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# Against The Current

By Peter Callahan

(CHILDREN CHATTERING)

(WOMAN SIGHS)

Good morning.

Hi.

You sleep all right?

(GRUNTING)

You?

Not really.

Ah... There's more Cokes,  
and I could get you a coffee if you'd like.

Want to go for some pancakes or something?

I'm totally starving.

Actually, I already had one of those...

Maybe I should get going, anyway.

I gotta take care of some stuff.

(INAUDIBLE)

(SOFT ROCK MUSIC PLAYING)

What the hell do you want?

An incredibly complicated  
and elaborate drink

that takes you about 10 minutes to make.

Then I'd like to complain about

how there's no alcohol in it.

That's our best seller.

You want a massage

and manual release with that?

Maybe later.

**-PAUL:**

-Yes?

You have any plans

for the next month or so?

You mean other than going on auditions that  
will lead nowhere and babysitting drunks?

I want to do the river swim.

What river swim?

The river swim, the one I've been  
talking about since high school,  
the entire length of the lower Hudson,  
all the way from Troy  
to the Verrazano Bridge, 150 miles.

Why?

**PAUL:**

-Just because?

**-PAUL:**

You accompany me in a boat,  
like we talked about.  
What do you say?  
Not many people have swam the whole river.  
Not many people have dug up  
Babe Ruth and driven around  
with his skeleton in their car either,  
which was another idea  
that we had one drunken night.  
I know, but I mean it.  
I want to swim the river.  
We can leave Monday  
and be back by the 28th.  
Why now?  
Why not?  
Sarah's not going to like it.

**LIZ:**

Hey.  
Liz... Hi. You remember Paul.  
Sure. You're a financial writer or something?  
Or something, right. And you waitressed  
here a couple of summers ago.  
Never again.  
A sentiment shared by the management.  
I wasn't that bad.  
Nor were you any good.  
You're actually a teacher, right?  
Yeah.  
For retarded kids or something.  
No, regular ones.  
Oh. Don't know where I got that.  
May I have a very strong  
vodka and soda, please, Jeff?  
One Alcoholic's Special coming up.  
So, what are you boys up to tonight?  
Talking about 19-year-old girls  
with big tits or something?  
Maybe. What's it to you?  
Actually, it looks like  
we're going on a swimming trip.

A swimming trip?

-Thank you.

-Yeah.

Paul's gonna swim the entire length  
of the Hudson River.

Why would you do that?

Why do people climb Everest?

Most people don't.

I didn't realize you were a big-time swimmer.

I'm not. It's just an idea I had long ago  
and it's just kind of stayed with me,  
to swim all the way down the river  
to where it meets the ocean.

Don't you think you'd get a little pooped?

**PAUL:**

I don't swim it all at once.

It's more a psychological challenge  
than a physical one.

Anyone could do it if they wanted to.

Totally eccentric, I like it.

Then come with us.

-Right, right.

**-JEFF:**

Or just go instead of me.

Come on.

You're asking me to take a couple weeks off  
and drive a boat,  
slowly, down the Hudson river  
while you're in the water all day?

If she wants to come, thank God.

It'll give me someone

to make fun of you with to pass the time.

Well, I don't want to interfere if it's gonna...

If it's some sort of male bonding thing.

Please. If we were any more bonded,  
we'd be 69-ing each other.

-You should come with us.

-I actually could come.

I don't start school till after Labor Day.

We could spend a night at my mom's house  
in Rhinebeck,  
along the way, if you want. Free beds.

See? She's from the Hudson Valley, too.

She's one of us.

I'm not sure.

What kind of bathing suits do you have?

'Cause we usually wear a two-piece.

(LAUGHING)

I don't think it'd be very much fun.

-It might be.

-I don't know.

**SARAH:**

I think it's really important to him  
for some reason.

So you and Paul get to spend  
three weeks alone together  
and I get to sit here all by myself.

Liz is coming with us, too.

The girl from the bar? Are you kidding me?

She wants to come.

What?

Is Paul sleeping with her or something?

No.

-Are you?

-No.

-Then why is she coming?

-Just for fun.

Why didn't you ask me if I wanted to come?

**-JEFF:**

-No, it's stupid.

Then don't come.

Fuck you.

Right.

**-SARAH:**

-Hmm? Nothing.

**SARAH:**

Nothing.

Because I feel like getting out of the city, I...

Neither of them.

No.

I'll, uh... I'll call you when we get close.

Three weeks or so.

Yeah, I guess it is a three-week vacation,  
if you want to call it that.

(VIBRATING)

(DOORBELL BUZZING)

**JEFF:**

**around about 1:**

We can drop off the car, head down  
to the waterfront and find a boat.

**LIZ:**

Yeah, it's easier than trying to rent one.  
We'll get a used one or something.  
What are you gonna do with it  
when we get to the city?  
I don't know.  
Try to sell it or something, I guess.

