

Nothing but an Old World

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Book 1

Why is it always so damned hard to start?

The mind's failure finds an empty heart.

(An elderly man struggles to the stage. The curtains are hanging unopened behind him. He is paunchy and white haired, unshaven, in expensive but wrinkled clothing. He has on a suit. His manner are archaic, he gesticulates broadly with his cane and with his hands. Before he speaks he bangs on the stage floor with his cane. He begins talking, after making sure that the sounds of his cane has justly resonated.)

-Our hero, Damian, has a mind. No doubt it is a mind of exceptional imagination, a learned mind, a mind with wings and tunnels, a mind full of love and memory, of hate and regret. The mind is Damian's only resource. He has a lonely studio apartment and lots of remembrances of the thighs of old girlfriends. He has a family that he cannot decide if he has removed himself from them or the other way around. Really, he has nothing. He has a job that belittles his education. A job that mocks his worldliness; the trips to Paris and to Rome, several times to Britain and to Ireland, to Germany and to Russia, to Asia and to Latin America, not to mention the US all the way over. Nothing, like I said. The details are not all that important because that is not the reason we're here; that he has nothing is a given. Damian, I

am quite sure, will fill you in on everything. All of the myriad details, the excuses, the portraits, the memories, the reasons, the whole story and with a dash of his writerly flair, his liberties, his revisions. I would dare not to try and tell you. I would fuck up all the punch lines. I would have you in tears at the wrong time. I am just like you. I'm the audience. I have no special powers, no access that you do not have. Let us just say that I know him and that he asked me here. All the rest of you bought tickets. I'm here only to write this down.

Let me be brief. I'm sure those of you, my neighbors, sitting next to me are wondering why I am here at all. I am here by means of an introduction. Damian has given me the concept in advance and I am here to make sure you're with him before he even comes out. He's here, in the moonlight, theatre moonlight, to invent the world again. I begged him to maybe consider asking some of us for help but he has declined any proposal, any request for another voice on the matter. He is going to invent the world again with only his mind as a resource. You say that this task is impossible. Some of you may already be laughing at the foolishness of this enterprise. You may ask, 'how did this come about? How has our hero been given this enormous power?' Maybe the power exists in his mind alone and maybe it doesn't. I cannot answer such a question. Why is he doing all of this in a theater? Witnesses. Theatre is the easiest place to go for witnesses. There will be some communal assessment as to the work here tonight; some group acknowledgment as to the reality of what will be done. At worst, some grouping feeling will be sensed and everyone will leave the theater together. But who hasn't wanted this kind of power? Damian will do all that he can on this stage, though I do not know what he

will do. He will do it alone. He mentioned to me something I thought quite worth taking note of. He said, "The material world we have been placed in is restricting because the only way out is a mystery." He wants to offer a way out. Be patient with him, for surely this task will prove to be a frustrating one. This is a task that will inevitably lead to short tempers and to desperations, to the need to try anything, to digging through the grave of his memories. I will be here with you at the end, even if Damian manages to disappear.

(The old man leaves the stage, finding his seat in the audience. The curtains come up.)

(The stage is blank and bare. The background is black with a moon hanging down from an invisible wire. One lonely character ambles onto the stage, drunk, he wanders stumbling around stage for a while, breathing heavily. An unlit cigarette is dangling from his lip. He takes it into his hands and begins speaking.)

Damian: This heat could find you in a cave that opens to the sea.

(He stops, remembering his cigarette)

Damian: Anyone out there with a light?

(He's met with silence)

Damian: What's the use? I just prefer to smoke before I work, that's all. I prefer to smoke after as well. I enjoy it. I don't believe in addictions. It's not the best thing for me, I understand. But whose to say the night bird song isn't what causes them to die? They say sex is the reason we die. It's not like there's a choice in the matter. I mean, I've seen women, harems of women, done up in tight white numbers, breasts swelling up and bursting in the dress and eyes so wide and lips that want everything to do with you....it's not like there's a choice in the matter. I've accepted this. You chase a woman through the hallway, and you throw her panties over the bedpost. You wake up dead in the morning but with such rouged cheeks, such wakefulness, who cares for dying then?

(He takes a few paces to be under the moon and pauses long enough to begin a new subject.)

Damian: I left a woman for the moon. I left her as she was sleeping. I took a look, the farewell look, at her eyes closed, blue with mascara and took to the door. It's something leaving a woman, especially a woman like her, who was yearning for a ring, for stability. At first it's nice, but they say it feels great when you're freezing to death, after you've acknowledge what is happening, they say the freeze, the blood slowing to ice, feels warm. I left her at this moment, when I noticed where I was, out beneath a tree, a lone tree in a grassless meadow, freezing to death. It used to be a lot like Strindberg's riff on love, why doesn't everyone on earth envy me, why don't the people on the street shake their fingers in my face in a rage, knowing what I have at home. Love. Hah! Love is for the birds. That was years ago, my God, it could

have been yesterday. I loved her though. Love is someone who made you realize you were born.

(Walks around stage for a while, contemplatively.)

Damian: Listen to that! The bats! How they whistle in the night, on the hunt.

(Directly to the audience now)

Damian: I am here, I must tell you, you are here, so that we may begin the world again. I did not know I could do this, never imagined wanting to but this is what I was born to do. And so tonight, we will begin the world again. A world without cancer, maybe, a world without murder and death. Nah, nah. We will keep all the darkness, for the ground would get envious if we ceased to stop hurling each other in it, if we did not drown in it. No, no. We will keep it all but begin again. If this sounds hard to you, imagine how I feel. If no one has a light, I will have to find one.
Light!

(His cigarette is lit, out of the air.)

Damian: Hah! See! I told you, let us start small and end big. It would be lovely to keep the night a little longer but to have the colors of dawn. It would be nice to have this grass green and the summer.

(The stage opens to fresh grass, to trees in blossom)

Damian: And for music.

(A fiddler appears and begins to do a traditional Irish number. He is dressed in a blue shirt, a grey vest, grey trousers, barefoot, wearing a grey cap.)

Damian: Ah, how nice! Music. Yes. And now, a woman to dance with. Pale Colleen! Red hair. Lily-white skin. Faster, play Fiddler, faster.

(A woman with red hair, beautiful, in a red dress appears and Damian and her begin to dance. They stop and he begins to talk to her.)

Damian: Are you very afraid of death, Rose?

Rose: I do not know what death is.

Damian: Then I shall not tell you. When you were born?

Rose: Tonight. In the dance, I was born.

Damian: Of the moon and stars?

Rose: Of the moon and stars. I was born in the dance.

