

**VAN GOGH IN N.Y.**  
**or**  
**(The Red-headed Madman Who Thought**  
**He Was Van Gogh)**

**A play by JORGE CELAYA**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

\*\*VICENTE—a Mexican painter from the Sonoran desert who thinks he is Van Gogh

GONZALO—Vicente's brother, also \*"Theo" Van Gogh's brother

PAINTER—Vicente's friend, also \*"Mauve" Van Gogh's cousin

CIEN—a prostitute in NYC, also \*"Sien" Van Gogh's prostitute-wife

WOMAN—sophisticated N.Y. lady, also \*"Ursula" Van Gogh's cousin

DRUG ADDICT—a young woman, also \*"Kee" Van Gogh's cousin

OLD PAINTER—an old man, also \*"Weissenbruch"

VOICE of VICENTE's FATHER—also the Voice of \*"Theodorus" Van Gogh's father

SOMEONE WHO LOOKS LIKE GAUGUIN—also \*"GAUGUIN", Van Gogh's friend and fellow painter

### OFFSTAGE VOICES:

VOICE 1: An African-American

VOICE 2: A Nuyorican

VOICE 3: A Mexican

NOTE: \*\*One actor will play Vicente. All the characters in Vicente's mind can be played by three actors— two men and one woman.

\*In the mind of Vicente are characters from Vincent Van Gogh's life.

TIME: The present and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century at once.

PLACE: New York, NY

COSTUMES: Should subtly reflect the merging of the present in NYC and the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in the Netherlands and France, making the clothes seem both extravagant and insane.

"This man, he'll either go crazy or he'll leave us all behind."  
-Camille Pissarro-

A FRAME WITHOUT A DOOR & AN OIL LAMP ARE IN THE CENTER OF THE STAGE. VICENTE, STANDS AT THE "DOOR." HE CARRIES AN EASEL ON HIS BACK & A CANVAS IN HIS HANDS. INSIDE THE DOORWAY, STANDS HIS BROTHER, GONZALO.

GONZALO: I don't know if I can let you in, Vicente. You're too crazy.

VICENTE: Yes, brother. And you? Are you a superhero?

GONZALO: Yes. I've survived in this city.

VICENTE: So what? I've survived in—

GONZALO: —In Mexico? In the desert? With your painting?

VICENTE: To paint—

GONZALO: Make a lot of money?

VICENTE: —Is a pleasure.

GONZALO: To paint is a...?

VINCENTE: It heals me.

GONZALO: Pleasure? It makes you sick.

VICENTE: Right. And acting?

(A SILENCE)

GONZALO: You're going to go crazy.

VICENTE: You also dreamed about—

GONZALO: I never dreamt.

VICENTE: —succeeding as an actor—

GONZALO: I never dreamt.

VICENTE: —here in the City.

GONZALO: (WITH PAIN) I never dreamt.

VICENTE: You dreamt about it as much as I dream about painting.

GONZALO: A hobby.

VICENTE: It was more than a hobby for you. Did the Big City swallow your dreams?

GONZALO: I'm the one eating up New York so—

VICENTE: I don't find you too—

GONZALO: Don't try to force yourself into my life.

VICENTE: —convincing.

GONZALO: Why didn't you stay in the desert? You'll die here.

VICENTE: Where's your—

GONZALO: Fuck you! Don't start with your bullshit!

VICENTE: Where's your essence?

GONZALO: Essence?! You can't come here asking me for shelter and then talk to me about "essences."

VICENTE: We're just chatting.

GONZALO: I know you. You want to get back at me.

VICENTE: For what? I don't understand. I just want you to take me in. What would I be trying to get back at you for?

GONZALO: You started already. You're here to fuck with me. Just to fuck around with me.

VICENTE: Oh. Like for when you used to hurt me when—

GONZALO: Here it comes.

VICENTE: —when we were little and your hits were so full of hate?

GONZALO: What the hell do you want? Why do you want to fuck with me every—

VICENTE: You're no Superman.

GONZALO: —time. When it snows.

VICENTE: You were never my hero.

GONZALO: That's how Winter is.

VICENTE: You hear me?! You were never my hero?

GONZALO: I never wanted to be your hero. But now I am a hero, I conquered the—

VICENTE: I wanted you to be my hero. You were the oldest...

GONZALO: —City.

VICENTE: ...and you never protected me.

GONZALO: Aren't you proud of me?

VICENTE: No. Definitely not. You never protected me.

