This story is as amusing as the one that we live here on this earth, that is, if we were to see ourselves from a distance with smiling eyes. What wonder, what incandescence! to be able to strip ourselves of pomp and circumstance. It’s been some time now that the theory of the superego was surpassed. All we need now is to open our eyes and see ourselves boldly and brazenly.

The Tip of the Iceberg is a passing glance at how we wish to be seen, at how we search deliriously for love and are burdened by the everyday weight of life that squashes us in our pursuits. We are forever in exile from ourselves, in exile from the truths we refuse to accept, whose baseness we evade fleetingly through convex mirrors of deceptive reasoning and distorted images. The foot replaces the head, the hat conceals the face. Words mask feeling. But the depth of the iceberg is our very grief, and it moves impetuously raising storms, crows, messengers of ill fortune, roots that invade our universe of plastic flowers, toads which try to reach the sky and fall instead and splat and splash against us, threatening our precarious stability - a stability staggering for its balance upon razor sharp stiletto heels. Can a human being live on the tip of the iceberg without slipping, descending into grief? Do we need little oak boxes to protect us, store our worries and serve as our amulets? What stirs the fire of a verb, a question mark, syntax, punctuation or the lack thereof? What stirs an inverted or illuminated word, the spoken word turned into a meow? What is shape of the iceberg that contains silence?

bea Cármina

translated by Caridad Svich
**CHARACTERS**

*This play could be performed with four actors.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roberta</td>
<td>Agua’s mother. Very attractive. With gorgeous, sculptural legs. Ever since Agua was born, she’s retreated from reality and lives more and more in a world governed by her own obsessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lope</td>
<td>Roberta’s husband, Amelia’s lover, and Agua’s father. Ever since Agua was born, he can’t stand Roberta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agua</td>
<td>Autistic. She drags a suitcase around with her. Sybil, the cat, is inside of it. Between 13-16 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>Lope’s lover and cousin. May be played by same actor who plays Roberta. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliverio</td>
<td>Serial killer, adores Roberta’s shoes and wants to possess her collection. Hates Agua and Sybil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teodorovich</td>
<td>Psychiatrist, uses his patients to experiment with them. Silent figure. May be played by same actor who plays Lope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeus</td>
<td>the god, lives on Mount Olympus. May be played by actor who plays Lope.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGUA (water) enters, dragging a suitcase. Inside of the suitcase is a mewling cat. Her presence on stage is constant, save for occasional moments when she enters and exits, at the director’s discretion. When Agua is offstage, the dissonant music of a violin is heard, reminiscent of a mewling cat. ROBERTA enters.

Roberta.- Agua, take Sybil out. (to the audience) A cat has to eat, whether her name is Theorem, the square root of a parallelogram or Sybil. Think of it this way: it’s as if you were stuck in an elevator, and spent the entire day going up and down, and down and up. You’d have to throw up eventually, even if you hadn’t eaten anything. All that mewling…and scratching…I hate Schoenberg’s music.

LOPE enters with a cup of coffee and newspaper. A moment. Roberta looks at the garden.

Roberta.- I don’t remember that in the garden yesterday.
Lope.- No?
Roberta.- Yesterday or ever.
Lope.- Mmmmmmm…
Roberta.- I walked through the garden two days ago. Yesterday I watered it. I’m not blind. I see things.
Lope.- Ah…
Roberta.- The gardener does whatever I say.
So, it couldn’t have been him.
Lope.- Tsktsktsktsk…
Roberta.- I’ve known him for years.
Lope.- Hohohoho…
Roberta.- He’s a pro.
Lope.- NNNNiiiiii…
Roberta.- If another gardener came through here, I wouldn’t have let him in.
Lope.- Ah…
Roberta.- It couldn’t have been Amelia. She would’ve told me.
Lope.- Amelia?
Roberta.- Did you come through here with your little squad and ruin my
garden?

Lope.- In the afternoon?

Roberta.- It was you, wasn’t it?

Lope.- Today?