Damian: And you do not know death? It was not whispered to you when you were born?

Rose: I heard nothing but music!

Damian: Blake's lamb.

Rose: No lamb at all. I do not wait for mother to call. I have no mother. I go where I choose. I go freely.

Damian: And you feel as though this will not end? This independence?

Rose: Why should it end on the day it began?

Damian: Don't all things end?

Rose: Nothing ends. You're memory is too long, sir. Let me kiss you. Let me help you forget.

Damian: If I forget than this all goes south. It will turn out like the last world.

Rose: There are many worlds to come, of course.

Damian: Yes. That must be true. Come and kiss me, dear. You're eyes, those breasts...

Fiddler: Don't be lewd, man!

(Fiddler stopping momentarily his instrument)

(Fiddler looks at her)

Fiddler: Those thighs!

Rose: Put your hands anywhere you like.

Damian: A dream come true, I am almost reticent to touch you. What will this do to my fantasies?

Rose: Only lonely men have fantasies.

Damian: Honey, any man of sound mind would have a fantasy while he's on top of you!

Rose: Touch me everywhere you'd like.

Damian: Don't insist, you'll sound like a slut.

Rose: (Hurt) Oh..my

(Fiddler, again stopping the play of the fiddle)

Fiddler: Why, a warm girl like you...don't persist with such a louse. Some people just get their kicks hurling their own shit into other people's hearts. Come here..come, come.

(Rose quickly leaps to him and they embrace, kissing. The stage goes black on them and only the light shines on Damian. The moonlight.)

Damian: Hah. Love, what a sucker's game, even when the girls are easy. There's no telling any of them how to act, even the ones you like. Perhaps a world that begins out of love will inevitably end in heartbreak. A fool's try. But just because the old world has ended, or rather, because I am escaping the old world, laying a new world right on the tracks of the old, doesn't mean the old cock doesn't work. I would hate to wake up alone in the new world, in my new world. What would it mean if even the artist, if God himself, couldn't get laid and have a smoke after all the work that went into it? Wouldn't that be a sham! Wouldn't the clerics find that out? Doesn't faith begin in the bedroom? A girl that makes you something less of a lonely cloud, we all want it again and again. Someone to be near, for even the quotidian things, to hold open the door for, to guard the purse while she runs to the restroom. Yes, neediness, in a way, to be needed, to be admired and to admire, oh yes. What does it

say about my mind that I would have Rose, such a pretty thing be so easy? Well nothing out of the ordinary, I suppose, nothing that hasn't been documented in the novels we read as children. I have a dick. I like to use it. My brain is far tenderer, far more giving, believe me. And isn't the thrill always in the chase? Well, no. I like the chase to end as quickly as possible, uninhibited. I was born for this sexual age, where all roads lead to the bedroom. And so, audience, why leave it like a bird leaps out of the way of your car right after it has landed directly in your path? Well because I am going to die.....but you knew that. I don't know why, to be honest. I feel this dread, this ennui, I can't find any of my books in my apartment, and I am always in the way of some hyper-real speedway of banter. I needed some peace, a vacation, but the job doesn't let me out, ever. Important business, they say, all those files. All the time I am dreaming about some coquettish young vixen, much younger than me, perhaps with too much rouge on her cheeks, blue mascara, lightning blue, ah, the modern age, the times we live in, everything is so hard to gauge, to judge, to internalize. The great authors are dead. Why not begin again so at least let the artists have new subjects to tackle? Perhaps one should not begin with love but with philosophy, with some cranky old man who was born to know everything until some other old man deconstructs his mentor's vision and replaces it with something equally pedantic, equally all knowing, equally stupid. Yes. Let's have our bearded philosopher, in his aged cheeks and silver hair. Let us have the robe and everything. But please, send someone who smokes!

(A bearded man of forty appears, in a flannel shirt under a beige jacket, his legs are crossed and he is sitting awkwardly on the trunk of a tree. He is looking down at his feet, at the grass beneath him. His name is Burton.)

Burton: This tree, no less an immigrant than I, to this world. But we have always been here. This grand oak, once a seed a bird had cast off...

Damian: Spare me! Must all philosophy make strides to define the world around it? Even in this new world? Must all philosophy be more physical than anything else?

(Mocking)

Damian: And man had arms to determine the distances of the body, to pinpoint the end of what one was capable of reaching out towards. Can we not skip all of this and accept the physical world as the given?

Burton: The physical world is the only evidence of what lies ahead.

Damian: How trite. When the world begins with contrivances the deadening technology of revolution, of politics is inevitable. What are your credentials?

Burton: I was asked to come by you but not to put you on edge. We can just talk if you like.

Damian: Where does the brain begin?

Burton: In the head.

Damian: What can it do?

Burton: We have to determine what it can see first; what it is capable of processing, of thinking, of creating.

Damian: No, no. We mustn't begin there. I don't want answers based upon hypotheses. I want answers that are absurd, that have roots in nowhere.

Burton: A world cannot begin that way.

Damian: All worlds begin in absurdities! Whether it's Gods crushing meteors together, or black holes exploding into space and time.

Burton: But we must have order of thought. We do not have the authority to act in the manner our creators acted.

Damian: The irony of course.....well, why? Why can't we act like our creators?

Burton: A house isn't built alone; it is not made to be lived in alone.

Damian: Another remark like that and you're off into the ether.

Burton: What I mean is...

Damian: I think I get what you mean. You're a miserable thinker.

Burton: I've only just started.

Damian: True. So don't speak any longer. I will need you in a few hundred years perhaps, observe, observe. Don't speak. Go off to the brook and sit like a good boy and watch. We'll all be dead before you come up with anything of interest.

Burton: That's how philosophy works.

(And he does as he is ordered and removes himself to the back of the stage, where he will wait for the remainder of the show.)

Damian: This heat, June heat. Nearly unbearable, after conversations like that, when the innocent and the experienced collide. Maybe the world should begin with Revolution....but no, no. All revolutions end up in the hands of mad men. It is far better to rest your feet in a stream, water idly passing by, then to run up a hill carrying a flag. I am lazy, a product of my time. I don't believe in anything. Last year my brother has a baby born without any bones in it. I asked him, "Well, how soon did you know?" He said, "A few weeks ago." No excuse, I would have gotten the plunger out and sucked it out of her right there. Isn't it far better to kill a baby, a boneless baby, in the warm womb of its mother, then to crush the skin bag between its mother's thighs on the way out? My point is there are no explanations for things like that. The feminists say that life begins with revolution. You know, that birth is a violent act and all that. Who cares if it is or not at this point? There's nothing radical about that thought. A wise man in the street once told me a radical thought: those who do nothing have all the control. Hah! Nothing and control and how one leads to the other. The treasures of curbside Academe!

