

FRANKENSTEIN by Nick Dear (2011)

CREATURE: My heart is black. It stinks. My mind, once filled with dreams of beauty, is a furnace of revenge! Three years ago, when I was born, I laughed for joy at the heat of the sun, I cried at the call of the birds – the world was a cornucopia to me! Now it is a waste of frost and snow. The son becomes the father, the master the slave. I have led him across the Black Sea, through Tartary and Russia. I have led him past Archangel, and out on to the ice. We go north, always north. His dogs are dead; his supplies exhausted. But we have a compact we must keep: he lives for my destruction, I live to lead him on. (*Calls into the wind.*) Frankenstein! Come! (*To us.*) I used to have dreams... I dreamt we were hiking, over the mountains, under a glorious sky. We would walk together, and talk together... he would tell me how to live. The mistakes to avoid. How to woo a girl. For this I came to find him, but he turned me away! Why did he do that? Why did he turn me away?

THE THREE SISTERS (1901) by Anton Chekhov (Transl. R. Hingley.)

IRINA: Tell me, why is it I'm so happy today? I feel as if I were sailing, with the wild, blue sky above me, and great white birds soaring about in the wind. Tell me why? Do you think--? This morning I woke up, got out of bed, washed – and suddenly I felt everything in this world was clear to me – I felt I knew how life had to be lived. Dearest Doctor, I know everything. We must toil, live by the sweat of the brow, whoever they are; that's the only way one can find the sense and purpose of life, happiness, joy. How wonderful to be a working man who rises at first light and breaks stones on the road, or a shepherd, or a teacher, or an engine driver on the railway... Lord, never mind being human even – better to be an ox, a simple horse, just so long as you can work – anything rather than a young lady who rises at noon, drinks her coffee in bed, then takes two hours to dress . . . oh that's so awful! You know how in the heat you long to drink the way I began longing to work. And if I don't start getting up early and working, then you must shut your heart to me, Dearest Doctor.

THE CRUCIBLE by Arthur Miller (1953)

MARY WARREN: I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleeps in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then- then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin' up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then (*Entranced*) I hear a voice, a screamin' voice, and it were my voice and all at once I remembered everything she done to me! (*Like one awakened to a marvellous secret insight*) So many times, Mr. Proctor, she come to this very door, beggin' bread and a cup of cider-and mark this: whenever I turned her away empty, she mumbled. But what does she mumble? You must remember, Goody Proctor. Last month-a Monday, I think-- she walked away, and I thought my guts would burst for two days after. Do you remember it? And so I told that to Judge Hathorne, and he asks her so. "Sarah Good," says he, "what curse do you mumble that this girl must fall sick after turning you away?" And then she replies (*Mimicking an old crone*) "Why, your excellence, no curse at all. I only say my commandments; I hope I may say my commandments," says she! Then Judge Hathorne say, "Recite for us your commandments!" (*Leaning avidly toward them*) And of all the ten she could not say a single one. She never knew no commandments, and they had her in a flat lie!

AWAY by Michael Gow (1986)

MEG: I saw the carton. I saw it in the hall.

I saw it. It was near the telephone table, wasn't it?

You saw it too, didn't you? You saw the box sitting there. You must have. It was sitting next to your vanity case. Everything else that was in the hall got packed in the car. You did see it.

You were the last one out. You're the one who shuts the door, after you've made sure the stove's off and the fridge has been left open. You saw the carton and you left it there on purpose.

You left it behind.

And you knew what it was. You knew what was in it and you left it there.

Why did you do that?

Why would you do a thing like that?

I want to know why you did it.

Tell me why you deliberately left that box behind.

We have a game we play every year. We sneak presents home, we hide them, we wrap them up in secret even though we can hear the sticky tape tearing and the paper rustling; we hide them in the stuff we take away, we pretend not to see them until Christmas morning even when we know they're there and we know what's in them because we've already put in our orders so there's no waste or surprise. And Dad always hides his in a pathetic place that's so obvious it's a joke and we all laugh at him behind his back but we play along! You knew what was in that box. You left it behind. I want to know why. What were you trying to do, what did you want to gain?