**LIZ:**

I'm not sure. Don't worry about it.  
I didn't realize I was traveling  
with John D. Rockefeller here.  
Which way to the boatyard?

**-MAN:**

-We're looking to buy a boat.  
Well, you sure can't have one for free!  
(LAUGHING)  
(COUGHING)  
(CONTINUES COUGHING)  
-What kind of boat?  
-What?  
What kind of boat are you looking for?  
Oh, uh, the smallest one you got.  
Like a canoe?

**JEFF:**

With a weak motor.  
-A weak motor?  
-Weakest one you got.  
He's gonna swim down the river to the city  
and we need to ride next to him.  
So iust, you know,

anything that can putter along beside.

-You're swimming to New York City?

-Yeah.

Is it some sort of charity-type of thing,  
or a dollar-a-mile or something?

Not really.

Hmm.

Well, I got an old whaler with  
an old 70-horsepower engine.

Couldn't outrun a turtle.

(MAN COUGHS)

**MAN:**

**PAUL:**

Yeah, I believe that's the going rate  
for old boats with weak engines.

Right.

You folks done much boating before?

(MAN COUGHS)

**LIZ:**

I have.

I went to summer camp on Lake George,  
and we had waterskiing, we...

Sometimes they let us steer the boat.

Well, this boat couldn't pull a turtle,  
much less a skier.

What's with the turtles?

Piloting a boat is a lot different  
from driving a car.

But it, um, starts with a key, right?

Yeah. But it's got no brakes, for starters.

Neither did my last car. I think we'll be fine.

How do I look?

Like a total dick. What'd that getup run you?

-Uh, not much. I bought it used.

**-LIZ:**

Let's head up to the very beginning  
of the river.

To the dam where the first lock is.

We'll start from there.

(EXHALES)

Okay, then.

Don't drink the water.

**-PAUL:**

**-LIZ:**

It's freezing!

Really? Isn't that, uh, your...

Like, your thing?

Doesn't your thing keep you warm?

**PAUL:**

Your outfit.

You know what? I think it's broken.

I'm getting out. It's too cold.

Bullshit you're getting out!

Get used to it and start swimming.

-It's freezing!

-Your idea, pal.

We didn't come all this way

to get jerked around,

so tuck your cock in your ass

and get moving.

(ENGINE STARTING)

(SALVADOR SANCHEZ PLAYING)

Salvador Sanchez

Arrived and vanished

Only 23

With so much speed

Owning the highway

Mexico City

Bred so many

But none quite like him

Sweet warrior

Pure magic matador

Pancho Villa

Would never rest

Till 1925

He closed his eyes

Till Manila stars would rise

(PANTING)

Maybe you should stop for the day.

You think so?

Yes.



Okay.  
Thanks.  
How much ground do you think we covered?  
Maybe three miles.  
It's not enough.  
It's only the first day.  
Plus we got a late start, so...  
Gotta do better tomorrow.  
Maybe you could smoke in the water.  
Save time on the smoking breaks.  
The cigarettes would get wet.  
Not if you smoke the waterproof cigarettes.  
They're all the rage with the kids today.  
You guys are weird.  
What do you mean ''you guys''?  
He's the one that wants to swim all day.

**PAUL:**

I want to swim the Hudson.  
There's a difference.  
It's not like I'm going back and forth  
in a pool all day, like Stevie Brennan.  
(CHUCKLING)  
He was a mentally retarded boy  
we went to school with.  
Autistic.  
Whatever.  
That young man gave one hell of a blowjob.  
-Mmm...  
-You guys are truly demented.  
I don't know what you mean by that.  
Now, let's head back to shore  
so I can get a high colonic and a bite to eat.  
(SOFTLY) It's okay.  
It's okay. It's okay. It's okay.  
(EXHALES) It's okay.  
I haven't had sex in a year.  
No?  
You should get married then.  
I have sex like, God, almost six times a year.  
It's hard to keep up.  
What's that about?  
I don't know. Marriage, I guess.  
Lots of little resentments.

You're single.  
You ought to be having sex all the time.  
Get it while you can. You know?  
I guess.  
So what's this  
haven't-had-sex-for-a-year business?  
A girl like you should be getting  
some serious dick action.  
Yeah, I don't know.  
I think I've had too many lovers already.  
-Too many lovers?

**-LIZ:**

Not too much sex. But too many lovers.  
Paul! Hey, Paul!  
You think you've slept with  
too many women in your life?  
Too many?

**JEFF:**

Oh, yeah. Way too many.  
Wish I could turn back the clock.  
Where do I sign up for  
the too-many-lovers program?  
-You don't understand.  
-Yeah, apparently.  
(SIGHS) I haven't slept in a sleeping bag  
since camp. Inside a teepee.

**JEFF:**

Waterskiing. Teepees.  
(SIGHING) I wish I could go to camp now.  
It was fun.  
It had all sorts of old-school activities.  
Archery, water polo, capture the flag.  
Oh! I would love to play water polo.  
Paul, how much would you pay  
to play a real game of water polo?  
-Ten bucks?  
-Wrong! Fifty bucks.  
Wow. Water polo. (CHUCKLES)  
What didn't they have at that camp?  
Adequate adult supervision. It was great.  
Any lesbian experimentation going on?

