

THE WASH presented in installments:

By Philip Kan Gotanda

CHARACTERS

Nobu Matsumoto: "Nisei" (2nd generation Japanese American) 68 years old. Retired produce man. Separated from his wife, Masi. Lives alone in the family house.

Masi Matsumoto: "Nisei" 67 years old. Left Nobu. Does housework for a living. Lives in a small apartment by herself.

Kiyoko Hasegawa: 55-ish. Originally from Japan. Previously married to an American Soldier. Widow. Seeing Nobu. Owns and runs a small Japanese restaurant.

Sadao Nakasato: "Nisei". 65 years old. Widower. Seeing Masi. Retired pharmacist.

Marsha Matsumoto: "Sansei". (3rd generation Japanese American) 33 years old. Single. Older daughter of Nobu and Masi. Works as a dental hygienist in nearby big city.

Judy Adams: "Sansei". 29 years old. Married to James with a baby, Timothy. Younger daughter. 5th grade teacher.

Chiyo Froelich: Originally from Japan, but has lived most of her adult life in the U.S. Late 40's. Divorced. Friend of Kiyoko. Owns and runs small beauty salon next door to Kiyoko's restaurant.

Blackie: Hawaiian "Nisei". 55-ish. Un-married. Speaks with a thick pidgin. Works as the cook at Kiyoko's restaurant.

THE WASH

STAGE: Center is Nobu's place, the "Old family home". Up right is Kiyoko's restaurant. Up left is Masi's small studio apartment. Down right and left are small areas for Marsha's and Judy's places, respectively. Also, the down area is used to play scenes that take place elsewhere.

The set should be realistic but elemental, allowing for an underlying "abstract" feeling. The piece should feel fluid in scene transitions, entrances, exits, and cross-overs. Actor's movements, from one area to another, both as focus action and as half-light action, are an integral part of the story telling.

The play takes place over a period of 6 months -- July to January. Clothing that reflects the seasonal changes might assist in showing the passage of time.

Time: 1986-1987
Place: San Jose, CA.

ACT I

Scene 1:

Nobu's place, the old family home. Along the upstage area is the kitchen. Stage left is a door that leads to the outside, the proverbial side door entrance into the kitchen that everyone uses. Stage right of the kitchen along the upstage side is a door leading to the hallway and bedrooms. A sink, refrigerator, stove. There is a kitchen table with a pile of dirty clothes on the floor next to it. On the stove, a pot of water is boiling.

In the washrack there is a teapot, some dishes, chopsticks, etc. Down right a TV is on quietly. A long couch is angled facing the TV. A long coffee table in front of the couch. On it sits the skeleton of a large kite Nobu is building. Throughout the course of the play, the kite becomes more and more pronounced in its construction.

The pile of dirty clothes is lit in a shaft of light. Lights come up to half on Nobu's place. NOBU MATSUMOTO asleep, lengthwise on the couch, facing the TV. Newspaper is sprawled over his chest. Mouth open, snoring loudly. TV lights come up. Nobu can be seen in the flickering light of the television screen. Lights come full up. Nobu awakens with a start, newspaper falling to the floor. Pulls himself upright and just sits and stares into space for a moment, trying to awaken. Then picks up the newspaper, tosses them in a heap on the couch. Checks to examine the progress he is making on the kite. Carefully sets the kite back on the table and shuffles over to the stove to shut the boiling water off.

He gets a plate and a pair of chopsticks from the wash-rack, puts the two hotdogs that were boiling onto the plate. Then he gets some tea out and puts it into the teapot which he has taken from the rack. About to throw out the hotdog water to boil some new water, then stops. Thinking. Proceeds to just pour the hotdog water into the teapot and use it to make tea.

Nobu reaches into the refrigerator and pulls out a bowl of cold rice, covered over in cellophane and a small bottle of French's Mustard. He uncovers the rice, scoops some of it into a rice bowl using his chopsticks, pours hot tea over it. It starts to spill, quickly bends down and slurps up the excess. He opens the mustard and using his chopsticks again, shovels a healthy portion of mustard onto his hotdogs and bowl of rice. Sets the food down on the coffee table and begins to eat while working on the kite and watching television.

While he is eating, MASI MATSUMOTO enters through the side door with two large brown paper bags. She's struggling to open and close the door with both hands so full. Nobu turns around and notices her but gives no greeting and makes no effort

to help her. Instead, goes back to eating, working on kite and watching TV. She is not upset by his actions. She has no expectation of him to assist her. Masi sets both bags on the kitchen table and catch her breath. She proceeds to put vegetables from one of the bags into the refrigerator. Tomatoes and Japanese eggplant.

MASI: (Putting vegetables away)

If you have any more dirty clothes I can take them now. Nobu? Is this everything?

NOBU: (Not turning, eating.)

Want some hotdog?

MASI: No, I ate before. Got these from Mr. Rossi. The tomatoes are soft so eat them right away.

Getting up and folding paper bag. Puts it into drawer. She knows this place well. Walks over and checks his shirt collar form behind.

No more clothes?

NOBU: (Brushing her hand away.)

No, already.

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

MASI: (Unpacking.)

I just finished cleaning Dr. Harrison's place. You should see the bathrooms. If you see them walk down the street, they look so clean and neat. But the toilets, "kitanai" ((dirty))

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

NOBU: Hotdog water.

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

MASI: You gonna fly this one?

NOBU: (Sarcastically.)

Yeah, with a fishing pole. Like a big fish in the sky.

(Masi gives up trying to talk to him. She gathers up the dishes that Nobu has set down and brings them towards the kitchen.)

NOBU: (Feels badly and offers an explanation.)

Saw it on TV. "Honto, yo" ((Really)) Japanese fly them with fishing poles.

(Masi ignores his peace offering and proceeds to pick up the old clothes on the floor, fold them and put them into the same paper bag that she brought the clean clothes in.)

MASI: Have you talked to the kids?

(No response.)

Marsha said she stopped by. (Beat.) You know if you don't see Judy's baby soon he's going to be all grown up. Nobu?

NOBU: No.

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

MASI: No more dirty clothes, Nobu?

(Nobu shakes his head without turning away from the TV.)

Alright, then I'm going.

(Masi leaves with the bag of old clothes. Nobu Continues to watch TV for a few moments. Then, turns and stares at the door. Dim to half, with the TV light illuminating Nobu.)

(MARSHA MATSUMOTO lit in pool of light looking towards Nobu.)

MARSHA: Dad?

(Nobu turns to look at Marsha momentarily, then back to the television.)

(JUDY ADAMS is lit in a pool of light, holding Timothy. Marsha dims to darkness.)

JUDY: Mom?

(Masi moving away.)

(Masi turns to look at Judy momentarily, then

exits.)

(Judy dims to darkness)

(Nobu dims to darkness.)

Scene 2:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. Up right stage. On up side wall, there is a service window. Left of it is a swinging door that leads into kitchen. Small counter space with 3 or 4 small stools. Down, there are 1 or 2 small tables with chairs.

Lights come up. BLACKIE can be seen in the service window. Speaks with a thick pidgin. He is taking a big swig of Budweiser beer. KIYOKO appears and gives him a dirty look. Blackie's embarrassed. He's been caught in the act.

BLACKIE: It makes my cooking get mo' better. (Kiyoko stares)

It makes me get m' better. (Kiyoko continues to stare) I'm thirsty. I wanted a beer.

KIYOKO: (Taking bottle away.)

You're always thirsty, you're always hungry. You're the cook. You're supposed to cook the food, not eat it all up. Now go wipe the tables.

(Hands him a towel and scoots him out the swinging door.)

BLACKIE: It makes my cooking get mo' better. If I feel better, my cooking get mo' better. It does.

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

Blackie stops and scratches his butt --

KIYOKO: (noticing, knocks his hand away.)

Don't scratch your "oshiri" ((butt)). You're the cook, 'member?

Nobu enters, walks over and is about to greet them. However, Kiyoko grabs the towel away from Blackie and walks pass Nobu, ignoring him.

BLACKIE: Boy, you in the dog house.

NOBU: What?

