

VISION TWO: Between this Breath and You

Characters:

Mourid Kamal- Palestinian, a father.

Tanya Langer- Israeli, twenty years old.

Sami Elbaz- Israeli, Moroccan descent, early thirties.

Time:

The present.

Place:

A clinic waiting room in West Jerusalem. Very bare, a few chairs. Not 'realistic'. Between Vision One and Two, there should be unexpected music or sound.

SCENE

(A bare waiting room in a medical clinic. A row of five to six simple, hard chairs. Mourid is sitting completely still, hands on his knees, waiting, assured. For someone, something. Sami enters with his mop, sees Mourid)

SAMI

We're closed. Okay? Closed. You don't speak English, eh?

(Sami begins to slowly, methodically stack the chairs until constructing a mini-wall between himself and Mourid. He looks over the chairs at Mourid. Mourid ignores him. Sami then uses his string mop as a puppet: the mop "peeks" over the chairs at Mourid)

SAMI/MOP

It's late. We're its. Closed. Late. We're tits. Clothes. Latte. Wear nits. Clogs. Lattice. Waffle house pits. Latex. Werewolves and gits.

(Mourid continues to sit and stare to the front. Sami lowers the mop and begins to mop. Sami speaks energetically)

Ever been to the Dead Sea? No? No. Well, it's not the salt that makes you float but the shit, shit, shit. Excrement, an excellent floating device.

When you are kid, you can pick up a shell and hear the sea in your ear. Today, day in day out, I hear the sea, my mop, and the shit. It rings. No. It hisses, shushes, sighs in my ears like some alien lullaby.

(Sami rests on his mop)

SSSSSSHHHHHHUUUSSHHHHHHH! I'm the ancient mariner: water, water, everywhere and not a drop to drink because it comes from assholes, toilets and sinks!

MOURID

A poet as well. SAMI

Shit.

MOURID

Your favourite subject.

SAMI

I didn't realize you could speak. English.

MOURID

And make sense of it too. But please, don't let me interrupt you.

SAMI

Of course not.

(Sami continues, but not speaking directly to Mourid)

When they ask me, though they never ask me, but when they ask me, "If you could be reborn what would you be? An eel? An isopod? A tuna?" They would limit the choices to fish because they know I'm a mariner of sorts and envy fish. Still I would surprise them

because I'd say-- *(to Mourid)* Are you listening, Man?--*(away from Mourid)* I'd say 'I want to be reborn as a. Mop.' Yes. A mop. Not a synthetic one, of course. But one of these old fashioned ones of wool and cotton, stick made of hardwood, fresh from a tree. I'd spend my life as a mop in the arms of an earnest cleaner, licking up the refuse from the linoleum, the slate, the marble. And you know why? *(to Mourid)* Huh? *(away from Mourid)* Because there is no surface in the world more intimate than a human floor. We leave everything behind on it: our hair, our skin, our drippings and droolings, our lint, our nefarious discards, our shameful discords. With what this mop gathers I could build, particle by particle, out of abandoned parts, an entirely new human being! A mop is an extension of divine power, a gatherer of the slough, a mop is, in short, a functional God. *(to Mourid)* And you are obstructing my God. It's after hours. The nurse will see you tomorrow.

MOURID

Thank you. The nurse will see me today.

SAMI

Where did you learn your English?

MOURID

Imperial College. London. Engineering.

SAMI

Bah. Imperial College. Me, I'm a self-made man. Both english and biology. Just me and my books. Then I did graduate studies at Hebrew University.

MOURID You are a liar.

SAMI

In this instance, yes. Hebrew University rejected me.

MOURID

I must see the nurse.

SAMI

And I must finish mopping before I can go home.

MOURID

Tell the nurse that Mourid is waiting for her.

(Sami looks closely at Mourid for the first time)

SAMI

Oh. My. God. You're her lover! Tanya has a West Bank lover!

MOURID

I am not her lover.

SAMI

(speaks to his mop) You little fool, Tanya! How could you fall for one of them! Don't you know they are the worst sort of.

