

Reforming Arts Re-Entry Project Reading March 2019

[Pre-show music, including but not limited to *Hotel California*]

[Place chair centerstage for Ladrina's poem]

Ladrina:

“Boss just left with his rantings and ravings on and on about the hierarchies he's creating. About his power moves and big lavish life. His obvious superiority cuts like a knife. Bottom of the barrel is how he refers to me, he laughs at my shackles, my filthy face and feet. He sneers at hopelessness, toast to my defeat. A nobody, for nothing, but clanging and dangling these chains. You can never escape your bonds; you don't even have a brain. Maybe he's right, but I have a feeling he's wrong. He says I'm bound and shackled and have been so long but I don't see a chain, a link, a lock, or a key. So who's to say I'm imprisoned? Who's to say I'm free? He's poisoned my mind, made me think his words true, I was afraid to test it, too frightened to move. Now I see my way out. My chance to abandon these chains. Now it is time to show boss-man how to really take life by the reins.”

[Exit Stage]

JoJo: [Enter Stage]

Utopia Monologue

Congratulations, the government has approved everyone to receive a million dollars to be spent as follows:

[Gulp, deep swallow]

10% on clothes, 20% on homes, 20 on all other things like cars, jewelry and then a nice 50% return back into the community.

Peace, peace it will bring. So congrats, pat your neighbor on the back and go neatly into the houses built specifically from tax.

Blue shutters, faux grass, red door. Aren't you glad that you look to the left and the right and everything is perfectly alike. This removes all chaos and assumes all equality.

We'll call it Utopia, or maybe we won't call it... anything at all - Paradise sounds nice.

A million dollars to be spent exactly to the cent... how government approves that there should be absolutely no difference between me or you. Utopia.

Carrie: [moves downstage]

“This is my personal dystopia”

“I had been playing with three kids that I felt drawn to. One of the two girls had bright red hair like it was on fire. The other one was high yellow like the sun. The boy was short and stubby. I continued to play when the old man walked up and grabbed hold of the two kids; yelling, screaming at them to go into the house. “Y’all don’t need to be around that brute. Don’t ever speak to her again.” The old man then turned around and looked at me with hate in his eyes and said, “You look like your dad.” Later on that night, I found out that the three kids were my sisters and brother and the old man, my granddaddy.”

All: [enter stage]

Carrie: “What’s that saying y’all? Blood is thicker than water...? Not in my family.

Music Cue: *Hit the Road Jack - Track 4* -- Carrie & chorus back-up

Chorus x2

Hit the road, gal

And don’t you come back

No more no more no more nor more

Hit the road, gal

And don’t you come back no more

Verse 1

Ohh Granddaddy Mack why do you treat me so mean?

Why won’t you let me play with my siblings?

I’m way too young to talk back

Now I’m gonna get my toys and won’t look back

Chorus x 2

Hit the road, gal

And don’t you come back

No more no more no more no more

Hit the road, gal

And don’t you come back no more

Verse 2

Mister Mack came out yelling at me

Talking about how much I look like my daddy

I asked him why did he hate me?

He said look in the mirror then you'll see

Chorus x 2

[Fade out and Exit Stage]

Secret Place!

Robyn: My secret place was under the pack porch of my childhood home.

Jordan: It was a small apartment with 2 bedrooms.

Robyn: It was dark and the feel of grass and rocks were everywhere.

Jordan: One window (sunlight), 1 long hallway, a living room.

Robyn: It smelled of wood and outdoors and sometimes of wetness.

Jordan: When you come in the door, it's empty with no smell but paint.

Robyn: When I was in my secret place I felt in charge.

Jordan: Me and my people used to hide in there and smoke and chill when we skip school.

Robyn: I would go into my spot of seclusion when I would feel picked on or unimportant.

Jordan: When I was there I felt scared for the Popos.

Robyn: The smell of my place was safety and security.

Jordan: But I still did it and I stayed there every day with my friends.

Robyn: The smell of the wood meant this was for me.

Jordan: Also we had to watch for the neighbors because they will call the police.

Robyn: I kept a secret box under the porch full of my stuff.

Jordan: So if we get to the spot and see that the neighbors was watching we would leave.

