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The sadness of the limes

de
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traducción de
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(fragmento en inglés)

Warning: This play's got a laugh track.

SCENE 1

A man facing Van Gogh's "Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear" scratches his right ear.

did he miss it

Not enough to hear the rest of the story

The man turns to face forward. He's putting on a clown nose.

This morning
driving on the highway
I saw a dog walking against traffic
and I thought

It's God

What are you laughing at
How do you know it wasn't Him
After all, have you seen Him

I don't get it
I still don't get it
What do people laugh at

You
What are you laughing at

This man
he walked an entire day
just to see the woman he loved
take off with her new husband
and so he began to paint
He challenged his era
his teachers
Convention
and he wasn't understood

He lived off his brother's hand outs
Never managing to show any of his works

But he continued painting

He always believed that in the end there'd be something

He went crazy

and didn't sell a painting

He cut off an ear

and didn't sell a painting

He killed himself

And not even that sold a painting

That happened a hundred years later

A vase of sunflowers sold for 39 million dollars

With that kind of money, he could've bought himself an ear

Or an entire body

If that would've floated his boat

But what's this story mean

Why is it always referred to in self-help books

I should be grateful for not being a painter

For not having talent

For having both ears

Just like my third grade teacher

always preaching

always out to help us

saying

Let us give thanks for being whole

For counting on two hands

And two legs

For not needing any help getting around

And today

today precisely today

After seeing God walking against traffic on the highway

I listened to the news

A paraplegic woman avoided getting raped

Fending it off by using her prosthetic leg as a weapon

She beat her assailant with the leg until he lost consciousness

They didn't say dead

only unconscious

It's very much on my mind

what are you laughing at

Where would my third grade teacher be now
Would she have been told
Would she have cut off an ear after hearing the story
I don't think so
Surely the bitch lives in a safe neighborhood
or she wants to be brutally raped
just like that
just to feel something
Because the bitch had a thing against cripples
She couldn't bear seeing them begging in the street
walking like that with their irregular gait
maybe it offended her
saying that two plus two didn't make four
The old bitch and her paraplegic pitter-patter

Rite Pool roars with laughter

Laugh
Why aren't you laughing
Want to hear a joke

My name is Rite Pool

Scene 2

Rite Pool walks over to a parking meter. He fills it with change. He takes a seat next to it.

Where did it all begin

With Genesis
I suppose

For me it began with a table
A table with three legs
Tilted like a cheap Picasso
it was our kitchen table
it was also the ring for my parents' fights.
One argument we'd tip it to one side
Another and we'd tip it to the other
Don't drink water at my table
don't put down boiling milk
Mom's argument can get you wet
and Dad's can burn you
It was hard eating at our table

but we did it
It was there that I told my first joke

Mommy's stupid

Dad laughed while tilting the table toward his side
Daddy's stupid
And both of them laughed
Tilting the table from one side to the other
Soon enough my siblings came to see what was happening
And I tilted the table
From one side to the other

Mommy stupid
Daddy stupid

And we all laughed as if we were happy
Barely four and I'd already told my first joke

And then school
So poor and full of tilted tables and stupid people

Above all the teachers
Like that grim reaper I had in first grade
The one who cried at my feet telling me that I'd end up a garbageman
Even now I can't understand the cause of her tears
Considering what a shit she was
Soon enough she sent me to the Principal's office
In the end, she didn't know what to do with me
but the Reaper never figured on my wit winning over that man
So much so that he assigned me the homework of telling six jokes every Monday after the Pledge of Allegiance
A pledge that he confessed he hated for its solemnity and bad rhymes
That was the first of his confessions
It was also the title of my first routine

Solemnity and bad rhymes

That's how I began my career
telling six jokes on Mondays after the Pledge of Allegiance

Solemnity and bad rhymes

I became so popular at school that the Principal decided that he himself would teach me
Little did young Pool learn of sums and remainders
On the other hand the Principal confessed his entire life
About his sleepwalking mother who saw ghosts in electric poles

A danger to one and all
of his unfaithful wife's barren womb
of love forbidden by the fourth grade teacher's polyester apron
And each Monday after the Pledge
six jokes

two about unfaithful wives
two about old ladies getting electrocuted
and two about polyester

He kicked me out
of course
And I was only eight years old

He rises and deposits more change in the parking meter. He sits back down.