(Damian, realizing he is on the verge of rambling, becomes self-aware when he realizes there is an audience.)

(A voice heard from the behind the curtain.)

Voice: A new world doesn't make the body any younger.

Damian: (thoroughly relaxed, knowing that this is the voice inside his head.) Yes, I know.

Voice: It's nothing but an old world. Same grass. Same dust. Same earth. You would have to die before anything new was said or done.

Damian: All the humans would have to die.

Voice: No, just you. Your ideas are found ones. There's not an original bone in your body. Not one ounce of artistic vigor. You're drunk. Face it. You're a moonlight drunk.

Damian: And now you'll say I'm chasing youth. That sexual energy, when my dick got so hard I couldn't stand up straight.

Voice: You said it for me.

Damian: I can still get hard, damnit. I'm hard now.

Voice: But not when it counts, that girl Rose would have sucked you dry. Your creation. You could have whispered, "Drink it down," you could have done anything. Instead you called your own creation a slut.

Damian: And so what? My last lover was impossible to please.

Voice: It was just impossible for you to please her.

Damian: Yeah, that's what I mean. But she had seen it and done it all. She didn't share in the excitement. Her tongue would twirl over my dick out of habit, not out of

passion. She knew the moves but did not know the holiness, the mystery. All of that had been wiped out the first time she saw her parent's fucking through the crack in the door. It was impossible to live up to. It was impossible to get it up to.

Voice: And yet, you'd spend hours masturbating to those same moves. Hours on the toilet, holding you own dick and she knew the entire time what you were up to in there.

Damian: She was savage about it. Endless ridicule.

Voice: And yet your thoughts turn to her more often than the one girl you truly love.

Damian: Because of all those missed opportunities to cum.

Voice: No, because she weakened you. She threw you out of the world.

Damian: Enough! (Now Damian addresses the audience again as his conscience flees him.) Nabokov said the night was a giant. It has never been better described. A giant, something to overcome, everyday in the glow of the sun, between passerby's walking their dogs, through the shapeless clouds, happily I know that when the sun recedes, I will be a slave to memories that will make me shudder with discomfort. I will know my own rage until I collapse into bed too weak to summon up even the sound of my own voice. The night is a giant. Can you blame me that I still think of her? Her with her wild kinks and her perverse idiosyncrasies? She would rise up from the bed with her ass shaking in the air and would wait giggling while my nervous hands forced my erection to sleep. I want her now. Only to get back.....no, but can you blame me for this new world? It's something of mine, free of the

persecution of my own follies. If misery is the river of the world, regret is the ocean it flows into. I have made the mistake of creating the world in the dark. I want the sun, the grand glow of fire. I want majestic blues and the calmness of afternoon. I no longer want the shadows and the night bugs, the inner prejudice, the fright of being alone in the dark. There is heaviness in my chest that only light can erase.

(The floodlights beam directly on the audience blinding them. Day.) Enough!

Enough! I want night! (The lights return to their normal settings. Night. Perhaps the lights are dimmer than before.) My eyes weren't made for day. I momentarily lost my cool. The night is a giant, yes, but a giant one can try to tame. I love the moonlight. Perhaps I am a bit drunk on it. Perhaps that is why I lost my cool, of course, everyone is aware of the strange effects moonlight has on men. My skin looks silver, my lips feel blue. I feel as though I have a touch of fever. I could be a leper. A leper in my own world. The tragedy! Those of my generation, in our youth, have believed that death is dead. That death, another moment in a life full of moments, no less important than any other, was nothing to think about. We don't worry about the dead. We don't worry about our death. Why should we when there is just so much to do? Death is no longer a tragedy, except if one of us young dies it is not anything but the end. Wouldn't this be funny if it were true?

(Death, dressed in the typical garb, black hood, long cape, white face, black eyes, arrives on stage in a horse carriage drawn by moaning, limping lepers with sallow skin and clothes. Damian's unconscious is now appearing at the center of his mind. It will become wild.)

Death: Do you forget that despite any efforts to make a new world, your body will age at the same rate? You will die, Damian, just the same. I'm here to remind you.

Damian: As if I could forget. I do not wish to create anything, this new world, to elude you. I would never be so bold as to...

Death: Wish for immortality? Everything falls eventually. You just want happiness that cannot be interrupted by plague, by cancer, by corruption, by denial and by doubt. You're still the product of the world from whence you came. You could create a world of golden nights and smiling faces but you forget that you have *experience* in the old world. You will never be able to escape your memory completely, nor the fear that cancer will come, or a heart attack. You will never have true happiness, even if everything you create is sublime and experiences true happiness.

Damian: You forget how easy it is to forget.

Death: No one ever truly forgets anything. Ask the holocaust survivors. Their dust remembers in the grave, those camps. Ask those who were touched as a child by their fathers in their baby rooms complete with stuffed unicorns. Ask those who have ever experienced heartbreak, however minute it may have been. The only way to truly forget it is to die and become nothing.

Damian: I am not so sure I would want to forget. I just know that what I am leaving the old world for was a state of ennui, of disillusionment, of redundancy and loneliness.

Death: You will find that in any world, new and old. Just the same as you will find me. If you want to create something, hop in. I will lead you to your nothingness

Damian: I want life! I would never go before I had to go, in part because I don't believe you even exist. I have seen my grandmother take her last asthmatic breaths and still I do not believe you.

Death: Of course you do. You're inconsistent.

Damian: And that is my right. I only want the unknown, this new world. I will find it there because I will create it in such a way that I will be always dazzled.

Death: Until it grows up and attacks you. What is more unknown than not existing?

Damian: Tomorrow.

(Death and his lepers leave the stage. Damian is left alone. He lights a cigarette.)

Daman: Heartache knows no silence. Even the small hours, just before the light comes in, before the birds wake up the world, those hours especially are scattered.

Loneliness is not a man alone on the couch, a pint of beer, a cigarette. Loneliness may look that way but the mind is storming, lost in desperate heat. There are memories real enough...real voices, moments lost and replayed. A lonely man shrugs at the thought of past happiness, squashes it, takes it for granted. There is a window with a light in it. I'm walking up the path to the door in the dark.

(As he says this, a version of Damian enters the stage and stops to listen; he is on his way into the house.)

Ah, to be let in, to be kissed again by those lips that you don't know are going to shatter you. Those lips when kips are active in receiving yours. It is bliss. Nights on end, when you don't even realize that what you're doing is hoping to be let in forever.

Damian's version of himself: You know it will end of course. That is why you go in.