(Kiyoko finishes taking a few quick swipes with the cloth at a table, then heads back towards Nobu and Blackie. Nobu is about to say hello again as Kiyoko ignores him and walks passed. She moves behind the counter and starts wiping.

Blackie exits to the kitchen)

BLACKIE: You in the dog house. But it going pass.

(Nobu moving to the counter)

NOBU: What? What?

(Kiyoko tosses a small plate of "tsukemono" ((pickles)) in front of Nobu and wipes around him)

(Nobu looks at the plate of tsukemono)

NOBU: You know I don't like this kind of pickle.

(Kiyoko tosses the towel on the counter.)

KIYOKO: I'll get your tea.

Kiyoko exits into kitchen. Blackie pokes his head out of service window holding Nobu's plate in one hand.

BLACKIE: We drop food on the floor, we pick it up. If we like you -- (Mimes throwing the food away.) But, if you in the doghouse...

Gives Nobu a knowing look and withdraws. Kiyoko enters with Nobu's tea.

NOBU: I like eggplant. You know that. You always give me eggplant pickle.

KIYOKO: (Pouring tea.)
Out of season.

NOBU: Masi brought some by yesterday with the wash.

KIYOKO: Nobu-chan, I said I'd do the wash for you. You gotta washing machine at your place. I can just come over and --

NOBU: No, no, too much trouble. I can do it myself. I don't like cucumber pickle.

KIYOKO: Nobu, how could you forget?

NOBU: I didn't. You did.

KIYOKO: I kept dropping hints.

NOBU: I like eggplant. You know that.

KIYOKO: All last week.

NOBU: Eggplant! Eggplant!

KIYOKO: (exasperated)
We ran out!

Kiyoko exits into the kitchen. Nobu sits there stunned at being shouted at.

Blackie enters, carrying a plate of food. Sets it down in front of Nobu. Blackie watches while sipping on a beer. Nobu is about to put a fork load into his mouth, then stops. Looks at food, then at Blackie. Blackie makes a barking sound and grins. Suddenly it dawns on Nobu what he forgot --

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

Scene 3:

Masi's place. Small apartment. SADAO NAKASATO sits on a sofa. Lit in a pool of light.

SADAO: So she said, 'How come you still wear your wedding ring?'. I didn't know what to say. Speechless. Then someone else said, 'Sadao, you always complain about not meeting people, not being able to start a new life. How come you still wear your ring?'. They weren't being mean. That's why we were there. To ask those kinds of things. I couldn't say anything. It had been about a year and a half but still... We were sitting around in somebody's living room. I began to cry. It became very quiet. I could hear myself crying. Like a little boy. I remember thinking, 'How strange. I am crying in front of all these people that I don't know. And I feel no shame.' The room was so still. All you could hear was my crying. Then I heard a tapping sound. I looked up and noticed a woman sitting across from me. She was nervous I guess, she was slapping her sandals against the bottom of her feet. Tap, tap, tap...

Pause.

I said I didn't know why. It just never crossed my mind to take it off. 'Why should I take the ring off? I said. Then one of the widows, the one who formed the group said, 'Because you're not married anymore.'

Lights come up on the rest of the apartment. Masi is at the small kitchen counter fixing 2 cups of Sanka coffee. She wasn't quite prepared for him sharing such

personal details of his life and is a bit unsure how to respond. Sadao fears he may have gotten a bit carried away.

MASI: (Bringing coffee over)
Cream? It's non-dairy creamer.

Sadao shakes head.

MASI: If you want tea?

SADAO: No, this is fine. I ran on a bit, didn't I?

MASI: No, no, it's alright. (beat) It's just Sanka.

SADAO: Good. Otherwise the caffeine keeps me up all night. Have you tried decaffeinated coffee?

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

SADAO: No, the bean. They actually make a decaffeinated bean.

MASI: No, we never did anything like that. Just instant. Yuban makes a good instant coffee. That's what I usually drink. But I don't have any since I moved over here.

SADAO: No, I've never tried it.

MASI: I'll have to get some next time I go shopping.

SADAO: They have this process they use. On the bean. I mean they don't grow a decaffeinated bean. I don't know what's worse. The caffeine in it or the chemicals they use to get the caffeine out.

(Laughing at his own joke)

SADAO: I have a little grinder. A Braun? You know a Braun?

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

MASI: We never did anything like that. We just drink instant.

SADAO: I like Sanka. I have to drink it all the time. Doctor's orders. (Imitating.) 'If you drink coffee, Sadao, drink Sanka!'

(Laughs valiantly at his attempt at humor. Masi stares at her cup. Sadao notices and offers a feeble explanation.)

Blood pressure...

(They drink in silence. Sadao remembers something)

SADAO: Oh. Excuse me. I left something in the car...

(Sadao's voice trails off as he exits. Masi sits there uncomfortably. This isn't working out. Sadao appears with a fishing pole and reel wrapped up like presents.)

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

(Sadao holds out pole.)

(Nobu lit in a half-light at his place watching TV. His face illuminated by the flickering screen's glow.)

I can't.

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

MASI: But Sadao...

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

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

SADAO: Go 'head. Open it up.

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

(Masi unwraps pole, which is broken down into pieces. Sadao sets reel on table and takes pole from Masi and proceeds to put it together.)

SADAO: Here, let me show you.

(Puts it together.)
There.

(Hands it back. Remembers reel, hands it to her.)

Oh, and here's this.

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

SADAO: See, it goes like this. And then you're all set to catch fish.

(Hands it back to Masi.)

I told you I was going to take you. Now you can't refuse.

MASI: Yeah, but...

SADAO: Thought I was kidding, huh?

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

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

MASI: But you have to do all that walking.

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

MASI: I don't play.

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

MASI: What about fishing?

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

(Nobu, still lit in half-light, gets up to phone Masi.)

(Phone rings. Masi goes over and answers it. It's Nobu. Slowly lights dim on Sadao and rest of apartment and just Masi and Nobu are lit)

MASI: Hello.

NOBU: (Lit in small pool of light.)

You coming to pick up the clothes?

Beat.

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

NOBU: I'm not worried. You alright?

MASI: Yes, I'm alright. Did you want something?

(No response.)

I got more vegetables. Do you need some more?

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

MASI: I don't have anymore.

NOBU: Alright, then.

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

NOBU: No.

(Pause)

MASI: Nobu, I have to go now.

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

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

NOBU: I'm not worried.

MASI: Bye.

NOBU: Bye.

End of 1st Installment

To be continued ---

2nd Installment

Scene 4:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. Kiyoko, CHIYO FROELICH, Blackie. Playing 5 Card Stud. One card down and 2 up. Chiyo in the process of dealing. Kiyoko to her left, Blackie to her right. Chiyo wears a poker visor. 5 empty beer bottles in front of Blackie, working on 6th. He is not drunk, though)

CHIYO: He's got a wife. You said so yourself.

KIYOKO: They're separated.

CHIYO: He wants to get back together. I know his kind. She left him. They can't get over that. He only wants you for one thing. Your "tempura". Yeah. He's over your restaurant everyday, "desho" ((isn't he)). Free meals. He's eating up all your profits.

(Just as Chiyo is finishing her line, they notice Blackie chugging down the rest of his beer. Making strange strangling noises. They stare. Blackie burps with great satisfaction, then notices them staring.)

BLACKIE: You gotta drink beer when you're playing poker or you aren't playing poker. You're just playing cards. I don't like cards, hate cards.

(Holds up beer.)
I love poker.

KIYOKO: Nobu's an honest man.

CHIYO: You don't know the first thing about men, Kiyoko.

KIYOKO: And you do?

CHIYO: You never get out of the restaurant. You just work all the time. Wait, wait, someone didn't ante. We only bet once, a nickel right?

(Counting)
See. Someone didn't ante.

KIYOKO: I did.

CHIYO: So did I.

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

BLACKIE: Huh? Oh, yeah.

(Blackie innocently tosses money in. Chiyo begins to deal with commentary)

CHIYO: (To Kiyoko)
Two 6's, a pair of saxophones.

(To Blackie)
A 3 of diamonds gives you...nothing.

(To self)
8 of puppy toes to the dealer, working on a possible club flush.