GONZALO: I never wanted to protect you.

VICENTE: I wanted you to protect me, you were the oldest.

GONZALO: I was only ever interested in myself.

VICENTE: But then I realized you were very afraid.

GONZALO: And I continue to raise myself up and protect myself.

VICENTE: So I started to protect you.

GONZALO: FUCK YOU!

VICENTE: And then you began to—

GONZALO: Don't say it!

VICENTE: Pity me. And I began to defend and I began to act like...

GONZALO: Don't say it.

VICENTE: ...like I was the older brother.

GONZALO: Fuck you!

VICENTE: I became stronger than you...I'm your hero now.

GONZALO: Go back! Fuck you!

VICENTE: That's why I keep myself strong in my dream.

GONZALO: Fuck you! Go back!

VICENTE: Return to the dreams you used to have, brother. You go back. You're not happy.

GONZALO: You go back where you came from. Go back. Fuck you!  
You're going to die. Where did you come from?

VICENTE: I come from my dreams. I'm in the middle of a painting. Don't you see me? I'm your hero from *the Starry Night*.

GONZALO: Of course! Van Gogh! Again Van Gogh? There's no one in the middle of *the Starry Night*.

VICENTE: I'm hanging from a star.

GONZALO: You're nuts. You're Vicente from the desert. Go back to Sonora. Go back home or your dreams are going to kill you in this City.

VICENTE: So now you're a prophet?

GONZALO: Whatever you say.

VICENTE: But you're not my hero.

GONZALO: I swallow the City.

VICENTE: So now what's your dream? Do you have one left?

GONZALO: Mother fucker!

(HE SNATCHES THE CANVAS AWAY FROM VICENTE, BREAKS IT, AND THROWS IT TO THE FLOOR.)

(PAUSE)

(VICENTE, IN SHOCK, PICKS IT UP.)

VICENTE: Maybe you do have a dream left.

(GONZALO EXPLODES & THROWS HIMSELF ON TOP OF VICENTE, PUMMELING HIM VIOLENTLY WITH HIS FEET & HANDS WHILE SCREAMING. VICENTE CURLS UP INTO A BALL.)

GONZALO: Get out! You're crazy!

(SARCASTICALLY)

Vincent Van Gogh! Stupid! You sure do dream, huh?! Fuck you! Fuck you! Get out! Get out! You're in New York, Vicente! Fuck you! This is New York! Get out! Get out! New York is expensive! New York will cost you! New York is New Yooooork! New York will kill you! Go back to the dessssert!

(FINALLY, HE BITES ONE OF HIS BROTHER'S EARS, TEARS IT OFF, AND SPITS IT ONTO THE FLOOR. VICENTE, IN A FETAL POSITION, WHIMPERS PAINFULLY.)

(DIZZYING & CHAOTIC IMAGES OF NEW YORK CITY APPEAR TO MARK A TRANSITION THROUGH TIME & SPACE.)

New York is New Yoooooooooork!

(A VIDEO GRADUALLY APPEARS WHILE VICENTE STANDS UP WITH DIFFICULTY, STRAPS A PIECE OF HIS BROKEN CANVAS ONTO HIS HEAD COVERING HIS WOUND, AND IN HIS OTHER HAND HE HOLDS THE TORN PIECE OF HIS EAR, LOOKING BOTH EXHAUSTED AND ABSTRACT.)

(VOICES ARE HEARD FROM OFFSTAGE.)

VOICE 1: Lend me your easel, aw'ight?

VOICE 3: Hey, Brother. When's your show at the Met?

VICENTE: (TO HIMSELF) Soon...soon...soon...voices...soon voices...soon.

VOICE 2: What a pendejo! Van Gogh was never in New York.

VOICE 1: Yo! You ain't Van Gogh, idiot! You don't even got red hair.

VOICE 3: Lend me your easel and your ear, my earless brother?

VOICE 2: Ollé? He never came to New York, cabron.

VOICE 3: If you don't got red hair, 'mano Mexicano, then you can't be Van Gogh.

VICENTE: (SHAKES OUT HIS BROWN HAIR, PULLS OUT A FEW STRANDS & SPEAKS TO HIMSELF)

Yes I am. I'm Vincent and my hair is red. I am...I am...I am...yes, I am...I'm Van Gogh and I'm...I am the City!

(Offstage laughter)

Yesterday...

