

The Sun's Heat

Writer's Note:

If in doubt, slower rather than faster. Hot, but controlled.

SCENE 1

(BOY delivers his monologue to the audience. He does not realize that the GIRL is on stage too. When he finishes, he exits.)

BOY:

Before I met her...things were...different. Better, but...worse.

(Beat.)

I was so content with my life. Everything seemed...just dandy. There was nothing particularly special going on, or anything but...I was drifting along on a float of cotton candy.

The world and I were pals, then. We'd get home from a long day of co-existing in tandem and...just get on with it.

We were on the same side, then. We were working together and...neither of us was in control.

Then.

Now...now the world has taken over. It's moving and shifting and shaking and pulsing and I can't anticipate anything. I can't see anything

that's coming at me anymore.

Except her.

She's coming at me at full speed and there's nothing that I can do to stop her.

(GIRL speaks to both the audience and the space that the BOY previously stood in.)

GIRL:

Before I met him, the sun shined from inside my head, if that makes sense.

Everything that was illuminated...glowed.

Nothing was in shadow, and I could see existence so clearly.

People were beautiful, nature was beautiful. Everything I saw...all the colours...I might as well have been on acid.

My head was so full of beauty that the sun inside it warmed my heart.

But now the sun has moved from my head to my heart and I think I'm going to Explode.

It's so

hot.

Everything that was once so beautiful is ugly.

It's mundane.

It's...itchy.

I am sickened by it. I am sickened by everything that isn't him.

Now, the sun's rays are only shining on him.

(Long pause.)

I was on the bus this morning, and there was this man a few seats in front of me. He used the ring finger of his right hand to scratch relentlessly all over the back of his

big,
ginger
head.

It made me want to be sick.

There was something intriguing about the back of his neck. It was fat and pink
like
raw chicken.

I wanted to press my face against it and feel safe in his soft, musky neck
smell. Maybe if I did, my face would disappear. Maybe his raw chicken neck
would absorb my head and be the sand to my ostrich.

He put his arm around the girl next to him.

How could someone be with him? Did she not know about his neck? How
could anyone love someone with
that

neck?

She kissed him on the cheek, her dry, chapped lips against his mushy skin.
Maybe that's why he scratched his head so much. Maybe the abrasive sieve-
like texture of her lips on his flesh made his skin

crawl

all

over.

Maybe he had nits.

Maybe, just maybe, there were tiny, invisible antennae sticking out of his head
that were making his skin itch.

Maybe he was an alien. An alien with a chicken neck.

I had to stop looking then. It made my eyes hurt.

SCENE 2

BOY:

I've lost all notion of centrality.

GIRL:

I know what you mean. My orbital senses feel a bit skewed.

BOY:

I don't even know what a circle is anymore.

GIRL:

There's no hope for us, is there?

(Silence)

BOY:

My mother told me once that simplicity is overrated.

GIRL:

In what way?

BOY:

Well, she said life was too short for things to be simple. She said complexity is more exciting.

GIRL:

I'm not so sure I agree.

BOY:

Me neither. I think simplicity is wholly underrated.

GIRL:

I wish simplicity was redeemable.

BOY:

What?

GIRL:

Redeemable simplicity. You know how when you were a kid and you'd go to an arcade and play the games – like the ones where you have to hit the animals on the head or throw enough balls into the hoop?

BOY:

Yeah.

GIRL:

And then once you finish each game, depending on how well you've done, those little ticket things come out of the machine?

BOY:

Mm-hmm.

GIRL:

And then you take all your little tickets up to the desk where the man is, and behind him you can see alllll the prizes...bouncy balls and remote control cars, slingshots and bubble machines...

BOY:

I never got enough to win the pellet gun.

GIRL:

I got a stuffed ladybird once. I called her Tilly.

BOY:

So...you think people should be able to acquire simplicity like kids do with prizes at arcades?

GIRL:

I think it would be helpful.

BOY:

How would that work, exactly?

GIRL:

I can't solve all the world's problems.

(Pause)

BOY:

That could come in handy, I suppose.

GIRL:

I know. I'm very clever, you know.

BOY:

That you are.

(Pause)

Do you think there'd be hope for us if we could?