Damian: And you, who are going in to be kissed by the girl who will later haunt you with her mocking, ruthless humiliation, you go in knowing there is an end?

Damian version: I know everything you know. I am you. In our most gratuitous fantasies, our versions of ourselves know everything we know at the time; in the moments we cast them. Of course, you wouldn't have known but everyone, in the hidden quiet of the mind, knows that things pass. I know for instance, that Dad died. That's six years from this moment you have placed me. I know the last time you borrowed money from our sister to make end's meat.

Damian: If I could give you a gift, it would be to know none of these things. I would have you turn right instead of left.

Damian's version: We don't have time for alternate universes. That theory is only real in television. We turn right and that is all, sometimes we turn left. We cannot alter the past, not even with infinity of "If I had," no, "If only I had...."

Damian: And if I told you that Dad didn't die. But is still living, smoking those Marlboro Reds, five packs a day, huffing away in the garage in the middle of the night?

Damian's Version: Hah. It would be a joke. Every bit of you placed him in that grave, outside of Jamestown, New York on the summer solstice. How many times have I been sent to bury him?

Damian: Countless times. Go in. Go in. You have a date.

Damian Version: Before I go in, may I say that the girl who I am seeing did not start out inveighing her hideous laughter across the room? She was a girl who loved you. A man never just uses his imagination on himself. You wanted to be destroyed. You created her and she liked her part. It was the part of her lifetime, for a while. You're a creature, when you are in the living world, of bravado, of arrogance, of self-importance. You do realize that you could have just as easily destroyed her?

Damian: So why didn't I?

Damian's Version: Because you gave her the part you wrote for yourself.

Goodnight.

(He turns and starts to head down the path, the lights go out on him and Damian is once again left alone.)

Damian: Darkness. I don't know how long ago it was that I first got here but I all I have to show for my creation is darkness. Nothing but dark is mine and it is not even mine! I did not invent. I have not cared for it. I have just framed this is darkness. I walk through it, exist in it. I live by it. It is not mine. When will this headache go away, this writer's block? I cannot imagine a world of anything.

(The lights go up on the philosopher who has been sitting towards the back of the stage.)

Philosopher: Let the world imagine itself.

Damian: Meaning I am not responsible for my own vision?

Philosopher: A vision, no. This is no vision. This is a void. You said it yourself.

There is nothing here but blackness. Perhaps if you go to sleep you will wake up in a world of roses, a dream world.

Damian: No. This needs my consciousness. I want to be awake for this, even if I am awake for ruin, even if I cannot even create a cloud.

Philosopher: Perhaps the clouds should create you.

Damian: I thought I asked you to never speak! What has it been, fifteen minutes? And you already have answers? This is a joke I am playing on myself for skipping Dr. Leher's survey philosophy course to go stare out on the mountains or for dates with blondes, a surprising number of them virgins, a joke for never getting Hegel or Kant. This is the best my mind can produce. This doggerel. Vanish. Go back and sit for a hundred years!

(The lights close out the philosopher.)

Damian: Can there be a moment without myself onstage? I need a moment of silence, of personal reflection in hopes that I will reaffirm what my purpose is here. Is that allowed? What can I produce to entertain the lot of you while I think? I can

produce a memory, I wish I could invent a vaudevillian romp to have you roaring in your seats or an absurdist scene where two elephants eat the moon and shit out the sun but I don't want us to lose our purpose here. The memory I have in mind, the memory I am presenting is when I was made aware of a person's ability to recreate a world out of a world that has fallen through, of a man, my father, in the company of his children, taking one last look around the place he was readying to leave in the morning. This was unknown to us at the time. They were very considerate of the fact that my brother and I were young. We never heard a yell. We never heard a whimper.

(Damian exits. Lights go up on two boys, one a teenager, the other close in age but before his voice had cracked. They are Martin and Damian, respectively. They are playing in the creek in their backyard, Martin, his arm holding the limb of an oak tree. There is the faint sound of rustling water. The moon is in the sky, just the moon, where it has always been.)

Martin:

(Martin takes a book out of his jacket, a book of poems by Wallace Stevens, a gift from his father.)

Martin: "I'm not a thinking stone." Hah. I really like that. It's like what you try not to be like, asleep all the time.

Damian: When you're asleep you don't try to be like anything. OH! I caught a bit of moonlight water in my cup! I can see the moon in my cup!

Martin: You shouldn't catch the moonlight in your cup, Dames; you should let it stick together.

Damian: That doesn't sound fair. I caught it. It looks as bright as ever. Nothing's changed.

Martin: Yeah, nothing's changed, except that the moonlight won't shine as bright tomorrow night in the dark, on the water. It might not shine at all.

(Damian, ignoring him.)

Damian: Look, even more moonlight! I should show Mom.

Martin: It's sort of like if I cut your arm off, you wouldn't be whole. You'd be embarrassed all the time that you weren't strong and fit.

Damian: I'd be a pirate. (Splashes Martin with his cup.)

Martin: Hey!

(The boys begin to play wrestle. A light shines dimly on the father, as we are made aware that he is now watching them. The light gets brighter as he begins to speak.)

Father: Cut it out, boys.

(He says amused.)

Father: Martin does Damian even put up a fight, he's so scrawny? Hah. Your mother won't even let him play baseball.

Damian: I can too fight!

(Embarrassed.)

Damian: Martin, tell him I can fight!

Martin: He's a very strong kid.

Father: I know.....I'm proud of him. But kids, let me tell you, let me show you an experiment I tried many years ago. I wanted to deface the cynics who would say that nothing lasts.

(He bends down and starts untying the laces of his shoes.) I wanted to prove permanence, that even us, as transient and mortal as we are, we can last.

Tomorrow, when you rise, you'll find my shoes right here and next to my shoes a bag of seeds. Take the shovels from the garage and dig a hole four feet or so into the ground. Place the shoes in the ground and lay dirt over them. Then plant seeds over that dirt and fill up the rest of the hole. When I am gone, boys, I will be a tree, or a bush, whatever you two decide on to plant. It will be forever.

(The father takes off his shoes and places them in front of his children.)

(The lights darken and the family, the sounds of the brook, all disappear. Everything is gone except for the father's shoes. Brown loafers.)

Book II

We're done with the sentimental,

Bring on the mythology.

(Damian walks out on to the stage against and is laughing, holding a lit cigarette. He looks disheveled, his hair is wild and the buttons of his shirt are half undone.)

(Damian addresses his audience.)

Damian: So, what did you get?

(He waits, half anticipating an answer.)