(VICENTE'S VOICE BLENDS INTO THE VOICE OF THE VIDEO THAT PROJECTS IMAGES OF NEW YORK IN THE BACKGROUND. VICENTE WATCHES THEM, ABSORBED. SUDDENLY, HE PUTS THE COLLAR OF HIS SHIRT BETWEEN HIS TEETH AS AN EPILEPTIC FIT OVERTAKES HIM. HE CONVULSES AND FALLS TO THE FLOOR, BECOMING UNCONCIOUS. THE IMAGES OF THE VIDEO ARE DISTORTED TO INDICATE A DISTORTION OF REALITY. THEY SHOW SIDEWALKS IN THE STREETS OF NEW YORK FILLED WITH GIANT BLACK GARBAGE BAGS. **NOTE: DURING ALL THE VIDEO SEQUENCES APPEARING IN THE PLAY, WE HEAR THE TAPED VOICE OF VICENTE.**)

VICENTE'S VOICE:

Taking the Moon by the hand, I began to design a map from myself. Manhattan is my torso, that is strengthened by a giant green lung at its center.

(IMAGES: HOMELESS PEOPLE SLEEP IN THE LOCKED DOORWAYS OF VARIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.)

The Bronx is my head, looking back at Queens and Brooklyn: my two enormous wings, when beating, radiate a thousand colors.

(A YOUNG PUERTORICAN RASTA-WOMAN SPEAKS FROM THE VIDEO. {Jorge: On the video, she speaks Spanish, but perhaps the translation can be used in a subtitle way? Or do you want it spoken in English? I like leaving it in Spanish. -m-})

PUERTORICAN RASTA-WOMAN:

I had a friend that died. She killed herself on the number 7 train in Corona, Queens. She was 20 years old. Three people saw three different things: one said she saw a man push her, another said she threw herself in, and another said she was walking on the tracks and the train ran her over. She didn't die there, she died two hours later after she got to the hospital, but nobody knows the truth about what happened that day. That was in April 2000. May she rest in peace and I love her a lot.

[Yo tenía una amiga que se murió, se suicidó en la línea 7 de Corona, Queens. Ella tenía 20 años. Hay tres personas que vieron tres diferentes cosas; Una dice que vio un hombre que la empujó, otra dijo que se tiró y la otra dijo que ella estaba caminando en el tracks y el tren le corrió. Ella no se murió ahí, se murió dos horas después cuando llegó al hospital, pero nadie sabe la verdad de lo que pasó ese día, eso fue en abril del año dos mil. Que she rest in peace y la quiero mucho.]

(THE VIDEO IMAGES DISAPPEAR. ON THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE, VICENTE COMES BACK TO REALITY. HE LETS GO OF THE COLLAR OF HIS SHIRT, SHAKES HIS HEAD, WATCHES THE DOOR FRAME. BEHIND THIS, GONZALO IS SEEN IN THE SHADOWS.)

GONZALO: Go home, brother. Go back.

(VICENTE ACTS LIKE HE MIGHT ENTER BUT HE CHANGES HIS MIND. HE SPEAKS ABSENTLY, WITH PAIN AND NOSTALGIA COMBINED, WHILE WALKING TO THE FRONT OF THE “DOOR”.)

VICENTE: Do you think I paint because I’m crazy or do you think I’m crazy because I paint, Gonzalo? I paint when I’m “dead” and what I mean by “dead” is when I’m really alive. I paint when I return to the maternity of my house, to that most intimate part of me, to those halls where we played, to a certain image that fills me with peace, that takes me away from this damned inferno. All the places where I find myself seeking shelter are like my mother’s womb, and only then can I paint.

GONZALO: The sunflowers!

VICENTE: I painted the sunflowers to defend myself from those wicked attacks. I call it a “happy death”, that moment of ecstasy before the epilepsy. I made myself the master of those ten seconds and I extend them over the time it takes me to paint a picture. That’s how I kill myself, brother, and I continue to kill myself many times over in order to enter that marvelous world where only the vitality of the image and the colors exist.

(VICENTE MOVES AWAY FROM “THE DOOR” WHERE GONZALO DISAPPEARS. HE EXERCISES: DOES SOME PUSH-UPS, SIT-UPS, BREATHES DEEPLY AND THEN WALKS IN A WIDE CIRCLE AS IMAGES FROM THE VIDEO APPEAR BEHIND HIM—IMAGES SHOT FROM VICENTE’S POINT-OF-VIEW WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS INTO THE SUBWAY. WE HEAR VICENTE’S VOICE AS THE IMAGES PLAY.)