(To Kiyoko)
Pair of sax's high. What do you see in him?

KIYOKO: He's a good man. Check.

CHIYO: But he's so old. Blackie.

BLACKIE: Yeah, I know.

KIYOKO: He's not old.

CHIYO: (To Blackie)
Your bet.

BLACKIE: Don't rush me, don't rush me.

CHIYO: I just think you can do better, that's all I'm saying.

(To Blackie)
You're queen high, working on a possible nothing.

(Motions to Kiyoko's hand)
A pair of saxes there, possible 3-of-a-kind.

KIYOKO: I don't want to talk about it.

(Blackie finally decides and is about to bet but Chiyo ignores him and goes right ahead)

CHIYO: Dealer bets a nickel. Is he good in bed?

KIYOKO: He's 68 years old. I raise you a dime.

CHIYO: Then it's important. See you and I bump you a quarter.

BLACKIE: I love it when the wahinis talk dirt.

(They stare at him)
Just joking, don't lose your coconut.

(As Blackie begins to put in the bets he missed
Kiyoko and Chiyo continue.)

KIYOKO: I call. (Tosses quarter in)

(Chiyo deals)

CHIYO: (To Kiyoko)
9 of spades. No help there.

(To Blackie)
A trois. Oh, a pair of 3's.

(To self)
And for the dealer...another club. Read 'em and weep. 4 puppy toes looking
mighty pretty. Flush, very possible.

(To Kiyoko)
Pair of sax's still high.

KIYOKO: You don't know him like I do. Check.

(Notices Blackie sucking on his beer)
He checks, too.

CHIYO: I'm just saying you could find some one else. Someone younger, more fun.

KIYOKO: (irritated) You've been watching too many soap operas, Chiyo. Life's not
like that. Men just don't fall into your lap.

(Chiyo's upset at being lectured to)

CHIYO: 50 cents.

BLACKIE: (Impressed)
50 cents...

KIYOKO: (making her point)
I like Nobu. One dollar.

BLACKIE: (In disbelief.)

1 dollar . . .

CHIYO: Alright, alright, white hair doesn't bother me. It's no hair I can't stand.

(Tosses in dollar)
Call you. You got the 3-of-a-kind?

KIYOKO: Pair of sixes, that's all. You got the flush?

CHIYO: Pair of eights! Hah!

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

BLACKIE: (Puffing up like a rooster.)
Excusez-mois, but I got 3 trois's.

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

KIYOKO: (To Chiyo)
Your wash.

(To Blackie)
Blackie, cut.

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

BLACKIE: (Holding up beer)
Hate cards. Love poker.

(as Blackie starts to guzzle, Kiyoko begins dealing.)

KIYOKO: (Dealing)
Harry would have been 59 this week.

Scene 5:

(Marsha's place. Nobu seated on a couch. Marsha making him comfortable)

NOBU: What do you mean, 'Be nice to Mama'?

MARSHA: All I'm saying is just try to be nice to her when she gets here. Say something nice about the way she looks or about her --

NOBU: (Interrupts)

I'm always nice to Mama. I'm always good to her.

Why the hell she has to live over there? Huh? How come Mama's got to live way over there?

(Masi enters carrying a small paper bag)

MARSHA: Hi Mom, come on in.

(Taking bag)

Here let me help you. Dad's already here.

MASI: Just some left over fruit that was in the icebox. Starting to rot so eat it right away.

(Masi and Nobu acknowledge each other awkwardly.)

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

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

MARSHA: (Offering explanation to Nobu.)

Jimmy wasn't going to come.

MASI: Bowling?

MARSHA: Sit down, sit down. Dinner's almost ready in a minute. Dad, coffee? Tea, for you Mom?

(Marsha exits)

MASI: Place is cozy, "neh" ((isn't it)).

NOBU: Looks like the rooms back in Camp.

MASI: Nobu, the Camps were over 40 years ago. At least she's clean. Not like the younger one.

NOBU: How you been?

MASI: Alright.

NOBU: "Isogashi no?" ((Busy))

MASI: No. The usual.

NOBU: I called the other night, no one answered.

(Masi doesn't offer an explanation)

How you been?

(Marsha interrupts carrying in an ashtray.)

MARSHA: Dad, Mom's taking a ceramics class. Judy got her to go.

(Hands him the ashtray.)

She made this.

(Nobu stares at it.)

MASI: It's an ashtray.

NOBU: You don't smoke.

MASI: I'll get Daddy's coffee.

(Masi exits with cup.)

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

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

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

NOBU: (Holding ashtray)

It's a nice ashtray. Is this where you go all the time? I call in the evening. I guess that's where you must be.

(Pause)

Remember those dances they used to have in the Camps? You were a good dancer. You were. Best in the Camps.

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

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

MASI: He could dance so good.

NOBU: Remember that dance you were supposed to meet me out front of the canteen? We were all going to meet there and then go to the dance together. Kats,

Chester, and I couple others. Everybody else, they went on ahead. I waited and waited...

MASI: Nobu, that was 40 years ago.

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

MASI: (Interrupts.)

That's over 40 years ago. How can I remember something like that?

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

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

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

NOBU: Where were you, huh?

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

NOBU: Where the hell were you?

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

(Nobu notices his coffee.)

NOBU: You put the cream and sugar in. That's not mine.

(Pushes coffee away. Masi realizes what she's done.)

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

NOBU: I like to put it in myself.

MASI: (Pushing cup towards him.)

It's the way you like it, the same thing.

NOBU: (Pushes it back.)

No, it's not the same things.

MASI: Alright, alright, I'll drink it myself. Here, you can drink mine.

(Masi shoves her tea to Nobu and grabs the

coffee cup.)

NOBU: What are you doing – wait, wait.

MASI: I don't mind.

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

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

MASI: (Interrupts, clinging to cup.)
Who gives a damn. You make such a fuss about its. "Monku, monku, monku".
((Kvetch, kvetch, kvetch)) I'll drink it.

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

(Coffee spills on to table.)

(Marsha appears with a towel.)

NOBU: (To Masi.)
Clean it up.

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

MARSHA: I'll clean it up.

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

MARSHA: Dad...

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

MARSHA: (Chasing after Masi.)
Mom...

(Nobu is left alone at the table. His cup of coffee sits in front of him. He stares at it for a beat. Then he puts in the cream and sugar. Stares at the cup)

Scene 6:

(Masi's apartment. Masi at clothesline. Judy visiting with Timothy.)

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

MASI: Daddy used to.

JUDY: Used to what?

MASI: Get up at night and feed you kids.

JUDY: You're kidding.

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

(They laugh.)

JUDY: I saw your new phone answering machine.

MASI: (Proud.)
Yeah. For messages.

JUDY: (Kidding.)
What? You got a new boyfriend?

MASI: Judy.

JUDY: Well, why not Mom? You moved out. It's about time you start meeting new people. Once you get a divorce you're going to have to do that any --

MASI: (Interrupts.)
I'm not getting a divorce.

JUDY: What are you doing to do? Live in separate place forever?

MASI: I just do his wash.

(Pause. Masi hanging clothes)

MASI: I think you should call Dad.

JUDY: Mom, what can I say to him? I can't talk about my husband, I can't talk about my baby. All he can talk about is how he can't show his face at Tak's barber shop because I married a "kurochan" ((black person)).

MASI: Judy, he's not going to call you.

JUDY: That's because he might get Jimmy. (Beat.) Can you imagine Dad trying to talk to Jimmy.

(Both laughing. Settle down.)

MASI: Judy. He needs you.

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

MASI: He can't.

Scene 7:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. We hear rhythmic pounding. As lights come up, Nobu and Kiyoko are lit in pool of light. Kiyoko is standing in back of Nobu pounding his back with her fists. She is massaging Nobu. This is a supreme joy for him. Kiyoko likes doing it for him.)

KIYOKO: (Not stopping.)
Enough?

NOBU: (Voice vibrating from the steady blows.)
Nooo...

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

KIYOKO: Enough?

NOBU: Noo...

(Kiyoko's arms are just too tired.)

KIYOKO: (Stopping)
Ahh...