(CHUCKLES) A little.

Why are you swimming down the river, Paul?

It's a charity stunt.

Why is it so important to get there  
by August 28th?

He has Yankee tickets that night.

You don't remember what the 28th is?

If you're talking about the day  
you came out to me,

I'm pretty sure that, that was  
the spring of senior year...

And we never really celebrate that.

This stuff never stops, does it?

**JEFF:**

The older I get, the more immature I get.

It's an odd phenomenon.

It's not one I claim to understand.

Enough about me.

What's the deal with the 28th?

Amy's anniversary.

August 28th is the fifth anniversary  
of her death.

To prepare for the occasion,  
I thought I'd do something interesting,  
something unique,  
to distinguish myself in some small way  
before I go.

Go where?

It's been five years.

Motherfucker!

**LIZ:**

What?

Jeff!

What's happening?

What... What was that about?

He's gonna kill himself  
when we finish the swim.

What's going on here? What...

When Amy was killed, Paul was a wreck.

He was completely destroyed.

Um... One night, after not being able  
to reach him for a couple days,

I went over to their apartment  
to see how he was.  
And when I got there, the door was open  
and there was a suicide note on the desk.  
And I remember  
we hung out on his roof sometimes,  
so I run up there.  
And there he was on the edge of the roof,  
-about to jump.  
-Jesus.  
Yeah. But I start talking to him.  
We start talking  
and I'm trying to convince him  
that he will feel better sometime.  
Amy had just died three months earlier  
and he just had to give it some time.  
And I told him to think about  
the people that care about him.  
And what about our friendship?  
That kind of thing.  
And I give him reason after reason  
not to do it,  
not the least of which  
is my car's parked below,  
I don't want him to land on it.  
Really?  
No, but I did say that at one point  
and he actually laughed.  
I got a laugh out of him,  
in spite of everything, and, uh,  
just kept him talking.  
Finally, after what seems like an hour,  
I say, 'I'll tell you what.  
'You absolutely have to give this more time.  
'Give it five years,  
'and if at the end of those five years  
you still want to die,  
'I promise not only not to interfere,  
'I'll kick in for a pack of razor blades,  
'and I'll give a eulogy at your funeral,  
telling 'em you did the right thing for you,  
'and I'll defend your decision  
to anybody who has a problem with it.'  
But he didn't want to wait five years.

He didn't want to wait five minutes.  
Thing is, he would've asked for  
the exact same thing  
if the situation was reversed,  
to give it more time.  
And when he realized that, I knew I had him.  
I knew he wasn't going to jump.  
We actually shook hands on it,  
and he seemed to gradually get better.  
And after a couple years,  
I put it in the back of my mind,  
and, uh, kind of forgot about it,  
until about two minutes ago.  
So, it's five years later and, uh...  
The time is actually here,  
and he still wants to die.  
(TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWING)  
(MOANS)  
Hi.  
Hi.  
Good morning.  
Where'd you get that?

**LIZ:**

I got one for Jeff, too, and a Coke for you.  
Oh, perfect. Thank you.  
I also found out  
we're camping on private property.  
Well, we're private people.  
Rise and shine, captain.  
We got swimming to do.  
The missus brought you some coffee.  
Really?  
Fantastic.  
Need to do six miles today, at least.  
You guys up for that?  
Considering all we have to do is  
sit in the boat drinking Mai Tais  
while you do the actual swimming,  
I'd say, yeah, I think we can swing it.  
I can't believe we're iust...  
We're just gonna go along like this?  
What would you prefer we do?  
Stop the trip. Take him to a hospital.

Get him committed or something.  
If we stop the trip and say,  
'No, we're not going along with this,'  
what's that going to accomplish?  
He wants to kill himself, he'll find a way.  
Maybe sooner rather than later.

**PAUL:**

-Yeah.

**-JEFF:**

Please don't.

**JEFF:**

We'll chat about the weather instead.

**PAUL:**

**JEFF:**

**PAUL:**

**JEFF:**

**PAUL:**

**JEFF:**

when you first get in.

**PAUL:**

Well, keep on trucking.

Will do, buddy.

(SOFTLY) I don't know

what the hell to do, okay?

I don't know what to do.

If he kills himself,

maybe he'll give me his television.

It's got a huge screen.

**MAN 1:**

**JEFF:**

**MAN 2:**

**MAN 1 :**

a few miles inland.

**JEFF:**

pollution's a top priority of his.

Let's get some hot dogs.

**JEFF:**

All right.

Put that around there.

We're looking for hot dogs.

I don't have any.

Fair enough.

Anybody know where we can

get something to eat?

Town's about a quarter-mile down the road.

Perry's has hot dogs.

-No, they don't.

-Yeah, they do.

-They're just not on the menu.