Robyn: I had books, dolls, trucks, etc. in my secret box for whatever mood I was in to play.

Jordan: We stayed until the night time because the apartment was abandoned.

Robyn: I had to eventually leave my spot because my dad found my box.

Jordan: No one moved in yet.

Robyn: He felt that was not a spot for little girls to play.

Jordan: So me and my friends made it our hot spot.

Robyn: I was told little girls don't play in dark dirty places.

Jordan: I was about 13 years old when this was going on.

Robyn: I was no longer allowed under the porch. I moved my box to the garage and that's where it stayed. Untouched.

I'm So Fly

That's why I gotta see my name in lights 'fore I die
 And stay up on a level that be higher than the sky
 No more just gettin by who are you, who am I?
 I wanna put my Momma in dat 20 room crib
 It take about an hour just to drive up where she live
 And never ever ever have to worry bout a bill
 Unless it's just a cosby with a house up on the hill.
 And my kids God forbid never have to miss a college
 Never drive a car over 100 thousand mileage
 Never have t see the inside of the pen and never
 Lose a chance cause the color of their skin.
 I wanna hear the droves sing a long and scream
 My name, not because of fame but because
 Of what I'm sayin', cause I spit them verses that
 Be hotta than a flame. And I can make it happen
 Lemme get up in the game. Gotta see my name in
 Lights.

Shannon and Novelty: [enter stage]

Music Cue: *Locked Up - Track 5*

“Locked Up”

Novelty:

Understanding Consequences

For the mistake I made

Head down low

No chance to escape

They say lock him up

Throw the key away

They say I’m locked up

But not the look on my face

Locked up

Who you not me

I’d be a fool to complain

Talking bout misery

I’d be a fool to sit in a cell

Claiming why me

Not freedom but in my mind

I’m screaming I’M FREE!!!

Locked up

All bars with chains

Locked up

No mind insane

Locked up

Police no goin

Locked up

10 years still sane

Shannon:

Do you believe me, when I tell you that I am tired as hell\ or That I think of suicide daily in this cramped ass cell.\I always catch myself daydreaming of how it used to be.\ Seeing hoe’s in videos, study wishing it was me.\ Making money, telling lies or whatever they do.\ With them stars in their eyes claiming they TRU.\ Another day another dollar that the state paid for me.\ They keep fussing about their money, when they can just set me free\ Enough of my situation, same stuff different day.\ With these hoes loving each other and the games they play.\ but yet my kids don’t got they mama and I’m all alone.\ Ma I won’t last long in this twilight zone.\ If I’m responsible in this day and time then how the hell I’m serving life for somebody else’s crime?\ yeah them lames took me down with them, for the stuff they did\ And I guess when they thought it over they said screw my kids.

Where my family at when my soul is drowned in pain\the state done took my name, replace my pride with shame\ So if I'm tripping out the stuff that these hoes do\Shawty (?) I ain't slipping it's just a phase that I am going through.\Don't try to understand me or predict my move.\Cause I'm a master this here thing I ain't about to lose.\ It's like the hotel California but it's not paradise\Could you tell me, How did I get life?

I Love You For Your Net Bag

(Sung to the tune of Aerosmith's *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing*. (Verses are the original written by Dianne Warren, Chorus adapted by Reforming Arts students))

QUESTION: SHOULD WE EXPLAIN THE STORE AND NET BAGS?

Verse:

I could stay awake just to hear you breathing
 Watch you smile while you are sleeping
 While you're far away dreaming
 I could spend my life in this sweet surrender
 I could stay lost in this moment forever
 Every moment spent with you is a moment I treasure

Chorus:

I love you for your net bag
 Some cheese puffs and some Debbie snacks
 Girl, I'm hungry baby
 You don't want me to get mad
 'Cause even when I dream of you
 A Honey Bun will never do
 Cuz I'm hungry baby
 And you don't want me to get mad

Verse:

Lying close to you feeling your heart beating
 And I'm wondering what you're dreaming
 Wondering if it's me you're seeing
 Then I kiss your eyes
 And thank God we're together
 I just want to stay with you in this moment forever
 Forever and ever

Chorus:

I love you for your net bag
Some cheese puffs and some Debbie snacks
Girl, I'm hungry baby
You don't want me to get mad
'Cause even when I dream of you
A Honey Bun will never do
Cuz I'm hungry baby
And you don't want me to get mad

I don't want to miss one coke
I don't want to miss one roll up
I just want to be with you
Right here with you, just like this
I just want to eat your snacks
Feel your heart so close to mine
And just stay here in this moment
For all the rest of time

Chorus:

I love you for your net bag
Some cheese puffs and some Debbie snacks
Girl, I'm hungry baby
You don't want me to get mad
'Cause even when I dream of you
A Honey Bun will never do
Cuz I'm hungry baby
And you don't want me to get mad

Chorus:

I love you for your net bag
Some cheese puffs and some Debbie snacks
Girl, I'm hungry baby
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I love you for your net bag
Some cheese puffs and some Debbie snacks
Girl, I'm hungry baby
You don't want me to get mad
'Cause even when I dream of you

A Honey Bun will never do
 Cuz I'm hungry baby
 And you don't want me to get mad

Diane: [enter stage]

“The Red Beast”

“The morning air was fresh and crisp- waiting for fall. I was out driving when I saw him Mesmerized by his beauty, all muscle and power radiating from him. Out the door I went to get a closer look. I ran my hands down his side as I walked around him admiring his features. He was shod in chrome and black, at least 17 hands high. I crawl on top of him, laying my head, feeling the energy connecting us. I knew I had to control the beast. Had to get a boost up, he was so big, as I set in him the thrill is racing through my veins. I take in his scent, mingling of musk and hot leather- soft and black I run my hand over him. I slip on my aviators, fire him up. The sound is high, his voice speaks power and strength- boom-boom-boom the sound goes. The Beast and I pull out on the highway like we own it. Windows down, breeze blowing through my hair. Then the beast starts singing to me-”

Music Cue: *Bad to the Bone* cover (46 seconds in, same place as Gina's)

“Right then I knew the Beast belonged to me”

[Exit Stage]

Novelty: [Enter Stage]

Music cue: *Bad to the Bone instrumental [track 2]*

Bad to the Bone

Bad To The Bone

On the day I hit prison

The guards all gathered 'round

And they stared at me fiercely

Cause I wouldn't bow down

The warden spoke up

Said, Don't leave this one alone

Cause he knew right away

That I was bad to the Bone

Bad to the bone

Bad to the bone

BBBBBad

BBBBBad

BBBBBad

Bad to the bone

I broke a thousand rules
 Before I met you
 I'll break a thousand more Baby
 Before I am through

I wanna be a true badass
 Til the law sends me home
 I want to tell you this convict
 I am bad to the bone
 Bad to the bone
 BBBBad
 BBBBad
 BBBBad
 Bad to the bone

I'll make a gallon of buck
 And I'll sell me some pills
 I'll fight 'til I drop
 And I'll learn how to steal

I wanna be a true badass
 Til the law sends me home
 I'm here to tell you buddy
 That I'm bad to the bone
 BBBBad
 BBBBad
 BBBBad
 Bad to the bone

[Exit Stage]

Shannon: [enter stage]

Music Cue: *If I Ruled the World instrumental*(Nas) track 7

“A place where we can be whatever we want to be, where we are all free, come go with me,
 come go with me
 Imagine if you will a place that is real /
 Where people love life and don't kill /
 Give to the poor and not steal /
 Where kindness is an act, that's not attached to a dollar bill /

A place where you can be whatever you want to be /
 With no mass incarceration, where everyone lives for free /
 No oppressive systems that steal your autonomy /
 Everyone would be a friend of me and not a stupid enemy
 No crash in the economy, God's children run away with me
 To this place of unity, love in the community
 Prosperity as far as our eyes can see
 If only you could imagine with me this paradise of equality
 Everybody eats when we eat, with the world at our feet.
 Safe for kids to walk the street, the parks or the beach

A place where we can be whatever we want to be, where we all are free, Come go with me, come
 go with me

[Exit Stage]

Everybody: [Enter Stage]

JoJo: Shirley Anne's *Battle Hymn for the Repressed* with everyone backing up the chorus

Verse 1

Martin Luther King took up the fight for civil rights
 He has raised our consciousness to dizzying new heights
 He died as a martyr after way too few good nights
 We know we are equal