Higplenoffenmopsters! *(shakes mop)* Snap out of it! Snap out of it, girl! Find a decent man *(beat)* like me!

MOURID

Tanya. So that's her first name. Tanya.

SAMI

After you had ravished her, not even the decency to ask her name?

MOURID

I am a married man.

SAMI Adulterer!

MOURID

Though my wife is dead. Two years now.

SAMI

Cheating on a dead wife!

MOURID

(matter of fact) There is something wrong with you.

SAMI

That's what Hebrew University said. And I said: 'Do you really think I resemble an insect?' No.

MOURID

Tanya has something that belongs to me.

SAMI

(continuing)--Then why did the authorities spray my father with DDT when he entered Tel Aviv?

MOURID

All Arabs are filthy?

SAMI

But I am a Jewish Arab.

MOURID

Yes. I can tell by the mop.

SAMI

And you have nothing but a dead wife. That's why you want my Tanya!

MOURID Your Tanya?

SAMI

She doesn't realise yet that she is mine.

MOURID

Finish your job. Go home. Make a child.

SAMI

I am alone. Does it show? I mop from clinic to clinic. I haven't kissed a woman in years. Does she not have a beautiful name, Tanya? She loves New York. Tanya.

MOURID Yes.

MOURID/SAMI Tanya...

(Tanya appears. She is a calm, direct young woman. Mourid stands up for her. Tanya does not acknowledge him)

TANYA

(in Hebrew) Sami? Is that your name? You realize we are closed?

SAMI

Yes, Miss Langer. But English please. I must practice for my future.

TANYA Sami Telbaz?

SAMI

Sami Elbaz. The replacement moppper since the first of last month.

TANYA

Have you told this gentleman that we closed two hours ago? He'll have to go to the public clinic or come back tomorrow.

SAMI

Yes, I did tell him. But he won't budge. Said he had to see you...Tanya.

(This is the first time Sami has called Tanya by her first name. Tanya studies Sami)

TANYA

It's Miss Langer.

SAMI

Miss Langer. *(beat)* I could whack him with my mop.

TANYA

No, Sami. I'll take care of it.

SAMI

Yes, Miss Langer. Miss Langer...Tanya.

TANYA Sami!

SAMI Tanya!

TANYA

Go finish up in the office. Then go home.

(Sami gives Mourid a dirty look, then exits slowly, dragging his mop behind him. Tanya looks for the first time at Mourid. She waits)

MOURID

Miss Langer. It is a blessing to meet you.

(Mourid holds out his hand but Tanya does not take it)

TANYA

I've been on my feet ten hours. I can give you five minutes, no more. What is the problem?

MOURID

There are many problems, Miss Langer.

TANYA

Is it a problem with appetite?

(Mourid shakes his head 'no')

How is your sleep?

MOURID

My sleep is very well, thank you for asking. I haven't seen it in years but I hear its thriving.

TANYA

Lets have a look in your eyes.

(Tanya signals for Mourid to take a seat. She shines a light in his eyes)

How's your sight?

MOURID

Belligerent. I focus on the road, it wanders with the goats.

TANYA

Is your vision clear?

MOURID

Yes. May God curse it.

TANYA

Look, do you need a prescription?

MOURID

I have never been to New York. I hear the subways are ugly. The parks beautiful. At night, Manhattan glows like a gigantic firefly.

(after a moment)

TANYA

I see. So this is not actually a medical problem. I could call the police. How did you get in here?

MOURID

Where is 'here'? *(beat)* This clinic?

TANYA

West Jerusalem.

MOURID I walked.

TANYA

You can't walk through the Wall.

MOURID

There are always cracks.

TANYA

Goodnight. And get out.

(Mourid stands)

MOURID

I am truly unwell, Miss Langer. You can help me.

TANYA

This is a private clinic. You'll have to pay.

MOURID

I have no money. Don't turn me away, please. You are a nurse.

TANYA

(after a moment) What exactly is the problem?

(Mourid sits again)

MOURID I am stuck.

TANYA

Your bowels? How are your bowels?

