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# Three Days in August

By Chad Berry

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- I am stretched on your grave  
and I'll lie there forever  
if your hands were in mine  
I'd be sure they could not sever  
my apple tree, my brightness  
it's time we were together  
for I smell of the earth  
and am worn by the weather  
when my family thinks  
that I'm safely in my bed  
from morn until night  
I am stretched out at your head  
calling out to the earth  
with tears hot and wild  
my grief for the girl  
that I loved as a child  
do you remember  
the night we were lost  
in the shade of the blackthorn  
and the chill of the frost  
so I'm stretched on your grave  
and will lie there forever  
if your hands were in mine  
I'd be sure they could not sever  
my apple tree, my brightness  
it's time we were together  
for I smell of the earth  
and am worn by the weather  
my apple tree, my brightness  
it's time we were together  
for I smell of the earth  
and am worn by the weather  
- um, maybe right down there?  
- Yeah.  
- Okay.  
I'm so sorry.  
- Shannon, thanks for coming.  
- You okay?  
- Ah, hanging in there.  
Sam, good to see you again.  
- I'm sorry, Aiden.  
- And look at this one here.  
A man before my eyes.

She'd be pleased to

know that you were here.

- You must be Liam.

I hear you're quite the Irish  
dancer.

- Yeah, I guess so.

- I'm Sam.

This is my wife Shannon.

- Of course!

Maggie's daughter.

Aiden told me so much about you.

- Is it okay if I take this down  
there?

- Of course, please.

- Hey, there's grandma and  
grandpa.

- Thank you for coming.

- Aiden, I'm sorry for your  
loss.

If there's anything we can do.

- John, thank you.

Thanks for coming, Maureen.

Thanks for making the trip down.

I appreciate it.

- And where should we sit,  
sweetie?

- Why not just join Sam.

He's right up front.

- Okay.

- Can I talk to you?

- Is everything all right?

- Yeah, I just want to  
talk to you for a minute.

- Okay.

You know, I fell in love  
many times in my life.

Trouble was, it was always  
with the same woman.

- I know you loved her, Aiden.

- That wonderful, wicked woman.

- I'm so sorry.

- Shannon, I know I'm only your  
stepfather

and really have no right to ask

you,  
but will you please say a few  
words  
to honor your mother?  
- Oh, I don't think I'm  
the right person for that.  
- Of course you are.  
- I have no idea what I would  
say.  
- It would mean the  
world to me if you'd try.  
Shannon, I can't go up there  
and talk about her right now.  
I'm asking you, please,  
would you do this for me?  
- Sure, okay, yeah.  
I'll say something, yeah.  
I'll say something.  
- Liam, please put the phone  
away.  
What was that all about?  
Is everything okay?  
- He wants me to say a few  
words.  
- Are you okay with that?  
- Yeah.  
- Welcome to all on this blessed  
day  
as a child of god returns  
to the kingdom of heaven.  
Before proceeding to the  
cemetery for the burial service,  
Maggie's daughter Shannon  
is now going to come up  
and say a few words.  
Shannon?  
- Did you know she was gonna  
talk?  
- No.  
Didn't know that.  
- It's making me most  
uncomfortable.  
- Let's just try to be  
supportive, okay?

- Oh, supportive.

I think we're supportive  
just by being in here.

- Shh!

Three Irishmen were adrift  
at sea, terribly thirsty.  
Suddenly a mermaid swims up and  
says,

"I shall Grant you one wish."

Without thinking, one

of the Irishmen says,

"turn the sea to beer."

The mermaid says, "let it be!"

And the sea was turned to beer.

Then one of the other

Irishmen stands up and says,

"shite!

Where are we gonna piss?"

For those of you who don't know  
me,

I am Shannon, Maggie's daughter.

I was given up for adoption at  
birth.

I guess it was so I wouldn't  
have to listen to her jokes.

Funny thing is that I

didn't get to know Maggie  
until recently.

Those of you who know her,  
you know how tough she was.

Had to be.

But what most of you might not  
know

is she was a great artist,  
an artist that was never  
given the opportunity  
to pursue her passion.

In addition to my blue eyes  
and...

God, her eyes, and my fair skin,  
I too am an artist.

About a year ago I

decided to rent a place,

send out invitations because I

was going  
to paint a family portrait.  
My whole family.  
- Hurry up!  
Let's go, c'mon.  
C'mon, c'mon, c'mon!  
C'mon, c'mon.  
Hurry up!  
Come on!  
Stop.  
After you.  
- Whoa!  
Oh my god!  
- Yeah.  
- Think it's big enough?  
Yeah, over here.  
- Mom, how did you find this  
place?  
- Oh, a friend recommended it to  
me.  
You'll appreciate this.  
I had the canvas delivered a few  
days ago.  
- Yeah, what is with the canvas?  
- I wanted to paint the family,  
and get us together for a few  
days,  
away from the house.  
- Cool.  
- Remember, take plenty  
of photos this weekend.  
- Okay.  
Yeah, no problem.  
I'll just, ah, I'll do that.  
- You little!  
- C'mon, c'mon!  
- Oh, shut it!  
I'll get you.  
- Hey, I brought the bags in.  
How's the studio?  
Because it cannot be any  
better than this kitchen  
and there is a smoker  
and a barbecue out back.

- It's perfect.

What did I say?

- You're right.