-Yeah, you have to ask for 'em.

**MAN 1:**

**MAN 2:**

-Who told you that?

-Nobody told me. I just know.

Don't worry, we'll get to the bottom of it.

Knock some heads together, if we have to.

Mmm-hmm.

Will you keep an eye on her for me?

**PAUL:**

I saw this thing on TV once,  
a special about the death penalty,  
and they were talking about  
prisoners' last meals, and this...

This chaplain was saying  
in his 30 years at Sing Sing,  
never once did he actually see  
a prisoner eat his last meal.

They always ended up  
giving it to the other prisoners.

We'll be passing Sing Sing.  
I know. That's why I mentioned it.  
Why did you mention it?  
Well, how can you be eating so happily  
if you know you're going to die soon?  
Well, A, this isn't my last meal,  
B, I'm hungry, and C, I love food.

**LIZ:**

That... Isn't that one reason  
not to kill yourself, right there?  
I mean, not to mention  
the millions of other reasons.  
I mean, you were like a little kid  
when we got those donuts on the drive up.  
I'm sure they'll have donuts in heaven.  
-What?  
-I'm sure they'll have donuts in heaven.  
-They have donuts in heaven.  
-Right.  
I mean, if one believes in the concept  
of heaven as a paradise,  
not really a stretch to believe  
they have donuts there.

**-PAUL:**

-Well, A,  
even if they do have donuts in heaven,  
and I can't believe I'm actually  
discussing these issues seriously,  
what about B,  
which is the fact that most people  
don't believe suicides go to heaven,  
they go to hell?  
I don't believe in hell, or that suicides  
would necessarily end up there.  
I'm not saying I believe that either  
but I'm certainly not sure there's a heaven.  
Me neither.  
Yet you're sure there's donuts there,  
if it does exist?

**PAUL:**

Paul, you've got to get some therapy.



You can't just...  
I tried therapy, Liz.  
All kinds. Groups, Prozac, Zoloft.  
I tried praying  
and then one day I just stopped.  
Why?  
Because Amy and the baby were still dead.

**LIZ:**

But that doesn't mean that  
you can't find a way to go on, somehow.  
Lots of people have suffered  
terrible tragedies and horrific losses  
and continued with their lives.  
They found a way to go on.  
Not all of them.  
Some of them killed themselves.  
But most do go on, Paul. They find a way.  
Maybe they were stronger than me,  
but it was their choice to go on  
and not someone else's.  
I'm sorry, but, like, grief  
or despair or whatever  
is just not a good reason to kill...  
To commit suicide. It's just not.  
Not a good enough reason for you, you mean.  
It's not a good enough reason for anyone!  
It's selfish to kill yourself.  
It's a hostile act.  
I don't have any siblings,  
my parents are dead,  
my wife and child are dead,  
so why can't I join my family?  
What about Jeff?  
What about your other friends?

**PAUL:**

to stay alive for them?  
I wouldn't stop Jeff from killing himself,  
if that's truly what he wanted to do.  
You want to kill yourself,  
it's your absolute right.  
Thanks. But who would drive the boat?  
Good point. Hang in there, buddy.

Things will start looking up.

You're an asshole.

And you're an idiot.

What'd I do?

(TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWING)

I'm pretty sure 'slack tide' means... It's like...

Slack. It's calm. It's not moving either way.

Remember, the Hudson is an estuary  
where the water flows in, then flows out.

Right, so ideally you want

to be swimming at ebb tide, right?

Maximum ebb best of all, where you'd be  
just coasting along practically.

I know, so why was I fighting tides  
half the morning?

I don't know how to read the chart.

Well, we were beginning to think  
you killed yourself.

You okay?

Went window shopping.

I'm cold and sore and everything aches.

What do you care?

You'll be dead soon anyway.

(THUNDER RUMBLING)

**LIZ:**

your circulation, you know?

What do I care? I'll be dead soon anyway.

Douch.

Maybe we should take tomorrow off.

Rest a day.

We could...

I don't know,

take a factory tour or something.

See where plastic's made.

Can't fall behind.

Then we'll motor down the river  
for a few miles at the end of the day  
and nobody will know the difference.

I'll know the difference.

I want to do this right.

I'd like to accomplish

this one thing in my life.

I want to actually do something

instead of just talking about doing things.

You know what I mean?

Let's get a milkshake.

This guy really didn't get enough time  
in the mixer.

Neither of them, Mom. Right.

Yes.

Maybe tomorrow.

When are we getting there?

When do you think we'll get there?

**-JEFF:**

-We'll be there tomorrow afternoon.

**-LIZ:**

-I want to do 10 miles tomorrow.

**-LIZ:**

-Okay.

-I'm serious. I want to do 10 miles.

-I heard you the first time.

Neither of them, Mom! Okay?

Uh, sometime tomorrow afternoon, probably.

Will Psthule be there?

I'm just asking. Suzanne?

All right, well, we'll all have dinner. Okay.

