flails!

Mud, water everywhere—

A torrent!

(Pause.)

(Panicked, explains.)

Tower couldn't swim.

We weren't taught—

Didn't have money for lessons.

And the Y?

When we were kids—

The YMCA didn't allow girls.

(Pause.)

(Exclaims.)

Should have followed!

Grab her arm!

I couldn't help Sammy—

Maybe I could my sister, Tower.

Yelled down—

“Help her!”

“My Tower!”

(Pause.)

(Bitter.)

This friend, Ruby?

Looked up at me.

Back at Tower.

Watched.

Did nothing.

And Tower—

Like Samuel—

Tumbled, flailed, cried out.

Took off!

That's what I did!

Along the ledge—

Find—help my sister.

There was silence.
Just the rain—
Pouring.

The creek—
River—
Was now a torrent.

My sister!

Has she drowned?!

Spotted her!

I spotted my Tower!

There was a—
They call it—
Bi-fur-ca-tion.

A river runs.
Then—

It bi-fur-cates.

In two.

It parts.

(Pause.)

Dis-tri-bu-taries.

(Exclaims.)

That's what they call it!

(Excited, describes and shows.)

There's this triangle—a wedge.

Three di-men-sional.

Tall—

Cement.

Plants—algae—all over.

(Pause.)

The tip of it parts—

Separates the river.

(Amazed.)

It caught her!

Point of this wedge held Tower against the current!

Legs, feet one way—

Arms, torso, the other.

(Amazed.)

My Tower held!

(Pause.)

(Describes.)

Where it parts—

This wedge—

Separated Tower.

One side, the river, rushing.

(Realizes.)

The other?

There was a pool—a cove.

Tower—she faced the torrent.

(Pause.)

(Explains.)

This dis-tri-bu-tary had a bridge—an overpass—

They all do.

Along the top—there's a path.

(Excited, recalls.)

Run down the path—over the river—that's what I'll do!

The other side—where the water breaks?

There's a slope.

It's steep to this bank.

The wedge parts the river—

And it stills—into this cove.

(Amazed.)

That's what it was!

A cove!

(Determined to self.)

Wade in—

I can't swim—

So—I'll wade!

(Pause.)

(Recounts.)

Above my waist—forty feet or so out.

There was—a tadpole—alone, dancing.

(Pause.)

(Exclaims.)

Grab my Tower—her arms!

Pull her back—to the bank!

(Pause.)

(Describes.)

Tower—

Gasps—

Cries—

Hysterical!

(Realizes to self.)

Bend down—hold her—

Hold my sister up, again.

(Pause.)
(As firmly instructing Tower.)

Sit up, Tower.

No.

This time?

Stand up.

Stand up!

God dammit!!

Stand up!!!

(Long pause.)
(Sound of river and rain.)
(Calm, resigned, recounts.)

We walked together.

My arm round her waist—

Held my sister up, again.

Tower-crying—

Broken.

(Long pause.)
(Quiet rain sound fades in, remains constant.)
(Says quietly, as if to Tower, while holding up.)

Let's go, Tower.

The path—

Back.

It's alright.

We're going home.

(Pause.)
(Describes.)

We reached the ledge—

The bank—

Where Tower fell.

Both of us looked down.

At the river—

Ledge of this torrent.

(Pause.)

Where is she?!

This friend—Ruby.

Fled—

Hid—

Vanished!

Don't you see?

The times!

Sammy?

Tower?

They had no friends.

Not the kind they needed.

Tower?

She needed parents—parents who could understand her.

Accept her.

Just...love her.

Without condition.

Mom?

Dad?

Where are you?!

We all run along some pathway.

A bridge of sorts—

That runs into a fork.

Reach a fork?

You can stop.

(Incredulous.)

(Pause.)

(Shocked.)

(Pause.)

(Pleads.)

(Pause.)

(Emotional, wonders.)

(Long pause.)

(Rain continues.)

(Explains.)

(Pause.)

Reflect—

Consider—

Make a choice.

(Pause.)

But a wedge?

We're thrown into a wedge.

Each of us—thrown into our own.

We've no choice but to hold on.

(Pause.)

These friends—the Rubies that come into our lives?

They don't need some cove.

They just swim.

Fortune offers them hope and promise—

(Long pause.)

(Explains.)

When I was young—things weren't—discussed.

The few, the friendless—

They roll, flail—

Hopefully—cling to some wedge.

(Pause.)

Then, they realize—they're different—

And it's okay—

Because, when they hold onto the wedge, there's a cove.

And a friend to get them out.

(Pause.)

(Concludes.)

I took Tower back—

Home—

Got her cleaned up—calm.

(Long pause.)

(Hopeful.)

Things are changing.

There are other bridges—
There's hope.

(Long pause.)
(Recounts.)

After the river—
Tower finished high school.
Like father, Sammy, couldn't talk—share her thoughts.

(Pause.)
(Surmises.)

Their secret was some shame.

(Wonders.)

But whose?

(Pause.)