- I love you.

- I love you.

- All right you.

- Wait before you pull in here.

- Oh just sh-sh-sh.

I think this is it.

What do you think?

- Well...

Yep, those are the longhorns on the gate.

- Uh-huh.

- Yep, this is it.

- Okay.

This is nice.

- A little rustic, huh?

- Wow.

- Daddy?

- Your parents are here.

- Yeah.

They're here!

Uh-oh, I can't miss.

Oh!

- Hey!

- Oh, momma!

- Well, we got the right place.

- Yes you do.

- It's so pretty.

- Ooh, I'm so happy you're here!

- Me too.

- Oh!

- Give me some!

- Oh, you'll get some.

- Good to see ya, kid!

You look great.

My god, look at you!

Oh my god, you look amazing.

I can't believe you did all this.

- Yeah, you proud?

- Mmm, proud!

- C'mon inside.

- Okay!

- Hey, Francis, good to see you!

Hey, I got the list.

We're gonna head out to the store.

Anybody need anything?

- Yes!

We need bottles of wine, vodka, beer.

- Wife's a lush!

- Shut it.

Oh, get something for dessert too, please.

- Ice cream?

- Ah, see what they have.

- All right, I'll leave it up to Liam.

We'll stop at the dairy mart on the way there.

- Mm-hmm!

- All right.

- If it's okay, I'm gonna put you down here. That way you don't have to deal with too many stairs.

- Stairs don't bother me none.

- He's wearing one of those watches that records your steps.

- Yeah, it counts my steps, measures my heart rate, it even notifies me when my subscription to playboy arrives!

- Sh, sh, stop it.

- He's in better shape than I am.

- Oh, don't say that.

- I'll wake you for cocktails.

- Okay.

- All right.

I'm putting you two upstairs.

- Are there more stairs?

- Oh!

- What did you bring, your whole closet?!



- Oh, this is great!  
You know, you could  
have stuck us anywhere.

- Oh, speak for yourself.

- There's plenty of closet  
space, a big balcony,  
private bathroom down the hall.

- Oh!

- Dad?

- Uh-huh?

What?

Oh.

- Look at that view.

- Oh, that's perfect.

Oh my god.

But, honey, you gotta  
stop worrying about us.

- I couldn't figure out what to  
wear,  
so I bought everything.  
Including the sheets.

- Yeah.

- You're kidding.

- No, you've spoiled her.

- Oh, I couldn't figure  
out who slept on this bed.  
I mean, it could be  
somebody who's been infected  
by some horrible rash  
or lord knows what else.

- Yeah, well...

- Now, I have something  
I want to show you.  
It's all my new clothes.

- No, no, no, honey, just try  
'em on  
in a little while.  
I want a moment with my  
daughter.

Mm-hmm.

Now, you told us to  
bring something special,  
right, something that  
meant something to us?

- Mm-hmm.

- Have I ever showed this to you?

No?

This is our family's scrapbook. It goes back many generations, all the way back to Ireland.

Huh?

Yeah, it's full of memories. And in the back, there's some blank pages, ready for you to put some more in.

Oh, ah.

Here, just flip through it when you get a second.

- It's perfect.

I love you.

- I love you too.

Okay, honey!

All yours!

- Thank you!

- I'm gonna

get a drink, all right?

- Ah, you would be so proud of me.

I separated all my dresses.

Party, daytime, formal.

- What's in the other bag?

- Shoes.

- Oh.

Of course.

- All right, what do ya think?

- Ah, it's...

- Unh-uh.

- No?

- - Nuh-uh.

- Okay.

You know, before we left, I treated myself to a manicure and a pedicure and some highlights, and I don't even think your father noticed.

- Well, you look great, mom.  
That, great.

- I'm glad you like it.  
'Cause I bought it for you.

- You didn't have to do that.

- Yes I did, 'cause I liked it.  
I looked at it in the store  
and I just saw you in it.  
I thought, gosh, you'd just  
look beautiful in that.  
You know, when you invited  
everybody,  
you said on the invitation that  
you wanted  
something personal, something  
special?  
Something that would inspire  
you, right?

- Mm-hmm.

- Well, your daddy brought  
you the photo album,  
and I brought you this.  
It's Seana's.

- Yup, she made it for me  
when she knew I was going to be  
a mother.  
You see the three stars,  
that's her, that's me,  
and that's you.  
Three.

- I can't take this.

- What?

Yes you can.

- It's yours.

- Shannon, you know  
that I have always said  
flowers are for the living.  
That's yours.

- Thanks, mom.

- I love you.

- Love you.

- What is this?

- Oh, a beer?

- Yeah, absolutely.

Love these tops.

- Yeah.

- Yeah.

- Salut.

- Salut.

- Ah, that is good.

I think we're just gonna order some pizza.

- Oh, well, that's fine with me.

- All right, what kind ya want?

- Well, anything but

Canadian bacon.

- I thought you liked bacon.

- Oh, I love bacon,

but Canadian bacon isn't bacon, it's ham.

It's Canadian ham, you know what I mean?

I don't know how they get away with calling it bacon.

It's ham!

I'm gonna file an injunction.

- All right, I'm with ya.

- So how's my grandson doin'?

- Hey.

Hello!

How's my grandson?

- Doin' good, grandpa.

Just stayin' busy.

School, studyin', dancin'.