Okay. Okay!

Bye.

All set. She's looking forward to it.

Faggots!

**LIZ:**

Hey, did you sleep okay?

Yeah.

We need to get going.

The current's really moving.

Maximum ebb, people!

Let's go while we got it!

**JEFF:**

No kidding.

And we're going right along with it.

I made him a promise.

-You don't have to honor it.

**-JEFF:**

What good is giving your word  
to a friend if you don't plan on keeping it?

-(MOSQUITO BUZZING)

-Shit!

You all right?

Just swimming down the river.

**OFFICER:**

I'm swimming down to the Verrazano Bridge.

Verrazano Bridge? It's like 90 miles.

Not all at once. You know, day by day.

Everything okay?

Everything okay here?

I'm fine. Really.

He wants to swim the entire river.

It's one of those, uh, endurance things.

Kind of, like, that Iditarod dog sled race  
they have in Alaska.

Except there's no other racers.

Right.

You got a permit for this?

No.

Do I need one?

Just be careful, okay?

Thank you.

-Do you know what we're eating tonight?

-Nope. My aunt will be making dinner.

-There'll be an aunt there?

-Yep. My cousin, also. The whole gang.

You don't sound too enthused.

You sure you want to do this?

We can always stay at a motel, if you want.

We'll be fine.

(THUDDING)

Fuck me!

What are the chances your mother  
will have homemade sticky buns

-waiting for us at the house?

-Near zero.

-What are the chances your stepfather will...

-Mother's boyfriend!

What are the chances your mother's

boyfriend will commit homosexual rape  
upon my person?

(CAR HONKING)

Your taxi's here!

Hi, Mom!

Now, that one was built by a prosperous  
Dutch merchant in the 1800s.

Made an absolute fortune in imports.

Unfortunately, his grandson frittered it all  
away and it had to be sold a few years back.

**-JEFF:**

-Yes, a shame.

You used to play with his grandson, Liz.

Do you remember?

We used to smoke pot by the river  
in high school, if that's what you mean.

Oh, don't be sassy!

And what about you, Seth?

What does your family do?

-Jeff.

-What?

-Jeff.

**-MOM:**

Forgive me, Jeff.

So what does your family do?

My mother's a college professor, retired,  
and my father is a physician.

Oh! A doctor. That must've come in handy  
when you got the flu.

Ha! Actually, he was the kind of guy  
who was so wrapped up in his work  
and research and whatever else,  
you could be walking around the house  
with a bloody stump and he wouldn't notice.

My aunt had a leg amputated  
and believe me, Jeff, you'd notice.

Right. I mean, he probably would have  
noticed something like that.

And what do you do?

**JEFF:**

Et vous?

Et vous?

Hey! Hello? What's your background?

My father was a lawyer.

My mother was a homemaker.

They both died.

Aw, lord. Plane crash?

**PAUL:**

They both had good lives.

Thank goodness for small favors, huh?

**PAUL:**

That house is amazing.

The Williams.

More divorce and alcoholism in that family  
than I care to discuss.

Troubled family, huh?

I don't want to discuss it. Please.

The youngest is in jail, if you can believe it.

And the middle one is a... A gay.

Oh, look at that one. That is huge!

The Vanderhooks.

Their money came from the railroads.

They had nine children.

Seven.

Well, I never counted.

Mostly boys, it seemed.

And poor Emily.

Oh, she died so tragically young.

Not that the father seemed to mind.

No, he had a new wife by the end of the year.

She couldn't have been a day over 21.

She did not wear a bra.

(LIZ LAUGHING)

You think that's funny?

Not wearing a bra is ha-ha funny?

No, not the lack of bra, in and of itself, no.

Well, let me tell you,

there was nothing funny about it.

Teenage wife,

prancing around in front of 12 boys

with no bra on all day!

So when does school start, dear?

The Wednesday after Labor Day.

I heard they were making  
the children in New York City  
start school in August these days,  
because they were so hopelessly  
behind in their studies.

-It's not true.

-Hmm.

Do you think they should start in August?

Or even July?

Right, like she's really going to be  
in favor of teaching all summer.

(MOM CLEARING THROAT)

Paul, we never did get to what it is you do.

That is, when you're not  
swimming the Amazon,

or crossing the Great Ponds.

I've been writing for a business magazine.

Mostly personal investments,  
money markets, IRAs, that kind of thing.

That sounds like a drag.

Suzanne...

No. Actually, she's right. It's... It isn't fun.

Well, maybe this little vacation  
will re-energize you and you can go back  
to work with a whole new attitude.

Not that I would want to write  
a financial column.

Or even read one.

-I'm not going back to work.

**-AUNT KAREN:**

Oh? Well, what's next?

Riding a bicycle to the Yukon?

**PAUL:**

Nothing, really.

**MOM:**

**PAUL:**

People don't just do nothing, Paul.

(WHISPERING) You have to do something.

Well, actually, if you really want to know,  
I'm going to kill myself.