NOBU: (Stretching)
"Oisho!" ((Ahh)) Masi used to do it. Sometimes Marsha does it now.

KIYOKO: (Pouring tea)
You're lucky you have children, Nobu. Especially daughters. Harry and I wanted children. They're good, neh.

(Nobu wants to give her something but feels awkward about it. Silence. Nobu abruptly pulls out a small gift and holds it out)

NOBU: Here.

(Kiyoko's too surprised to take it.)

(From here, spoken in Japanese except where otherwise indicated.)

Here, here, take it.

(Pushes it at her.)
For your birthday.

KIYOKO: (Taking it.)
Nobu.

(Opens it and holds up the earrings)

NOBU: Earrings. (In English.) I was walking by Inamasu' Jewelry Store.

KIYOKO: (English) Let me try them on.

(Kiyoko moves away to put on the earrings).

(FLASHBACK: Masi lit in pool of light.)

MASI: Why don't you want me anymore?

(No response.)

We don't sleep... You know what I mean and don't give me that kind of look. Is it me? The way my body... I've seen those magazines you keep in the back closet with your fishing gear. I mean, it's alright. I'm just trying to know about us. What happened.

NOBU: Nothing. Nothing happened. What's gotten into you?

MASI: Then why don't you...sleep with me?

NOBU: Stay outta my fishing equipment, I told you never to touch it. By the time I get home from work I'm tired. I work all day long, I'm standing the whole time.

MASI: What about those magazines?

NOBU: I'll throw 'em out, OK? First thing tomorrow I'll throw 'em in the trash and burn 'em. That make you feel better?

(Masi is hurt by his angry response.)

Masi?

(No response.)

Masi. You're pretty. You are.

MASI: Don't lie to me. I hate it when you lie to me.

NOBU: I'm not lying.

(Masi refuses to believe him.)

What the hell do you expect? We got old. Not just you. Me. Me. Look. Look at me. You call this a catch? You still want this?

MASI: (Quietly.)
Yes.

(Nobu doesn't know what to say.)

Why don't you want me?

(FLASHBACK ends. Masi withdraws into shadows.)

(Kiyoko returns to Nobu with the earrings on)

KIYOKO: (Posing.)
Nobu-chan?

NOBU: Good. Very good.

(Kiyoko attempts to embrace Nobu. It's too uncomfortable for Nobu and he gently pushes her away. Kiyoko is embarrassed. From now they speak in English again.)

KIYOKO: How come you do that to me?

(No response.)

Don't you like it?

NOBU: I like it. But I don't like it, too.

(Dim to darkness.)

End of 2nd Installment

To be continued --

3rd Installment

Scene 8:

Masi's apartment. Couch has a rumpled blanket on it. Morning. Sadao is standing holding the door open for a surprised Marsha. Sadao is dressed only in pants and an undershirt. Marsha is holding a box of "manju" ((Japanese pastry)).

SADAO: Good morning.

MARSHA: Is my mother – is Mrs. Matsumoto here?

MASI: (From off stage.)
Who is it?

SADAO: Come on in, please come in.

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

MASI: (Momentarily caught off guard.)
Oh, hi Marsha. Come in.

MARSHA: (Entering hesitantly.)
Hello Mom.

MASI: This is Sadao Nakasato. (to Sadao) My eldest one Marsha.

SADAO: Hello Marsha.

MARSHA: Hello.

(Awkward pause. Marsha remembers her package.)

Oh. I just thought I'd bring some manju by.

(Handing it to Masi.)

I didn't think it was that early. Next time I guess I'll call first.

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

SADAO: Hmm, love manju. One of my favorites. Especially with a good cup of strong coffee

MARSHA: I meant to drop it off last night but I called and no one was here.

MASI: Oh, we got in late from fishing.

SADAO: We caught the limit.

MASI: (Looking at phone answering machine.)
I have to remember to turn this machine on.

MARSHA: That's OK Mom.

SADAO: In fact, Masi caught more than me.

MASI: Teamwork. I catch them and Sadao takes them off the hook. Sit down and have breakfast with us. Sit, sit. It was so late last night I told Sadao to sleep on the couch. So he did. He said he would cook breakfast for me in the morning. Right over there on the couch.

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

SADAO: Waffles.

MASI: You sure you know how?

SADAO: I can make them, good ones. From scratch. And they're low cholesterol.

MASI: Sit down, sit down.

MARSHA: No, no Mom. I really should be going. I'm going to stop over at the house. To see Dad, too.

(Masi wrapping up two packages of fish with newspaper.)

MASI: (Handing her a package.)
Give some to Brad. Here.

MARSHA: Remember? I'm not seeing him anymore.

MASI: Then give them to Dad.

MARSHA: What do I tell him?

MASI: (Momentary pause.)

Just give it to him. No use wasting it. He can eat fish morning, noon, and night.

(Marsha turns towards door.)

SADAO: No waffles? They're low cholesterol.

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

(Marsha pauses at door. Masi and she exchange glances.)

Bye, Mom.

(Marsha exits.)

MASI: (calling after)

Tell Daddy I'll bring his clothes by later this week. That I've been busy. And tell him to have his old clothes in a pile where I can see it. Last time I couldn't find one of his underwear and he got mad at me.

(Closes door.)

It was under the ice box.

SADAO: (Seemingly preoccupied with his cooking.)

Everything's low cholesterol. Except for the Cool Whip. But that doesn't count because that's optional. Where's the MSG? That's my secret -- (Continues.)

(During the following, Sadao continues to talk. Lights up on Nabu sitting at the coffee table with the kite in front of him, about to eat an avocado.)

Nobu holds the avocado in his left hand and a knife in his right. He cuts the avocado along the side and pops the seed out. Then takes one of avocado halves and pours a large dose of sugar onto it. Takes a spoon and begins scooping large portions into his mouth. He likes this. To him, it's dessert. While eating, he stares at unfinished kite.)

(Masi, not listening to Sadao, picks up an avocado pit in a jar with water that is sitting on the kitchen counter. As Sadao rambles on, she lifts it and carries it downstage. Sadao notices her doing this but doesn't let on. He Continues to speak.)

SADAO: -- My daughter gets so mad at me, "Dad, you're a pharmacist, you should know better than to use MSG." She's a health food nut. Sometimes I add prune juice but then you have to do easy on the MSG. The flavor doesn't mix. It's mostly for medicinal reasons, though. The prune juice. But it really does add a nice hint of flavor to the waffles but you really can't over do it. Everything in moderation. I think these people got a little carried away with this MSG thing. 'Course I'm not running a Chinese restaurant, either. I'm just talking about a tiny pinch of the stuff...

(Nobu lifts the kite frame. He raises it above his head and begins to move it as if it were flying. For a moment Nobu appears like a child making believe that his kite is soaring high in the sky)

(Lights up on Judy with a baby stroller passing by Kiyoko's restaurant.)

(Nobu sets the kite down and goes back to eating the avocado. He continues to tinker with the kite.)

(Kiyoko and Chiyo approach Judy.)

Scene 9:

(In front of Kiyoko's restaurant.)

KIYOKO: Hello.

CHIYO: Hi.

KIYOKO: You're Judy.

JUDY: (Cautious.) Yes?

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

CHIYO: Chiyo Froelich.

KIYOKO: I run this restaurant. Hasegawas.

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

KIYOKO: How do you do.

CHIYO: Hi.

JUDY: Oh, hello.

(Silence. Kiyoko notices the baby.)

KIYOKO: Hello Timothy.

CHIYO: Nobu should see him.

(Judy is surprised they know Timothy's name. Kiyoko and Chiyo, in turn, are surprised at the baby's appearance.)

KIYOKO: Timothy's so cute.

CHIYO: He's dark...

KIYOKO: He comes to my place almost everyday... Nobu... Your father...

CHIYO: (Kidding.) He's so "mendokusai" ((troublesome))— I don't like cucumber pickle, I like eggplant. "Monku, monku, monku" ((kvetch)) all the time.

KIYOKO: Oh, it's no trouble at all. I like to do things like that. I like cooking for Nobu. That's how come I know him so good. I feed him, oh, almost everyday. He likes my cooking. That's why I know him so good.