MOURID

My bowels are pleasant. My bowels are actually very much like the English: punctual, polite, predictable. Abroad they are murderous, especially in slippers.

TANYA

Have you been here before?

MOURID No.

TANYA

I recognise your voice.

MOURID

We've never spoken.

TANYA

If I am to help you, we must be direct.

MOURID

In my ears I hear a rushing.

(Tanya looks into his ears)

TANYA A rushing?

MOURID

Wind through a pipe. Did you know, Tanya, may I call you Tanya? That wind has no sound? What makes the sound are the things it touches--branch, cliff, roof. All that rushing is the contact between one thing and another. Without that meeting point between two worlds, the harshest wind is silent.

TANYA

Your ears are fine.

MOURID

My throat hurts.

TANYA

Open your mouth.

(Tanya looks into his mouth)

Your throat looks okay.

MOURID

It's always dry.

TANYA

That happens when we age.

MOURID

I once dreamed water could be the solution. But you've closed the tap. Your lawns are so green they are blue. I can hear you splashing in your swimming pools in my sleep.

TANYA

You are suffering from depression. I'll suggest a prescription to the doctor. Seroxat. Full strength. You'll have to come back and collect it tomorrow.

(Tanya takes out a small notebook)

How do you spell your name?

MOURID

Mourid Kamal. K.A.M.A.L. Will pills clear up my depression?

TANYA

(smiles) Yes. They will.

MOURID

Thank you, Tanya.

TANYA

You're welcome.

MOURID

But I want to keep my depression.

TANYA

Depression is a disease, Mr. Kamal.

MOURID

No. Depression is a warning. Cystic Fibrosis is a disease.

TANYA

Cystic Fibrosis?

MOURID

Yes. It eats the lungs. Termites into wood. Rust into steel. Until the lungs collapse into a pile of rotting pus and follicles and steamed bronchioles and wilted bronchi. And the dying alveoli are not tasteful either.

TANYA

I'm sorry. I can't help you with that.

MOURID

My son's name is Ahmed.

TANYA

For a condition that serious, you'll have to go to the hospital for treatment.

MOURID

He's not much younger than you, a few years. His big toe on his left foot is slightly irregular. Do you think, Tanya, that one can build a boy out of a single toe? Sometimes I build him from his eyebrows, spreading out over his forehead. Please. Take my pulse. I have a fear

of death.

TANYA

(takes his pulse) We all must die. One of these days.

MOURID

I have a terror I will never die.

TANYA

You have a good heaven in store for you, Mr. Kamal.

MOURID

Yes. I believe in Allah, praise be to God. But what is a good heaven? Will there be gulls, or just the trace of them? Good coffee or just the aroma? Will there be sex or just the smell of it?

TANYA

(Listening to his chest) Breathe in deep, let it out slowly.

(Mourid does as she asks)

Again.

(Mourid does so)

You're lungs are sound. Who diagnosed you with Cystic Fibrosis?

MOURID

Who diagnosed you?

TANYA

(after a moment, firmly) I don't have Cystic Fibrosis. Your five minutes is up.

MOURID

Were you born in New York City?

TANYA

No. I was born in Tel Aviv. I went to boarding school in Boston. It's my responsibility to lock up so if you won't leave, I'll have to call security. You'll spend the week in jail.

MOURID

Please keep your kindness in check.

TANYA

At the very least.

MOURID

Boarding school abroad. Flights home for Hanukka, and school holidays. Ahmed went to school in a building that was made of two sticks and a stone.

TANYA

I don't do sentimentality, Mr. Kamal.

MOURID

That's too bad. My sentimentality has no limits.

TANYA

We don't go easy on trespassers.

MOURID

Do you think this is the only world? I can hear conversations happening one hundred years ago. The things my son said. The words you will say, after your death.

TANYA

(even) Are you threatening me?

MOURID

I want to touch you.

TANYA

Shame on you. Act your age. In my clinic, you'll have some respect.

MOURID

You are not a nurse, Tanya. You are a nurse's aid.

TANYA

How could you know that?

MOURID

You're not qualified to make a diagnosis.