Same ol', same ol'.

- Well, there ya go.

So how's the butcher business, Dr. scalpel?

- Same ol'.

Oh, here they go.

How cute.

Did she end up with a Unitard?

- Ha, that'll clear a room.

- Stop it.

- We're just gonna order pizza.

- You just went to the store.

- I just thought that it would be easier.

- Nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-no.

Once everyone's here, we're not leaving.

- Why don't you come on out and show me

where we're gonna have that portrait, huh?

- Check the lighting, honey. Whew.

- Yeah.

- Whoo.

I don't think there's enough whiskey in all of Ireland to get through this weekend.

- Forget Ireland.

Check the trunk of my car.

- Thank you.

- Bless me.

- Oh, it is so beautiful.

- Yeah.

I thought the same thing the first time I came out here.

- You know who I think is the most excited about being here?

- Hm?

- Your granddad.

He rushed around the house trying to find his captain's uniform.

For the portrait, you know.

Is that all right?

- Absolutely.

Is he doin' okay?

- Yeah.

He gets tired, you know, but he still wants to be in complete control.

He sat in the backseat of the car

and he was barking directions all the way here.

He is who he is.

- Mom?

About this weekend.

- What is it, honey?

- Hey, mom.

Let me get a picture of you and Nana.

- You better get my best side, you know.

- All right, make sure that those end up in my studio.

- Yes, ma'am.

- You know who would have loved it here?

- Hm?

- Your grandma, Seana.

Oh, what a terrific lady.

Complicated, dressed to the nines,

but very strict.

Did I ever tell you about the time

I was in the bathroom, and she walked in on me, and she yelled at me

because I wasn't sitting up straight enough on the toilet?

I guess that's how she tried to love me.

- I guess.

- What's the matter, honey?

What is it?

Sometimes...

- What?

- I don't feel like I belong.

- I don't think you should feel that way.

I mean, we're all here because we're connected to you.

We love you.

Well, I don't know what to say except,

why don't we have a drink?

What do ya say?

For your grandma.

We'll toast.

- Hey, mom!

- Oh, hey!  
- What are you doin'?  
- Setting up, getting organized.  
Whatcha got?  
- Remember how you asked everybody  
to bring somethin'  
special for the portrait?  
- Mm-hmm.  
Aww.  
Wow.  
- Remember?  
- Of course I do.  
It's the first show I ever took  
you to.  
- It was great, wasn't it?  
- Mm-hmm.  
- I remember thinkin'  
it would be so great  
to learn how to dance like that.  
- And now you do.  
Wow.  
- Oh, we took the pictures  
with 'em too, remember?  
- Yeah!  
That really is a great night.  
Wonderful memory.  
Thank you.  
- Thanks, mom.  
All right, see ya.  
- See ya.  
- Hello, sweetie.  
Wine?  
- Absolutely.  
- All right.  
Liam, drink?  
- Beer me!  
- Yes, all right.  
- Beer me, what?  
- There ya go.  
There ya go!  
- Poor baby.  
- Sorry.  
- A nice try though.

- I would have given you one.  
- You sit down and tell me what you've been doin'.  
- Well, just getting organized.  
- Did you get our Liam's present?  
- I did, and the album?  
It's amazing.  
- Yeah.  
Did your mother tell you we're planning a cruise in the fall?  
- No, she didn't.  
- Her idea.  
- Ugh, he sounds really excited, doesn't he?  
- Mm-hmm.  
- It's a small boat, about 200 people.  
We're goin' to Alaska before global warming destroys all the polar bears.  
- Mom, you don't like cold weather.  
- Oh, I know, but your daddy's gonna buy me a beautiful jacket, aren't you, daddy dear?  
- Well, that's why we're goin', so she can get a new jacket.  
- Sounds fun, grandma.  
- Yeah, well, you can come along with us if you're not in school.  
- I can miss school to go see polar bears die.  
- No, you can't.  
- Dad?  
- No, you can't.  
- Oh well, we'll work on him, okay.  
See if we can work it, huh?  
- Mmm.  
- If he help us to go, he



can go.

- All right, stop.

I wanna find out something.

How did you find this place?

- A friend of mine, she

works at the gallery,

she's been here before, so,

yeah.

- It's gorgeous.

It's perfect and rustic and

great for a family gathering.

And I love it.

- I'll drink to that.

- He'll drink to anything.

- Cheers.

- Oh, did we wake you up?

- I'll get it.

- Nuh-nuh-no.

I got it.

- Everybody good on drinks?

- Yeah.

- Hey.

It's good to see you.

Come on in.

Um, Maggie, Aiden, you

remember my parents,

and here are Francis, Liam, and

Sam.

- John, Maureen.

- - Sam.

- Hi.

- - Hi.

- Hey, Liam baby, take a

picture of Nana for me.

- Whose is that?

- Yo.

Yeah, just a sec.

- Liam, where are you going?

- Sorry, Nana, I gotta

take this.

- I hate cellphones.

- I am so sorry.

- Hey, what's up?

Yeah, we're at that house

in the middle of nowhere.

My mom's painting a portrait.

- Hey, Liam.

- Baby, it's fine.

- I guess so, sort of.

Yeah, the whole family.

She even brought her  
real mom and stepfather.

Can you believe that?

I told you she was adopted.

Huh, I guess you can call them  
my grandparents, technically.