Roberta.- Last night my flowers weren’t wilting.

Lope.- Yesterday?

Roberta.- Rose buttons bound by roots curled against their thorns. They’ll asphyxiate.

Lope.- Asphyxiate?

Roberta.- They’ll asphyxiate and die.

Lope.- That’s impossible, right?

Roberta.- The gardener wouldn’t come sneaking around at midnight to make this mess… You slink about, furtively, at dawn, even though you say otherwise. Even if you don’t take the trouble to tell me what time you get home… dammit!

Lope.- One has to work to progress.

Roberta.- Or regress.

Lope.- Shrink, you mean?

Roberta.- This house stinks.

Lope.- The flowers, the roots…?

Roberta.- You should take a shower to get rid of that stink.

Lope.- Good night…. see you later.

Roberta.- Send someone to tear up those roots; they’re killing my garden.

...

_Lope walks away._

Roberta.- Lope, I’m talking to you!

_Lope turns around._

Lope.- If you told me that the flowers or the plants were covered in dust, that they were torn or faded or had been warped by time…but that they’ve wilted…?

Roberta.- Flowers rot and…

Lope.- You’re obsessed with what plagues your garden. If it’s not crows, it’s scarecrows, or creeping roots. We’ll send someone to spray the flowers…
Roberta.- … and eggs abound in the rot.
Lope.- You should see doctor Teodorovich.
Roberta.- …mountains of worms crawl, walking piles of bugs invade our dreams
and stain our sheets.
Lope.- A tranquilizer.
Roberta.- A useless dawn plagued by eggs, worms that crawl on our
hands, legs, chests…vermin that enters our skin, sucks us dry, and leaves
us in waste.
Lope.- You need a sleeping pill. It’ll do you good.
_Lope exits._
Roberta.- *(to the audience)* Wouldn’t it bother you if you suddenly saw hundreds
of roots, coarse roots that overnight entwined themselves through your tender,
newly planted clusters of orange blossoms, and arose like snakes through the
hydrangeas, sweet poppies and blooming rosebuds of your garden? Can you
honestly tell me that it wouldn’t infuriate you to the point that you’d want to tear
out the roots of your hair, throw yourself against the walls of the house until
your head split open and your brains scattered everywhere like gobs of paint?
From now on, nothing but nightmarish roots. How is it possible that all of a
sudden roots and more roots emerge from the ground, crawl over the fence and
break through my roof? Would it seem normal to you that a person’s nerves
would all of a sudden burst through their skin, snake up and through their body
until their face was completely covered and their eyes were blinded? Wouldn’t
you have a heart attack if you looked in the mirror and saw such a horrific sight?
Will the roots grow and grow until they burst through the house? Agua! Agua!
We have to go shopping.

_Agua drags her suitcase. Sybil the cat is inside. Agua hands Roberta a small oak box
and a key. Roberta opens the box and takes out from inside of it another box, which
is identical in shape and design to the larger one, except it is smaller. She hangs it
around her neck._