(Silence. Judy is not saying anything.)

CHIYO: Show Judy your earrings. Kiyoko, show her.

KIYOKO: (Embarrassed.) Chiyo . . .

CHIYO: He gave them to her. Your father.

KIYOKO: Not now . . .

CHIYO: For her birthday.

KIYOKO: For my birthday. Nobu gave them to me.

(Masi's apartment. Masi has picked up her fishing pole and begins to practice her cast.)

(Dim to darkness on Judy, Kiyoko and Chiyo.)

(Nobu's place. Nobu dials Masi's apartment on the phone.)

(Masi's apartment. Sadao at the stove making waffles. He hears the phone ring and the machine click on but does not answer it. Masi is off to the side, in a pool of light, engrossed in her casting.)

NOBU: Masi? You got any --

(Nobu has gotten Masi's new phone answering machine. Nobu doesn't know how to deal with it.)

Masi?

(Listening to the message which finally ends.)

I am Nobu Matsumoto. My telephone number is 751-5253.

(Not sure if he said his name.)

I am Nobu Matsumoto.

(Hangs up. Picks up his kite and stares at it.)

(Masi casting. She is working on perfecting her technique, putting together all the little things that Sadao has taught her. She goes through one complete cycle without a hitch. She smiles to herself. It feels good. She begins again)

Scene 10:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. Surprise birthday party for Nobu. Judy standing out front. Blackie and Marsha in kitchen. Kiyoko and Chiyo scurry about in preparation)

KIYOKO: Blackie! Hurry up with that stuff!

(Blackie and Marsha come out of the kitchen carrying things. Marsha is covering her nose.)

KIYOKO: Ara! I forgot the dip. Chiyo, go talk, go talk.

(Kiyoko pushes Chiyo towards Judy, then hurries back into the kitchen as Blackie and Marsha enter.)

BLACKIE: What's-a-matter? You think that dish back there stink?

MARSHA: No, no...

(Blackie and Marsha set things down.)

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

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

BLACKIE: All orientals gotta like stink food. It's part of our culture. Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos—we all got one dish that is so stink.

Chinese have this thing they call, "Ham Ha", shrimp paste. My mom used to cook with it. Whew! Stink like something died. And you know Japanese eat "Takuan", the pickled horse radish. When you open up the bottle, the neighbors call to see if your toilet exploded. Filipinos got fish gut paste, "bagaoong", Koreans, "Kim Chee".
WHEW!! Next time you come I make you my Hom-yu.

MARSHA: Hom-yu?

BLACKIE: What's-a-matter? You live on Mars? You never heard of Hom-yu. Hom-yu. Steamed pork hash. It's my specialty. Gotta have the stinky fish on top. That's the secret. Lottsa "Pake" ((Chinese)) places don't use that fish anymore. Know why? Too stink! Chase all the "haole" ((white)) customers away. Take pork butt, chop it into small pieces. Four water chestnuts, chopped. Teaspoon of cornstarch --

(Kiyoko entering from kitchen carrying the dip.)

KIYOKO: (Interrupts, heading back to the kitchen)
Blackie! Blackie! Go do the cake!

MARSHA: I'll help you.

CHIYO: Kiyoko, when is he coming?

KIYOKO: He should be on his way. (to Marsha) No, no, you shouldn't help anymore. Eat, eat. Talk to Chiyo. (To Blackie.) Go, go, put the candles on the cake. No beer, either.

(Blackie exits, scratching his butt.)

BLACKIE: Stinky fish. Don't forget the stinky fish . . .

(Kiyoko follows him out, slapping Blackie's hand away)

CHIYO: (To Judy.) What do you do?

JUDY: Right now I'm staying home taking care of the baby. Before I was teaching 5th grade.

CHIYO: Oh, teacher, huh. My youngest hates her teacher. 5th grade. (to Marsha)
What do you do?

MARSHA: Dental hygienist. Remember, you asked me earlier.

CHIYO: Oh, yeah, yeah. (to Judy) What does your husband do?

JUDY: He's a writer.

MARSHA: He sells phone answering machines.

JUDY: He's a writer who sells phone answering machines.

CHIYO: You know who writes good? The ones who write soap operas. Yeah, you can't stop watching.

MARSHA: Judy watches "Edge of Night", it's her favorite.

JUDY: Only once in a while. Especially since the baby.

CHIYO: Know what's wrong with "Edge of Night"? I watch them all. Know what's wrong?

JUDY: I really don't watch it that much.

MARSHA: What?

CHIYO: The names. Yeah, the names. Isn't that so Kiyoko?

(Kiyoko entering with the cake.)

KIYOKO: Not now Chiyo.

(Marsha works her way over to the cake. Chiyo has Judy cornered.)

CHIYO: Haven't you noticed the names on "Edge of Night"? They're not normal like Luke or Laura. They're all so weird. Like Raven or Draper, Sky, Jynx. Isn't that so, Kiyoko?

KIYOKO: Don't bother her so much.

CHIYO: You ever met anyone named Raven? She's so awful.

JUDY: Actually, I don't watch it that much.

CHIYO: Isn't she wonderful.

JUDY: Oh, look at the cake.

(Judy maneuvers over to the cake. Chiyo follows. All standing around the cake as Kiyoko lights the candles.)

KIYOKO: Blackie called and he wasn't there so he should be right over. (To Marsha.) I'm so glad you could make it. Judy said you weren't sure whether you could come.

MARSHA: Oh no, no. We wouldn't have missed it.

KIYOKO: Nobu will be so happy you're here.

JUDY: I have a feeling he'll be surprised.

MARSHA: Thank you for inviting us.

KIYOKO: Oh no, no. I wanted you people here. (To Judy.) Where's the baby?

JUDY: Jimmy's home babysitting him.

CHIYO: Next time you bring him. I like babies. We got plenty of room here.

KIYOKO: Sure. No problem. Next time bring the baby and Jimmy, too. I want to get to know all of Nobu's.

(Blackie rushes in with his ukelele.)

BLACKIE: "Hayo! Hayo! ((Hurry, hurry)) The bugga's coming!

CHIYO: (To Blackie.) Get the lights. (Motioning to others.) Over here, over here.

(Nobu walks in and lights go up quickly, begin a very slow fade through the rest of the scene. They shout "Surprise". He is shocked to see Judy and Marsha. Kiyoko guides him over to the cake while Chiyo accompanied by Blackie on the ukelele, leads everyone in a rousing round of "Happy Birthday" or an appropriate Hawaiian song. He's trying hard to appear happy but he is very uncomfortable. Lights continue their slow fade through the song. He is now standing in front of the cake. His face is lit by the glowing candles.)

(Nobu doesn't move to blow out the candles. The moment is becoming uncomfortable.)

JUDY: (irritated) Dad.

(Nobu still doesn't move. Moment is now very awkward.)

MARSHA: (Gently) Dad.

(Nobu blows out the candles.)

(Black out.)

Scene 11:

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

MASI: Sadao?

(Busy switching channels.)
Sadao?

SADAO: Hmm?

MASI: Could you please keep it on one?

SADAO: (Realizing what's he's been doing.)
Oh. I'm sorry.

(Starts switching channels again.)
Which one? This one? How's this?

MASI: Fine, fine. That's fine.

(They settle into watching TV.)

MASI: Sadao?

SADAO: Hmm?

MASI: I don't feel good. (Pause.) I think something's wrong with me.

SADAO: What, what? Want me to call Doc Takei?

MASI: No, no...

SADAO: You have a fever? Headache? What's wrong?

MASI: No, no, nothing like that.

(Pause. Thinking.)

MASI: I'm too happy.

SADAO: What?

MASI: I feel...too happy.

(Sadao stares at her uncomprehending.)

MASI: I used to feel like this as a kid, I think.

SADAO: You feel too happy?

MASI: When you're a kid you get ice cream and 'member how you used to feel? Happy, right? But then you eat it all up and it's gone, or, you eat too much of it and you throw-up but his just goes on and on.

SADAO: You mean us?

(Masi nods)

SADAO: Yeah, but this is a little different than ice cream, don't you think --

MASI: (Interrupts.)
Of course, of course.