VICENTE (VO): Staten Island is my foot, which holds me up like the feet of God over the water. Sometimes I look for my other foot and I do not find it.

I am surrounded by great bodies of water, vast mounds of packed earth—  
(WE HEAR A BOOMING SOUND VIBRATING ALONG THE WALL OF THE SUBWAY. THEN WE SEE THE RAILS OF THE TRACKS AND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRAIN PLATFORM. A SUBWAY TRAIN SUDDENLY PASSES.)

—attractive creases in my face containing cars, people, music, shop windows, man-made devils, salesmen, handsome men, the perfect bodies of beautiful women—

(CLOSE-UP ON A BLACK MAN SINGING Bill Withers' "AIN'T NO SUNSHINE WHEN SHE'S GONE" HE REPEATS "AND I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW, I KNOW I KNOW— ...)

—a dance in every corner. Miraculous seduction flows through the air—

(CLOSE-UP ON A MAP OF MANHATTAN IN A WOMAN'S HANDS)

—the walls are dressed in smiles. Violence is on the surface of the skin but you ignore it. [Jorge: This might go better in the first person, i.e.

...my skin... I ignore it. Or do you mean the "skin of the walls?"]

(CLOSE—UP OF A BROKEN CHAIR ON A SUBWAY CAR.)

Lots of culture, museums, libraries, large parks, fast bikes—happy ones—they almost fly.

(CLOSE-UP OF A SUBWAY PASSENGER PRAYING IN HEBREW AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS. VICENTE, LYING ON THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE, MOVES HIS HAND SOFTLY THROUGH THE AIR, OBSERVING THE IMAGE HE'S "PAINTED.")

Massages, tattoos, and concerts—concerts of semaphores—signals—going from red to green, from green to yellow. Staircases going up and going down, remain suspended halfway between gravity and infinity.

(CLOSE-UP ON A PAPER CUP WITH THE WORDS "I LOVE NY" PRINTED ON IT, CAUGHT IN A DIRTY, URINE-FILLED CORNER OF A SUBWAY CORRIDOR. ON THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE, VICENTE CONTINUES TO EXERCISE. IN THE VIDEO, A TANGO PLAYED ON ACCORDION IS HEARD AS A TRAIN ENTERS THE STATION. WE SEE A WOMAN'S LEGS, AFTER A BOOMING SOUND IS HEARD THAT HITS THE WALL AND CROSSES ONTO THE OTHER PLATFORM. INSIDE A SUBWAY CAR, WE SEE A MENTALLY RETARDED PERSON ROCKING IN HIS SUBWAY SEAT. ON THE PLATFORM, WE SEE A BLACK MAN JOYFULLY PLAYING A DRUM AND SINGING. IN COUNTERPOINT, WE SEE AN ANCIENT WOMAN, HER SKIN STUCK TO HER BONES, WITH SUNKEN EYES THAT TAKE YOU INTO OBLIVION. SHE'S DRESSED IN BLACK STOCKINGS, SHOES & GLOVES, CARRIES A LARGE BLACK LEATHER HANDBAG, AND WEARS A LARGE PINK HAT.)

VICENTE (VO): I've got brand names—Sound-bites—in my ears, eyes, on my tongue, in my larynx, on my pharynx, in my stomach, on my navel, in my hair, in tears, in laughter, in screams, in sobs, in my ribs, my sex, in tickles, on ankles, on knees, calves, on my lips.

(WE SEE AN EMPTY BLOOD-STAINED SEAT WHERE THE ANCIENT WOMAN IN BLACK SAT.)

My tears—Diet Coke, my laughter—Calvin Klein.

(WE SEE THE ANCIENT WOMAN WANDERING AS IF SHE IS LOST, LOOKING FOR HERSELF IN THE ASCENDING STAIRCASE OF THE SUBWAY EXIT.)

My walk is adorned with Blue Jeans, melted onto beautiful buttocks.

I'm the sound of a BMW motor beautifying the silences. I'm a big shop window filled with a thousand languages, a thousand customs, a thousand ways of dressing and of eating—and all of it I transform bit by bit.

(VICENTE, ON THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE, MOVES HIS HAND THROUGH THE AIR. THE ATMOSPHERE CHANGES. THE VIDEO IMAGES DISAPPEAR AND SLIDES COME UP—A COLLAGE OF VAN GOGH PAINTINGS, INCLUDING ONE WITH SUNFLOWERS, ANOTHER WITH CYPRESSES AND “THE STARRY NIGHT.”)