Roberta.- You had breakfast, right?
Agua.- And my hand?
Roberta.- I told Amelia to give you breakfast.
Agua.- I can’t find it.
Roberta.- Amelia?
Agua.- That there, you call that a hand?
Roberta.- The same as this one.
Agua.- Well I can’t find it anywhere.
Roberta.- These are your hands, Agua.
Agua.- Who says?
Roberta.- Linguists, historians, academics, translators…
Agua.- They lie.
Roberta.- Why would they lie?
Agua.- Because they’re grown ups.
Roberta.- A hand is a hand.
Agua.- Well, I can’t find what those grown-ups call a hand.
Roberta.- It’s right here, child.
Agua.- Why smack one hand against the other?
Roberta.- Did somebody hit you? Hurt you?
Agua.- That’s not my hand.
Roberta.- Was it Amelia?
Agua.- It’s dad’s hand, right? If only…! Amelia’s? It’s not mine.
Roberta.- Are you saying they stole it?
Agua.- My hand…suddenly…vanished.
Roberta.- Want me to help you look for it?
Agua.- Between one meow and another…poof, whoosh, wow…it disappeared.
Roberta.- Just like that?
Agua.- One listens, one turns around.
Roberta.- Who turned around?
Agua.- Besides Sybil?
Roberta.- A key?
Agua.- One turn… or two? One turn or two?
Roberta.- She locked you up?
Agua.- Five little fingers on the other side of the door.
Roberta.- She dared punish you?
Agua.- Without a hand or fingers, it’s impossible to greet anyone.
Roberta.- Greet a…stranger?
Agua.- Agua hiding with her ugly stump.
Roberta.- She locked you up so you wouldn’t see what they were doing?
Agua.- Agua slipped through the eye like a cyclone.
Roberta.- Do I know who it was? Do you?
Agua.- And Sybil can’t walk, because how could she without feet?
Roberta.- Amelia! Amelia!
Agua.- I want my hand.
Roberto.- I’ll help you find it. Amelia!
Agua.- If you can, so can I.
Roberta.- Amelia!
Agua.- I’ll look for it in dad’s bedroom…
Roberta.- It’s best if you looked in yours.
Agua.- Amelia must’ve stolen it.
Roberta.- She was in my bedroom? Amelia! Did she shout at you? Amelia! Did she put on my shoes? Amelia! Did they fill my garden with roots? Amelia! Did she hurt you?
Agua.- Hurt you more.
Roberta.- Me?
Agua.- Shshshshshshshshshshshshsh

*Agua drags the suitcase. Sybil meows from inside of it. Sybil and Agua exit.*

*Roberta on the phone:*

Roberta.- Doctor Teodorovich please. … It’s urgent… When he gets in, tell him to call Roberta, Agua’s mother…she’s had a relapse, it’s urgent… Thanks. I’ll wait for his call.

*Time shift. A day or so later. Lope enters.*

Lope.- You’re still up (at this hour)?
Roberta.- Amelia’s gone.
Lope.- Where?
Roberta.- I fired her.
Lope.- You’re crazy.

Roberta.- My garden’s full of roots because of her.

Lope.- Agua needs someone to take care of her when you’re not at home.

Roberta.- I work from home. Dog therapy.

Lope.- Canine counseling? You’re a compulsive shopper, Roberta. Face it. You need Amelia.

Roberta.- I only buy shoes.

Lope.- Agua gets sick when she goes shopping with you for four or five hours; she doesn’t sleep. She throws up. Can’t you see that what you do is bad for her? Three hundred minutes from one shoe store to another? One thousand eight hundred minutes from one mall to another? What else do you do with yourself but buy shoes? Why don’t you wait to wear them at home? I’ve seen them all, and they’ve all been used, and don’t lie to me that you wear them out of every store, only to buy another pair and do the same. Where do you go to show off your new shoes?

Roberta.- I didn’t want her around anymore.

…

Roberta.- I didn’t want Amelia in the house.

Lope.- She’s my cousin.

Roberta.- Even if she were your mother.

Lope.- What bug bit you, eh?

Roberta.- What could an uneducated woman like her teach our child?

Lope.- She didn’t have the same opportunity you had to study and have two useless careers.

Roberta.- She’s illiterate… ignorant.

Lope.- What bit you? A little pest?

Roberta.- She wasn’t good to Agua.

Lope.- (are you) Confirming, deducing, opining, affirming or dreaming?
Roberta.- I didn’t want her around anymore.
Lope.- Give me a reason.
Roberta.- She brought someone home.
Lope.- She brought… whom…?
Roberta.- She locked Agua up so that she wouldn’t see what they were doing.
Lope.- I’m asking, demanding, that you give me a reason… not a delusion.
Roberta.- She locked Agua up in her room.
Lope.- Amelia told you this?
Roberta.- Agua did.
Lope.- Since when do you interpret Agua’s half-formed phrases accurately?
Roberta.- Well, I fired her.
Lope.- Since when do you feel sufficiently capable to translate the primitive thoughts of your child, her syntax plagued by chaos…?
Roberta.- What does it matter to you if Amelia’s here or not…
Lope.- Don’t tell me you’re a psychic now!
Roberta.- … if you never stop by my house for a second.