SADAO: What about with Nobu? Didn't you go through this with him?

(Masi shakes her head.)

SADAO: I mean in the beginning when you first met? When you got married?

MASI: No, it wasn't like that. I think something's wrong with me. You know how they say there's no such thing as an accident? That you really wanted it to happen and so it did? I don't think I really cared for Nobu. Not the way he cared for me. There was someone else who liked me in Camp. I liked him, too. I married Nobu. Something's wrong with me, huh? Now you make me feel too happy. I don't like it. It makes me... Unhappy.

(Sadao reaches out and places his hand on top of hers)

MASI: Was she in a lot of pain?

(Sadao doesn't follow her comment.)

Your wife. Towards the end. In the hospital.

(Sadao realizes she's talking about Mary)

SADAO: Mary just slept all the time. No, not too much. After about 2 weeks she went into a coma and that was it. You can't tell. Cancer's like that. Mary was pretty lucky, I guess.

There's nothing wrong with you. Really, there isn't.

You scare me. You know that? Sometimes you scare the hell out of me. I don't want to go through that again. I told myself, 'never, ever again'. Dead is better than feeling that kind of pain. But this. This is. I don't know. To get a second chance...

Nothing good about growing old. You spend all your time taking medicine and going to the doctor so you won't die. The rest of the time you spend going to the funerals of your friends who did die and they were taking the same medicine and seeing the same doctors so what's the use, anyway? The golden years...

Look at us. Here we are. At our age. In bed together. Not even married. Can you imagine what the kids are thinking?

MASI: We're not doing anything wrong.

SADAO: Of course, I know, I know.

MASI: We're not doing anything wrong, Sadao.

SADAO: I know. But when I really think about what we're doing. It embarrasses the hell out of me.

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

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

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

Scene 12:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. Nobu is sitting at counter sipping sake and eating eggplant pickles. Blackie is watching him from service window. He comes out sipping on a beer.)

BLACKIE: (Takes a big gulp.)
Know why I like to drink Beer? Know why?

(As Nobu looks up, Blackie answers his own question with a loud satisfying "burp".)

Ahh. I like to let things out. Makes me feel good. Don't like to keep things bottled up inside. Not good for you. Give you an ulcer. Cancer. Maybe you just blow up and disappear altogether, huh.

(Laughs at his own joke. Notices Nobu isn't laughing.)

BLACKIE: That's the problem with you "katonks". You buggas from the mainland all the time too serious.

(Nobu glances back towards the door.)

No worry, no worry. Kiyoko going be back soon, Hey, you had lots of girlfriends when you was small kid time?

(Nobu just shrugs.)

Strong silent type, huh. Me? Lottsa wahines. All the time like to play with Blackie. (mimicking the girls) "Blackie, darling you're so cute, you're so funny". But I not all the time cute. I not all the time funny. How come you all the time come around here and you still got one wife?

NOBU: We're separated.

BLACKIE: So when you gonna get the divorce?

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

BLACKIE: What about Kiyoko?

(No response. Nobu keeps drinking.)

I don't like you. I like you. I don't like 'cause you make Kiyoko feel lousy, I like you 'cause you make her happy. Hey, she's my boss, who you think catch hell if she not feeling good? Hey, I don't like catching hell for what you do --

NOBU: (Interrupts.)
It's none of your business, Kiyoko and me.

BLACKIE: None of my business? Hey, brother, Kiyoko may be feeding your face but I'm the guy who's cooking your meals.

(Nobu stares down at his pickles.)

Nobu?

NOBU: What?

BLACKIE: You like Kiyoko?

(No response.)

Well, do you?

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

BLACKIE: 'Yeah, I guess so' what?

NOBU: (Mumbling.)
I like Kiyoko.

BLACKIE: Jesus. Talking to you "katonks" like pulling teeth --

NOBU: I LIKE KIYOKO! (beat) I like Kiyoko.

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

BLACKIE: Feels good, huh?

(Dim to darkness.)

End of 3rd Installment

To be continued --

4th Installment

Scene 13:

(Nobu's place. Masi enters carrying the wash in a brown paper bag. She unloads the clothes and stacks them neatly on the kitchen table. She picks up the old clothes off the floor, folds them and puts them in the bag. As she looks up, Masi is trying to decide whether to say hello to Nobu. She looks for a moment to the hallway, then turns to leave. As she makes her way to the door with the bag, Nobu enters from the hallway.)

NOBU: Masi, is that you?

MASI: I was going. I'm a little late. I was just going to leave the clothes and go.

(As she speaks, she notices the dirty dishes on the coffee table. She puts down the bag and proceeds to clean up the mess as she continues to talk)

I didn't know you were in the back...

(Masi taking the dishes to sink. Nobu just watches)

Nobu, why don't you wash the dishes once in a while? Clean up.

NOBU: Place is a dump anyway.

(Masi stops and looks at him. Nobu presses the point.)

Place is a dump, mama. Neighborhood's no good. Full of colored people, Mexicans...

MASI: (Putting dishes in sink.)

Well, move then. Move to the north side, like me. I kept saying that all along. For the kids -- better schools, better neighborhood, think you listen to me? (mimicking Nobu) 'I don't like "Hakujin" — white people make me nervous.' So you don't like white people, you don't like black people, you don't like Mexicans, so who do you like? Huh? "Monku, monku, monku"...

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

NOBU: Masi?

MASI: (Stops) What?

NOBU: Mr. Rossi give you anymore fish?

MASI: (Uncomfortable lying)

No. Not lately.

(Pause.)

NOBU: Mama?

MASI: Is your back bothering you, Nobu?

(No response.)

Want me to massage it for you?

(Nobu nods.)

(Masi puts down the bag and moves over behind Nobu, who is seated, and begins to massage his back. They continue in silence. Nobu is enjoying the moment. He begins to quietly laugh to himself.)

MASI: What?

NOBU: When I started work at your Papa's farm, he wanted to put me in the packing shed. I said, "No, I want to work in the fields." It was so hot, 110 degrees out there. He thought I was nuts. But I knew everyday at 8 in the morning and 12 noon you and your sister would bring the water out to us.

MASI: (Laughing as she recalls.)
Nobu.

NOBU: I wanted to watch you.

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

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

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

(Both laughing.)

Papa liked you.

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

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

(Masi massages Nobu in silence.)

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

MASI: What?

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

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

NOBU: (Interrupts.)

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

Masi stops. She realizes what he's asking her.

Long silence.

Masi begins to massage Nobu)

(Dim to darkness)

Scene 14:

(Lights up on Blackie at restaurant. After hours.

Seated in semi-darkness.

Feet up on table, accom- (Masi's place. Sadao panying himself on the stands before the door ukelele and singing a Masi has just opened.

sad Hawaiian love song. In Sadao's right hand

Several empty bottles of he holds a suitcase

beer sit on the table. and in his left several

He sings, "Manuela Boy".) fishing rods. On his

head sits a fishing

hat.

He has come to move

in with Masi. For a

moment they look at

each other in silence.

Masi invites him in.

Sadao enters)

(Dim to darkness)

(Song ends.)

Scene 15:

(Nobu's place. Judy has stopped by with Timothy. Nobu is watching TV.)

JUDY: I was just driving by and I thought I'd stop in.

(No response.)
You doing OK, Dad?

NOBU: Where the hell is he?

JUDY: Dad.

(Judy gives up trying to speak to him. Turns to leave --)

NOBU: He can come now.

JUDY: 'He can come now'? Dad, he isn't one of your children. He doesn't need your permission. He's -- (Continue.)

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

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

NOBU: I said he can come -

JUDY: (Interrupts.) He won't come. He doesn't like you.

(Silence.)

Dad? You know Mom's moving out? I didn't put her up to it.

(No response.)

If I did. I'm sorry.

(Judy goes over to get Timothy and brings him over to Nobu. This is the first time Nobu's seen the baby.)

Timothy. Your grandson.

(Judy holds the baby out to Nobu. For a moment, there is a hesitation. Then, Nobu takes the baby. Judy watches as Nobu plays with Timothy.)