(Pause)

GIRL:

Maybe not. But at least then we'd have some kind of...cosmic faith.

SCENE 3

(GIRL is sitting atop a brick bridge, cross-legged. A streetlamp emanating orange light is also on stage, shorter than the bridge. There is a bench next to it.)

GIRL:

Everything restarted at that one moment. I remember it so clearly; it's etched into my throat, into my neck.

It was the fourth time we met. We were drunk on happiness and darkness and each other. And a very sweet, very pink gin punch that made me... pucker.

It was two thirty in the morning, and we were lost,

but

that didn't matter.

I remember looking up and seeing the midnight blue sky blinking at me, a dark abyss of fabric behind a big,

brick

bridge.

The road was empty apart from us. The orange light of the streetlamps set his hair on fire.

It was cold, but that kept me warm.

He told me he missed me, and I

started to cry.

He said it again, and I told him to

stop.

I told him I didn't understand,

why

did he miss me? I was right there; he didn't

need

to miss me.

But he carried on saying it.

Then... then, he

kissed

me, and I could feel the warmth of his face against the cold tears on mine.

That was the first time he kissed me.

Then he explained, with his hand around my neck and his voice in my jaw... he told me... "I miss you even when I'm with you. Even when you're next to me, you're too far away."

We stood like that for

a while.

I don't know whether I was happy or sad. Something in my chest started

jarring painfully, but

I liked it.

I liked that I could feel it.

Maybe I think happiness is sadness and sadness is happiness. Maybe I think pain is pleasure and pleasure is pain. Maybe, just maybe, I've been emoting, thinking and feeling everything

backwards

my whole life.

Whatever the case may be, wrong or right, nothing felt out of place then. We were high and low, left and right, in and out all at the same time.

We were expanding, we were contracting.

We were oscillating, we were perfectly still.
He ran out into the middle of the road and
screamed
that he loved me into the universe.
In my mind, that's the
only
moment
I know really happened.

SCENE 4

GIRL:

I think that people forget that we depend on each other to live. Talking to someone, even staring at a stranger in a crowd makes a difference to our day. They plant little seeds of...well, of imagination into our little insignificant minds.

BOY:

I know what you mean. I think the first time I saw you, things changed.

GIRL:

What do you mean?

BOY:

I mean...well. I mean you are 1 person out of 7 billion people. You're on 1 planet out of 8 planets, in 1 star system out of 100 billion star systems, in 1 galaxy out of 100 billion galaxies...and you are enormously insignificant.

GIRL:

Well, thanks.

BOY:

No, not you. Not you specifically. Everyone. Each person.

GIRL:

Is that information even accurate? You're not a physicist.

BOY:

You know what I mean.

GIRL:

You're ridiculous. *(Pause)* That's depressing, you know.

BOY:

No, it's wonderful. Because when you think about how a tiny interaction – like when I saw you for the first time – can change another person so completely...think about the chain reaction.

GIRL:

So you seeing me changed you, which changed how someone else saw you...that eventually changes how our galaxy is seen by...others?

BOY:

Yes.

GIRL:

I'm not so sure that works.

BOY:

Aren't you? Think about it. You changed me, have I changed you? Maybe. Have I changed others since you changed me? Most definitely. And by that logic, they've changed how someone else sees them. Extract that change, and multiply...and soon all the worlds will have changed.

GIRL:

Why did seeing me change you? Or how, rather?

BOY:

I don't know, but it did. I felt it. I changed more once we spoke. I changed even more when this happened.

GIRL:

When what happened?

BOY:

Whatever this is.

GIRL:

What is this?

BOY:

I don't know. Something special. Like opening Christmas presents, but better.

GIRL:

How are you sure that it's special, though?

BOY:

I can feel it.

GIRL:

Where?

BOY:

Here.

GIRL:

But that's just inside *you*. Your body could just be malfunctioning.

BOY:

It isn't.

GIRL:

You don't know that. You're biased.

BOY:

True. But don't you feel different?

GIRL:

Different? Different how?

BOY:

Just...different. Don't you feel different?

GIRL:

Well, I don't feel different. I think I think different.

BOY:

What do you mean?