The secret—
Wouldn't be too much for Tower and Samuel—
If it weren't too much for the Rubies.

(Pause.)
(Explains.)

A facility—
A home.

That's what they did.
Put my Sammy and Tower in a home.

(Pause.)
(Hopeful.)

Now—there are therapists—programs.
Help victims—overcome the guilt and shame.

(Pause.)
(Rueful.)

For Sammy and Tower—
There was a home—with a room.
A room with secrets.

(Wistful.)

Tower needed a friend—
And my father, Sammy?
They both needed a chance—
To share their secret, be accepted—loved.

(Long pause.)

(Rain sound effect fades to silence.)

(Recounts.)

One time—visited my sister.

It's a long drive.

Outside this town—

Off a dirt road.

A turn-off—

Leads to this grove.

I remember—as a kid—

There was this large, old building—

You know—

Wooden windows.

Ivy covered brick.

Same as other residents—

Her room was her home.

(Pause.)

Rains a lot.

Outside—there's this grass area—

Benches, flowers, shrubs.

You know—for residents—and visitors.

(Pause.)

It was fall—a Sunday.

(Excited.)

Got to visit my sister!

Tower exclaimed, “Adira, you're here!”

(Pause.)

We talked for hours.

In her room—about our childhood—

The times we had.

Allan hot lips—

Glass mayonnaise jars—with those blue lids!

When we went to that creek—and chased tadpoles.

(Pause.)

(Quiet rain fades in.)

<https://www.pond5.com/sound-effects/item/8875497-rain>

(Recounts.)

It was dusk—

I had to go.

Tower and I?

We walked—

Just pass the lawn—

There's this bank.

A slope—

Down to this creek.

It was steep!

(Tells Tower.)

Tower—

You can do it.

Make it down on your own.

(Long pause.)

(Recalls.)

Starts to rain.

The water runs—quick.

Tower and I—

We step down—

(Pause.)

Edge of this creek—

There's this spot.

(Explains.)

The water stills—

(Realizes.)

And there's this river rock.

A wedge.

It parts—separates.

(Pause.)

(Curious, describes.)

The creek continues—

But it parts—
And—there's this cove.

(Excited, exclaims.)

Took off our shoes!
What fun—
Barefoot!
Wade into this pool—
About forty feet or so.

(Rain clip fades to silence.)

Above our waist?
Tower and I—face each other.
Look down.
At our feet?
There's this—tadpole.
Just one.
Dancing—nowhere in particular.
Trying to find—

(Wonders.)

The other tadpoles?
It's parents?
Where were they?

(Pauses, then continues.)

Tower and I face—look at each other.
Move closer.
Lean forward—together.
It senses something.
Maybe our shadow?
Then—it hides.
Tries to—
Under that wedge.

(Pause.)

It's getting dark.
Near the creek?

(Pause.)

(Surprised.)

There's this—bramble!

Ivy—

Vines—

Leaves—

Tangled—

Confused.

(Pause.)

(Growing interest, intent.)

You hear them—

Frogs—

Croaking.

Outside Tower's room—her home.

They're the ones—

Made it—out the creek.

Escaped Tower's, Sammy's home.

(Pause.)

The others—the Rubies?

They announce—

(Exclaims joyously.)

“Tell friends!”

“This is mine!”

“My place!”

“Made it—made it out!”

(Long pause.)

(Rain starts again.)

<https://www.pond5.com/sound-effects/item/8875497-rain>

(As adult self, quiet, laments.)

ADIRA

Tell—

How they escaped—

(Pause.)

Childhood.

(Long pause for rain.)
(Intent.)

Walk over—

Tower and I—

To see.

Where's that sound?

(Pause.)
(Hushed, intent.)

There.

We hear it!

Vines—

Leaves—

Shaking.

Get close—

Where is it!

(Pause.)

Hear the story.

Face each other—

Close—

Look down—

Watch.

Wait.

Just one tale.

How it—

They—made it out.

(Pause.)
(Rain fades out.)
(Caught off guard, recounts.)

Tower turns—

Looks at me.

Something—

Something on her mind.

Tower—she asks me—

(Speaks as Tower speaking to Adira, when in quotations.)

ADIRA as Tower

“Adira.”

(Adira speaks as self, recounts to audience.)

ADIRA

Tower and I—

Look into each other.

Two sisters—

Each a pool of water—deep, clear.

When one reflects—the other—ripples.

Like mirrors—

Cause and effect—

Back and forth—they shimmer

(Pause.)

(Recalls.)

Below—

Hides that frog.

It watches—

Listens.

(Pause.)

Tower says to me—

(Adira as if Tower, cautious, asks.)

ADIRA as Tower

“Adira—”

“Maybe we can be together again.”

“Like—when we were kids.”

(Long pause.)

(Furious, defensive, Adira as adult, exclaims.)

ADIRA

That frog?!!
Just set there!!
Watched!!
Listened!!
Didn't-say-a-thing!!

(Pause.)
(Laments.)

It knew the secret.
Every night—
Outside my Tower's window—
Her home.
They remind her—

(Bitter, sardonic, proclaims, and laughs derisively.)

