

SCENE 1

REGINALD (REGGIE) DAVIS, 60's is on his hands and knees dragging things out of a closet. He already has overflowing boxes around him. He pulls out a pair of men's speedo trunks. They are short, tight and leopard patterned. His wife, CHERYL 60's, walks in with two cups of coffee.

She takes a seat at the table. An empty chair is opposite her.

CHERYL

Those must be Jeremy's.

REGGIE

Thank God they're not mine.

Reggie tosses them aside.

CHERYL

I think you would remember if they were.

REGGIE

Even on my best days...my very best days, I wouldn't have worn a thing like that.

CHERYL

Seems to me I remember a pool party where you chose to wear nothing.

REGGIE

I was drunk. And that was years ago.

Cheryl picks up a book and reads.

CHERYL

That was your 35th birthday party. So, no blaming it on reckless youth.

Reggie tries to stand. He can't budge an inch.

REGGIE

Cheryl, hand me that chair.

Cheryl looks up from her book, but
doesn't move.

CHERYL

You're closer to it.

REGGIE

I know, I'm closer to it, but I can't get it.

Cheryl reluctantly gets up and
places the chair by him. He puts
his hand on the seat then heaves.

REGGIE

I thought I was frozen to that spot.

He rubs his knees and legs then
sits in the chair. He starts
sorting through boxes holding up
books, kitchen gadgets, and
pictures.

REGGIE

Who's idea was it to start weeding out the lost or forgotten
things of our youth?

CHERYL

Lost or forgotten things of our youth, our kid's youth, my
mother's, your father's. My sister's...they all decided to
use our house as a dumping ground for their lost or forgotten
things. And if we're going to downsize eventually, we need to
find, remember and throw out.

Reggie holds up a picture.

REGGIE

Who the hell is that kissing you?

(beat)

And where am I?

CHERYL

You probably took the picture.

REGGIE

No, I didn't. I don't even know where this is? I've never seen that house in my life.

Cheryl walks over and peers at the picture.

CHERYL

That's not me, that's Stacy. Put your glasses on.

Reggie fumbles to get his glasses.

REGGIE

Your sister? Oh, yeah. Now, I see. What's she doing kissing this guy?

CHERYL

You know Stacy, always the flirt.

(beat)

By the way, why can't you tell the difference between me and my sister? She's twenty pounds heavier, you know.

Reggie realizes his mistake.

REGGIE

Didn't have my glasses. Of course, you're thinner.

CHERYL

Here, let me help you.

Cheryl kneels, but very slowly and with absolutely no grace. While Reggie moves to the table and drinks his coffee.

CHERYL

Okay, this must be Stacy's things. Those are Jeremy's over there.

Cheryl crawls on her hands and knees. She picks up a few items and tosses them.

CHERYL

I don't know. I don't care.

Cheryl holds up a piece of paper and starts reading.

CHERYL
Oh, you darling sweet man.

REGGIE
What?

CHERYL
How profound of you.

REGGIE
Yes, I am profound. You just noticed after all these years?

He picks up Cheryl's book out of
curiosity.

CHERYL
I especially like this: Blooms a rose of bittersweet
memories.

Cheryl turns and crawls on her
knees near Reggie while she's
reading.

CHERYL
I press to my fragile heart.

Reggie looks up.

REGGIE
You sick?

CHERYL
The poem. The poem I found that you wrote for me.

REGGIE
Poem?

CHERYL
Yes, this. This beautiful expression of your agony when we
were having those difficulties.

REGGIE
What?

He gets up and takes the poem from
Cheryl.

REGGIE

(reads)

With love and kisses and salty tears, that fall on sunbaked earth, blooms a rose of bittersweet memories, I press to my fragile heart.

CHERYL

I press to my fragile heart.

REGGIE

I didn't write this.

CHERYL

Of course you did. It's you all over. Brooding, melancholy. That time we were going through that rough patch.

REGGIE

You gotta be more specific.

CHERYL

You lost your job. We were pressed for money. You were so out of control.

REGGIE

I didn't write this.

CHERYL

Then who did?

REGGIE

I don't write poetry.

(beat)

Okay, a couple of times...maybe. But I didn't write this. Maybe you did.

(beat)

It's got all your little...uh...uh..

(searching for words.)

Subtleties.

CHERYL

Really?