(Judy begins to withdraw from the scene. Nobu

remains lit holding Timothy)

(Marsha lit in pool of light. They watch Nobu)

MARSHA: Did you tell Dad?

JUDY: No. I just brought the baby by.

MARSHA: Maybe he already knows about Mom and Mr. Nakasato.

JUDY: I don't think so. I really don't think so.

(Marsha and Judy Dim to darkness)

(Nobu begins to hum, then sing a lullaby to Timothy.)

(Dim to darkness. We hear the sound of a coffee grinder.)

Scene 16:

(Masi's apartment. Masi has asked Judy and Marsha over for a talk. She has just told them that she is about to go over and visit Nobu. She is going to tell him that she wants a divorce and to marry again.

The two daughters sit uneasily while Masi is at the counter preparing coffee and tea. Masi is trying to get the Braun Grinder to work. She's getting the feel for it by pushing the button. We hear the whirl of the spinning rotor blade. She's ready. Takes plastic top off and pours beans in. Masi presses the start button. Just as the grinder picks up top speed, Masi accidentally pulls the plastic top off. Beans go flying every which way.

Quiet. Masi peeks from behind her hands. She is upset. The daughters embarrassed. Normally, this would be a funny situation. Marsha gets up and starts to pick up beans scattered on the floor. Judy starts to giggle - it's all too ridiculous. Then Masi, too, begins to laugh. Marsha follows.)

JUDY: God, what a mess.

MASI: (To Marsha.)
Let it go, don't bother. I'll take care of it later.

MARSHA: (sitting, finds a man's sock)
What's this? This belong to Mr. Nakasato?

(Masi takes it. Awkward moment.)

JUDY: Mom. Why?

MARSHA: Why didn't you just leave sooner? You didn't have to stick around for us.

MASI: I didn't. (Pause.) I was. I was scared.

MARSHA: Of what? Dad?

MASI: I don't know. Everything.

JUDY: Was it 'cause I kept harping on you to move out on him all those years? Is that why you left.

MARSHA: What's the difference.

JUDY: Marsha.

MASI: Dad was always trying to beat me down, every little thing. 'How come you can't do this, how come you can't do that' – nothing was ever right. Every time I opened my mouth I was always wrong – he was always right. He always had to be right.

There are things you kids don't know. I didn't want to talk about them to you but... Daddy and I, we didn't sleep -- (Continues.)

JUDY: (Overlapping)
That's OK, Mom. Really, it's OK...

MASI: (Continuing.) -- together. Every time I wanted to, he would push me away. Ten, fifteen years he didn't want me.

We were having one of our arguments, just like always. And he was going on and on about how it was my fault this and my fault that. And I was trying to explain my side of it when he turned on me, 'Shut up Mama. You don't know anything. You're stupid.'

After 37 years of letting him be right, he called me that. And I understood. He didn't even need me to make him be right anymore. He just needed me to be stupid.

I was tired. I couldn't fight him anymore. He won. He finally made me feel like shit.

(Judy and Marsha are shocked by her language.)

That was the night I left him and came over to your place.

(Nodding towards Judy)

I like Sadao. I like Sadao very much.

Scene 17:

(Nobu's place. He's fixing himself in front of a small wall mirror. He adjusts the collar of his shirt and tugs at his sweater until it looks right. Nobu checks his watch. As he begins to pick up some of the scattered clothes on the floor, Masi enters.)

Nobu quickly gets up and moves to the sofa. Masi goes over to the kitchen area and takes clothes out of the bag setting them neatly on the table. She picks up the dirty clothes off the floor, folds them, and puts them into the bag.

As she's doing this, Nobu gets up, shuffles over to the stove and turns on the flame to heat some water. Stands there and watches the water heat up.)

MASI: (Sits down on sofa.)

I want to talk, Nobu.

(No response. Gets tea out and pours some into pot)

I have something I want to tell you.

NOBU: (Moving back to couch)

Want some tea?

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

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

NOBU: The pharmacist or something?

MASI: No, the lawyer one. He's the lawyer one. I went to see him.

(Turns off the stove flame.)

I went to see about a divorce. About getting one.

(No response.)

I want to get married again. So I went to George to see about a divorce. I wanted to tell you first so you'd know. I didn't want you to hear from someone else. I know how you hate that kind of thing. Thinking something's going on behind your back.

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

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

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

MASI: 13 months.

NOBU: 13 months, who cares? I never thought about it. I don't understand, Masi.

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

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

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

NOBU: (Interrupts.)

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

MASI: (Interrupts.)

It's been over a year, Nobu --

NOBU: I know! I said I know.

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

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

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

NOBU: (Interrupts)

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

MASI: His name is Sadao Nakasato. His wife died about 2 years ago. He's related to Dorothy and Henry. Nobu, it's the best thing for both of us.

NOBU: You keep saying it's the best thing, the best thing.

(Pause.)

Masi, why did you sleep with me?

MASI: Aren't you seeing somebody?

NOBU: No. Not like that.

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

NOBU: (Interrupts.)

It's totally different! I'm not seeing anyone!

(Pause.)

How long have you been seeing this guy? How long?

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

NOBU: (Interrupts.)

HOW LONG!

MASI: About 5 months.

NOBU: 5 MONTHS! How come you never told me? Do the girls know, too? The girls know! Everybody knows? 5 months. 5 GODDAMN MONTHS AND I DON'T KNOW!!

MASI: I asked them not to tell you.

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

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

NOBU: Everybody in this whole goddamn town knows except me! How could you do this to me! Masi! HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME??

(Nobu has her by the shoulders)

MASI: You going to hit me?

(silence. Nobu lets her go)

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

(Dim to darkness)

Scene 18:

(Kiyoko's restaurant. Chiyo and Kiyoko seated at table. Lit in pool of light)

KIYOKO: Harry died 9 years ago. That's how long it's been. He never forgot my birthday. Not once.

CHIYO: I could set you up. Yeah. You're not that old. We could go out on a double date.

KIYOKO: It's not that easy for me.

CHIYO: They're lots more fish in the ocean. Go dancing with us. Come on.

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

CHIYO: I'll introduce you to some of the guys. 'Member Ray, you met him? He's been asking about --

KIYOKO: (Interrupts.)
I don't like those people.

CHIYO: (Quietly.) I just thought you wanted to meet somebody. That's all --
(Continues.)

KIYOKO: (Overlapping.) That's not the way I am. I'm not like that.

CHIYO: (Continuing.) -- I was trying to do. That's all.

(Sits for a moment in silence. Lights begin to dim on Chiyo. By the end of the monologue only Kiyoko is lit on the pool of light.)

KIYOKO: When Harry died, right after? I started taking the bus to work. I had a car, I could drive. It was easier to drive. I took the bus. For 25 years you go to sleep with him, wake up next to him. He shaves while you're showering, comes in from the yard all sweaty. Then he's gone. No more Harry in bed. No more the smell of aftershave in the towel you're drying off with. No more sweaty Harry coming up and hugging me. I had a car. I took the bus. I missed men's smells. I missed the smell of men. Every morning I would get up and walk to the corner to take the bus and it would be full of all these men going to work. And it would be full of all these men coming home from work. I would sit there pretending to read my magazine...

(Inhales. Discovering the different smells.)

Soap... Just washed skin... Aftershave lotion... Sweat...

Scene 19:

(Nobu's place. Knock at the door and Marsha enters carrying a brown paper bag. Nobu watching TV)

MARSHA Mom asked me to drop these by and to pick up the dirty clothes.

(No response. Marsha unpacks the newly washed clothes.)

Kiyoko' been calling me. She's worried about you. She says you won't see anybody. Why don't you just talk to her Dad?

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

MARSHA (Interrupts.)

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

NOBU: (Interrupts.)

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

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

NOBU: (Moving he towards the couch and pushing her down while speaking.)

Sit down, sit down here. Tell me about it. Who is he? What does he do? Tell me 'bout him! Tell me!

MARSHA (Seated.)

What do you want me to say? Huh, Dad? They're happy. He's a nice man.

NOBU: (Repeating.)

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

MARSHA He treats her like a very special person.

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

MARSHA (Interrupts.)

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

NOBU: (overlapping)

Alright, alright...

