

EINSTEIN. (*Indicates his own drawing.*) Men have swooned on seeing that.

PICASSO. Mine touches the heart.

EINSTEIN. Mine touches the head.

PICASSO. Mine will change the future.

EINSTEIN. (*Holds his drawing.*) Oh, and mine won't?

(Triumphant, EINSTEIN grabs SUZANNE and begins to dance with her. PICASSO stands rebuked.)

GASTON. (*Suddenly singing.*)

WHEN A MAN LOVES A WOMAN...

FREDDY. What the hell was that?

GASTON. I don't know, it just came over me.

(EINSTEIN dances SUZANNE to her seat and gives her his drawing, signing it. She smiles.)

(SAGOT gets out of his chair and starts to exit.)

FREDDY. Where're ya going?

SAGOT. I'm going to get my camera. A night like this must be preserved on film.

(Referring to the painting on the wall.)

Picasso, do something about that ovine pastorate will you?

PICASSO. The idea is coming.

SAGOT. I like it; sounds good.

(SAGOT exits.)

PICASSO. The idea is coming. THE idea is coming.

FREDDY. Hey Picasso, you're the least funny guy here, tell me if you get this joke.

PICASSO. (*Défensive.*) Hey, I'm funny.

ALL. (*Not unison, but en masse.*) ["No, you're not...no way...uh-uh. I don't THINK so."]

GERMAINE. (*To FREDDY.*) Tell us all.

Freddy

FREDDY. OK. A man goes into a bakery and says, "Can you mail a pie?" The baker says yeah I think we could. Then the man says, "Well could you bake me a pie in the shape of the letter E?" And the baker says yeah I think we could do that. Come back tomorrow and we'll have it for you. So the man comes back the next day and the baker shows him the pie. The man says, "You idiot! That's a big E I wanted a small E, a small E." So the baker says no problem, come back tomorrow and I'll see what I can do. So the man comes back the next day and the baker shows him the pie. The man says, "Perfect...it's perfect." Then the baker says, "So where do you want me to send it?" And the man says, "You know what... I think I'll eat it here."

(They all stare at him. No laughs.)

Guy told me that the other day; I didn't get it.

GERMAINE. (*Explaining.*) I think it's surreal.

FREDDY. I guess that's why I didn't get it. I'm a symbolist.

GERMAINE. And a good for nothing one at that.

FREDDY. You calling me a good for nothing symbolist?

SUZANNE. What's symbolism?

GERMAINE. So far it's a fancy excuse for not doing the dishes.

FREDDY. That's not fair. Your post-romanticism has gotten us into a lot of hot water around here.

GERMAINE. My romanticism is not post!

FREDDY. It most certainly is!

GERMAINE. It's neo.

FREDDY. Post!

GERMAINE. Neo!

FREDDY. Post!

GASTON. STOP IT BOTH OF YOU! My God! This is not some sleazy dive somewhere.

EINSTEIN. The reason the joke is funny is because of the perfect selection of the letter E. It couldn't be an A-shaped pie, because "A" is functioning as both article and noun, who needs it. It can't be a B-shaped pie

PICASSO. Look, I meant everything I said that night, I just forgot who I said it to. Stranger things will happen in your young life, believe me. Worse things.

SUZANNE. I believed you.

PICASSO. I believed it too. And now that I see you tonight, my dear, I'm believing it all over again.

I remember a blue-green bed with a rose colored spread over it. A tin half-moon on the wall, holding a candle. On your bedside table there were three rings side by side with small turquoise stones, one with garnet, and next to them a pale pink ribbon. Later I picked it up off the floor

(Then.)

I can't remember your name.

SUZANNE. I never told it to you.

PICASSO. Yes, you did. I remember it now.

SUZANNE. I never told you.

PICASSO. Yes you did Suzanne.

SUZANNE. I don't remember.

PICASSO. My ear was inches from your mouth. You said your name to me, then spoke words half-whispered, passion obscuring their meaning.

(He leans in and kisses her.)

Do you remember?

SUZANNE. Yes.

PICASSO. I drew three pictures of you from memory.

SUZANNE. You did?

PICASSO. But I can do better.

SUZANNE. I'll be there later.

PICASSO. That's a coincidence. So will I.

SUZANNE. I should go now.

(She picks up her things.)

Good-bye everyone.

(She goes over to EINSTEIN.)

Picasso

Good-bye, Al.

(To PICASSO.)

When will you be there?

PICASSO. When the play's over.

(She exits.)

EINSTEIN. The cat door was locked!

(GASTON re-enters from the bathroom.)

GASTON. So who's the third?

FREDDY. What do you mean?

GASTON. Well, in this bar tonight are two men; one is Einstein, the other Picasso. Both nearly the same age, who think that somehow they are going to change the century. So let's give it to them and say they are. One. Two. There must be a third; there's always a triptych. The father the son and the holy ghost, the three graces. Musketeers. How many? Three.

EINSTEIN. So who is the third point in the triangle, so to speak?

GERMAINE. Maybe it's Matisse.

PICASSO. No! Matisse cannot be third! If he wants he can be fourth, but he cannot be the third point in the triangle.

EINSTEIN. I hate to tell you this but the idea of a triangle with four points will not fly. A triangle with four points is what Euclid rides into hell.

GERMAINE. Well, who is the third?

(Enter SCHMENDIMAN, bursting in.)

SCHMENDIMAN. You are lucky tonight. You were here at the moment and you heard it straight from the horse's mouth. I will be changing the century. The other bars know it, you may as well too.

EINSTEIN. And what is your name?

SCHMENDIMAN. Schmendiman. Charles Dabernow Schmendiman.

PICASSO. Why be nasty? We're not so different...