GIRL:

Well...I don't know. I think...I think I think the same, but I think that you being here makes me think about things I didn't used to think about. So I'm busy thinking these different thoughts I never thought about.

BOY:

So...that's different. Right?

GIRL:

I suppose.

BOY:

And you don't think that that difference makes a difference?

GIRL:

I think it makes a difference to me. I don't know if it makes you different or anyone else different.

BOY:

I disagree. I think that whatever you think differently manifests in ways you can't even comprehend.

GIRL:

So I'm ignorant.

BOY:

Yes.

GIRL:

That's not nice.

BOY:

It's not a bad thing, to be ignorant. They say ignorance is bliss for a reason.

GIRL:

I don't want to be ignorant.

BOY:

What does it matter?

GIRL:

It matters a lot.

BOY:

Why?

GIRL:

Because it just does.

BOY:

Why?

GIRL:

BECAUSE IT DOES.

BOY:

I think you're wrong. I think this ignorance is wonderful. Don't you feel wonderful? Don't I make you feel wonderful?

GIRL:

You make me feel....

BOY:

Wonderful?

GIRL:

BOY:

Who you are always changes you know. It doesn't matter if you're ignorant to that.

GIRL:

What?

BOY:

Exactly, what.

GIRL:

I'm confused.

BOY:

Think about what you are. What are you?

GIRL:

Well, I'm a girl.

BOY:
Yes, you really are.

GIRL:
What does that mean?

BOY:
Think about what you are. Not who.

GIRL:
I still don't understand.

BOY:
You're denying your femininity my love.

GIRL:
You don't know what I'm denying.

BOY:
Alright. What are you denying?

GIRL:
Do you ever think about love?

BOY:
Yes.

GIRL:
I always think...it's a verb, not a noun. Why do people make it a noun?

BOY:
I...

GIRL:
It's a process. It's not a thing. It can't be a thing. You surrender yourself completely and totally to someone...it's definitely a verb.

BOY:
That makes sense.

GIRL:
If people let themselves go, and surrendered to everything around them...just think. It would be beautiful.

BOY:
I suppose.

GIRL:

That's what I'm denying. I can't surrender.

BOY:

We've surrendered to each other.

GIRL:

I know. But what if that isn't enough?

SCENE 5

GIRL:

When people say that every person is like a snowflake – different, unique, special – I’m not really sure how to believe it. I do believe it, but I’m not really sure

how

to. There are a lot of people, and only a finite number of characteristics and qualities. I guess it’s the combination that makes people different; I suppose they

react differently to one another. Like chemistry.

We’re all little chemical reactions in different environments reacting in different ways to different things. Some things have no effect on us, others catalyze us.

Our catalysts, though...do they destroy us? Or do they speed up an inevitable natural reaction to take us to a better state? I don’t know.

He’s catalyzing me. I’m not sure where we’re going. Maybe this is just one long, explosive chemical reaction that will end up destroying everyone and everything in a fiery mass.

(Let’s be pyromaniacs.)

BOY:

I committed arson for her once.

She loves light. Warmth. Gold.

It was a surprise.

In the middle of the night, I woke her. I carried her, took her way beyond the edge of civilization.

I knew this place from...before. A large, empty field with one tree...just one, growing ominously from it, the middle. I always thought the tree looked mangled, in pain, whenever I saw it. It looked unhappy. I tried to give it happiness,

her kind of happiness.

I made it warm, I made it light, I made it gold. When I took her to it...she walked towards it. Slowly. Stopped and...just watched. Hours, she stood and watched. When it burnt out, she turned to me, eyes full of sadness. I picked her up and carried her home.

She’s never felt so heavy in my arms.

SCENE 6

Lights fade half-up, slowly. A table for four, covered in a white tablecloth. There are four chairs, two of which look like they have been recently sat in, yet whoever was there left in a hurry. There is an empty bottle of red wine on the table, two soiled glasses, and one stain. One of the wine glasses is knocked over. On the floor there is a very used record player. The song "Winnipeg" by Joywave begins playing. A breeze. The song ends. Lights fade down.

SCENE 7

BOY:
What's your name?

GIRL:
I haven't got one.

(BOY smiles.)

What?

BOY:
I haven't got one either.

GIRL:
Oh. Really?