TANYA

I will qualify for a full nursing degree in eighteen months.

MOURID

How often do you stay behind to lock up? To play with the stethoscope? To talk with a patient after hours, pretending you can be of service?

Yes. Lets call security. I have some things to tell them.

TANYA

Your word means nothing against mine. You know that.

MOURID

That is true. But I can put a little bug in someone's ear. It wouldn't look good for you, Tanya. Trust is key in your profession. Between you and your patients. Between you and your colleagues.

TANYA

What do you want from me?

MOURID

Just to talk a little while. Together in this room.

TANYA

Do you want to hurt me?

MOURID

No. I do not want to hurt you. I want to tell you about my son. When he was twelve the IDF gave him a broom. They made him sweep the dirt from their tanks. The children had been throwing dirt.

TANYA

How innocent.

MOURID

The back of the head and pelvis. Your soldiers shot him twice.

TANYA Why?

MOURID

They said he was carrying a gun.

TANYA Was he?

MOURID

Yes. But it was a toy gun.

TANYA

Impossible to tell the difference in the midst of.

MOURID

He was pretending, with his toys, that he was a fighter. As you pretend with your toys that you are a nurse --

TANYA

(interrupts) I am sorry for your loss, Mr. Kamal.

MOURID

Sometimes a death is more than a loss. It's an abyss. A quiet howling. Can you hear that howling? Listen.

(He listens. Tanya takes some tablets from her uniform)

TANYA

Here. These should you help with that noise.

MOURID

You're not qualified to hand out a prescription.

TANYA No, I'm not.

(Tanya puts the tablets in Mourid's shirt pocket)

MOURID Thank you.

TANYA

It's normal to grieve for years after the violent death of a loved one.

MOURID

But Tanya, there was a bottom to that abyss. A miracle. My son did not die.

TANYA

That is a miracle. But a bullet in the back of his head? Is he not. Well, I mean, his brain, is he--

MOURID

The bullet carved out half his brain.

TANYA I see.

MOURID

Yes. I see, also. And I sometimes still feel it on my hands, lumpy and warm like a hearty porridge. Imagine the shame of entertaining such a metaphor as your child dies in your arms.

TANYA

But you said he lived.

MOURID Tanya.

(Mourid nears Tanya. She holds her ground. He raises his arm and at first it is not clear what he will do. Then he puts his hand on her breast. For moment, neither of them moves.

Then Tanya slaps Mourid. He withdraws his hand from her breast/ chest)

MOURID

You caught your breath when I touched you. I felt you. Catch your breath. What a strange phrase: to catch one's breath. As though it wished to escape our grasp forever.

TANYA

(calmly) I realise you are grieved. Perhaps even temporarily--

MOURID Insane.

TANYA

Whatever happened to your son, be he dead or a singing vegetable, you will not touch my breasts.

MOURID

I don't want to touch your breasts.

TANYA

(calls loudly, keeping her eyes on Mourid) Sami!

(Sami appears with his mop)

SAMI Tanya.

TANYA
Call the police.

(Brandishes his mop)

SAMI
Let me take him. He looks slow.

TANYA
No. Call the police.

SAMI
But it could look bad if you know him.

TANYA
Before tonight, I had no connection to him whatsoever.

MOURID

That's not true. We are unbearably intimate.

TANYA
I'll call the police myself.

(Tanya turns to go)

MOURID
If you do that, Tanya, you will never know how I know you often wake in the night, and you are falling and clawing at your face trying to dislodge something caught in your mouth and you cannot breathe.

SAMI
Okay. Time for the cops.

TANYA
Wait, Sami. Stay. *(to Mourid)* Your cheap tricks do not impress me, Mr. Kamal: everyone dreams of suffocation.

MOURID
Not that often.

TANYA Who are you?

SAMI

He's a widow. He's looking for a new wife. Isn't it obvious? But what has he got to offer, huh? Three olive pits and a hand shake? Exactly. *(to Mourid)* How 'bout a cup of water? *(to Tanya)* Has he even offered you a cup of water?

MOURID

Tanya knows that water is no longer a part of my life.