Damian: Did you get the one with my mother banging on the bathroom door, after I had been in there for hours with the shower on full blast. I would always shit before I jerked off, as a teenager coming into my own, I would drive the family mad with waiting at the bathroom door. The sound of wasted running water, splashing its way down onto the porcelain of the shower floor, as I was sitting on the bowl, with my hand on my hard dick, dreaming that that hamper was growing great breasts and the medicine cabinet becoming a wet pussy, as the whole family was screaming at me to hurry up or the pilot light would blow out.

(He pauses, smiling in the memory. When he begins speaking the glee in his voice has faded and he assumes a more businesslike tone.)

Damian: Masturbation for me has always come before work. When I was a student at the city college, I would find my way into the bathroom cubicle to rub out the anxiety before an exam. I always work better afterwards. You can assume what you will about my need for escaping but I do feel better now

(Damian pauses to let his implications sink in.)

Damian: And you can trust that we will have a much better go of things this time. I always get these half-formed ideas when I masturbate. I know the practical thing to do would be to stop tugging and write them down. I always get something, a start; I feel that is what I have here. I know that we ought not to begin with religion because a religion will come on its own and that my vision will not last long after this world graduates past its infancy. It is a fact that even worlds die out to the meteors of history, just as orgasms die out upon their analysis, or upon the recognition that whom you're sleeping with may have a different interpretation of the act and will make sure to clutter your thoughts by speaking her own. This is why, I asked not for your help this evening. I didn't want a multitude of voice clamoring for their wants and desires. Call me tyrannical but I would much rather have you thrust out into a singular vision of the world. Of course, once we arrive, you can all fully participate. This is why I will not start by religion. You will all bring about that. You will probably deface my name and your children will dismiss me out of the history books, leaving me a child's myth. I accept this, my vision will change, but as of now there is no world. As of now...

(Damian is interrupted and his father, the one from the memory appears onstage. Damian looks startled. He clearly does not want his father to be a part of any of this, as he was beginning to become much more relaxed and confident. He imagined that he was proceeding as though he were a general. He was acknowledging his troops, in an attempt to clarify things. The apparition of his father squashes this confidence. He becomes a son again and nothing more.)

Father: Damian, why are you doing this?

(His father sounds concerned, sincere. He is here to bring Damian back to reality. Damian, sensing this, becomes ashamed, self-conscious. He begins to act out as though he is still sharing a roof with his father; as though he is a teenager again.)

Damian: What are you doing here? Is this what I come up with? My unconscious has attacked me! I was about to speak of Gods and mythologies. What a Freudian nightmare! You know full well why I am here.

Father: Is it because she left you? How could she have stayed, Dames? With you becoming increasingly bitter, jealous? Sometimes when the floor gives out, you just have to

(Damian interrupts him.)

Damian: Accept the new floor?

(Damian laughs at this thought, knowing that his Dad had a cliché in mind.)

Damian: She left me. That is not why I'm here.

Father: You're here because you're too afraid of letting it all go to waste. You're scared to shit that you're past your prime and the damages are too vast to clear away.

Damian: The damage is the landscape.

Father: And you're letting it overwhelm the landscape here. You're hell-bent on revenge. You're bringing up everything that has gone wrong, everything that you despise and you're incapable of fixing anything because it wasn't fixed for you.

Damian: Well, I don't need your help, Dad. You left us nothing but a tree and some birthday cards.

Father: I am dead, Damian.

Damian: So you invite yourself here to my new world? This is the first chance I have at doing something original, of my own. I have the power to bring anything into this world, into whatever way I choose it.

Father: And you brought me.

Damian: And I can make you vanish? I could create you and kill a thousand times but that might bore the audience.

Father: Is there a chance of that already?

Damian: Of course they're bored! They're not up here.

Father: Yes, they're done in their seats, watching you suffer. You should bring her out.

Damian: I would rather bring out the plague.

Father: I'm going to leave you, Damian. You're going to realize that this will come to nothing. But it is a nothing you will have to face alone. You have to do this. Get as far as you can before you come back.

Damian: Don't curse this!

Father: It is not a curse. It will be a lesson for you, Damian.

Damian: How saintly of you to offer something so fatherly.

Father: Good bye, son.

(The lights darken on the father and Damian is left alone on stage. He makes no gesture to acknowledge his father's good bye. He stands with his head down until he spots the loafers his father left on stage. He takes off his own shoes and puts on his father's. He paces, stretches his legs. He attempts a tap dance in his father's shoes. He grows comfortable and begins to speak in a lighthearted tone.)

Damian: Can you believe he said that she left me? I said at the beginning that I left her! I did. I left her for the moon, like I said before. It was something I needed to do. The relationship was ending and she was becoming a real ball buster about everything. If I washed the dishes, they wouldn't be clean enough. She would find a

speck of food and call me in from the den so that she could point it out. It was this way with everything. I mentioned all the problems we were having with sex. She had done everything and she was beginning to tell me more and more of her erotic past; taunting me with it, as though I were a virgin, or a child with a Playboy. I have had anal sex and sex in stalled elevators! I have been with a lot of women, too many to count and they did to me things I can't even remember. They did things that would make me blush if I mentioned them out loud. I think she probably wanted me to leave her. She was no victim. She got what she wanted, probably. Who can say? I mean no one who loves someone else will call them into the kitchen to inspect a tiny spot of food on a plate! My father said this and I cannot understand it. I mean, he wasn't even alive when we were going out! He wasn't there! You can trust me, I am saying this so because I want the truth to be known. As my audience, I require that you trust me. My generation happily killed their families by ignoring everything they said. It had no use to us! They were products of the sexual liberation movement and all they ended up with after all those drugs and all that pussy was an office job and a republican voting ticket. Elephants. Old Bastards. Gave us everything they had, all their money, all their commitment, just as the generation prior did for them. We won't do anything of the sort. And yet, my father has the nerve to come here before you and offer me some advice. He's been dead so long now that I don't even know if that was his real face. I imagined him with a red beard and thinner voice. But maybe that is his voice. Maybe that is his body. Can I really trust my memories? Do we invent them or are they invented for us? I had a grandfather who spoke of the youth rioting when the taxes for social security got

too high. He insisted that we would not pay for the old people to live if it meant that we couldn't live as the young do. Perhaps it is frivolity that would spark it. Not being able to buy new records or fashion magazines. We want our luxuries just as they did but unlike them, we need our luxuries for we have been raised on them and it would be insufferable to go without a personal computer and a manicure. Yeats spoke of a country of the young. Perhaps this should be our country. Let us have a go then, let us bring the young out in the air and be with them without the threat of balding and cardiac arrest. We will die? No! We will not die. But much like Endymnion we will sleep. This is what we will do when we die. This is what we will teach the children, that their parents are sleeping underground. And it will not be a lie for it is what will be believed.