BOY:
No, not really.

GIRL:

BOY:

GIRL:
I was lying too.

BOY:
Why?

(GIRL looks surprised, as though nobody has ever asked her 'why' before.)

GIRL:
I...I like lying. It's fun.

BOY:
It is.

GIRL:
It's only fun when it's to strangers, though.

BOY:
Why's that?

GIRL:
They think you're telling the truth.

BOY:

So you like lying to people who'll never find out?

GIRL:

Yes.

BOY:

Isn't the thrill in knowing you might be caught out?

GIRL:

No. When you lie to someone you don't know, you know that what you've told them isn't true. But they think it is.

(GIRL leans in towards BOY, as though telling him a secret.)

You make truth and untruth subjective. You hurdle the boundaries between fact and fiction. That's the thrill.

BOY:

So...am I a stranger?

(Pause.)

GIRL:

I don't know. Are you?

BOY:

I don't think so.

GIRL:

BOY:

So...are there any other boundaries you like to hurdle?

GIRL:

Lots.

BOY:

Will you teach me?

GIRL:

If you like.

BOY:

I would.

GIRL:

Okay.

BOY:

So what are they?

GIRL:

Later.

SCENE 8

BOY:

I'm scared. I'm scared because I have the same faith in her that...the religious have in God. I've stopped caring about what I do; I've stopped worrying about everything because I know she can pull me through anything. I've never been more positive about anything in my life and all of a sudden it doesn't matter that each second feels like five yet each hour passes twice as quickly as it should. She's my martyr, my angel, my savior. I don't know what she's saving me from but somehow that doesn't matter either.

All I know is...fuck. Just that. F-U-C-K. Fuck.

I think 'fuck' is the most beautiful word in the English language. It so adequately encompasses everything that can't be put into words yet somehow seems to fit perfectly.

So that's it. All I know, all I think, all I believe, now, is...just, fuck.

GIRL:

In my head I constructed a whole other life for him, one without me in it.

One with, but without us.

I imagined him with a wife, a perfect one with eyes and ears and skin.

She would have hair like burnt copper and a cute upturned nose like a happy piglet.

He would wear pinstriped jackets and a bowler hat, and they would walk down the street with their arms interlocked. People would stop and stare as they passed, wishing they could follow.

At best, I can project an air of
insecure
indifference.

At worst she would be able to command a room before even walking into it.

People would sense her presence and prepare for it.

Sometimes I wish I were a frog, hopping from one lily pad to another. Hop, hop, hop.

Imagine if each lily pad was a different world. Each circle of green an entirely different universe, and the frogs are just hopping in between. I think I'd like that.

It's not fair.

I want to hop between.

SCENE 9

(BOY and GIRL are below the bridge. They sit on the bench next to the streetlamp.)

BOY:

I'm not even sure when it happened. It wasn't straight away, or I would've noticed. Right?

GIRL:

It wasn't straight away.

BOY:

I feel like I'm spending you.

GIRL:

What do you mean?

BOY:

I feel like I'm spending you on things...on things that don't deserve you.

GIRL:

I don't understand what you mean.

BOY:

GIRL:

Is everything all...right?

(He just looks at her. She begins to think something's terribly wrong.)

BOY:

Don't panic.

GIRL:

What's wrong?

BOY:

Nothing's wrong.

GIRL:

I can tell. I can tell that there is.

BOY:

There isn't.

GIRL:

What is it?

BOY:

Why do you love me?

GIRL:
What?

BOY:
When I'm with you, I feel like...if our brains were taken out of our heads and put next to each other...

GIRL:
Yeah?

BOY:
I think they would crawl to one another. I can imagine our grey, wet brains sliding together by unnatural forces and combining. Every gap would be filled, no part would be exposed. I feel like our brains would fit perfectly together.

GIRL:
Are you alright?

BOY:
Why do you love me?

GIRL:
I don't understand why you keep asking me that.

BOY:
I don't keep asking. I asked twice.

GIRL:
Well yes, I suppose that's true. Technically.

BOY:
Are you going to make me ask you again?

GIRL:

BOY:
I want to know.

(She begins telling him, growing more upset and resentful as she explains. As she finishes, she turns with her back to him.)

