

MAN

Okay. You don't have to. Most people don't. Hit me. Most people just go away. You can go away, too, if you want to. That's what most people do when I tell them about myself. My brother Paul says I just shouldn't tell people about myself, because I scare them, (*referring to his book of "Things to be Afraid Of"*) So I've recently put "myself" on the list of things to be afraid of, And I have to memorize what to be afraid of. Things like bears. And guns and knives. And fire. And fear—I should fear fear itself—and pretty girls. My brother Paul says they can hurt you 'cause they make you love them, and that's something I'm supposed to be afraid of too—love—but Paul says that I'm really lucky, 'cause I'll probably never have to deal with love, because I have a lot of deficiencies' and not very many capacities as a result of the congenital analgesia. Paul says I'm never gonna have to know what it feels like... 'cause it hurts.

CHAD

I don't know. Just sometimes... I don't know why I bother goin' "out". I don't like it, Randy. I hate it. I hate goin' out on these dates. I mean, why do I wanna spend my Friday night with some girl I might *maybe* like, when I could be spendin' it hangin' out with someone I *know* I like, like you, you know? I mean... that was rough tonight. In the middle of Sally tellin' me how she didn't like the way I smelled... I got real sad, and all I could think about was how not much in this world makes me feel good or makes much sense anymore, and I got really scared, 'cause there's gotta be something that makes you feel good or at least makes sense in this world, or what's the point, right? But then I kinda came out of bein' sad, and actually felt okay, 'cause I realized that there *is* one thing in this world that makes me feel really good and that *does* make sense, and it's you.

MAN

Oh, come on. You give yourself too much credit. He was young. That's all you need to get your hopes dashed: Be young. And everybody starts out young, so... everybody gets their hopes dashed, and besides... I don't think you really *dashed* his hopes. 'Cause if you *dash* somebody's hopes—well that's... kind of a nice way to let 'em down, 'cause it *hurts*... but it's quick. If you'd have said, "No," *that* woulda been "dashing his hopes". (*Beat.*) But you didn't say, "No." You said nothin'. You just didn't answer him. At all. And that's... killin' hope the long, slow, painful way, 'cause it's still there just hangin' on, never really goes away. And that's... kinda like givin' somebody else a little less air to breathe every day. Till they die.

WOMAN (GLORY)

There's something you should know: I'm here to pay my respects. To my *husband*. Yeah: *My husband*. Wes. I just wanted to say goodbye to him, 'cause he died recently. On Tuesday actually. And, see, the northern lights—did you know this?—the northern lights are really the torches that the recently departed carry with them so they can find their way to heaven, and, see, it takes three days for a soul to make its way home, to heaven, and this is Friday! This is the third day, so, you see, I *will* see them, the northern lights, because they're *him*: He'll be carrying one of the torches. And, see, I didn't leave things well with him, so I was just hoping I could come here and say goodbye to him and not be bothered, but what you did there just as second ago, that bothered me, I think, and I'm not here for that, so maybe I should go find another yard...

GAYLE

Shh!!! I've tried to *make* you love me by giving you every bit of love I had, and now...I don't have any love for *me* left, and that's...that's not good for a person...and...that's why I want all the love I gave you back, because I wanna bring it with me. I need to get away from things...Okay, YOU. *You* are the things in this town I need to get away from because I have to think and start over, and so: all the love I gave to you? I want it back, in case I need it. Because I can't very well go around giving *your* love—'cause that's all I have right now, is the love *you* gave *me*—I can't very well go around giving your love to other guys, 'cause that just doesn't seem right—Shh!!! So I think--. I think that, since I know now that you're not ready to do what comes next for people who have been together for quite a long time, I think we're gonna be done. So I think that's the best thing we can do, now, is just return the love we gave to each other, and call it even.

HOPE

Oh, don't even answer that. That was--. I know that's a horrible question to ask a person who lives in a small town, as if everybody in small towns knows everybody else, agh!, can't believe I asked that. I don't live here anymore, but when I did, I hated when people assumed I knew everybody in a small town just because it was small. It was worse than when they'd ask if we had "...plumbing way up there?", 'cause, you know, people in small towns really don't know each other any better than in big towns, you know that? I mean, you know who you know, and you don't know who you don't know, just like anywhere else. (*Beat.*) I'm so sorry to have bothered you. I was just sure--. When his parents passed away, he kept the house, I heard. He lived here. He stayed here, I thought. He was one of the ones who stayed (*Beat.*) I didn't stay. I went away.