Made it!!
Made it out!!
We're free!!"

(Long pause.)
(Reflective, asks.)

But they weren't, were they?
Free?
Samuel—Sammy?
Tower?
No one was free.

(Pause.)
(Emotional, pleads.)

Don't you see?
What I'm saying?
When you get to close—
To the bramble?
These so-called friends?
They're the ones that keep secrets!!

(Long pause.)
(Rain starts again.)
<https://www.pond5.com/sound-effects/item/8875497-rain>
(Reflects, surmises.)

We all have'em—
Secrets.
At least one.

(Long pause.)

When Tower asked—
If we could be together?
I said—let's get back.
Out of the rain.
Walked my sister back—
My arm— round her waist.
Held her up, again.
Told my Tower—
You're doing great.
We'll talk—
Soon.

(Pause.)
(Recounts.)

Tower was excited.
Went back—
You know—
To her room.

(Pause.)

I went to the office.
You know—
The business office.

(Pause.)

For the appointment—
Sign the papers.

(Clarifies.)

The papers—
They call it—indefinite stay.

Same place, same way—

As our father, Samuel.

(Pause.)

(Soft, hurt.)

Same fate.

(Long pause.)

(Rain increases in volume.)

(Anguished, pleads.)

Because they transgressed, didn't they?!

Tower?

Sammy?

Sinned!!

Lesbian—

Gay—

A mental illness that wasn't—and isn't.

No one would listen, hear, understand.

The others—the Rubies?

They went silent.

Hid.

Vanished—into the bramble.

(Pause.)

Because of the others—their intolerance?

Sammy and Tower—

This is their home.

What those friends think—

What they did—to my family.

Condemned my father and sister to some room.

(Pause.)

Every night—

Towers and Sammies—

Confined—

Look out their windows.

Watch the rain—

Hear the frogs—

Sing—croak their own fortune.

(Pause.)

(Whispers, laments.)

Vanished—

They vanished—into the bramble.

(Long pause.)

(Intent, implores.)

Listen—

Do you hear it?

Those sounds?

(Pause.)

(Incredulous, exclaims.)

Don't you hear'em?!

There!

In the bramble!

(Long pause to hear rain.)

(Concludes.)

Went quiet—

Didn't it?

When we got too close?

They went silent.

(Long pause.)

(First set of three door knocks by an extra hidden from audience in back room, as if to ask if someone is inside that room.)

(Quiet, respectful knocking sound—two sets of three knocks.)

(Adira wonders.)

That knocking.

Who was it?

(Long pause.)

(Resigned.)

My bag is packed.

I have to go—

Home—to my family.

(Pause.)

(Picks up suitcase to leave, turns, starts to walk toward BSL.)

(Second, more intense set of three door knocks by extra hidden from audience within backroom.)

(Hears again, with concern, surprise, drops suitcase, turns back, asks audience.)

What...*was*...that?

(Long pause.)

(Listens, then surmises.)

Predetermined—that's what it was.

(Pause.)

(Realizes, explains.)

How we interpret predetermined?

The confusion?

Clears the bramble—

Make things right.

(Pause.)

(Resigned, concludes.)

There was nothing more I could do.

So—I drove off—

Home—to my family.

(Long pause.)

(Picks up old suitcase, walks to BSL, opens room door, walks into hidden room, closes door behind and locks it.)

(Very long pause.)

(Rain sound fades out to silence.)

(Orderly opens, enters SR front door, closes door behind, walks from Front Door entrance across stage to BSL, Adira's door.)

(Knocks on Adira's door three times as to see if there is anyone inside room, then calls out in normal volume through door to Adira.)

ORDERLY

Adira—

(Pause.)

(Silence, as Adira does not answer her door or respond from behind it.)

(Orderly waits, listens, then, this time more intently, knocks on door again, three times, this time more loudly.)

Adira—

(Pause.)

(Adira does not answer.)

(Orderly calls out more loudly through door.)

Your sister—Tower—

Is that her name?

(Pause.)

(Adira does not respond.)

(Calls out through door more loudly.)

Adira—

While you were down at that creek?

Tower called—

Wants to know how you're doing—

(Pause.)

Are you settling in?

Your new room—

At the home.

(Pause.)

(Adira does not respond.)

(Orderly calls out more loudly through door.)

Have you made any friends?!

(Pause.)

(Anxious for response, exclaims through door.)

Adira?!

What do I tell Tower?!

(Pause.)

(Orderly knocks on door harder, indicating panic.)

(Pause.)

(Panicked, grabs, shakes door knob hard.)
(Yells through door.)

A-di-rah!!!

(Very long silence.)
(House and stage lights fade to darkness.)

Play Beethoven - String Quartet No. 6, Op. 18, No. 6, II:

Adagio Ma Non Troppo 0:00 – 0:40

<https://www.pond5.com/royalty-free-music/item/235275126-beethoven-string-quartet-no-6-op-18-no-6-ii-adagio-ma-non-tr>

End of Play.