MARSHA (Continuing.)

-- Lake Berryessa and camp over night. He teaches her how to bait the hook cast it out and even to tie the hook. I mean you never even took her fishing. (Continues)

NOBU: (overlapping)

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

MARSHA (Continuing)

-- They even dig up worms in his garden at his house. I saw them. Side by side -- (continuing)

NOBU: (overlapping)

Alright, I said.

MARSHA (Continuing)

-- sitting on the ground digging up worms and putting them in a coffee -- (Continues.)

NOBU: (Overlapping.)

ALRIGHT! ALRIGHT!

MARSHA (Continuing.)

-- can! I MEAN DID YOU EVER DO THAT FOR MOM!!

(Pause. Quieter.)

Did you?

(Getting worked up again.)

You're so... So stupid. You are. You're stupid. All you had to say was "come back". "Please come back." You didn't even have to say, "I'm sorry." (Continues.)

NOBU: (Overlapping.)

I'm your father . . .

MARSHA (Continuing.)

-- Mom woulda come back. She woulda. That' all you had to say. 3 lousy words: "Please come back." --(Continues.)

NOBU: (Overlapping.)

I'm your father...

MARSHA: (Continuing.)

-- You ruined everything. It's too late! YOU WRECKED EVERYTHING!!

(Pause. Composing herself.)

I'm so mixed up. When I look at Mom, I'm happy for her. When I think about you... I don't know. You have Kiyoko.

NOBU: That's not the same. I'm talking about your mama.

MARSHA Dad, Kiyoko cares a great deal about you. She's been calling Judy and me day and night.

NOBU: She knocks on the door but I don't let her in. She's not Mama.

MARSHA Dad. What do you want me to say? That's the way it is. I used to keep thinking you two would get back together. I couldn't imagine life any other way. But slowly I just got used to it. Mom over there and you here. Then all this happened. I mean, sometimes I can't recognize Mom anymore. What do you want me to say? You'll get used to it.

NOBU: (Pause, upset. Then, stubbornly.)
No.

MARSHA: (Looks at her father sadly.)
You'll get used to it.

(Dim to darkness)

Scene 20:

(Masi's apartment. Masi is at the clothesline hanging clothes. Judy, holding Timothy, is with Masi.)

Nobu suddenly rushes in --)

MASI: Nobu --

JUDY: Hello Dad --

NOB (To Masi, ignoring Judy.)
It's no good, Mama. It's no good at all. You come home. You come home now, Mama. You come home. It's no good --

JUDY: (Overlapping. Trying to calm Nobu down.)
Dad? Dad, take it easy, take it easy --

NOBU: (Yanking his arm away from Judy.)

I DON'T WANT TO TAKE IT EASY! I WANT MAMA TO COME HOME!

(Shocked silence.)

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

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

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

MASI: (Interrupts)
Nobu, Nobu... You don't understand, Nobu. I can't come home. I can't come home anymore --

NOBU: (Interrupts)
I DON'T CARE! I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANY OF THAT STUFF MAMA!

(Nobu's breaking down)

I won't yell at you, any more. I won't yell, I promise, Mama. I won't "monku" about the store or about your Papa... I'm sorry...I'm sorry. Masi, it's no good. Please come home. Please come home... Please...

(Neither Masi or Judy knows what to do)

(Dim to darkness.)

Scene 21:

(Lights up on Kiyoko's restaurant. Chiyo is dialing Nobu's number on the phone. A concerned Blackie stands guard next to her. Kiyoko has told them not to bother with him anymore. Kiyoko appears and watches them from the service window. She makes (In half light, while no attempt to stop Kiyoko's restaurant is in full light, them. Chiyo lets the Nobu composes himself and

phone ring and ring. leaves Judy's place. We
Finally she and Blackie follow him as he begins
exchange disappointed to make his way back home.
looks. At that point He stops in front
Kiyoko bursts in on of Masi's place and stares
them.) at it.

KIYOKO: How come you keep doing Action should be just
ending
that? Huh? Don't phone at Kiyoko's restaurant.
him anymore. I told you, As that scene darkens,
didn't I? Nobu arrives at his home.)

(Blackie and Chiyo look
sheepishly at Kiyoko.
Kiyoko's feigned anger
is very transparent to
all three parties and
only adds to the discomfort
of the situation.)

(Dim to darkness.)

Scene 22:

(Nobu is lit in a pool of light. He stands there for a moment in silence, still carrying
some of the emotional turmoil from his previous scene with Masi. He reaches behind
the sofa and pulls out a long, narrow object wrapped in cloth. As he unwraps it, we
see that it is. A Shotgun.

Nobu sits down in the chair with the gun across his lap, staring into the darkness.
As the lights do a slow fade on Nobu, the mournful wail of the "shakuhachi" is
heard.)

(Slow fade to black.)

Scene 23:

(Masi's apartment. Knock at door. Masi answers it. Nobu standing there with a
shotgun.)

NOBU: Where is he?

(Masi stares at the gun.)

MASI: He went to buy the newspaper.

(Nobu walks in and looks around.)

Don't worry. It's not loaded.

(Nobu cracks the shotgun and shows her that it is not loaded)

NOBU: At first I said, "No, no, no, I can't believe it. I can't believe it." I got so pissed off. I got my gun and drove over here. I drove around the block 20 or 30 times thinking "I'm gonna shoot this son-of-a-bitch, I'm gonna shoot him." I drove right up, rang the doorbell. No one answered. I kept ringing, ringing...

I went back to the car and waited. You cheated on me. How could you do that to me? I'm a good husband! I'm a good husband, Masi... I kept seeing you two. The two of you together. I kept seeing that. It made me sick. I kept thinking, "I'm gonna shoot that son-of-a-bitch. I'm gonna shoot him." I waited in the car.

It was 3 o'clock in the morning when I woke up. It was so cold in the car. You weren't back. I got worried I might catch a cold, and my back — you know how my back gets. I drove home, took a hot bath and went to sleep. I've been sick in bed all week.

I just wanted to show both of you how it was, how I was feeling. But it's alright. You two. It's all right now.

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

MASI: Nobu.

NOBU: Yeah?

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

NOBU: What is he? An old man or something?

MASI: He just likes to take naps. You do, too.

NOBU: In front of the TV. But I don't go into the bedroom and lie down. Well, where is he? Bring him out, don't I get to meet him?

MASI: You sure?

(Masi looks at him for a long while. She believes him. She turns to go wake Sadao up, then stops.)

Chester Yoshida? That night in the Camps when I didn't show up the dance?
Chester Yoshida? We just talked. That's all.

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

Scene 24:

(Marsha and Judy lit in pool of light down stage. Marsha is holding a small kite and playfully moving it above Timothy who is held by Judy.)

(They sit in silence enjoying the moment)

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

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

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

Scene 25:

(Darkness. On stage, the TV light comes on. Nobu's face lit by the screen's light. Lights come up and Nobu is now lit in a pool of light, seated at sofa watching TV. No kite on the coffee table. The rest of the place is in darkness. Masi is lit in pool of light. She stands, staring pensively down stage into space. In her arms she is holding the brown paper bag of newly washed clothes. She turns and moves towards Nobu's place. As she enters the lights come up full on the house.

Nobu is still sitting on the sofa watching TV. Masi goes over to the kitchen table and takes out the newly washed clothes, stacking them in neat piles on the table. She then proceeds to pick up the old clothes scattered on the floor and puts them in the bag. She is ready to leave. Masi picks up the bag of old clothes and moves towards the door, then stops. Thinking.

Masi returns to the kitchen and leave the bag of Nobu's old clothes on the table. Beat. She turns goes to the door. As she opens the door, Masi looks back at Nobu

and watches him for a brief moment. During this whole time, Nobu has never turned around to look at Masi though he is very aware of what is going on. Masi turns and exits through the door.

Lights dim with Nobu silently watching TV. At this same moment, the brown paper bag of wash on the table is lit by a shaft of light. His phone begins to ring. Nobu turns to look at it. Black out on Nobu. The WASH fades into darkness. The phone continues to ring for a few moments. Then, silence)

END OF PLAY.

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