GONZALO: (FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE “DOOR”) New York is expensive.  
Go home, brother. Go home.

VICENTE: (RUNNING FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER, AS IF TRYING TO ESCAPE HIS BROTHER) Noooo! I want to paint sunflowers forever! Mulberry Trees! Cypresses! Starry Nights! Forever! Escaping from my broken ear the teeming demons' howls made to assault my time. Each time I die, I find the woman I've always searched for, the one I've never found. I'm in peace and death while painting. I rest in peace painting. While I paint I don't want to go back there, to “life”, to hell!

If you make me go back there, I'll cut off my other ear! I swear! For every moment when I'm back there, I'll cut off a part of my body, until I'm just a torso—and then I'll drag myself on it until I die again.

BRUSHSTROKE: A TRANSITION INTO AN IMAGINED PLACE WHERE VINCENT VAN GOGH SPEAKS TO HIS COUSIN “MAUVE”. VICENTE LOOKS MALNOURISHED, FEVERISH, EXHAUSTED. HE TRIES TO SCREAM. HE MOVES TO THE “DOOR.” INSIDE IS “MAUVE” WHO IS PAINTING IN THE AIR WHILE SWEATING PROFUSELY—LIKE POSEIDON.

VICENTE: Why don't you see me, Cousin? Why don't you turn to look at me? I just need someone to see me on this cold night and let me paint. I want to end my silence, Cousin. DON'T YOU HEAR ME?! I know. Sometimes when I leave the house and I want to speak, something happens in my throat. The words don't want to come out. And I know what it is. I know what it is. It's the fear. The panic that I have when I think I've forgotten how to speak. “How does one speak?” I ask myself. “How does one speak?” If I speak, will they hear me? I've spent days locked up without talking to anyone. That's how you are now. I see you buried in your canvas, not noticing anyone and I understand, the same thing happens to me and...well, at least you have a wife to keep you company, I have my fever and I want to speak and there are my words stuck in my throat—unable to come out—so I clear my throat and clear my throat and...

(“MAUVE” SPEAKS TO HIM WITHOUT TURNING TO FACE HIM, AND THEN GOES TO HIM.)

MAUVE: Vincent, I'm painting you. I'm painting you, Vincent. How good that you arrived. Stand here please. Pose for me. Pose so I can finish the painting. When you see it, you'll learn more from it than you did from any class you ever took. Like that, just like that. Standing. Natural. Just like you are. You're perfect like that. In the meantime, pay attention to the brushstrokes made, yes?

(MAUVE, WITH ENERGY & VIOLENCE, SWEEPS LONG BRUSHSTROKES ACROSS VICENTE'S CLOTHES, FACE, NECK AND HANDS. WHILE HE SPEAKS, HE PUNCTUATES HIS WORDS WITH HIS STROKES ALTERNATING BETWEEN SUBTLE & SHORT STROKES AND QUICK & BLUNT ONES. VICENTE LISTENS WITHOUT MOVING, AS IF HE IS IN A STATE OF SHOCK.)

This brushstroke means confusion, this one madness, this one obscurity, this one betrayal, this one ruin, this one deception, this one self-pity, this one abandonment. This one passion, this one desire, this one love, this one trauma, this one fanaticism, this one blame, this one escape, this one desperation, this one rebelliousness, this one transgression, this one epilepsy, this one schizophrenia, this one dependency, this one your addiction, this one means that in all women you search for your mother—that's why you can't really have one. This one puts a stop to your journey. This one major loneliness, this one desolation, this one blood and pain in one ear, this one blood and pain in your soul, this one intense yellow you discovered on your canvas and already miss because you'll never again capture it. This one your chronic and profound sadness, this one your

poverty, this one your blue eyes that see a pregnant prostitute's pock-marked face. This one your hands which caress a pregnant prostitute's pock-marked face. This one your member penetrating the vagina of the pregnant prostitute with the pock-marked face. This one father of the children who are not your children. And this one the disdain and rejection of your family and your friends.

(“MAUVE” STOPS HIS ACTION, EXHAUSTED.)

I'm done with this painting, but I think I have the subject for my next one. Don't you want to see it?

(VICENTE, IMPRESSED, DOESN'T MOVE AN INCH.”MAUVE” TRIES TO MAKE HIM SEE HIS PAINTED CLOTHES AND HANDS.

VICENTE RESISTS.)