Did you want to have something we'd all have to be sorry for the whole holiday?

There's always something we do wrong that takes you weeks to forgive.

You have to tell me.

SUNSHINE SUPER GIRL by Andrea James (2020) (This monologue is for First Nations)

EVONNE: This is a good spot here. This is Mum's spot.

That current there? Swirling around and around? That's the backwater. Leaves and twigs and bugs. That's what the fish are after and that's what I'm after. The fish.

My dad told me about the magic of fishing at the backwater. He used to say, "See that big hole down there? Plenty of fish. Big ones. That's where you go to catch a fish." But to tell you the truth, if I don't catch a fish, that's okay too...

No-one knows I'm here. Not even family. I'm not ready to go into town. Just yet. Yesterday I fished around the corner. A bit closer to the bend and I caught three fish! One yellow belly, one red fish, and one cod.

One pan size and one baking dish size. And one Family size. Caught 'em on some worms. Took me two hours.

[She smells her fingers.]

Still got that fishy smell. It's starting to sink in.

Look out!

[A fish bites, she scrambles to hook it, but misses]

Missed him!

Freshwater woman, through and through.

When I throw in a line and I'm waiting for a bite, it's like I'm on the court. In the zone.

Your hearing changes – like you're underwater.

Your muscles shift and tighten. Ready for anything. Your vision is sharp. Every twitch, every flutter. And when everything aligns, that ball moves in slow motion and comes up to meet you.

Like an old friend.

And when you hit that sweet spot.

"toc!"

Contemporary Monologues 2027 Arts Academy
Associate Professor Kim Durban

It's like pure heaven.

That ball flies like a bird.

You watch your opponent scramble and before she hits the ball..

Wham!

You're there. You know where to be.

DANCE NATION by Clare Barron (2018)

ZUZU: People say I dance with a lot of grace and that I'm beautiful and above-average and stuff. Here's what they don't say.

They don't say I'm sensational.

They don't say I take their breath away.

They don't say they could watch me forever.

They don't say they cry when they watch me dance.

When they watch Amina dance, they cry. I know.

Because I cry when I watch Amina dance.

My Mom asked me to dance for her cancer. She saw a documentary about this woman who did a dance and it cured her cancer and so she asked me if I would do a dance for her and my Mom is not normally like that but she was feeling really emotional at the time and she kept breaking down all the time so I did this solo at the year-end recital for my Mom and her cancer. And I tried to make it the best dance I had ever done. I tried to like feel things with my arms and my legs. I tried to make people feel things with my arms and my legs ...

But it was just an ordinary dance, really. A lot of people didn't know it was about my Mom's cancer at all. They thought it was about whatever our dances are usually about. Flowers. Or sailors, you know. Not cancer. I didn't make them cry. I didn't make myself cry. I don't even think I made my Mom cry. She told me that she liked it. But she didn't cry. And it didn't cure her cancer, so. Her cancer actually got worse after that, so. It was just an ordinary dance.