Hadn't thought of it.

Yeah, grandma and grandpa are  
here.

Yeah yeah, and Franny.

Oh no kidding, it was so ugly.

They came in last night.

- Smoke bothering you?

- It's important to her.

- Liam!

Hang up the phone and get over  
here.

- Sam.

- It's rude.

- Listen, I gotta go.

We're still on for tomorrow  
night.

Yep, yep, a'ight, later.

- Honey, can we take a break for  
a minute?

- You know what, that is a great  
idea.

Everybody, let's take a break.

- I gotta hit the head.

- Sam, will you help  
daddy set up the grill?

- Yeah, sure.

- Thank you.

- So are you grillin'  
today or...?

- All right, what's next?

- I've got coleslaw in the  
fridge

and a bowl in that drawer.

- All right.

- Maggie, you need anything?

- No.

- Hm.

- Hm?

- No, I was just, I just said,  
"hm."

It was interesting what kind  
of potato salad you're making.

- What's that mean?

- Doesn't mean anything,  
it just means it's interesting,  
all right?

What are you puttin' in it?

- It's an all-mustard potato  
salad.

- Mustard?

- That's right.

- No, no mayonnaise?

- That's right.

No mayonnaise.

- Why?

- 'Cause I don't like  
mayonnaise.

- Well, but you always make  
potato salad with mayonnaise.

- Well, not this one.

- All right.

And why is that?

Is that because of health or  
something?

Because I read somewhere that  
mayonnaise is just as healthy  
as an avocado.

- I don't know about that, mom.

- I just never liked the stuff.

- That's good to know, yeah?

- Yeah.

Oh.

Oh, that's just great.

So we're gonna have  
potato salad with mustard.

That's dandy.

- I guess you just prefer the devil's sperm.

- What?

What did you just say?

- The devil's sperm.

- Oh my god.

- You prefer the devil's sperm?

- You're disgusting.

Jesus.

My god.

Why do you ever let her talk to me like that?

- Maggie.

- Oh, you devil you.

- John?

- I'll be right there.

- Looks like someone salted her pie.

- Everything okay?

- It could be anything.

Hey, Aiden.

Are you still out in Coryell county?

- That's right, still there.

I do most of my work out of Jonesboro these days.

- Well, what are you doin' to keep busy?

- Same thing that's kept me busy for the last 40 years, electrical work mostly.

A little carpentry, odd jobs here and there.

- Oh, here we go.

- We could certainly use a good handyman up in the big d.

The only thing I can manage to change are my diapers.

- And we pray that he remembers to change 'em every day.

- There we go, I knew it.

- John, you still practice law?

- He knows the license

plate of every ambulance  
in Tarrant county.

- Yeah, I'm still a partner.  
They haven't caught me yet.

- What do you know about life  
insurance?

- I know if Maureen knew  
how much money we had,  
she would have run me over years  
ago.

Why, what's up?

What do ya need?

- I, ah, I'm thinking of changing  
our policy, age and all,  
but these regulations of  
preexisting conditions and stuff.  
I was just wondering if you knew  
someone

- I could talk to.

- - Mom.

Will you help me?

- Ah, well I could email  
you a couple of names.

You just send me all of your  
information  
and I'll do it when I get back.

- If you don't mind,  
yeah, that'd be great.

- No, I'd like to do it.

- Thank you, thank you.

- Sure.

Yeah, excuse me, guys, for a  
minute.

What's the problem, Maureen?

- You won't believe what she  
said to me.

- Momma, please.

- Can't we just...

- mom!

Please.

- Fine.

- Look, look, look, look,  
over there on that branch.

- What is that, a bird?

- That's a brown-headed cowbird.  
- Oh god, not this again.  
- What's a cowbird?  
- Well, a cowbird is a member of the blackbird family and they've evolved to follow around the herds of cows and sheep and buffalos and it picks the ticks off of their backs.  
- Wow, this is just like animal planet.  
- There it is.  
- Keep goin', daddy.  
- She's a brood parasite.  
- What's a brood parasite?  
- Ah ha, see, the curiosity of youth.  
A brood parasite, see that's when the female cowbird lays her eggs in the nest of other birds, right.  
- So they make the other birds raise their babies?  
- Exactly.  
- Hey!  
What're you sayin'?  
- Maggie, he didn't mean anything.  
- God, that's, I'm sorry, I didn't mean anything really by it.  
- I know.  
She'll be all right, just let her go.  
Probably best to just leave her alone for a bit.  
- Sorry.  
- Aren't you proud of yourself?  
- Hey.  
- Hey.  
- Come back down and join us.  
- Nnh.

I lost my appetite.

- Daddy didn't mean anything.

He has really been into birds.

We got him this book last

Christmas.

I wasn't hungry anyway.

- How are you?

- Fine.

- The hospital?

- Took in a couple of extra shifts.

I'm workin' six days a week.

- Busy's good.

- Yeah, I guess.

- I'm busy too.

I had a few gallery showings and a couple new commissions.

- That's nice, real nice.

- A lot of hard work but...

- But what?

- Why'd you stop painting?

- Oh.

Well, I never had the time or the means to do anything with it.

I was so busy at the hospital.

I just had a whole lotta things goin' on.

- I'm sorry.

- For what?

- Well, didn't you love it?

- Hrmph, love has nothing to do with it, Shannon.