SAMI

Then you have nothing. And now I'm going to pull the ground right out from under you! *(beat, realising)* Oh. Forgive me. An unfortunate metaphor for a West Banker. But never mind. Tanya. Allow me to compete with this suitor. I have two strong mopping arms, strapping arms, stropping mops. I speak Hebrew, Arabic, English--and Biology, fluently. I am a mariner.

(quotes)

"He was shrewd adventurer, tough and hardy By many a tempest had his beard been shaken. And he knew all the harbours that there were Between the Baltic and Cape Finisterre."

Chaucer.

"If I could find a sturdy boat I'd unfurl, and float and float."

That's me. Gifts? Two mops, one bucket and three kinds of desire: hot, cold and Oh My God.

(Tanya looks at both of the men and shakes her head in disbelief)

MOURID

I'm sorry that I touched you, Miss Langer. I could not help myself. I won't touch you again. Give me just a few more minutes. After today I will not return unless you request it. Please

SAMI

Yes. Could not help the minutes today. Just a few more selves I'm sorry for. After the touch could not help. Request you unless it, please.

(For the first time Tanya really looks at Sami. She listens)

Yes. Touching you. Mopping me. Topping him: the bastard. Because I have the gift of knowledge. Though I can't practice it here. I would like a professorship and I've been given a mop. But I specialise in isopods. Did you know that I am deeply familiar with one of the worlds most sophisticated isopods, including wood lice? *Cymothoa exigua.* *(to Mourid and Tanya)* Say it!

MOURID/TANYA *Cymothoa exigua.*

SAMI

That's right. This tiny isopod chooses the mouth of the spotted rose snapper fish for its home. It latches onto the fishes tongue with its little hooked legs and gradually eats away the fishes tongue. Then it grips tightly, oh so tightly, to the stub and effectively becomes the fish's tongue, growing as its host grows and feeding on bits of meat that float free as the fish eats. Speaking of unbearable intimacy. For all we know any of us could have had our tongues devoured while we slept and in the morning, a creature has latched onto our stubs, masquerading as our tongues, and we don't know it. Will it talk in a way that deceives us? Will it grow from the garbage that float free as we speak?

(Tanya continues to stare at Sami some moments. He smiles broadly at her, thinking he has won her over. Mourid steps in front of Sami)

MOURID

Miss Langer. I had meant for our first meeting to unfold quite differently.

TANYA

(to Mourid) I don't understand you. Do you want to know if I am single? Yes. I am. Again and again, I'm single.

MOURID

But why? You are intelligent--

SAMI Beautiful--

TANYA

Don't. I had a fiancé. He left. Like the one before him. At present I'm

not interested in anything long term. What was your son's name?

MOURID

Ahmed. If he had grown up, if we lived in a different hour, you might have fallen in love with him. Shall I build him for you? I will begin with the left shoulder. On its blade he had a mole. He--

TANYA

(interrupts) No, Mr. Kamal. Don't build him for me.

MOURID Only for you.

SAMI

Then let me build him. For both of you!

(Sami uprights his mop. He is serious and careful in this demonstration)

About this tall?

MOURID

You're not qualified to build Ahmed. You never met him.

SAMI This tall?

(after a moments hesitation)

MOURID

A little shorter.

(Sami carefully adjusts the height, until its right).

No. No. No. Yes. That's right.

TANYA

This is ridiculous.

(Sami fluffs the 'hair' of the mop)

MOURID

He had thick hair, yes, like that. But not hanging in his face.

(Mourid adjusts the 'hair' away from the 'face'; he is taking this

exercise seriously)

MOURID

Yes. Exactly. I'm beginning to see him now.

SAMI Ahmed.

MOURID

Yes, my Ahmed.

TANYA

I see nothing.

SAMI

Did he wear a hat?

MOURID

No, no. *(beat)* Actually, yes. When he was six or seven he wore a red baseball cap. He used it as a basket to collect interesting pebbles, when it wasn't on his head. Please, go on.

(Sami whips off his cap and puts it on the mop)

Hmmm. Maybe. Maybe. A certain likeness.