**THE SEAGULL by Anton Chekhov (1895) (Translation from the Russian by
Elisaveta Fen)**

NINA: Why do you say that you have kissed the ground I walked on? You should kill me rather. *[She bends over the table]* I am so tired. If I could only rest--rest. *[She raises her head]* I am a sea-gull--no--no, I am an actress. *[She hears ARKADINA and TRIGORIN laughing in the distance, runs to the door on the left and looks through the keyhole]* He is there too. *[She goes back to TREPLIEFF]* Ah, well--no matter. He does not believe in the theatre; he used to laugh at my dreams, so that little by little I became down-hearted and ceased to believe in it too. Then came all the cares of love, the continual anxiety about my little one, so that I soon grew trivial and spiritless, and played my parts without meaning. I never knew what to do with my hands, and I could not walk properly or control my voice. You cannot imagine the state of mind of one who knows as he goes through a play how terribly badly he is acting. I am a seagull--no--No, that is not what I meant to say. Do you remember how you shot a seagull once? A man chanced to pass that way and destroyed it out of idleness. That is an idea for a short story, but it is not what I meant to say. *[She passes her hand across her forehead]* What was I saying? Oh, yes, the stage. I have changed now. Now I am a real actress. I act with joy, with exaltation, I am intoxicated by it, and feel that I am superb. I have been walking and walking, and thinking and thinking, ever since I have been here, and I feel the strength of my spirit growing in me every day. I know now, I understand at last, Constantine, that for us, whether we write or act, it is not the honour and glory of which I have dreamt that is important, it is the strength to endure. One must know how to bear one's cross, and one must have faith. I believe, and so do not suffer so much, and when I think of my calling, I do not fear life.

***WALKING INTO THE BIGNESS* by Richard Frankland (2014) (This monologue is for First Nations)**

RICHARD: Later. We're about 3000k's in. Me and Mum. Yeah, I'd gone back home. Now I'm outside of a town on the Nullarbor somewhere, hungry, walking – been up to Broome for my sister's wedding, hitchhiked to Perth, slept under a tree at the Kalgoorlie turn off. We'd lost our house in Portland but most of the family's in Canberra so we're heading there. Things hadn't turned out so we'd left Broome with no money. Not a zac, not a brass razoo. I am the man. I am 15. It's 1979. We walk and walk and walk.

Here the land seems to go on forever. And I, I've lost everything. Got nothing. Can't even get a feed. No money. No blankets. And I am not sure why, but - I have this canvas bag full of my songs, poems, stories. And so I, I just walk into the bigness - Mum's watching - and I pull it all out and throw it as hard as I can.

From nowhere a Willy-Willy comes and picks it up mid-flight and grabs it all and whizzes it around. Mum yells: 'No!' - and runs into the Willy-Willy.

Her hair's flinging about, whipped up, down, to the side. She's yelling and snatching it all back from the wind. It was like she was challenging nature itself. And she snatches the stuff, the songs, the poems, and the rest.

I am breathless, watching. The Willy-Willy passes, off into the distance, a whirl of dust, fearless in its journey. Mum stands there, tears falling, hair everywhere, handfuls of my writings. Without a word I take them from her and stuff them back in my bag. Dunno what else to do with 'em. Now, gotta get out of here and find myself another job.

BERLIN by Joanna Murray Smith (2021)

TOM: I wasn't interested at first. I didn't want to get drawn into...I don't know. but my mother showed me the databases...It was just a – a casual thing-but the pieces started to come together...The Nazis meticulously documented what they stole. Over 20,000 works on neatly typed index cards, now online. I found the Picasso and the Chagall and the Klee. But no Constable. No Aphrodite. I went back through the records to see how the works were acquired...And I began to wonder if the dealer hadn't kept a memento for himself. Lo and behold, the Constable was formally listed when your parents put it into the Sotheby's sale in '89. They retracted it as you know. *[Beat.]* Perhaps they knew someone might be looking for it. *[Beat. He allows a moment for this to sink in.]* It wasn't hard to track your mother via her own website. I told her I was writing my doctorate on English Romantic painters and I'd love to see her Constable. 'My daughter Charlotte has it,' she said. In Berlin.' Your Facebook page had enough clues to narrow it down. Shots of you hanging out of a window in summer above a ramen place, et cetera. There's a photo of you in your street in a crazy wig with your street number behind you. Your neighbour was kind enough to tell me you were working at the bar when I bumped into him in the stairwell. *[Beat.]* And there you were. *[Beat.]* And here I am.