GERMAINE. Oh yes we slept together but there is a difference. For me, you are the thing that never happened. You and Freddy exist in separate universes. What I do in one has nothing to do with the other.

PICASSO. How convenient.

GERMAINE. Oh, don't get me wrong. I'm not being nasty. I like you. It's just that I know about men like you.

PICASSO. Men like me? Where are there men like me?

GERMAINE. Have a drink. You don't want me to go on.

PICASSO. No, tell me about men like me.

GERMAINE. (*Settles in.*) A steady woman is important to you because then you know for sure you have someone to go home to in case you can't find someone else. You notice every woman don't you?

PICASSO. Many.

GERMAINE. I mean every woman. Waitresses, wives, weavers, ushers, actresses, laundresses. You notice them, don't you?

PICASSO. Yes.

GERMAINE. And when you see a woman you think, I wonder what she would be like. You could be bouncing your baby on your knee and if a woman walks by you wonder what she would be like.

PICASSO. Go on.

GERMAINE. You have two in one night when the lies work out, and you feel it's your right. The rules don't apply to you, because the rules were made up by women, and they have to be if there's going to be any society at all. You cancel one when someone better comes along. They find you funny, bohemian, irresistible. You like them young because you can bamboozle them, and they think you're great. You want them when you want them, never when they want you. Afterwards you can't wait to leave, or if you're unlucky enough to have her at your place you can't wait for her to leave because the

truth is we don't exist afterwards, and all conversation becomes meaningless because it's not going to get you anywhere because it already got you there. You're unreachable.

Your whole act is a camouflage. But you are lucky, because you have a true talent that you are too wise to abuse. And because of that you will always be desirable. So when you wear out one woman, there will be another who wants to taste it, who wants to be next to someone like you. So you'll never have to earn a woman and you'll never appreciate one.

PICASSO. But I appreciate women. I draw them don't I?

GERMAINE. Well, that's because we're so goddamn beautiful isn't it?

PICASSO. Germaine, men want, and women are wanted. That's the way it is and that's the way it will always be.

GERMAINE. That may be true, but why be greedy? By the way, I knew you were using me, but I was using you back.

PICASSO. How?

GERMAINE. Now I know what a painter is like, tomorrow night a street paver maybe, or a news agent, or maybe a bookseller. A street paver may not have anything to talk about to a girl like me, but I can write my romantic scenarios in my head and pull them down like a screen in front of me to project my fantasies onto. Like you project your fantasies onto a piece of paper.

PICASSO. How does Freddy fit in? Why are you with him?

GERMAINE. Because occasionally, occasionally, he says something so profound I'm just glad to have been there. But really? What I wouldn't give for a country boy.

(**FREDDY re-enters.**)

FREDDY. Well, I caught the son-of-a-bitch in time.

GERMAINE. Not quite.

(*A young woman charges into the bar. She looks around.*)

SUZANNE. What?

GASTON. Oh nothing, I was just thinking out loud.

SUZANNE. Been awhile?

GASTON. About eight months. Interesting really. I saw a cat in the street and bent over to pet it and it moved just out of my reach. It seemed friendly but nervous so I followed it, it was just out of my reach for several blocks - here kitty, kitty, kitty - when I realized the cat had stopped at the feet of a woman. I looked up at her and our eyes met. Older, my age, ^{you} ~~but~~ she was dazzling. Let's just say she had a nice mortal coil. We made love in her place within the hour.

SUZANNE. Did you ever make love to her again?

GASTON. No, I didn't.

SUZANNE. See, there you are. She was there; you were taken with each other. You men; why is once enough? Why wouldn't you make love with her again?

GASTON. I would have but she died about an hour later.

SUZANNE. Oh.

GASTON. We both wanted to do it again and I told her I needed an hour to rejuvenate. I went outside and sat with the cat and after a while I looked up and they were taking her body out on a stretcher.

SUZANNE. Oh my God.

GASTON. I can't help but think that I killed her.

(Pause, then.)

Hoo-ah!

FREDDY. Hey, what did Picasso say about my place?

(FREDDY starts sifting through some bills.)

SUZANNE. He said this is where artists come to talk about...

let's see...mana...mana...

EINSTEIN. Festos? Manifestos?

GERMAINE. Anyone want a coffee?

GASTON. (Vehement.) That's what I could go for!

Gaston

Suzanne

GERMAINE. Cream or black?

GASTON. No, a manifesto! I could really go for a nice juicy manifesto. It would be nice to wake up and have a raison d'être to go with your morning coffee, wouldn't you say? I have to pee.

(He goes to the loo.)

EINSTEIN. Did Picasso say he was working on a manifesto?

SUZANNE. Oh no. He said he doesn't need one and if he did come up with one he would have depleted it before he finished writing it down. Oh one other thing. Just before he left he went to the window and reached down on the sill and like lightning, grabbed a pigeon. Then he held it in one hand and turned it upside down and soothed it and talked to it and the pigeon fell asleep. Like it was hypnotized. Then he held his hand out the window and dropped the pigeon. And it just fell two stories upside down, straight down, like a stone. Then just seconds before it would have hit the ground, the pigeon turned itself over and started flapping like mad and it took off flying, straight up past us, above the buildings and just away into the night. Then Picasso turned and said, "That's like me." And he was gone. Could I have a refill?

(GASTON re-enters.)

GERMAINE. I'll get it. Anyone else want a refill?

(Several respond.)

FREDDY. Anybody know what 62 francs 33 minus 37 francs 17 is?

GERMAINE. Why don't you let me do that, Freddy?

EINSTEIN. 25 francs 16.

FREDDY. You sure?

EINSTEIN. 25.16.

FREDDY. You're positive.

EINSTEIN. Positive. Absolutely.