(Sami stands the mop to attention, between himself and Mourid, so its the three of them, together)

MOURID

Can you see him now, Tanya? The moment of him. The flash.

TANYA No.

MOURID

The idea.

SAMI

But you are not really looking, Miss Langer.

MOURID The color.

TANYA No.

MOURID

We are here, Tanya.

SAMI

Yes. We. are. here.

TANYA Sami.

SAMI

Yes, Miss Langer.

TANYA You're fired.

SAMI

Up. Up. Yes. I am Fired. Up. Because I can build a human being but here I cannot build a life.

(Sami takes the hat off the mop, puts it on his own head, and lowers the mop to be a 'mop' again)

I can't even float on the shit of the dead sea because I am terrified of water. Imagine, a biologist who is afraid of water. Fired? Fired? I fire you too Tanya Langer. For your inability to see the boy in a mop or the mop in every human being. Nevertheless, let me help you. Don't move. Please.

(Sami 'mops' Mourid's body. Mourid does not move. Then he 'mops' Tanya's body. She also remains still).

There. You are both blessed by my instrument of God. Sail well. Sail safe. Good-bye. Good-bye. But watch your tongues. Watch your tongues!

(Sami exits with his mop)

TANYA

I feel sad for your loss, Mr. Kamal. But tonight will come and tonight will pass. And I am already forgetting your sorrow.

(Tanya moves to leave)

MOURID

You will not become a full fledged nurse, Tanya. In eighteen months

you will be dead.

TANYA

How dare you.

MOURID

Though you have envied your superiors medical uniforms, you will never wear one.

TANYA

Wrong. I stole one from the laundry room months ago. I sleep in it at night. I'm my dreams I qualify to do anything.

MOURID

I never had cystic fibrosis. You did.

TANYA

So that's what you want? Will you leave me alone then if I admit it? Yes. I had cystic fibrosis. In the end I could not breathe.

MOURID

Now you can breathe.

TANYA

Double lung transplant. October 17th. Five years ago.

MOURID Today.

TANYA

Yes. Five years ago today.

MOURID

The day after Ahmed died.

(Tanya clocks the suggestion, but only for a second)

TANYA

My donor was a young Jewish student from Haifa.

MOURID

You were still a child then. Like Ahmed.

TANYA

My donor died in an automobile accident.

MOURID

The donor organs had to be transplanted within six hours after being removed. While you were under general anaesthesia, the surgeon made an incision across your chest, beneath the breast area and removed your lungs. Then the surgeon placed the new lungs into your empty chest cavity and connected the pulmonary artery of the new lungs into your vessels and airway. Drainage tubes were inserted to drain air, fluid, and blood out of your chest for several days to allow the lungs to re-expand. With oxygen. Sweet, cold oxygen. And here you are, beautiful Tanya. *(beat)* My son is inside you.

(after a moment)

TANYA

You are a grieving, pathetic, gibbering lunatic. Her name, my donor's name, was Amira Goldensohn.

MOURID

Ahmed is inside you.

(Tanya is silent. Then she begins to laugh. She laughs and laughs)

It is beautiful to hear you laugh. It takes more air to laugh than to speak. When you inhale, my son's lungs extract the oxygen from the air, then distribute it via the bloodstream to every cell in your body.

(Tanya quits laughing)

TANYA

You are wrong, Mr. Kamal.

MOURID

I am certain.

TANYA

You can prove nothing.

MOURID

I can speak to my son.

TANYA

You are out of your mind.

MOURID

I am a father. A father can speak to his son no matter the circumstances. You cannot prevent it.

TANYA

You can speak to your son? What? Use my ear as a telephone? Like this?

(she speaks into Mourid's ear)

Hello? Hello, Ahmed? This is your father speaking. How's the weather in there?

(Tanya spits at Mourid)

Oh my. Its raining.

(Mourid moves away and wipes his ear with a handkerchief)

MOURID

You are one tough nut.