REGGIE

Yeah, see here. That fall on sunbaked earth. If I had written it, I would have just said, hot or...or scorched...or I don't know, dry. But sunbaked. That sounds like you.

CHERYL

Let me see it again.

Reggie hands her the poem.

CHERYL

Even if I did write it, and I can't remember if I did, I can't think of why I would write it. It sounds like something that a person writes full of regret or melancholy.

REGGIE

The time we separated.

Silence...then

CHERYL

(unsettled)

Oh, that time.

(beat)

That was so awful.

REGGIE

You didn't even bother to write a note.

CHERYL

That was a bad time for me.

REGGIE

For you?

CHERYL

I was lonely and he seemed the solution.

REGGIE

But he wasn't.

CHERYL

It was remarkably unremarkable.

SILENCE

REGGIE

(clears his throat)

So, that's why I think you wrote this.

Cheryl looks down at the poem.

CHERYL

I could have.

REGGIE

See. Maybe...maybe, after.

CHERYL

After?

REGGIE

After we got back together. Blooms a rose of bittersweet memories. Our love blooms with bittersweet memories.

CHERYL

Rose is a metaphor.

(beat)

Could sun baked earth mean our relationship? That's profound.

REGGIE

That's who I am.

CHERYL

But you said you didn't write this.

REGGIE

And you said you didn't write it. What difference does it make?

Reggie has his back turned he gathers the two cups. Cheryl struggles to get up. She holds out her arms.

REGGIE

It's a rose that grows from drought ravished, oooooohhhh, I like that. Drought ravished.

CHERYL

Hard scrabble.

REGGIE

Like that one too. But the point is, it...the rose... struggled and it survived.

CHERYL

And bloomed even more beautifully.

(beat)

Help me. I'm stuck.

Reggie helps her up. They stand close.

CHERYL

Oohhh, I like that interpretation. We should frame this.

REGGIE

Really?

CHERYL

Well, we actually had a hand in creating this poem, regardless of who wrote it. It was about a poignant relationship. And ours was definitely that. It struggled and survived.

They look at each other then kiss.

Just then, the doorbell rings and the door opens. JEREMY, early 30's, bursts in and catches them.

JEREMY

Wuuueeeeeee. In the middle of the day?

REGGIE

I still got it son. Need to use it before I lose it.

JEREMY

Can you guys just wait until I leave to continue?

CHERYL

I'll try to resist, but your father is soooooo tempting.

Cheryl and Reggie laugh. Reggie takes the cups and exits.

JEREMY

Good, my things.

He holds up the speedos.

JEREMY

Those were the days.

CHERYL

Yes, please take them or throw them away.

JEREMY

Nope. This comes with me to the new apartment.

Reggie comes back with the poem,
coffee refills and a plate of
cookies. He sets them on the table.

CHERYL

Sorry, things didn't work out with Janet.

Jeremy shrugs.

JEREMY

No hard feelings. We just sorta drifted. Besides, I'm kind of excited. I never had my own apartment.

Jeremy walks over the table.

JEREMY

First my dorm roommate, then another room mate after college. Then Janet. I'm looking forward to having some space to myself.

Jeremy bites into a cookie and then
looks at the poem.

CHERYL

Well, if you need anything.

JEREMY

Right. Dinner, lunch...food..hey, you found it.

Jeremy holds up the paper.

CHERYL

Yes, the poem about...

JEREMY

My cat.

REGGIE

What?

JEREMY

I loved that cat. Well, it wasn't really my cat. It was my roommates cat. But you know, you guys never let me have a pet so I kind of fell in love with Rose.

CHERYL

The cat? The cat was named Rose?

JEREMY

Yeah, she was such a great cat. I missed her so much when Greg moved and took her. I think I missed that cat more than I'm missing Janet. Can I have it?

Jeremy doesn't wait for an answer.
He takes it.

JEREMY

Well, gotta go. I'm painting the walls today. I think I'll paint them an off white. Janet wouldn't let me touch her purple walls. Ugh, purple.

He turns to them.

JEREMY

Maybe one day, I'll meet someone and we'll be as solid as you two are. Love yah. Gotta run.

Jeremy exits. There is stunned
silence.

Reggie holds up his cup.

REGGIE

To Rose the cat.

Cheryl holds up her cup. They
clink.

CHERYL

To Rose, may she bloom with bittersweet memories forever.

THE END