(A group of college age kids appear out of the darkness. There are three of them. Two boys and one girl. They are sitting on the ground and laughing with each other. One of them is writing in a journal. They are all very beautiful and happy.)

Damian: What are you speaking about so merrily?

Emily: We're plotting the next adventure.

Robert: Yes, we cannot stay here. There is nothing here.

Emily: We were just laughing about how boring it is here.

Robert: And how much we want to leave.

Damian: But because there is nothing here, that means we can build whatever we want, live however we want.

Emily: No. There must be something going on somewhere.

Damian: But you have only just arrived here! You have not seen any part of this new place!

Robert: There is nothing out there. There is nobody here. No music, no nothing.

Damian: How do you know there is nothing?

Emily: Because there are no sounds, there are no birds, no trees. The grass beneath us is not even moving! Surely we are in a field and that is all there is.

Damian: I am here! I am here in this field with you. You don't know anything about me. Are you not interested?

Robert: We know you're alone in this field and were here before we got here.

Damian: Doesn't this interest you?

Robert: No. We have to go. We don't want to waste the night.

Damian: But you don't even know where you're going?

Emily: It'll be fun.

Damian: I brought you here! Do you know that? You did nothing to come here. You don't know anything about where you are. I am your creator! You must stay. I command you to stay.

(The kids laugh and whisper to each other. The boy writing puts down his pen and suddenly begins to throw a clump of dirt at Damian. He tries to block it but it hits his chest. The others, laughing, begin to throw dirt at him too.)

Emily: You're a lunatic!

Damian: Stop it! Stop it! You can go! I demand you to go!

Robert: We'll go.

(They get up, still laughing, and begin to walk offstage. Damian grabs the one who had been writing by the shoulder, stopping him. The others wait at the edge of the stage.)

Damian: What is it you were writing?

Writer: I wrote a haiku.

Damian: Can I read it?

Writer: Yeah, I guess. Go ahead.

(Damian takes the notebook from the writer and begins to read.)

Damian: In the dark we laugh

At a strange cunt scratch his cunt

Says he made us up.

I did....

(The writer begins to laugh, along with the others.)

Damian: Oh fuck, fine. Get out of here. I'm sick to death of you kids.

(They walk offstage chuckling and horsing around. Damian is left by himself. His mood is sour, as he wipes the dirt from his clothing.)

Damian: How boring they were! I had forgotten how boring being young was! Here I had given them a landscape, a place to exist, where they could have done anything their young hearts could have wanted. They chose to leave. Why build when you can go? Why work when you can run from work?

Voice: You wanted their acceptance.

Damian: I wanted to figure out why my creations were acting so aloof! I always imagined that I could do what I desired with what I had created, that I could fit them into the spaces I wanted them to exist in. Or was this the idea I have had of youth all along, having gone through youth and experiencing how wretched it all was.

Voice: It didn't seem to you so wretched at the time.

Damian: Of course it didn't! I thought I knew everything. Youth is wretched looking back on it. It was a nightmare, always wasting time, always on the go.

Voice: You would have gone with them if they had asked you.

Damian: I wanted them to stay! I gave them a whole landscape to do whatever it is they wanted to do. They could have helped me build something here. They could

have lived exactly the way they would have wanted to. They were born without constructions. They knew no parents and the hell of growing up.

Voice: You brought them here. Of course they were constructions, they were born of out of constructions.

Damian: I wanted them here to help me. I figured a few sets of young hands could really help. I thought they would give me some energy; some of that youthful exuberance.

Voice: Do you forget that everything you have brought out, you have created yourself?

Damian: I could be guilty of that.

Voice: Do you forget that you can have anything you wish, that it will be here before the words even leave your lips?

Damian: No, I don't forget that.

Voice: So why don't you bring something here that will be tolerable?

Damian: I am seeking perfection. I won't have a world like the old one. I don't want all the loneliness and the suffering, the boredom and the cancer. I don't the alienation, the questions of why we're here and wondering whether God in the sky invented us, or if Jesus is still bleeding on the cross in some alternate universe. Who wants a world of simulacrums and where technology can defeat real life? A world where if you want to see a girl's tits, you can click on the internet and have a million

pairs of tits in front of your dick for hours. You don't even have to ask them! You don't even have to rape them!

(Burton suddenly appears and the three of them begin a frustrating dialogue.)

Burton: But you're not perfect. Nothing you make will be perfect.

Damian: Do you sit there in the darkness and think of the perfect time to pop out with a cliché! I know I am not.....I am trying for a better world.

Burton: A better world can only be attained by a better self.

Damian: When did you become the dalai llama? Are you a yoga instructor in the darkness, sitting in the rising dragon?

Voice: You should perhaps give him a chance. You're out of your league here. You were like a kid at the locker dreaming of whom the in crowd is snickering about a few moments ago. And they were your own creations!

Damian: I am not going to tolerate this.

Burton: You don't have to do this alone. Look out there. I have been watching. There are so many people out there. Surely there is one of them you could ask?

Damian: And divide my mission? Share power?

Burton: You're more powerful when other acknowledge that there is power.

Damian: They do, clearly. They haven't left yet.

Burton: They will.

Damian: They will stay here. You're getting on my nerves. Interrupting my work.

Voice: We're inside your head, you know, Damian. You can make us go away.

Damian: Fuck off then! Get the fuck out of my head! I need to think.

(Burton recedes to the darkness and the voice ceases to talk. Damian senses their absence and becomes pleased. He smiles, tries the tap-dance again. Damian takes a cigarette from his shirt pocket and lights it. He inhales heavily and smokes with pleasure.)

Damian: Inspiration. A flash in the head. We will begin with a creation myth, even as you are watching me create the world. This will give us some distance. Let me tell you how it goes.....

(Many actors fill the stage and silently act out Damian's myth as he recites it. They move in a dance. The lights elegantly change the color of the stage as the myth requires.)

Damian: The world was born in the head of a man, who fled the old world. The old world was a trap. It was full of lepers. It was filled with plague. There were many days of boredom and many nights of doubt. Technology became its own mythology. It took over the desire of man. It predicted his future. Sex became nothing but pornography. The mystery of the human body was all within the expectation of performance.

Then the sun blew up.

Then the moon blew up.

All that was left was the one mind and all this darkness. The one mind realized it could create flowers, it could stop time, it could marry colors, it could bring back the mystery of things.

It brought back the moon.

The moon gave light to the darkness.