GIRL:
I love you because...when we're together, something...happens.
Something...perfect. It's not you that's perfect, and it isn't me – I don't think

we make each other perfect, but...the combination of you and me results in something akin to...I don't know, gravity maybe. It's wonderful.

BOY:
That was very poetic.

GIRL:
I'm glad you enjoyed it.

BOY:
I didn't say I enjoyed it.

GIRL:
That's mean.

BOY:
Do I hurt you?

GIRL:
(Incredulously) What? No, of course not. How could you say that?

BOY:
I don't know. I just...wondered.

GIRL:
I still don't understand what you meant about spending me.

BOY:
Don't you feel like you're spending me?

GIRL:
You're not money.

BOY:
Aren't I?

GIRL:
No.

BOY:
When we're not together, I think about you. All the time. All the things I do, you're in my head. I exhaust myself, but I still think about you. I'm scared that the more that you fill my head, the less you fill...you.

GIRL:
That's why you feel like you're spending me?

BOY:
Yes. Yes, I think so.

GIRL:

You're not spending me. I'm not a diminishing source of...me.

BOY:

I don't believe you.

GIRL:

You should.

BOY:

I don't.

GIRL:

Try.

BOY:

Alright.

GIRL:

BOY:

Okay. You're right. You're not.

(She turns back to face him. He doesn't look at her.)

GIRL:

I love you.

BOY:

GIRL:

Believe me.

BOY:

I do.

GIRL:

No. You don't.

BOY:

I know you love me.

GIRL:

Knowing and believing are different, you know.

(Pause. He looks her in the eye. He says the next line with such intensity that his voice falters.)

BOY:

I don't want you, I don't need you. I crave you. I crave for you to be near me, for you to be able to wear my skin, to be inside my eyes, ears and hands.

GIRL:

I already feel like I am.

BOY:

No, you don't.

GIRL:

Yes. I do.

BOY:

I didn't think love would be like this.

GIRL:

Me neither. I don't think it is love.

BOY:

So you don't love me.

(He gets up and begins climbing the bridge.)

GIRL:

I didn't say that.

BOY:

You just did.

GIRL:

I don't think there's a word.

BOY:

I knew I loved you more.

GIRL:

Don't be ridiculous.

BOY:

How am I being ridiculous?

(He is atop the bridge now.)

GIRL:

Why are you up there? Come down!

(He smiles at her.)

BOY:

I'm going to prove you wrong.

GIRL:

What? You can't! I'm not wrong!

BOY:

Aren't you?

(He stands at the edge of the bridge, toes over the edge. She realizes what he is about to do. She is horrified.)

GIRL:

I'm coming.

(He moves back from the edge as he waits for her to climb the bridge. Once she reaches the top, they grasp each other's hand.)

BOY:

I'm going to jump to prove that I love you more.

GIRL:

No, you're not.

BOY:

Yes, I am.

GIRL:

No. You're not. Because I'm going to jump to prove that I love you more.

BOY:

Not if I go first.

GIRL:

Maybe I'll go first.

BOY:

You won't.

SCENE 10

(GIRL and BOY sit together under a tree of stars. The light shines deep and bright from in the stars, and illuminates an orb of hazy gold around them. It is warm. They are connected on an indecipherable level. There is something very touching and very real about them in the surreal atmosphere.

There is happy music playing, and GIRL starts laughing at what BOY is saying. We cannot hear them, we are just witnesses to their intimacy for a while. The music begins to fade down.)

GIRL:

I just want you to know.

BOY:

You don't need to tell me, you know. I already do.

GIRL:

As long as you do. And we can be happy.

BOY:

We can be. I promise. Someday, we'll take it all over. We can conquer it. It's you and me against the world baby; let's launch a war on any moment that isn't this one.

GIRL:

But I'm scared.

BOY:

Don't be. It's all about the we from now.

GIRL:

Will everything end ok?

BOY:

Everything will be fireworks and ships sailing. Sunlight dancing across the ocean and scaling the Eiffel Tower.

GIRL:

That sounds...scary.

BOY:

It's meant to be. I'm terrified.

GIRL:

Are you?

BOY:

Not in this moment. Which we're making last forever. Are you ready for this? We're embarking on an eternal adventure.