VICENTE: Why are you doing this to me, cousin? I just came to one more class. Who do you think you are to do all this to me?

(“MAUVE” LOOKS AT HIM AND LETS OUT A SHARP AND CONTAINED GUFFAW.)

MAUVE: Want to learn something else? I'm going to do one last thing for you, Vicente.

(“MAUVE” SHOWS HIM A MOLD OF A HUMAN FOOT. IT IS NEXT TO THE FRAME. VICENTE APPROACHES THE MOLD, SQUATS, AND HOLDS IT IN FRONT OF HIM, MOVING HIS PENCIL AROUND THE EDGE. “MAUVE” WATCHES HIM.

A GRADUAL TRANSITION OF TIME: “MAUVE” TURNS AROUND HIM, OBSERVING AND PRESSURING HIM, WHILE VICENTE FOLLOWS TRYING WITH MARKED SARCASM TO HANG THE FOOT MOLD IN DIFFERENT POSITIONS. ON TIPTOES. ON THE HEEL. MAKING IT “WALK.” MAKING IT LEAP. MAKING IT DANCE ON TIPTOES, AS IF TRYING TO MAKE IT COME ALIVE. THE HATE AND FRUSTRATION BETWEEN THE TWO INCREASES EACH TIME. “MAUVE” EXPLODES.)

MAUVE: No doubt the street, your religious fanaticism and the mines of Borinage have destroyed your neurons. Don't move! Don't move it out of place! (VICENTE CONTINUES TO PROVOKE HIM, LOOKING FOR WAYS TO HOLD THE MOLD.)

Alright! Enough! Enough already, Vicente!

(MAUVE TRIES TO TAKE THE FOOT OUT OF HIS HANDS, AND VICENTE, FULL OF RAGE, FLINGS THE MOLD AGAINST THE WALL, BREAKING IT.)

VICENTE: Where is the human foot? Where? Show me your feet, cousin! Show me your feet and I'll draw them! Or maybe you have plaster feet? With all

these human beings around, you give me a God damned plaster mold? What's that about? I can try to draw my foot, your foot, whatever foot of whomever! But not a piece of plaster! Don't fuck with me! Wherever you walk in this damn City there are human feet. Lost feet. Found feet. Loving feet. Feet with callouses. Fungused feet. Feet that hate. Urinated feet. Wretched feet. Lively feet. Feet so angry that they trample everything. Beautiful feet. Shitty feet. Feet with sores. Distant feet. Bruised, purple feet. Black feet. White feet. Indian feet. Arab feet. Latino feet. New Yorkers' feet. European feet.

Asian feet. Children's feet. Feet with leprosy. Sold feet. Feet. Feet. Feet. Live feet. A fuck-load of feet! And you come out with this damn plaster foot that doesn't move? That says nothing to me? That has no life?

MAUVE: Why don't you paint Sien's feet, your prostitute?

VICENTE: Ohhh, so that's it? That's why you won't teach me anymore? I'm not worthy to carry on the name of the family because I live with Sien? Is that it?

MAUVE: She's got nothing to do with the family.

VICENTE: Don't mess with her. She is worth more than you, me or anybody else.

MAUVE: She's ugly and classless. She smokes stinky cigars, drinks alcohol and continues to work as a prostitute while you take care of her children. Aren't you embarrassed? You want human feet? Then you can paint your own dirty, calloused feet.

VICENTE: She's a hard-working woman—a woman worked to exhaustion—worked to the very soles of her feet—so deeply furrowed for man's seed—like the plowed earth. You're right, Mauve. I will go paint her worn feet. Her feet have covered many kilometers in this City—looking for some cash, satisfying the refined and repressed pigs like you in order to give her children something to eat.

(VINCENT/VICENTE GIVES ONE FURIOUS “BRUSHSTROKE” IN THE AIR WITH HIS HAND AS HE EXITS THROUGH THE “DOOR.”

TRANSITION: THERE IS A CHANGE OF ATMOSPHERE, ONCE VICENTE GOES THROUGH THE “DOOR”, INTO THE STREET. HE DOUBLES OVER HOLDING HIS STOMACH, WHIMPERING WITH HUNGER AND PAIN.)