All became beautiful in the moonlight.

The man and his mind realized it could restore the human mind to its innocence, to its invention, to its music and its poetry. And so the mind began with.....

(He pauses, unsure of himself. The dancing stops.)

Damian: And so the mind began with nothing.

(The lights appear on Burton, the philosopher, who has never left the stage. The lights blacken on the dancers.)

Burton: That myth hasn't revealed anything. You're still in the same position you were when you started. Perhaps this task has proven too much for you.

Damian: I'm turning myself into a myth.

Burton: That job is historically done by those who have witnessed, who grew up with tales of legend. You're trying to write your ticket out of this.

Damian: I began with such optimism...

Burton: They say that when you go home the walls feel safer.

Damian: Go fuck yourself, Burton! I am sick to the brim of your inane musings, you're nothing but a goddamn critic and nothing has happened for you to criticize! Do you want to try it? Its harder than it looks.

Burton: I have been waiting but it seems that the only subject that lasts long enough to interpret is you, Damian.

Damian: Why don't you just keep your mouth shut until I've realized something? Go back to your stone and disappear until I call you.

(The lights go out on Burton and Damian is once again left alone.)

Damian: The more I read as a child, the more my mind would attack me when I closed the book and turned off the lights. The conversation would stop in my head; the voices from the books would fall silent. I would lie in bed and my mind would torture me until I fell asleep. Is this what is happening now? Are my creations coming through the darkness to cut me down? I can sense all of them moving in this black world, all of them restless for being incomplete. I cannot finish this. They will come out to ridicule me back into the nothing I was before I came here. You will all go home and wonder why you came. An experiment of this kind will not be attempted for some time.

(Damian's voice returns to begin a new conversation.)

Voice: Maybe it ought not be attempted.

Damian: But it must be attempted! If not simply for the reason that it never has before been attempted.

Voice: This is vanity, Damian! You're parading the horrors of the old world when you never have been through any of them but heartbreak. Your work is not honest.

Damian: Heartbreak is painful enough to assume that what will be coming next isn't desirable. Heartbreaks happen more than once. And besides, I saw death. I saw my father die.

Voice: You did not. You were out of the country.

Damian: I meant that it happened.

Voice: So what? It will happen to you. Death told you himself. You're a coward. You're flying from pain but this hasn't been going too well here for you, Damian. You're failing. Surely failure will bring you pain, for if it doesn't, you will be nothing short of a fool.

Damian: I am not afraid of failure.

Voice: You are, Damian. You give this up. One after the other your creations have mocked you, disappointed you, hurt you, left you. You're still alone in the dark, Damian.

Damian: Its not any different than what it be like if I went back. Why should I throw in the towel? I'm not tired yet! My mind has not been exhausted of its resources.

The poets tell us the imagination holds no bounds, forever expanding. They tell us the mind is an infinity field.

Voice: Maybe they say that because it never turns off. Maybe they say that because they want to believe that they aren't the sum of what they can say and do at the time. I think that's a foolish notion.

Damian: You do not see the merits in what I am attempting?

Voice: Don't you fear God?

Damian: Hah! God? Is this still the modern age? No intelligent person would even say that word without a snicker.

Voice: Everyone wonders. Everyone is afraid.

Damian: Because we can't shake the conditioning, the upbringing.

Voice: They can shake it off in every other way. Tobias Schneebaum turned off his New York City upbringing with his Fulbright art grant to eat a human leg.

Damian: Are you saying, what, that he too feared his maker?

Voice: I'm saying you fear it.

Damian: I don't. I'm an educated man, who freed himself of the terror of the old world. What a creation that would be if someone created it. It would be no different than my blackness.

Voice: Hubris. You speak of mythology but laugh of God and Gods? You speak of a spiritual world but deny it in any way that doesn't make you important.

Damian: How quickly you became a theologian. God in the modern world is a retreat from reason.

Voice: I haven't the time for this. The tiresome account of the modern intellectual. Besides, there's someone here who wants to speak with you.

(Damian looks up, alarmed.)

Damian: Who? Who is there? I cannot think of an image I have brought out that I would want to see again. I had no plans for the moment. I was intending to wing it and try a few more times. Who is there? Come on and come forth!

(A girl, very attractive gets up from the audience and hesitates where she stands before she rushes towards the stage. This girl is Lila. Her expression is one of resentment.)

Damian: Lila? What the hell are you doing here?

Lila: What do you mean? Did you think I wouldn't be here? You must know that this has been advertised all over town, don't you? The New World. Don't you know that? Your face is on the poster and they're all over the city. Did you think I would stay at home? I knew you'd be talking about me here. I knew I was probably the reason you had planned to do this in the first place.

Damian: Oh yes, how I forgot that you assume you're the reasoning behind my every thought. How presumptuous, Lila. How fitting, knowing you, and how wrong.

Lila: I knew you'd be talking about me. The things you've said here.

Damian: I don't recall mentioning your name, Lila. I never said Lila was a slut or Lila was an ugly bitch who should be thrown under a bus.

Lila: I knew you were talking about me! I knew. It was very hurtful, Damian.

Damian: They don't know who the hell you are. They were probably thinking about their ex-wives and their ex-husbands when I described you. That's how the imagination works...

Lila: Don't lecture me, Damian! You said you left me. You didn't leave anyone. I left you.

(Lila, to the audience.)

Lila: That's right, I left him! Look at him. He's a wash out. He's a failure, a phony, a flop. I cannot believe how crowded this whole thing is! I cannot believe you're still here listening to this shit, watching him fail.

Damian: Steal the show, Lila.

Lila: There is no show. We're still at the beginning.

Damian: So you left me?

Lila: I left you the first time we had sex, only I waited around a while because I wanted to see if it would grow by an inch or an ounce.

Damian: Petty, petty. I was, I am in love with you, Lila. This world is not about you, I wasn't planning on inventing the world to get you back. I really wanted out. I saw this as a chance to make everything right.

Lila: Why don't you do what every other sensible person does and commit suicide. And I do not love you. You're a fool.

Damian: I am no fool. You left me because I made you feel small.

Lila: The only thing small around here...

Damian: Shut up, Lila. You're public resentment is contrived. This is not about you and me. I am trying to do something for our race.

Lila: It looks as though you were trying to make the world a clone of your mind. Every fantasy you ever had came and taunted you. You failed, Damian. Let's face it. It was like watching a bad movie adaptation starring Charles Dickens, if somehow, they let the lead role go to a neurotic, pathetic Jew.

Damian: Anti-semitic.

Lila: You sound like your grandmother with that stuff. The holocaust is a punchline now. I wonder what she'd think of that?