***THE CHERRY ORCHARD* by Anton Chekhov (1904) (Adapted by Simon Stone.)**

TROFIMOV: We talked a lot yesterday, but we didn't get anywhere. A proud man, at least in your sense of the word, has something mystical about him. And you may be right. But if we look at the thing quite simply and don't try to be too clever, then what room is there for pride and what's the sense of it all anyway, if in fact man is a pretty poor physiological specimen and if the great majority of humanity is crude, stupid and profoundly miserable? It's time we stopped admiring ourselves. The only thing to do is work . . . Here in Russia very few fine people actually do any work. The kind of intellectuals I know don't do anything. They call themselves an intelligentsia, but they speak to their servants as inferiors and treat the peasants like animals. Science is something they just talk about and about art they know precious little. Oh they're all very earnest, going around looking all solemn. And what does it mean to die? Perhaps we have a hundred senses and perhaps, when we die we lose only the five we know, while the other 95 live on. Still I see a bright and beautiful future for humanity. For so long the greater part of human existence has been this suffering. A select few controlled the wealth, grinding the majority into the dirt beneath them. And recently, as the world has developed and machines start to replace the worker, another kind of tyrant is emerging. Not born of wealth but having fought tooth and nail to gain it, he is greedy and uncouth without any of the delicacy or the generosity of the aristocrat, instead all righteous, self-satisfied and clumsy. And both the aristocrat and the oligarch ignore the one strongest asset of mankind, the community. This is the future I see before us. Yet what we have got now but dirt, vulgarity and squalor. I loathe all the earnest faces. They scare me and so do earnest conversations. Why can't we just keep quiet for a change?

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE BROWN by Clark Gesner (1967)

CHARLIE: I think lunchtime is about the worst time of day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes, mornings aren't so pleasant either. Waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night, too. Lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between when I do all those stupid things. Well, lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. Well, I guess I'd better see what I've got. Peanut butter. Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely...I guess they're right. And when you're really lonely, the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. There's that cute little red-headed girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she would do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her?...She'd probably laugh right in my face...it's hard on a face when it gets laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over and sit there. I could do that right now. All I have to do is stand up...I'm standing up!...I'm sitting down. I'm a coward. I'm so much of a coward, she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why shouldn't she look at me? Is there any reason in the world why she shouldn't look at me? Is she so great, and I'm so small, that she can't spare one little moment?...SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! SHE'S LOOKING AT ME!! (*he puts his lunchbag over his head.*) ...Lunchtime is among the worst times of the day for me. If that little red-headed girl is looking at me with this stupid bag over my head she must think I'm the biggest fool alive. But, if she isn't looking at me, then maybe I could take it off quickly and she'd never notice it. On the other hand...I can't tell if she's looking, until I take it off! Then again, if I never take it off I'll never have to know if she was looking or not. On the other hand...it's very hard to breathe in here. (*he removes his sack*) Whew! She's not looking at me! I wonder why she never looks at me? Oh well, another lunch hour over with...only 2,863 to go. (*BEAT*) Now remember what I said.

***THE MATCHMAKER* by Thornton Wilder (1954)**

CORNELIUS: Isn't the world full of wonderful things? There we sit cooped up in Yonkers for years and years and all the time wonderful people like Mrs Molloy are walking around in New York and we don't know them at all. I don't know whether - from where you're sitting - you can see - well, for instance, the way (pointing to the edge of his right eye) her eye and forehead and cheek come together, up here. Can you? And the kind of fireworks that shoot out of her eyes all the time. I tell you right now: a fine woman is the greatest work of God. You can talk all you like about Niagara Falls and the Pyramids; they aren't in it at all. Of course, up there at Yonkers they came into the store all the time, and bought this and that, and I said "Yes, ma'am", and "That'll be seventy-five cents, ma'am"; and I watched them. But today I've talked to one, equal to equal, equal to equal, and to the finest one that ever existed, in my opinion. They're so different from men! Everything that they say and do is so different that you feel like laughing all the time. (he laughs) Golly, they're different from men. And they're awfully mysterious, too. You never can be really sure what's going on in their heads. They have a kind of wall around them all the time - of pride and a sort of play-acting: I bet you could know a woman a hundred years without ever being really sure whether she liked you or not. This minute I'm in danger. I'm in danger of losing my job and my future and everything that people think is important; but I don't care. Even if I have to dig ditches for the rest of my life, I'll be a ditch-digger who once had a wonderful day.