Chorus 1

Stand up, stand up, all you repressed
 Stand up, stand up, all you repressed
 Stand up, stand up, all you repressed
 We know we are equal

Verse 2

My heart has known the horrors of mankind's panopticon
 Convictions handed out like they're some deal on Groupon
 Every day after the last a wasted downtime marathon
 One day we shall be home

Chorus 2

Help us, help us, all you freemen
 Help us, help us, all you freemen
 Help us, help us, all you freemen

One day we shall be home

Verse 3

True justice has no race, religion, color, gender, class
 We must gather all together, bringing empathy to pass
 Teach the kids to love each other to the very last
 One day we shall have peace

Chorus 3

Speak out, speak out, all you oppressed
 Speak out, speak out, all you oppressed
 Speak out, speak out all you oppressed
 One day we shall have peace

Sin: look at me I done made it man I'm big now
 see my shoes when I walk they could fit now

topnotch CEO of a corporation
 and in all mixed up in the rat racing
 how I made my first mill nevermind that

got the cheese I could show you what a grind that
 sign that

(Nikki crosses to stand near Sin)

Little Miss how you doing may I help you?
 work plus a degree up under your belt too?
 seems like everything's in order wait hold up
 I see her back on her resume I fold up
 please explain what it weed that you rolled up?
 or is it banks that you and your people hold up?
 nevermind no time I can't hire you
 so you can take all that I got before I fire you?
 will give it time give me a minute before I call back
 it was about 3 months and never called that
 then one day I got a buzz from my new assistant
 this girl calls every day just pick up and listen
 it was her so persistent well I'll be damned

I thought my line through phone calls to the phone spam

Nikki: I'll take minimum wage just to pay my rent plus I'm a little hair line past intelligent

Sin: obviously not because you got caught oops did I say that nah just a thought she said

Nikki: just give me an opportunity to show you my kids will never have to see what I go through

Sin: I understand but my business is all I have you want me to give you the wheel just for you to crash

Nikki: okay nevermind that's what they all say I hope you and your business have a great day

Sin: now same girl back in prison is where she's living because I didn't give her the second chance that I was

given

like golf clubs resorts first class support

not like criminals they lie cheat steal and extort

stupid girl foolish girl man she must be CRAZY

like I will help with just enough so she could feed her babies

I'm surrounded by the wealthy for life I'm bonded

(drops head) but I will never ever tell them that I'm a convict

(picks up phone)

hey Bob good news stocks are up!

All: [Move downstage]

Music: *I Will Survive* Group Performance- Gina/JoJo as soloist with everyone singing the chorus [curtain call during song]

I Will Survive

At first I was afraid – I was petrified

Didn't want to live – If I had to pull this time

Spent some sleepless nights – Thinking how it all went wrong

And I grew strong – and I learned how to get along

And now I'm back – It's time to fight
 You'll never break me – Because you haven't earned the right

I should have bargained with the judge – I should have tried to cop a plea
 If I had known for just one second – This would be my destiny

CHORUS

Unlock these chains – Show me the gate
 Been down long enough – time to go and meet my fate
 It was the judge who tried to break me with this time
 And though I stumbled – I did not lay down and die

Oh no, not I – I will survive
 Man you know I've got my hustles – so you know I'll stay alive
 Lots of time still left to live
 With no paybacks left to give
 And I'll survive – I – I will survive

--dance break--

It took all of my strength – Not to fall apart
 And I'd give all I have just for one new start
 I've spent oh so many nights feeling sorry for myself
 Has I cried – But now I hold my head up high
 And you see me – I've been renewed
 Not that scared little girl so afraid of you

Now you've come to tell me no – They don't wanna set me free
 Well I'm done with my time and this time is done with me

CHORUS

Unlock these chains – Show me the gate
 I've been down long enough – It's time to leave me to my fate
 It was the judge who tried to break me with this time
 And though I've stumbled – I did not lay down and die
 Oh no, not I – I will survive
 Man you know I've got my hustles – so you know I'll stay alive
 Lotta time still left to live

With no paybacks left to give
And I'll survive – I – I will survive

[Soultrain curtain call]

[All dance off stage]