Damian: Six million and you're laughing?

Lila: Its so hard not to laugh. Six million is the funniest joke in the world.

Damian: You're getting revenge, now. I don't give a damn about the holocaust. I was just fucking with you.

Lila: You do too. You cry in *Schindler's List*, even though you know what is going to happen.

Damian: I love you, Lila. I meant it. I mean it. But I am not coming back Lila.

Lila: Coming back? Who is asking you to come back? Who wants you? Aren't I allowed some resentment? Some public resentment? Its true, Damian has a small dick. It's like a half eaten strawberry, a little tree stump, only it never grows into a tree, it can't get hard, its gets as hard as jell-o. I would ask him if it was....

(Before Lila can finish her sentence, Danny shoots her in the head. She falls immediately to the floor. The lights fade out on Lila as though she never existed.)

Damian: She never existed. You're all stunned, thinking that I would be so brazen to shoot someone in public. This play is in my head, remember? All of it. Lila was never alive.

(The white haired man from the beginning gets up from his chair.)

White haired man: But she was alive, Damian. I knew her very well. I introduced the two of you, in fact. You murdered her in front of everyone. I think this experiment has gone on long enough.

Damian: She did not exist! Why are you lying to the audience? My last lover was a redhead?

White haired man: She was a redhead?

Damian: Was she? I don't remember the little things.

White haired man: You loved her, Damian. You shot her because you loved her. Come down, now. Things will be okay. We could get you off. Everyone in here would probably testify to your insanity. There are probably a few good lawyers in this very theatre!

Damian: I don't need a lawyer. You can't arrest someone for shooting something that never existed.

White haired man: How Mafioso of you to say so.

Damian: WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? SHE IS NOT REAL!

White haired man: Come down, Damian. It's time. The show is over. Come down, Damian. It'll be okay.

(Damian shoots the white haired man. The man falls in front of his seat and his body lies there, in front of the audience until the end of the show.)

Damian: Relax, relax. He wasn't real either. I invented him to give you some context. You all must calm down. If you forget about him, he will go away. I'm speaking to those of you in the front row. Just forget about him. He doesn't even exist.

(Burton comes out of the darkness.)

Burton: Do you really want this new world to begin in denial?

Damian: Denial? They don't exist. You don't exist.

Burton: I've been watching this whole time. Those were real people you shot. This is not surrealism where the colors of the rainbow come flying out of the body when the bullets hit. You're beginning the new world in violence, Damian.

(Damian shoots Burton and the colors of the rainbow fly out of his body through a hole in his chest.)

Damian: Out, all of you! All of you, out, out! Come out of the shadows, my darlings! My failures!

(They all appear, they are bound and gagged. They are squirming and squealing, hysterical, all of them. He pulls down the gag from Rose's mouth and uncuffs the fiddler.)

Damian: Play that violin. Something somber. Rose, of the dance, do you feel much like dancing now?

Rose: I don't know death.

Damian: Play that fiddle!

(The fiddler begins to play a mournful melody.)

Damian: I don't want to dance in these old shoes. Do you make love to fiddler when I sent you away?

Rose: Yes.

(Damian shoots her point blank in the head.)

(Damian shoots them all as they squirm and plead. After he shoots them, he becomes peaceful. He stares at his gun. He throws it on the floor. He is silent for a long time before he speaks.)

Damian: That wasn't so bad, was it? It wasn't all that violent. Its not as violent as the blackness we're in now. Nor is it as violent as the boredom that will creep in after you leave, or of the fantasy you have of fucking someone you're not supposed to be fucking. I did not create the world out of violence. I ended the world in violence so that we could begin again. Should we have one last go of it? Those characters would have become stale anyway in the brain, had I allowed them to stay. They would have become worse if I had allowed them to actually create the world along with me. These were not my bad ideas that I had to put a stop to. I had to put a stop to your expectations. I murdered every one of them because I knew that secretly, after every idea that I had, after every face that I brought here, every new scene and monologue, that it wasn't going to be good enough. I got this sense right away. Perhaps tomorrow's audience will be better. If you came tonight, please do not come back tomorrow night. You're the hideous audience. You're the audience

who cannot do right, you will not go where is necessary, you will not succumb to the vision of the grand master. Nevertheless, we will try one more time. We ought to. I will go against my better judgment and allow you to get your money's worth.

Voice: You really should let these people go home.

Damian: Just one more, after this, they can do what they want.

Voice: You're pathological. You're obsessed.

Damian: I am going to begin the world by ending mine.

Voice: Suicide?

Damian: Yes. I'll leave a note that says, "It was an accident."

Voice: A curious and amusing note. Something to baffle them.

Damian: I'm not actually going to commit suicide. I'm far too vain for that. I'm just going to shoot my gun in the air and allow the lights to fade out on me.

Voice: That's an idea. Leave them wondering if you did it.

Damian: Yes, wondering if I did it.

Voice: Are you going to go back to the old world?

Damian: Yes. What choice do I have?

Voice: I guess you don't have any other choices. You know you'll probably go to jail for murdering your ex-girlfriend and all those other actors.

Damian: Yes. But I figure I can probably invent another world in jail. I'll have a lot of alone time. Malcom X supposedly memorized the entire dictionary when he was in prison. If he could do that, there's hope.

Voice: Haha. Public racism. Its so much funnier when you can say it front of everyone. They think you're terrible.

Damian: No, I just meant that no one has ever memorized a dictionary.

Voice: Oh.

(Just then, neon lights on both sides of the stage appear saying in big, flashing, yellow letters:

GO HOME THE EXPERIMENT IS OVER.

Damian and his inner voice continue their conversation)

Damian: They put the lights on.

Voice: Yeah, the show is over.

Damian: Do you think they enjoyed it?

Voice: They're still here. I think they expect something. I thought you were going to fire your gun into the air after the lights went out on you. Let them think that you've committed suicide.

Damian: Maybe they'll leave if I do something heinous. I could invent some slut to actually go down on me in front of all of these people. I could hit her and curse her

out. But maybe that's more normal than I think. Nothing is as heinous as it used to be.

Voice: That's for sure.

Damian: Let me have a closing monologue then, if that is what they want.

Voice: Wrap things up.

(Damian stands there, thinking.)

Damian: It was an accident.

(The lights go out. A single gunshot is fired. The lights go back on. Damian is there on the floor. The lights come on. Damian is not there at all. Once again, the neon signs come on, flashing:

GO HOME THE EXPERIMENT IS OVER)

Voice: I have a haiku for you who are still here:

Go home, fuck your wives

Lead your shit pathetic lives

Its only theatre

FINIS