TANYA

Good-bye, Mr. Kamal. Its been a real adventure. But its time for you to seek out another sucker. I won't be yours. I bet you've accosted half a dozen transplant patients, telling each one that he or she is filled to the gills with your son. I'm still young, Mr. Kamal. I know I won't have the time to ravish this cold world the way I'd like to. But I do know this: unlike most transplant patients who experience at least one episode of organ rejection, my body did not reject the donor lungs.

MOURID

I am so grateful.

TANYA

Had your son's lungs been inside me, I am sure, absolutely sure, that I would have rejected them.

MOURID

There is no science to what you say. My son's lungs and your entire system proved compatible. That is a fact, a piece of luck, and a

wonder. No one would tell me anything about you. To finally find you, after years of searching, to stand close enough to feel your breath, his breath--is a miracle. Ahmed's lungs were not taken from us. We gave them. Let us celebrate with a passionate tune my son liked to sing in the mornings before school:

*(sings with
gusto)*

"She take my money. Well I'm in need. Yeah she's a triflin' friend indeed.

Oh she's a gold-digger,
Way over town.

That digs in me!"

Kanye West. Brilliant. But my son liked the classics as well. This was his favorite oldie:

(sings)

"Every breath you take. Every move you make--

TANYA The Police.

MOURID

Dreadful. Do you think he might have known he would die? Do you think he could have been practising that song, for you?

TANYA

Mr. Kamal, I say: goodnight.

(Tanya moves to leave. With one hand, Mourid suddenly grabs Tanya's uniform from the back to keep her from leaving)

MOURID

Ahmed, this is your father speaking to you: greetings.

(in Arabic, but not directly to Tanya)

How are you?

TANYA

Let go of me.

MOURID

(Arabic) Praise be to God. I have missed you so much. I have so many things to say.

TANYA Let go!

(Tanya firmly tries to shake Mourid off but his tightens his grip)
(in English) It has been too long, Ahmed. But Tanya must not leave me yet. Show her

that you are my son. Show her.

(Tanya pulls free)

TANYA

Whatever is inside me, you son of a bitch, it belongs to me now.

MOURID

Show her Ahmed!

TANYA

You have no command over me. I am--

(Suddenly Tanya cannot breathe fully. She does not panic. She is controlled and contains her fear. She tries to breathe deeply but her breath is constricted. She takes short, tight breaths)

MOURID

Now do you believe me, Tanya? Now do you know on whom you depend to breathe?

TANYA

This will pass...This will pass...

MOURID

Now do you believe me?

TANYA I...I...

MOURID

That's enough, Ahmed.

(After a few moment, Tanya catches her breath and can breathe evenly again)

TANYA

Do you know, Mr. Kamal--

MOURID

Mourid. Please call me Mourid.

TANYA

Do you know, Mourid, why my fiancé left me? When I told him about the transplant, he said he couldn't bare to make the investment. The average life span of a lung transplantee is six years. I'd done nearly five when I met him.

MOURID

There is a woman in Canada who has lived more than twelve years. It's possible that with good care--

TANYA

(interrupts) Half of all patients die within five years after transplant, from infection and chronic rejection. I will probably die because of the toxic effects of the immunosuppresant medicines. It's extremely common.

MOURID

My son was in good health.

TANYA

In these last few months, at times, without warning, I have difficulty breathing. Sometimes, as you witnessed just now, when I am under pressure, for a few moments I lose my capacity altogether. But then it returns. It hardly frightens me anymore.

MOURID

There are techniques of breathing that can relax the transplanted lungs, allow for strengthening, perhaps allow for a few more years of life.

TANYA

There is nothing I haven't tried.

MOURID

But you haven't tried this with me, Tanya. I can teach you these techniques. You might still become a nurse!

TANYA

Lets say that for a moment, just a moment, that I accept the preposterous notion that my donor was your son--

MOURID

Ahmed. Please. His name was Ahmed.

TANYA

Then it would be true that I carry with me a piece of. Ahmed. Your son. You like that idea: a piece of Ahmed inside me.