I do what I do to survive.

- I didn't mean...

- What?

What are you talkin' about?

- I just was, was just trying to talk.

- Talk about what?

- I was just tryin' to,

I really don't know you

or anything about your life, my father...

- Shannon?

I don't want to talk about it.  
Besides it's really none of your  
business.

- What do you mean?

- Ahh, well, I see where  
this is goin', mm-hmm.

Next thing you're gonna tell me  
I'm the one that ruined your  
life.

Hm?

- You don't get it, do you?

I was nine years old when  
I had my first sleepover,  
and it was great, until  
it was time to go to bed.

I was just lying there,  
thinkin', worrying,  
that no one was going to come  
back

and pick me up in the morning.

My friend's mother found me  
in the middle of the night,  
crying in a corner.

She had to call my parents  
to come pick me up.

So it's my fault that you  
couldn't spend the night  
at your friend's house?

- I stood in the front  
door in my nightgown  
for my parents to come.

I didn't think they were coming.  
But, of course, they did.

- So it's all about you, isn't  
it?

Well...

I was 17, thought I was in love,  
and I got pregnant and I  
didn't want to have a baby.

Your father blamed me for  
it, so did my parents.

No, I didn't want to have you,  
but I didn't have a choice.



And when I gave you up,  
you weren't supposed to come  
back, ever.

I moved on with my life.  
Do you understand?

This has nothin' to do with  
love.

This has nothin' to do with  
whether I loved you or not.  
The truth is, the day you were  
born  
was the worst day of my life,  
'cause I wasn't ready to grow  
up.

- Sorry you feel that way.

- I shouldn't be judged for  
being honest.

- No.

Not at all.

You are who you are.

- All right, here we go!

- Honey, could you give  
me a minute so I could  
run into the little ladies'  
room and check my face?

- That's right, you're the  
only one in this damn picture.

- It is not a picture, it is a  
portrait.

It is a family portrait.

Now, I think it means a  
great deal to Shannon,  
so I think we should all look  
our best.

- No, you're right, Maureen.

Your face could use some more  
work.

- Maggie, give  
it a break, will ya?

- Just shut your face.

- I hit a nerve, did I?

- Dammit, that's enough!

Maybe we should all stop  
thinking about ourselves

for a few minutes and try  
to remember why we're here.

- I think that's a very good  
idea.

- And I thought  
pork chop hill was bad.

- Ugh, you would not  
believe what's goin' on.  
Naw, we're all out there  
posin' for the portrait,  
and my grandma starts pickin' a  
fight  
with my mom's real mom.

Classic.

They did not trade blows.

That would have been cool.

Yeah, yeah, I'll be out  
there in about 20 minutes.

Mm-hmm, yeah, we passed it on  
the way in.

I'll meet ya there.

All right, bye.

- So...

How you doin', honey?

- I'm starting to think  
this weekend was a mistake.

- No, it wasn't a mistake.  
The guest list was a mistake.

- Mom.

- Oh, she's a hateful woman.

- Mom, god!

It's not about you.

- I know it was your decision,  
but I think you could be a  
little bit more understanding  
about the other people around  
here.

I mean, your daddy and Sam,  
Liam, me...

- are you saying I'm  
not being sympathetic?

- No, I'm not saying that.

You convinced yourself  
that this was gonna be

one big happy family this weekend.

I mean, w-we've talked about this.

You do it a lot.

You make up your mind and then the doors close and the lock is locked and nobody can get in anym...

- maybe I don't want anyone in!

Do you ever think about that?

Maybe I just want to fit in, something I've been trying to do since the fifth grade and those fucking, fucking family trees.

- Whew.

Well, you know you were four-weeks-old when your daddy and I brought you home.

I remember asking the woman at the adoption agency what I should do, and she said, "oh, you just take her home and you love her."

Well, that sure wasn't enough.

Can't tell you how long it took for me to feel adequate and not guilty for taking you away from another woman, a woman who happened to be your mother.

Dammit, I knew it.

I knew when you were young that at some point you were gonna go out and you would try to find her. That real mother of yours. Oh god, I was so scared, so scared that you'd love her more than you love me.

- Hey, Liam.

Where ya headed?

- Goin' for a run.

- Yeah, I guess we both  
needed to get out of there  
for a little bit.

- What's goin' on with them,  
dad?

Why they fightin' over mom?

- It's complicated.

- It's just weird.

Why can't they just get along  
anyways?

- That would be great.

They just don't see it that way.

- Well, at least I got some good  
photos.

They're even smiling in some,  
so guess they got along okay,  
right?

- Yeah, a picture's  
worth a thousand words, right?

- Yeah, I guess so.

- Do you know why people  
smile in pictures?

Because we tell 'em to.

You can tell somebody to  
smile and say "cheese,"  
but you can't really fake being  
happy.

Your mom, she's just, she's  
trying to figure it all out.

You know, find a way to be  
happy.

Or at least content.

- Mom's not happy?

- It's not that simple.

Sometimes she's happy.

She's trying to  
connect with her past.

Trying to connect with  
her past and present.

She wants to find out where she  
came from

so that she understands who she

is.

Life isn't just a picture.

It's a series of events

all strung together,

like a puzzle, but no

matter how hard she tries,

she may never find all the

pieces.

And let's face it, women

have more pieces than men.