(THE VIDEO BEGINS TO PLAY: WE SEE A MAP OF NEW YORK IN THE SUBWAY. THEN WE SEE, A DRIED WATERFALL OF MUD ON ONE WALL AND THE PLATFORM, WHICH IS FLOODED WITH FULL, BIG, BLACK GARBAGE BAGS. WE SEE THROUGH THICK IRON BARS, A CHINESE MAN WONDERFULLY PLAYING A VIOLIN. A PAIR OF BLACK MEN SING SOMETHING HAPPY. ANOTHER BLACK MAN WHO DRINKS ALCOHOL, SINGS AND ACCOMPANIES HIMSELF ON A HOMEMADE BASS MADE OF A WASHTUB, A BROOMSTICK AND A STRING WHICH WAILS A DESPERATE RHYTHM THAT IS CUT SHORT BY THE DIZZYING SOUND OF A PASSING TRAIN. )

VICENTE (VO): I'm a solitary dog with mange—not on my skin, but on my fangs, drooling the foam of desolation with each step. An itch in my teeth made for tearing at peeling flesh.

I'm a man without a home wounded by the sharp oblivion of the streets.  
What a pain of broken bones in my forehead!

(IN THE VIDEO, A JAMAICAN MAN SINGS AND ACCOMPANIES HIMSELF ON GUITAR, ALLEVIATING THE MONOTONY OF WAITING ON THE SUBWAY PLATFORM.)

I'm a bicycle, alone, sad, left in a heap and chained to a post—left with a flat tire and a small bike bag shot to shit. What a miserable oppression sometimes visits me!

(IN THE VIDEO, WE SEE A GUY WALKING WITH HIS HEAD DOWN, A COMPUTER BAG HANGING FROM HIS SHOULDERS WHO DISAPPEARS BEHIND A WALL NEAR THE SUBWAY TRACKS JUST WHEN A TRAIN PASSES.)

I try to shake off the anguish, the ghosts—

(IN THE VIDEO: WE SEE A WOMAN ASLEEP ON A SEAT IN A MOVING SUBWAY CAR WHO ROLLS WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THE TRAIN.)

—that's why I dance away the blues in the trucks and on the subway.

(IN THE VIDEO: WE AGAIN SEE AN IMAGE OF THE PUERTORICAN RASTA-WOMAN SUPERIMPOSED OVER AN IMAGE OF A CEMETERY IN BROOKLYN, SEEN FROM THE POINT-OF-VIEW OF A MOVING SUBWAY CAR.]  
PUERTORICAN RASTA-WOMAN (Speaking from the video):

[Jorge: Would you consider having some of the words from the video repeated or spoken by actors on stage? Especially in places of repetition of images, so that the images can accumulate? And then the English can be spoken?]

[Jorge: As I asked before: on the video, she speaks Spanish, but perhaps the translation can be used in a subtitle way? Or do you want it spoken in English? I like leaving it in Spanish. –m- [Yo tenía una amiga que se murió, se suicidó en la línea 7 de Corona, Queens. Ella tenía 20 años. Hay tres personas que vieron tres diferentes cosas; Una dice que vio un hombre que la empujó, otra dijo que se tiró y la otra dijo que ella estaba caminando en el tracks y el tren le corrió.]

I had a friend that died. She killed herself on the number 7 train in Corona, Queens. She was 20 years old. Three people saw three different things: one said she saw a man push her, another said she

threw herself in, and another said she was walking on the tracks  
and—

(THE TRAIN CROSSES INTO HER IMAGE AS SHE SPEAKS.)

VICENTE: —the train ran her over.

(THE RASTA-WOMAN'S IMAGE FADES INTO DARK & DIRTY STAIRCASES INTO THE SUBWAY ACCOMPANIED BY BRILLIANT AND LIVELY JAZZ. THEN, A ROMANTIC COUPLE APPEARS. SHE PASSES THROUGH THE REVOLVING DOOR-STYLE TURNSTILE WITH HER METROCARD AND ENTERS THE SUBWAY, BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE A WORKING TICKET. SO HE GOES TO BUY ONE AND SHE SENDS HIM OFF WITH A KISS. SHE DANCES WHILE HE'S GONE, FIRST A FEW TAP STEPS THEN SOME BALLET TURNS AND THEN FLIRTS WITH THE CAMERA. HE COMES BACK WITH A TICKET, PASSES THE TURNSTILE INTO THE SUBWAY AND THEY KISS LOVINGLY. THEN WE SEE JUST HER HAND WAVING GOOD-BYE AS THEY EXIT DOWN THE STAIRS INTO THE SUBWAY.)

VICENTE (VO): I'm a violinist interpreting Paganini for a dollar. My arms as slender as strings! Sleeping on a bench with no notion of time.