And then a new school
With its tables
chairs
teachers
and it's complete perfect students
all of them complete
the only incomplete one there
was me

You want to hear a joke
My name is Rite Pool

What size
who knows
I could be Olympic-size, I could be a kiddie pool
I could be nothing but a tin bucket with delusions of grandeur
Truth is I don't know

Sometimes I laughed with them
even though inside I was crying

But I kept on
In other places I kept on seeing incompleteness
Tables
Chairs
People
Dogs
They cried
While inside I was laughing

And I kept on

Always believing that in the end there'd be something

He confirms that the parking meter is still full

Then came the real world
 Working at the Three Trapped Tigers
 telling jokes
 instead of begging
 and just like in Genesis
 I needed a comrade
 An Eve
 a sidekick
 An Izzy Dedley

For every twenty miserable fools
 an Izzy Dedley
 a happy man
 a happy man with whom I plunged into Solemnity and bad rhymes
 I was Solemnity
 He brought the bad rhymes
 Along with a recently stolen joke

Izzy always said
 that with a small-time crook for a father
 And a mother who took in dirty laundry he was nursed on vice
 All of his jokes were stolen
 But that wasn't his worst sin
 The worst thing about Dedley was that he couldn't even make his mother laugh
 Even though he said he could

I wonder what became of him
 Could he be dead
 could he have cut off an ear
 I don't think so

He gets up one more time to put change in the parking meter. A man enters hurriedly carrying a painting in his hand. It seems like he's been on the run. He comes to a stop in front of Rite Pool.

IZZY DEDLEY
 Rite Pool

RITE POOL
with disgust
 Dedley
 It's you

IZZY DEDLEY

What are you doing here

RITE POOL

Dedley

IZZY DEDLEY

You wait

Like the chicken in front of the roaster

Hoping his mama escapes unspeared

like that tiny bagel by the toaster

praying his parents avoid getting schmeared

RITE POOL

It's you

No doubt about it

IZZY DEDLEY

Probably you don't know whether to take off

on foot or to wait for a dog

like those two little fleas outside the movies

Which one's your car

RITE POOL

You're in a rush

I could tell from a mile away

IZZY DEDLEY

Nope

Believe it or not I just got out of the joint

RITE POOL

Like father like son

IZZY DEDLEY

Nope

I went there to do a gig

And well sure I did spend some time in the slammer

But now I'm out

RITE POOL

Surely they're waiting for you at home

IZZY DEDLEY

No

No one's waiting

Which one's your car

RITE POOL
don't got one
And that thing you brought here

IZZY DEDLEY
It's a painting that they lent me

*Rite takes the painting. It's a lithograph of Van Gogh's 39 million dollar
"Sunflowers"*

RITE POOL
You know Dedley
This painting could buy an ear

IZZY DEDLEY
An ear
But I still have both
Mr. Pool

RITE POOL
Or a new body if that would float your boat

IZZY DEDLEY
Seriously

RITE POOL
It's too bad that Sarah Bernhardt never had a picture like this one

IZZY DEDLEY
Lucky me

RITE POOL
She should've taken up painting

IZZY DEDLEY
What for
If her acting was already so good
and what if her painting was bad
maybe they should have had her sing
No Mr. Pool
Why paint

RITE POOL
Because at the height of her career a leg got cut off

IZZY DEDLEY
Ay

RITE POOL

And the Ringling Brothers bought it for a hundred thousand dollars

IZZY DEDLEY

Was it worth that much

RITE POOL

The damned leg wasn't worth much to them when attached to the rest of her body
But when it was on its own it made more money than Bernhardt

IZZY DEDLEY

I don't recall any jokes about legs who've left their owners

RITE POOL

I do

but that wasn't it

IZZY DEDLEY

So tell it then

RITE POOL

No

It's too early

you know Izzy

I've been thinking about cutting off my right leg

IZZY DEDLEY

No way Rite

how would you get to the store to buy a bite

RITE POOL

Or my left arm

IZZY DEDLEY

No way Rite

Without arms how could you fight

Cutting off an ear – now that might be bright

RITE POOL

No

No way Dedley

it's been done

IZZY DEDLEY

We'll listen to secrets and extort big fees

RITE POOL
No way, Dedley
It's way
way
way too cheesy

IZZY DEDLEY
And then, and then...we'll issue decrees

RITE POOL
No way
Most likely
my leg
my arm
or my ear
would end up worthless if they left me

Dedley and Rite share a complicit look. They begin to laugh.

RITE POOL
I bring Solemnity

IZZY DEDLEY
And I the bad rhymes

They get back to laughing

IZZY DEDLEY
Let's go back

RITE POOL
No way

IZZY DEDLEY
We're as good as we ever were