- I think I'm gonna take off.

- I don't blame ya.

Hey, Liam?

You got your cellphone on ya?

All right, don't stay gone too

long.

- All right, let's play ball!

- All right, let's go it.

- Now you see close only

counts in horseshoes...

And hand grenades!

- Hey!

- Right, pop?

- He was in the Korean war.

- Wow, what was that like?

- It was like a beautiful

picnic,

set on fire.

- Nice shot!

- Franny?

Stay awake.

Hey!

- I'm so hungry I could eat the

ass out

of a low-flying duck.

Oh, great.

Well, have a seat and you two

are gonna sit next to Franny.

- Can I get anybody

else a drink while I'm up?

Hey pops, I got you a

bourbon and water, all right?

- Ah, you talked me into it.

- For the love of Pete!

Who made this Shepherd's pie?

- Wow.

- Team effort.

- I was part of the team!

- I watched while they made it.

Hey, can you help me  
out and bring it over?

- Oh, sure.

- Oh, I can smell it from here.

Look at that.

- Looks delicious.

- Oh, that looks good.

- Ooh!

- There we go, Aiden.

- All right.

I would like to make a toast.

Thank you all for coming.

I know I've thrown you some  
curveballs.

- Some curveballs?

- It's not what you were  
expecting,  
but I've been thinking about  
this weekend  
for a long time.

It's been a dream of mine  
and the gifts you have brought,  
they meant a lot to me.

So, thank you and cheers.

- Cheers.

- Cheers.

- If it's okay, I'd  
like to read something.

It's a letter I sent home to  
your grandma  
from the war in Korea.

It was pork chop hill.

"Good morning, darling.

"Here is another day without  
you,

"but nevertheless, you  
are forever on my mind.

"Yesterday I received your  
letter.

"You'll never know how happy  
that made me.  
"It gave me new life and  
new strength to carry on.  
"This is the first  
chance I've had to write  
"since we staged an attack in  
two villages  
"in the high mountain.  
"We fought all day and  
only advanced a few miles  
"and we paid for it dearly  
with blood and lives.  
"I was in a daze for most of it,  
"with a prayer and your name on  
my lips.  
"Every step I took I thought of  
you,  
"and about our time when  
we would be together soon.  
"At present, I have 12  
men under my command  
"and we're guarding 80 enemy  
prisoners.  
"This'll all be over soon,  
"and I'll be on my way  
home to your loving arms.  
"I love you more than the words  
of this letter can express.  
"Your loving husband, Francis."  
I brought this for you, sweetie.  
- I love you.  
- Would you mind  
if I said a blessing?  
- Please.  
- Bless, o lord, this  
food we are about to eat  
and we pray you, god, that it  
will be good  
for our body and soul.  
And if there be any poor  
creatures hungry or thirsty  
walking along the road,  
send them in to us that we

could share this food with them,  
just as you share your  
gifts with all of us.

Amen.

- Amen.

- - Amen.

- All right!

Where are you going?

Ah.

- Dun-dun-dah!

All right, all right, everybody  
smile.

- Okay.

- Smile, c'mon!

- All right!

Now who would like some  
Shepherd's pie?

All right, you're gonna  
have to pass your plates.

It's too hot.

- This looks fantastic.

- Want some butter?

Thank you.

- You want some bread?

- I think I'm gonna...

- This is so good.

- Could someone pass  
me some bread, please?

- Oh, sure.

- Would you like some butter?

- There we go.

- There we go.

- And me too.

Pass it down.

- I'd like some more whiskey.

Is that okay?

- Sure.

- Me too.

- Trade ya.

Get this stuff off of...

- Oh, that smells so good,  
darling.

- There ya go.

- Liam, did you know that



Maggie was quite a dancer  
in her day?

- Maggie?

A dancer?

I didn't know that.

I wouldn't have known  
that in a million years.

- So you danced?

- Oh yeah, as a girl I did,  
a little.

We went on a tour a little bit  
one summer.

- Liam darling, would you  
pass the salt and pepper?

- There you go.

- Thank you for all of it.

- Shannon,

I bought something dear to my  
heart too...

For you.

Yeah.

There's these newlyweds  
and they're in a hotel room  
in the honeymoon suite,  
and the groom decides that he's  
gonna

let the wife know  
exactly where she stands  
before the marriage,  
so he takes off his trousers  
and he throws them at her,  
and he says, "put those  
on!"

And she says, "I can't  
wear your trousers!"

And he says, "and don't  
you forget it!

'Cause I'm the one that's always  
gonna

wear the pants in this family."

And the bride,  
she takes off her knickers.

Throws 'em at him and says,  
"well try these on."

And the groom says, "I  
can't wear your g..."

oh! No, no!

"I can't get into your  
knickers!"

And the bride says, "and don't-"  
oh, "and you never bloody will  
if you don't change your  
attitude."

- See what I live with?

- Well, better you than us.

Ohh.

What is wrong with you?

- Me?

- Yeah, you.

I'm just trying to lighten  
things up a little bit,  
but oh, no.

- You're doing a hell of a job,  
yeah.

- Woman, you're a nasty piece of  
work.

- Now, wait a minute,  
wait a minute, wait a minute.

- You are nasty.

- No no, wait one second.

Anybody else, you want a drink,  
do you want another  
drink here at the table?

- Well, I think she's had  
enough.

