

samuel
beckett



THE
COLLECTED
SHORTER
PLAYS

Collected Shorter Plays

Rockaby

Written in English in 1980. First performed in Buffalo, New York in 1981 with Billie Whitelaw as W and V, directed by Alan Schneider, produced by Dan Labeille. First published by Grove Press in 1981.

NOTES

Light:

Subdued on chair. Rest of stage dark.

Subdued spot on face constant throughout, unaffected by successive fades. Either wide enough to include narrow limits of rock or concentrated on face when still or at mid-rock. Then throughout speech face slightly swaying in and out of light.

Opening fade-up: first spot on face alone, long pause, then light on chair.

Final fade-out: first chair, long pause with spot on face alone, head slowly sinks, come to rest, fade out spot.

W:

Prematurely old. Unkempt grey hair. Huge eyes in white expressionless face. White hands holding ends of armrests.

Eyes:

Now closed, now open in unblinking gaze. About equal proportions section 1, increasingly closed 2 and 3, closed for good halfway through 4.

Costume:

Black lacy high-necked evening gown. Long sleeves. Jet sequins to glitter when rocking. Incongruous flimsy head-dress set askew with extravagant trimming to catch light when rocking.

Attitude:

Completely still till fade-out of chair. Then in light of spot head slowly inclined.

Chair:

Pale wood highly polished to gleam when rocking. Footrest. Vertical back. Rounded inward curving arms to suggest embrace.

Rock:

Slight. Slow. Controlled mechanically without assistance from w .

Voice:

Towards end of 4, say from 'saying to herself' on, gradually softer. Lines in italics spoken by w with v. A little softer each time. w's 'more' a little softer each time.

w: *Woman in chair.*

v: *Her recorded voice.*

*Fade up on w in rocking-chair facing front downstage slightly
off centre audience left.*

Long pause.

w: More.

[*Pause. Rock and voice together.*]

v: till in the end

the day came

in the end came

close of a long day

when she said

to herself

whom else

time she stopped

time she stopped

going to and fro

all eyes

all sides

high and low

for another

another like herself

another creature like herself

a little like

going to and fro

all eyes

all sides

high and low

for another

till in the end

close of a long day

to herself
 whom else
 time she stopped
time she stopped
 going to and fro
 all eyes
 all sides
 high and low
 for another
 another living soul
 going to and fro
 all eyes like herself
 all sides
 high and low
 for another
 another like herself
 a little like
 going to and fro
 till in the end
 close of a long day
 to herself
 whom else
 time she stopped
 going to and fro
 time she stopped
time she stopped

[Together: echo of 'time she stopped', coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.

Long pause.]

w: More.

[Pause. Rock and voice together.]

v: so in the end
 close of a long day
 went back in
 in the end went back in
 saying to herself
 whom else

time she stopped
time she stopped
going to and fro
time she went and sat
at her window
quiet at her window
facing other windows
so in the end
close of a long day
in the end went and sat
went back in and sat
at her window
let up the blind and sat
quiet at her window
only window
facing other windows
other only windows
all eyes
all sides
high and low
for another
at her window
another like herself
a little like
another living soul
one other living soul
at her window
gone in like herself
gone back in
in the end
close of a long day
saying to herself
whom else
time she stopped
time she stopped
going to and fro
time she went and sat

at her window
 quiet at her window
 only window
 facing other windows
 other only windows
 all eyes
 all sides
 high and low
 for another
 another like herself
 a little like
 another living soul
 one other living soul

*[Together: echo of 'living soul', coming to rest of rock,
faint fade of light.]*

Long pause.]

w: More.

[Pause. Rock and voice together.]

v: till in the end
 the day came
 in the end came
 close of a long day
 sitting at her window
 quiet at her window
 only window
 facing other windows
 other only windows
 all blinds down
 never one up
 hers alone up
 till the day came
 in the end came
 close of a long day
 sitting at her window
 quiet at her window
 all eyes
 all sides

high and low
for a blind up
one blind up
no more
never mind a face
behind the pane
famished eyes
like hers
to see
be seen
no
a blind up
like hers
a little like
one blind up no more
another creature there
somewhere there
behind the pane
another living soul
one other living soul
till the day came
in the end came
close of a long day
when she said
to herself
whom else
time she stopped
time she stopped
sitting at her window
quiet at her window
only window
facing other windows
other only windows
all eyes
all sides
high and low
time she stopped

time she stopped

[Together: echo of 'time she stopped', coming to rest of rock, faint fade of light.

Long pause.]

w : More.

[Pause. Rock and voice together.]

v: so in the end

close of a long day

went down

in the end went down

down the steep stair

let down the blind and down

right down

into the old rocker

mother rocker

where mother rocked

all the years

all in black

best black

sat and rocked

rocked

till her end came

in the end came

off her head they said

gone off her head

but harmless

no harm in her

dead one day

no

night

dead one night

in the rocker

in her best black

head fallen

and the rocker rocking

rocking away

so in the end

close of a long day
went down
in the end went down
down the steep stair
let down the blind and down
right down
into the old rocker
those arms at last
and rocked
rocked
with closed eyes
closing eyes
she so long all eyes
famished eyes
all sides
high and low
to and fro
at her window
to see
be seen
till in the end
close of a long day
to herself
whom else
time she stopped
let down the blind and stopped
time she went down
down the steep stair
time she went right down
was her own other
own other living soul
so in the end
close of a long day
went down
let down the blind and down
right down
into the old rocker

and rocked
rocked
saying to herself
no
done with that
the rocker
those arms at last
saying to the rocker
rock her off
stop her eyes
fuck life
stop her eyes
rock her off
rock her off

*[Together: echo of 'rock her off', coming to rest of rock,
slow fade out.]*