(NERVOUS LAUGHTER)

He's joking. He's...

These guys have a real  
deadpan sense of humor.

Bedpan?

Deadpan.

Bedpan, too.

**PAUL:**

But if you'd rather not discuss it, which is  
more than fine with me, let's not.

Please. Let's do.

(STAMMERING)

What is all this nonsense  
about killing yourself?

Why?

Because I've lived my life.

Uh-huh. You're all of 21 years old!

Thirty-five, actually.

Well, I don't care if you're 36.

It's still a poor reason to commit suicide.

**AUNT KAREN:**

Suicide is not the answer to anything.

Particularly growing older.

If it was, we'd all be dead.

(CHUCKLING)

Look, I'm way over 21,  
and you don't see me committing suicide.

I'm no spring chicken either,  
and I'm still here.

You know what? I'm...

I'm sorry I brought this up.

I'm sorry.

Good luck closing that barn door.

It actually was a ioke, okay?

I'm not going to kill myself.

I'm sorry I said that. I'm sorry.

Um... I was just making conversation.

I do not like those boys.

Which one are you dating?

I'm not dating either of them, Mom.

I just hate to see you throw yourself into  
the arms of the first man who smiles at you



just because you're getting older.  
Do yourself a favor.  
Forget about marriage and children.  
It's not worth the sacrifice.  
-Thanks.  
-Oh, stop with that!  
You know what I'm saying.  
You gotta look out for number one,  
which is you,  
not some man.  
I'll tell you something.  
I don't give Pastiche a thing, until I got my...  
(WHISPERS) You know what.  
I really don't want to discuss this.  
Uh, yeah, I think she does some good work  
with the right roles.  
I didn't say she was better than you,  
just she does what she does.  
And no, I don't think she's prettier than you.  
Well, yeah, she's younger.  
I mean, that's just a fact.  
Right.  
No, she's not.  
We'll talk about this when I get home, okay?  
Yes, I gotta get off the phone.  
'Cause it's not polite to talk for an hour  
on the phone at someone's house.  
Yeah, whatever, 20 minutes.  
Yes, definitely.  
Uh, no, nothing's wrong.  
I don't know what you perceive in my voice,  
but everything's fine.  
I'll call you soon. Bye.  
High maintenance!  
So you're an actor, huh?  
Have I seen you in anything?  
Other than the dining room during dinner?  
I doubt it.  
Unless you happened to be living  
in the Phoenix-Scottsdale area  
a few years back,  
where you would certainly recognize me  
from the Lem's Auto Insurance ad  
as the poor bastard

who slams his car into a hearse.  
It ran all the time.  
I think I missed that one.  
Well, I have it on tape.  
Be happy to send it to you.  
I could even autograph the, uh, tape sleeve.  
You know that self-deprecating humor  
is usually used  
as a defense mechanism for those  
with actual low self-esteem, right?  
That would be me.  
Which doesn't mean it isn't funny.  
Thanks.  
But what I'm really good at  
is bartending.  
Hmm, someone's gotta make the drinks, huh?  
Yeah, I guess so.  
So, uh...  
What do you study in college?  
Actually, I'm a drama major.  
Another actor.  
No, I'm just kidding. I'm pre-med.  
Really? So, you want to be a doctor?  
No. I'm fucking with you.  
I'm just a regular liberal arts,  
nothing special, no-real-skills-learned major.  
You'll make a great temp someday.  
Thank you.  
So, um, your friend in there,  
he sounded serious about  
wanting to kill himself.  
He is.  
Hmm, interesting. It's his life.  
You think so?  
No, it's your life.  
Let's take a walk.  
Where to?  
I don't know.  
I'm gonna go for a walk.  
Come join me, if you like.  
And that's when I knew, right then and there,  
that I could never eat another tomato!  
And that's when I knew, right then and there,  
that I could never eat another tomato!

(LAUGHING)

(DOOR CLOSES)

She's not on the porch.

Tell her she'll just have to walk home.

Oh, dear, I'm not going to tell her anything.

I'm going to bed.

Why don't you pin a note to Pasthule's shirt?

-Nice meeting you, Paul.

-Good night.

Good night, Aunt Karen.

We'll tell Suzanne you left.

No, let her figure it out the hard way.

(WHISPERING) Let's roll him for his billfold.

If only he had one.

(PAUL SIGHS)

God, I'm sorry I brought you here.

I'm sorry I brought me here.

-Why?

-My family is weird.

All families are weird.

Do you miss yours?

Of course.

They good to you?

(WHISPERS) Amy was great.

And the baby, well...

Um, I wasn't... I wasn't talking about...

I was talking about your parents.

Wow, I'm sorry.

Oh, no.

(SIGHS)

Of course.

I miss them, too.

I want you to taste me.

I want you to taste me

and then I want you to fuck me.

Wanna taste me? Do you wanna fuck me?

(SUZANNE MOANS)

Taste me.

(PAUL SIGHS)

**PAUL:**

Good morning.