- Oh, yeah I've had enough.

I've had enough of you for this  
lifetime!

- Look, nobody is holding  
you hostage, dear.

You can leave any time you want.

- Well, I didn't even want to  
come here in the first place,  
did I, huh?

And I certainly never,  
never would have come  
if I'd known you were gonna be  
here.

- Well, then why did you come?  
You can go, you are free to go.  
Don't you understand?  
You have given me everything  
I have ever wanted  
with this woman at the end of  
the table.  
So go on, go ahead, run, run.  
Run away.  
We don't need you here.

- You're a rude fucking cow.  
- And you're a disgusting pig.  
- Yeah, well go eat shit, bitch.  
You go home!  
- All right, that's enough!  
That's enough!  
- You bitch.  
- Goddamn it, that's enough!!  
- Maggie?  
- Oof!  
- Y'all are gonna wanna go see  
this.  
No, seriously, you gotta  
see what I have planned.  
- Oh, Shannon, I'm hunting.  
Come on now.  
- Wait!  
- Ladies?  
Ladies!  
I'll take it from here.  
- Why did I think this would be  
any different than it is?  
- Sweetheart, don't  
kick yourself too hard.  
The weekend isn't over yet.  
How the hell did you arrange all  
this  
without anyone gettin' wind of  
it?  
- It was Liam.  
He put the whole thing  
together with his friends.  
- C'mon.  
I still got some kick left in

me.

- Well?

- We shall see.

Drink?

- Oh yeah.

- Whoo-hoo!

- Knock, knock.

Hey.

- Hey.

- Been in here all night long?

- Most of it.

- Everything okay?

- Eh, couldn't sleep.

- I brought you some tea.

- No.

- Okay.

That was some surprise party  
last night.

I had no idea you planned it.

How did you pull that off  
without me findin' out?

- The dancing?

That was all Liam.

Pretty sneaky, huh?

- Yeah, real sneaky.

Impressive.

Was it what you expected?

- I was hoping we'd all have a  
good time.

Maggie would relax a  
bit and enjoy the music,  
we'd all get to know each other.  
Guess I was asking for too much.

- "Hey, you wanna try my pants  
on?"

C'mon, it was funny.

- My mother didn't think so.

- Yeah.

I just don't think those two  
are ever gonna get along.

I mean, the only thing  
they have in common is you.

- Shouldn't that be enough?

- It should be.

- I wasn't expecting this  
to be some big love fest.  
I wanted this to pull  
us all closer together,  
not tear us further apart.

- Cut yourself a break.  
Heck, those two...  
It's just not gonna happen.

- You really think smoking  
is a good idea right now?

- Not like it's gonna kill me.

- I wish you wouldn't talk like  
that.

- Well, why quit now?

- Because I'm asking you to.  
Maggie, I love you.

- I know you do.

- Listen, I know you  
didn't want to come here,  
but you're doing this for me,  
so this morning, please talk to  
Shannon.

We need her, you need her.  
Please go and find her  
and tell her you're sorry  
about last night.  
Can you do that for me?

- Just for you.

- Thank you.

- What the hell?  
Would you please close the door?  
What are you lookin' at?  
Oh, Christ.

- Mornin'.  
How's everythin' goin' in here?

- Just finishing what I came  
here to do.

- Can I come in?

- Sure.

- Sable brushes.

- I like the way they  
glide across the canvas.

- May I take a peek?

Mmm, yeah.

Oh, it's comin' along real good.

- Slowly.

It's still missin' some pieces.

- Yeah.

I guess we have some things we  
don't know

about each other.

- That's why I invited

you here this weekend.

So we could learn those things.

Some of 'em.

- Shannon, as much as you want  
it,

you can't fit a lifetime into  
three days.

Will you look at me for a  
moment, please?

I'm sorry about last night.

I had a few too many and

I really shouldn't have

acted that way.

I'm very sorry.

- It's not an easy  
situation for any of us.

Especially you.

I appreciate you being here.

- I appreciate you inviting me.

Maureen and I just...

- I love my mother.

- Oh, I know you do.

- She's good to me.

- You know, in the world that I  
come from,

you didn't get pregnant  
unless you were married.

And even then,

you sure as hell didn't tell  
anyone.

When it happened to me I was,  
hmm,

I was scared and ashamed and  
alone.

I wore the biggest clothes

I could find,

trying to hide it  
and then when I outgrew  
'em, I sewed my own.  
Tryin' to hide the truth.  
But you can't hide the truth.  
Can you, Shannon?  
You can't hide the truth.  
My daddy, he screamed at me so  
loud.  
I thought he was gonna kill me.  
And my mother,  
she was so drunk,  
you know, she couldn't stop  
crying.  
I don't think she ever looked  
at me again after that.  
When the nurse...  
Handed me you,  
I held you so tight.  
I didn't want to say goodbye.  
And after that, I...  
I got numb for a while.  
I started wonderin',  
is this a dream or did it really  
happen?  
After that,  
that moment...  
I was so angry  
and bitter,  
and I hated myself for  
what I had done to you.  
- I don't hate you, Maggie.  
I don't.  
- I would not blame you if you  
did.  
- I get it.  
That must have been so hard.  
I am sincerely grateful for what  
you did.  
Well, better get back to work  
if I'm gonna ever finish this.  
We'll see ya outside, okay?  
- That's why I'm here.  
- Hello.