(Mourid nods 'yes')

TANYA

In fact I'd say you are intoxicated with the idea, that it gives your entire being a shape and focus you would not have otherwise. Otherwise, you'd be just a bag of liquid grief-- we could pick you up, poke a hole in the bottom, and you'd just spill away. But imagine the implications here--your son inside me--somehow alive inside me.

(sings the rest of the refrain from the Police song)

"Every bond you break Every step you take I'll be watching you."

That would mean he accompanies me. Participates with me. Enjoys with me.

MOURID Yes!

TANYA

When I laugh, your son laughs. When I sing, your son sings:

MOURID

(joyously sings)

"Oh can't you see You belong to me!"

(They sing together with vigour)

MOURID/TANYA “My cold heart aches. Every step you take.”

TANYA

Exactly. *(beat)* But that would also mean your son was present last night. That’s why I am especially tired today. I was up 'til 4 a.m. I picked a stranger up after work. A sweet, eager young man. He fucked me so hard I thought he’d break me in half.

MOURID

How dare you--

TANYA

Don’t worry. Things went smoothly. Your son gave me good air when I sucked cock. Good Jewish cock.

MOURID No!

TANYA

And let me tell you, I do the deep-throat thing and I need all the oxygen I can get.

MOURID

Stop it! You must stop this ugliness!

TANYA

To cut it short: when I fuck an Israeli, your son fucks an Israeli. And when I have a good orgasm, your son --

(Mourid cries out and rushes at Tanya threateningly, as though to hurt her. Tanya holds her ground. But then Mourid stops himself, and turns away. Mourid then takes a few steps as if to leave)

TANYA

And that’s not all I do. Mr Kamal.

(Mourid stops, listening to her with his back)

I don’t have a steady boyfriend now. Vigorous activity tires me a little more each day. My family, they pretend I’m well. Denial is their elixir. “Tanya will out live us all,” my father says. I visit with them less and less. On my break here at work, I usually go to the park. I close my eyes and sit very still until I am no longer there, just the breathing. Just the breathing. And all the world is condensed into the

fuel of oxygen, sliding in and out of my chest like the hands of God, working me, working my clay into a form that has no material existence, but is as solid and as palpable as this flesh. What is a good heaven? Yes. I'm afraid. But I imagine it to be a place of floating, where breathing is a continuous, circular motion, unchecked by the dependencies of this world. *(beat)* That space where exhalation ends, before the next breath begins. That's where I want to. Where I want to. What is the dream I keep having, of falling and suffocation? How do you know about my dreams?

(Mourid still speaks with his back to her)

MOURID

When Ahmed was five he fell down a well. He surfaced roaring like a bull. He almost drowned. He used to dream that dream for years. He would wake bellowing.

TANYA

In the dream I am drowning but then two big arms lift me out of the water.

MOURID

I found my son just in time.

(Tanya stands very still. Her breathing has again become difficult, constricted. She takes short breaths and tries to smooth her breathing)

MOURID

You musn't fight the constriction. You must welcome it. Welcome it and it will pass. The short breaths you take are rigid and only make it worse.

(Only now does Mourid turn around)

You must slow your breath down. Let it gather its force again. Like this.

(Mourid breathes in a long, slow breath)

As though the air has become fluid and you are drinking it in.

(Mourid breathes in again, demonstrating)

TANYA

I can't. (*beat*) I can't.

MOURID

You must listen to me. You must follow my breath.

TANYA

Why do you want to help me?

MOURID

Because your name is Tanya Langer.

(Tanya shakes her head 'no')

Because this is not the only world.

(Mourid and Tanya now face off, but with a good distance between them. It seems they are now in a different dimension, speaking to each other across a divide. They speak to one another slowly, formally)

TANYA

Mourid Kamal. Why do you want to help me?

MOURID

Because you are. My son.

(Tanya just looks at Mourid. Mourid raises his head slightly, and Tanya copies him. It is clear he is leading this breathing lesson. Mourid raises his hand slightly as though conducting their breaths. Together they begin a slow inhalation. Then an exhalation. The sound of their second inhalation is even deeper and seems to come from all around them. Before this second inhalation reaches its peak, the lights go black, and there is silence)

end of Vision Two