Wow.

**LIZ:**

What time is it?

**Um, almost 11:**

Really?

(WHISPERS) Yeah.

We should get going.

Do you think there's any Cokes in the house?

Probably Pepsi.

Pepsi?

What kind of flophouse  
is your mother running here?

Bonjour.

I'm such an idiot!

Yup.

How was it?

She's kinda nutty.

In a good way or a bad way?

A little of both.

Was our absence remarked upon?

Pasthule went nuts.

Is that, that guy's name?

(CHUCKLING)

I don't know.

Yeah, he nodded off.

Mom went to bed, the aunt went home.

-And what'd you guys do?

-Nothing. Just went to bed.

You're really going back into that water  
and swim all the way to New York?

Or are you just goooing on me?

Goofing.

-What?

-The word you mean, it's... It's goofing.

Oh, who cares what the word is, dear?

I'm asking him a question.

Yes, I'm going to swim  
all the way to New York.

What do you do when you finish?

Look for a new job, I guess.

There you go!

Can't hurt to see what's out there,  
now, can it?

Nope.

Keep my options open.

**MOM:**

The sorrow that man has known.  
Wish I could have grabbed  
a shower this morning.  
(ROLLERCOASTER PLAYING)  
There's my favorite  
Rollercoaster  
Next to the blue water  
There's the sun  
Going down  
Creating that fluorescent glow  
Reminding me I'll never be able  
To relive this day  
Except in memory  
There's those big  
Barking fish  
In the concrete stream  
But where's Dad?  
And where is Mom?  
Looks like from here on out  
It's me and you  
Looks like from here on out  
It's iust me and you  
(WHISPERING)  
Can I sleep with you tonight?  
Tie our sleeping bags together or something?  
What are we gonna tell him?  
Don't worry about it.  
I know how to handle it.  
Liz and I are shacking up tonight.  
You're on your own.  
When did this develop?  
I wasn't on the phone that long.  
Last night.  
Christ!  
It was one big orgy back at the house, huh?  
She knows. I can hear it in her voice,  
she knows.

**LIZ:**

She's 20 years old.  
I didn't find that part to be a problem.

What are you going to do?

-I might not go home.

-What?

**JEFF:**

I'm tired of living like this.

Oh, man.

(GROANS)

I feel so drained.

And I do not want to do this anymore.

**-PAUL:**

-What?

Make it work somehow. It's not impossible.

You could have a future, a child.

You just need to hang in there  
and make it work.

You're giving me advice?

Yeah.

What are you gonna do?

I don't know. Keep swimming, I guess.

(THUNDER RUMBLING)

(THUNDER RUMBLING)

It's a rainout!

Let's go get some breakfast.

Take in a movie or something.

Maybe it'll clear up later.

No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Look at the current.

We can make excellent time.

-Are you kidding?

-What? The rain?

Who cares?

The people who normally stay dry  
on this swimming trip, genius.

It may not matter to you in the water,  
but I'll take a dildo in my ass-pussy  
before I sit on a boat going  
two miles an hour while it's raining.

Let's go.

No.

We're gonna wait till it clears up.

If you guys don't want to, that's fine.

But I want to reach New York by August 28th,

so I'm swimming.

You can meet me downriver later.

(THUNDER RUMBLING)

You know, it actually feels kind of warmer.

(YELLS)

**LIZ:**

(PANTING)

Hey.

The library in this town sucks.

They have, like, two books and a newspaper.

What are you doing?

Is it true, if you cut a worm in half,

you get two worms?

I think you get three.

How's he doing?

Hey, sorry about that, uh, you know, that

whole attempted murder thing this morning,

but I'm over it.

**LIZ:**

It's really... It's amazing here!

**JEFF:**

near this big dump,

where I saw these huge rats fighting

with these seagulls over the rancid garbage.

Let me tell you, this definitely beats that.

Have you ever seen such a lovely sight?

Not in a long time.

There's... There's so much more beauty

in the world, too, you know? There's...

There's visual, artistic, emotional.

And love.

(LIZ SNIFFLING)

I can't believe we don't have

any weenies to roast.

Or marshmallows.

We could throw Paul in the fire.

Watch him iump out so fast

it'll make our heads spin.

So, how are you planning on killing yourself?

You don't live in that tall building anymore.

I'm not sure, really. Maybe a gun.

We're not gun people.  
You're not gonna shoot yourself.  
You don't understand.  
Help me understand.  
It's not your fault, Liz,  
and it's not your responsibility  
to try and save me, please.  
Look after your own lives, guys, not mine.

**JEFF:**

You're a part of my life,  
an important part of it,  
and you've become a part of Liz's life, too,  
so, uh, we are worrying about our own lives.  
Got it?

Look, I'm not asking you to agree with me  
on this or anything.

I'm just asking you to respect my wishes.

We all have to die sometime,  
so what's wrong with choosing  
how and when we die ourselves?

If I were a quadriplegic with burns  
over 90% of my body,  
you wouldn't try and make me  
stay alive, would you?