***THE SEASON AT SARSAPARILLA* by Patrick White (1962)**

ROY: When summer closes the door on chalkdust, and foxy questions of forty children, the mind should find release. But it doesn't. Nobody who has been boxed is ever quite free. His thoughts home like pigeons, to roost on their familiar perches...with the boxed thoughts of those he has never really left.

Here I am then...smelling of salt, sun and seaweed capsules popped in the heat of the day. Wearing its glaze of summer, my body is more or less renewed...while my mind lurks in stuffy corners, filled with Genoa velvet and silky oak veneers. Where the body ignores, the mind reminds...that the radio hasn't left off playing in empty rooms ...that the TV will continue to dissolve human personality, like gelatine in tepid water.

Of course, We-Who-Know-All-This hate it, and promote ourselves to escape to something better. But wonder if that exists...and depend on those twin dazzlers, time and motion, to help us believe we are doing and being. Who can resist deceiving himself when the razzle-dazzle is on...

Here they go now. That nice girl Judy Pogson can't give the violin away. She won an Instrumental Section once. At night her dreams breathe music. Its curtain hides whatever she has to discover.

All the afternoon my sister Mavis will have had the wind. Her time is getting close. This evening she could kill the carrots.

And the dogs . . . the dogs have never really stopped barking in anyone's mind.

***HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD* by JK Rowling, John Tiffany, Jack Thorne (2017)**

SCORPIUS: (exploding) Try my life! People look at you because your dad's the famous Harry Potter, saviour of the wizarding world. People look at me because they think my dad is Voldemort. Voldemort. Can you even slightly imagine what that's like? Have you ever even tried? No. Because you can't see beyond the end of your nose. Because you can't see beyond the end of your stupid thing with your dad. He will always be Harry Potter, you know that, right? And you will always be his son. And I know it's hard, and the other kids are awful, but you have to learn to be okay with that, because – there are worse things, okay? There was a moment I was excited, when I realized time was different, a moment when I thought maybe my mum hadn't got sick. Maybe my mum wasn't dead. But no, turns out, she was. I'm still the child of Voldemort, without a mother, giving sympathy to the boy who doesn't ever give anything back. So I'm sorry if I've ruined your life because I tell you – you wouldn't have a chance of ruining mine – it was already ruined. You just didn't make it better. Because you're a terrible – the most terrible – friend.

THE KID by Michael Gow (1983)

SNAKE: Honestly. I hate this trip. It's always chaos. Always a fight. By the time we get to Auntie Eileen's no one's talking to anyone. I have to do everything. Get the boys ready. Stock up on drinks and Marlboro and chips. Hate it. Won't it be great when we get the money? We'll be happy. We might take over a service station. Dean can fool around with his engines. I'll cook snacks and Pro can man the pumps. I'll have to help him with the change. I'll look back on all this and laugh. Hate it. All the people we end up taking along. Dean always collects Someone. You must have been the first one ever to turn him down. He was that upset. He was driving like a maniac. He just drove over the median strip and back we came. Little turd. Know why he got chucked out of school? Mrs Tucker guess what Dean called her - was wrapped in him. She used to beat shit out of him, for any reason, no reason, just so she could grab hold of him and whack his bum. One day he'd had enough and he told her to go and see one of he Abo stockmen and he'd fix her up. Poor woman grabbed all the rulers in the room and laid into Dean. He stood up, gave her a right hook and she went down like a ton of bricks. We all stood on the desks and cheered. I reckon Dean would win wars single-handed. The enemy would come to him on bended knees. People will do anything just to get a wink or a smile that says he likes you. Little turd. Foul temper. Lazy.

But who cares when it's Dean?