- Hello to you.

Can I help?

- Yeah.

Now take an end.

Put it down here in front of me.

- And this one?

- Uh-huh.

I'm gonna set it on the end.

- All right.

I just hope we don't get rained out.

- Yeah, me too.

- Maybe we can all hold matching umbrellas.

I think it's been done.

- You got a heck of a family, Shannon.

- Yeah, I like 'em.

- And thanks for havin' us.

I'm really sorry about last night.

- It's okay.

I talked to Maggie.

- Well...

Is there anything else I can do for you?

- Gather the troops, quickly.

- No problem, I'm on it.

- Thanks, Aiden.

- Hey, mom.

Check this out.

Come on, c'mon, c'mon, c'mon.

- I'm hurrying.

- Hurry!

- Oh!

- Boom.

How ya feelin' today?

- I'm good.

- How 'bout last night?

- I am so proud of you.

How did you get your friends to come here?

You'll never know how much that meant to me.



Now, if we can just get  
through the rest of the day.  
- I'm gonna take one more.  
- Ah!  
Oh, jeez.  
- Oh man.  
You have got to be kidding me.  
Give me these.  
I guess I will work in the  
studio  
until this passes.  
- Poor thing.  
All those interruptions.  
I don't think she's ever  
gonna get it finished.  
What's the matter?  
Are you feelin' okay?  
- Oh, I think my body's given  
out on me.  
I'm just gonna sit here for a  
minute.  
- I'm gonna go get Sam.  
- No, don't bother.  
Not unless he stopped bein' a  
doctor  
and started diggin' graves.  
- Maggie, don't talk like that.  
It's gonna be okay.  
- You're gonna be fine.  
- - Aiden.  
- You're gonna speak with  
Shannon today  
and you're gonna ask her.  
That's why we're here,  
and we need to find out now.  
- Well, we sure didn't  
come for the conversation.  
- No, but that's  
exactly what we need to have,  
a conversation with Shannon!  
- Well, how about somethin' like  
this?  
"Hi, sweetie!  
"I gave you up for

adoption when you were born  
"because I didn't want you,  
"and now I'm dyin' and I  
need a liver transplant  
"and I'd like you to be a  
living organ donor for me!"

Hmm?

How's that, honey?

- Go ahead, joke about it,  
but we have to find out if she  
can help.

- Hey.

- Hello, dear.

Get it, deer?

- Will you round everyone up?

I think I can get what  
I need to finish, okay?

- Sure, I'll do it for a buck.

- Oh gosh.

Go!

Hey, it's Sam.

Ah, Shannon sent me up.

She's ready to wrap things up.

Can you guys come down?

- Ah, just a second.

Um, Maggie's runnin' out of  
steam.

- Is everything okay?

- Um...

- I just need to freshen up.

I'll be right down.

- Is there anything I can do?

- Everything's fine.

We'll be down in a few minutes.

- Okay.

If there is anything I can do.

- Nah, we're good.

We're good.

Uh, we'll be right down, thanks.

- Okay.

Probably.

We need to get this done  
then we can go fishing.

- Are you guys talking about

fishing?

- Again.

- There he is.

Hey, Liam, what's wrong?

- Why don't you ask her?

- Liam.

- No, Aiden.

I think you should tell her.

- Aiden, let's leave.

- No, we won't.

Ask her.

Ask her right now.

- Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

What are you talking about?

- I just heard them

talkin' on the balcony.

She's dying, mom.

She needs a liver donor.

- Maggie.

- She wants you to do it.

That's the only reason they're here.

- Oh, w-wait.

I don't

understand what's going on.

- Partial liver transplant.

- They were talkin' about how they could drop it on mom so that she'd agree to it.

- She's dying, Shannon.

- Oh, this is unbelievable.

- Maggie, why didn't you just say something?

- This whole thing is my fault.

I made her come.

Don't blame it on her.

Listen, I'm not proud of a lot of things

I've done in my life,

but I'll be damned if I'm gonna stand here

and pretend that we weren't

hoping that Shannon could help.

If we went about this

the wrong way, I'm sorry.

If we hurt your feelings,

I'm very, very sorry.

I don't know what to do,

Shannon.

I've no right to, but I'm

begging you.

- Maggie?

- I never wanted any of this.

I wasn't supposed to be in your

life,

and you weren't

supposed to be in mine.

But that all changed when you

found me.

You grew up,

it was a good family.

You have a wonderful mother and

father.

You married a good, smart man,

kind.

Maureen, you surrounded

her with a loving family,

somethin' I couldn't offer her.

And just knowin' that,

it's given me a sense of peace

that I...

I haven't felt in a very long

time.

In a very, very long time.

- It's okay.

It's okay.

We're gonna figure this out,

okay?

Maggie and I were strangers in

many ways.

Who knows, maybe we weren't

meant to meet.

I know she didn't think

we were supposed to,

but something pushed us

together.

Whether it was me searching to

find myself

or Maggie searching for a match,  
which I was not,  
something forced us to connect.  
Maggie thought her life was a  
failure  
because she made bad decisions.  
But that's not true.  
She had me, she put me up for  
adoption.  
She gave me life.  
And because of that, she  
gave me all the people  
who taught me how to live it.  
And she gave me three days in  
August,  
and for that, I am eternally  
grateful.