GIRL:

I like adventures.

BOY:

You'll love this.

GIRL:

And...you promise we can be happy?

BOY:

I do.

GIRL:

Well then. Let's fucking do it. When? Where?

BOY:

Now.

(One by one, stars light the stage, varying in height. He smiles and strokes her cheek. It is sweet, devoted, and earnest. It feels as though they are pouring life into one another.)

GIRL:

What?

BOY:

Nothing.

GIRL:

I love you.

BOY:

I love you too.

GIRL:

Look! Up!

BOY:

It's happening. Can you feel it?

GIRL:

It's happening. Can you feel it?

BOY:

Let's dance.

(He picks her up and they sway to an invisible beat.)

GIRL:

Will it always be like this?

BOY:
Like what?

GIRL:
Like...this!

BOY:
We're halfway to the moon. You're making us fly.

GIRL:
What do you mean?

BOY:
You're doing this. Making us soar. You, and me. Together.

GIRL:
I don't understand.

BOY:
You couldn't if you tried. Only I can.

GIRL:
How could that be?

BOY:
I'm seeing you.

GIRL:
Well yes – I mean – I'm right here. Of course you're seeing me.

BOY:
Nobody else is seeing you. Not here, not now.

GIRL:
That's true.

(They stop dancing, and sit opposite each other under the star tree. They sit for a while in silence, eyes interlocked.)

GIRL:
Where are we?

BOY:
Who knows.

GIRL:
I like it.

BOY:
So do I.

GIRL:
Can we stay?

BOY:
Yes.

GIRL:
A while?

BOY:
Always.

GIRL:
Was that a bird?

BOY:
Maybe.

GIRL:
Oh. *(Beat)* I really hope it's always like this.

BOY:
It will be.

GIRL:
I'm so happy.

(They join. She lies with her head on his lap.)

GIRL:
Where do you think we are now?

BOY:
The depths of the ocean. Can you feel it?

GIRL:
The depths of the ocean.

BOY:
Yes.

GIRL:
Yes. I can. With you.

BOY:
We can go wherever you like.

GIRL:

Let's enter an abyss.

BOY:

An abyss of what?

GIRL:

An abyss of you, an abyss of me. An abyss of everyone and everything, an abyss into light and warmth and time and space!

BOY:

We can do anything.

GIRL:

Let's!

BOY:

Let's indeed.

GIRL:

How?

BOY:

How what?

GIRL:

Just...how? It's like magic.

BOY:

It's better than magic.

Girl:

Well what is it then?

(They kiss, once, slowly, not touching one another with arms or hands or legs.)

BOY:

It's a secret.

GIRL:

What kind of secret?

BOY:

An unknowable secret. Once you know it, you un-know it.

GIRL:

I don't know what that means.

BOY:

Me neither. It doesn't matter. Not like this. Nothing does.

GIRL:
No. You're right. Shall we go somewhere?

BOY:
Anywhere.

GIRL:
I'm happy.

BOY:
I am too.

GIRL:
For how long?

BOY:
From now. Always from now.

GIRL:
But before?

BOY:
Never happened.

GIRL:
Where are you?

BOY:
With you.

GIRL:
You're with me?

BOY:
Right here.

GIRL:
I'm cold.

BOY:
Don't be.

GIRL:
Okay.

BOY:
Is it working?

GIRL:

Yeah.

BOY:

I don't want you to leave.

GIRL:

I don't want to leave. At all. Do you?

BOY:

No.

GIRL:

Where would I go?

BOY:

I don't know.

GIRL:

Me neither. Where would you go?

BOY:

I don't know.

GIRL:

I want you to know.

BOY:

I want you to know too.

GIRL:

Let's know.

BOY:

I know you.

GIRL:

I know you too.

BOY:

Do you reckon they know?

GIRL:

Maybe. Do you?

BOY:

Sometimes. Sometimes not. How can they?

GIRL:

They might do.

BOY:

They might.

GIRL:

But we know.

BOY:

That we do.

GIRL:

Sometimes I think nobody else does, and it's just us.

BOY:

It is just us.

GIRL:

Are you sure?

BOY:

Yes.

GIRL:

Me too. It's just us.