Roberta exits.

Lope.- It’s our house, don’t forget, ours. Amelia adores Agua, I know it, and the decisions that have to do with Agua: we’ll take together. She’s our daughter, not just yours, and I won’t allow you to decide things for her without consulting with me first, and making sure we agree. And if I’m at the firm, you have my phone number. And my mobile. And my e-mail. In case you’ve forgotten: it’s Lopelope@yahoo.com.mx

Lights and time shift. Flashback to a few days earlier. [Translator’s note: the following scene is optional.]

Amelia enters (she is played by the actor who plays Roberta).

They kiss and laugh.

Amelia.- Shut your pretty little mouth, cousin. Agua can hear us.
Lope.- What? Roberta didn’t take her with her?

Amelia.- Agua didn’t want to leave with your wife, even though I tried to convince her. Every time Agua goes out with her she gets so tired; it makes her crazy. It’s a wonder Agua doesn’t get worse every day she’s with that woman. Your wife’s a spectacle, a…

Lope.- I need to go.

Amelia.- She won’t leave her room.

Lope.- With Agua in the house, I can’t…

Amelia.- You’re the one who called me up and told me how you were going to make love to me, you’re the one who whispered this and that in my ear before we opened the door to the garage… you can’t leave me this way, my little monkey. I’ll end up trawling the bars like a bitch in heat.

Lope.- You should’ve told me she was here.

Amelia.- Like a cross nailed to a bedroom wall.

Lope.- She wanders through the house night and day like a phantom.

Amelia.- I gave her the new medicine. That Teodorovich is something. He knows how much these poor head cases like Agua suffer. I told him what your wife should’ve told him years ago: that Agua was hysterical all the time. He tended to it immediately and gave me the prescription.

Lope.- Agua floods this house. One never knows where or when’s she going to surface…

Amelia.- I worry about your daughter’s well-being even though she’s not mine.

Lope.- If she wakes up and sees us?

Amelia.- With that medicine?

Lope.- You closed her door?

Amelia.- Under lock and key.

Lope.- You shouldn’t have.

Amelia.- How I love the sound of your knob when it turns…
Lope.- She’s claustrophobic.

Amelia.- …if you don’t want to, then leave.

Lope.- And I love your breasts in my hands.

Amelia.- I burn when we’re sitting there at the table. I take off my shoes, under the table… and she’s there sipping her soup so properly, stupidly nibbling on a tiny crouton between her teeth, acting as if she were all elegant, while my foot caresses your ankle and moves up your leg, and she goes on about “the crows in the garden that won’t let her sleep and their nightmarish caws” She stands there looking at the garden and you… oh you accidentally throw something to the floor, and bend down and lick my naked feet…only a moment ago…only a moment…

Lope.- I love how you say the word “moment,” it reminds me of when I was fourteen years old…

Amelia.- and then you leave me, wet, saliva all over: and the foolish chump stays there, looking out the window…

Lope.- …in Cuba you’d pull me into the bedroom while Dad and Mom were away at their embassy functions…

Amelia.- … her delusion of a garden.

Lope.- You make me lose myself, cousin, when you caress me under the table and she’s sitting there less than two inches away from…

Amelia.- I don’t know who’s crazier: your wife or your daughter.

Lope.- …your naked foot going up and down my legs. You really took a chance with that little gadget (massager) between your toes…! When did you put it on…? No, no I couldn’t keep eating…out of the corner of my eye I looked at the napkin resting over my lap: it was soaked.

Amelia.- I wish she were looking at us right now… little miss priss… little miss… To think she waters that ridiculous plastic garden and fumigates it as well. I already told you to send her to Bellevue so they can put her in a straight jacket! At the very least.

*Sybil meows inside the suitcase.*