But you're not even close to being like that.  
You're fine.

I'm not fine at all!

Nobody's saying emotional suffering  
isn't valid, Paul.

(STUTTERING) It... 'Cause it is,  
and clearly you're not fine,  
but the difference between  
a quadriplegic and you  
is that you can heal someday.  
That's your opinion.

**JEFF:**

whether you think it is or not.  
People can and do heal from emotional pain,  
and I'm sick of you saying it's hopeless.  
You want us to let you die?  
You want us to drive this boat  
down the river for you?



Then make us a promise,  
and that is to at least consider the possibility  
that you still haven't given this enough time,  
that you could be wrong about everything.

What was he like as a kid?

He was shorter.

He was unusual, actually.

Um... One part of him was  
confident, fun, adventurous.

Then there was always this other side,  
for as long as I can remember.

This vulnerability, this, uh,  
fragile part of him.

Good old Indian Point.

Hey, wanna get a move-along there?

Uh, we wanna get past these things.

I'm no Mark Spitzer.

Or Stevie Brennan for that matter.

Is it true the water is warmer  
near these plants

'cause of the crap they discharge  
into the river?

(YELLING) No. It's freezing!

**JEFF:**

We can crash at my parents',  
'cause they're in Nantucket for the summer.  
At their other house that they can afford,  
'cause they worked hard  
and made the right choices in life,  
while I didn't, and therefore live  
in a small, no-AC apartment.  
But whatever.

**JEFF:**

a set of keys to their parents' house.'  
It's just my life philosophy.  
Think your mother  
still keeps Nestlé's Quik around?

**JEFF:**

-Nilla wafers, too.

**-PAUL:**

**-LIZ:**

-Yes.

Welcome to my former home.

Wish I had appreciated it more at the time.

(SIGHS)

**LIZ:**

Don't leave us, Paul.

Don't leave me.

**PAUL:**

(LIZ MOANING)

(TOILET FLUSHING)

That ought to clear things out for a while.

It's nice up here, huh?

**PAUL:**

forts in the woods?

We spent weeks on those things.

**JEFF:**

I loved building those forts.

They were so elaborate.

You know, you could stay here

for a while, if you want.

My parents won't be back till October.

You could just hang around up here.

Take walks in the woods,

eat Nilla wafers, just hang out and relax.

We should get back to the river.

(FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING)

**JEFF:**

with my dad's gay porn stash,

there's gonna be hell to pay.

Liz.

You okay?

He wants to get going.

Mmm. I know.

Amy. Olivia.

(INAUDIBLE)

(CAR CRASHING)

(SOBBING)

**PAUL:**

(PAUL EXHALES LOUDLY)

(HOLES PLAYING)

Time

All the long, red lines

That take control

Of all the smokelike streams

That flow into your dreams

The big, blue, open sea

That can't be crossed

That can't be climbed

Just torn between

Oh, the two white lines

Distant gods and faded signs

Of all those blinking lights

You had to pick the one tonight

Holes

Dug by little moles

Angry, jealous spies

Got telephones for eyes

Come to you as friends

All those endless ends

That can't be tied

Oh, they make me laugh

And always make me cry

Till they drop like flies

And sink like polished stones

Of all the stones I throw

How does that old song go?

How does that old song go?

Congratulations, man.

-Good work.

-Thank you.

Thank you.

Some rough waters at the end there.

(LAUGHING)

Yeah.

Well, you made it through.

Let's get back in the boat,

motor over to Chinatown,

get some celebration dinner. All right?

Come on, man. My treat.

**PAUL:**

What?

I'm not getting back in the boat.

What are you gonna do?

Aw, Jesus, man.

Thank you for everything.

Really.

Paul.

Don't get back in that water.

Do not get back in that water!

Paul, please.

Just get back into the boat. We'll iust...

We'll go home.

I'm sorry.

Where are you going?

Where the hell are you going?

Paul.

It's okay, Jeff. It really is.

You've done all you can.

You've been a good friend, a great one.

Please, keep the deal we made.

I'm gonna go get him.

If he wants to turn around, he will.

(SALVADOR SANCHEZ PLAYING)

Salvador Sanchez

Arrived and vanished

Only 23

With so much speed

Owning the highway

Mexico City

Bred so many

But none quite like him

Sweet warrior

Pure magic matador

Pancho Villa

Would never rest

Till 1925

He closed his eyes

Till Manila stars would rise

Ghosts of the Philippines

Choirs and angels singing

Ukulele strings play for his legend

Iloilo King

Why have they gone?

felled by leather  
All alone, bound together  
Benny ''Kid'' Paret came a good way  
To climb up gray skies to lift his hands  
Stopped by the better man  
Eyes of Las Villas  
Cry for sons  
Lost on distant shores, unforeseen horrors  
Struck and delivered him  
Why have they gone?  
felled by leather  
All alone, bound together  
Where have they gone?  
felled by leather  
All alone, bound together