A bench with no golden Autumn leaves surrounding it. Stravinsky no longer passes through my ears.

(AGAIN WE SEE THE DETAILS OF A MAP, DIZZYING IMAGES OF SUBWAY WALLS, EMPTY PASSAGEWAYS, AND FINALLY THE EXIT. OUTSIDE, THE MOON LOOKS FEARFUL BEHIND THE CLOUDS.)

I'm local antiques—the usual kind—a place where no one buys or sells or rents or puts money down on credit. No trust.

(BUILDINGS. A BIKE SEAT COVERED IN PLASTIC TO PROTECT IT FROM THE RAIN. A LARGE "FRANKENSTEIN" FIGURE PROMOTING SOME PRODUCT COMES OUT OF THE SHADOWS. A PERFECT MANNEQUIN DRESSED IN RED APPEARS IN A SHOP WINDOW.)

I'm a violent word spelled by the wind, a tender word whipping by each moment. I'm something more intense than the sharp pain of a needle dragged slowly across an eye.

(A CLOCK IN A BUILDING. AN ELEGANT BMW. THE ONLY SOUND IS OF A SIREN SLOWLY DISSOLVING WITH THE IMAGES OF THE VIDEO.)

(ON THE STAGE, VICENTE MOVES TOWARDS THE "DOOR." INSIDE THERE IS A DREAM-LIKE ATMOSPHERE. THERE WE FIND AN OLD PAINTER, WEISSENBRUCH, EATING.)

VICENTE: Bon appetit, Weissenbruch.

WEISSENBRUCH: I'm not going to invite you. Get out of here.

VICENTE: Have you painted sometime with coffee and spit?

WEISSENBRUCH: Get the hell out of here!

VICENTE: You're fucked too?

WEISSENBRUCH: Here, only fools do badly. I do sell my paintings.

VICENTE: You know what? Last night I dreamt I was in the middle of a big, yellow field, and I was a collapsed skeleton. I had died of hunger. But the Sun was there. Hot, hot. Leaning into my bones and I could feel it working into my teeth, suddenly I saw muscles, nerves, flesh—starting to grow around my bones. I got up and I was right in the middle of the golden wheat fields that were married to the living earth. I was awakened by the sound of a rat squeaking and then I saw myself in a pile of big, black garbage bags, dying of cold and hunger. The rat tried to bite me on the nose, so I took that opportunity to yank scraps from between his fangs. But that didn't soothe my hunger.

WEISSENBRUCH: Fear, suffering, pain, & hunger make you talk like this—but that's normal. If you can't conquer that fear, you'll never be able to make yourself into anything. You'll certainly never be malleable enough to be a great painter. What are you waiting for? I'm not going to give you any charity.

VICENTE: I only came to confirm that your soul was fucked. You're a miserable wretch, Weissenbruch.

WEISSENBRUCH: (WITH A LAUGH) Miserable? Me? You want to be a good painter, right? Get out of my house, stick yourself in any corner of any alley and then come close to dying from the cold, and from hunger, and then let the fever take you to the point of hallucinating the most horrendous, and at the same time, beautiful figures, so that later—

VICENTE: That's where I came from. I already went through that. I came from there.

WEISSENBRUCH: Then give thanks to God. And if you haven't died, then paint. Paint on whatever you find—a carton, on your clothes, or in the air. If the fever doesn't let you paint on whatever you find, don't fight against the shivers she gives you. Let them guide your paintbrush, because only then will you truly be painting yourself.

VICENTE: That's where I came from. My last canvas I painted with a fever, some coffee, and with my spit.

WEISSENBRUCH: With...coffee?

VICENTE: Yes, with coffee. Coffee's the only thing I had to nourish myself and keep myself awake. I had no more paint so I mixed the fever and the coffee with my spit and...

WEISSENBRUCH: So what? Are you trying to impress me?

VICENTE: No. I only want you to listen! Forget about the damn food and the fucking money and just listen to me! I want to talk to you about the interesting tonality that that mixture of my fever and the coffee and my spit gave me. An intense yellow! What I don't understand is how I achieved this color! It's not logical! If in order to find an intense yellow you need a combin—Forget that damn food and let's paint, Weissenbruch! Let's paint!

WEISSENBRUCH: Lies! You don't want to paint. Your fears are killing you. They're killing you and you're letting them, Vincent. You let the cold air, the people, and the loneliness of this City defeat you! Ask yourself if you're an artist. Ask yourself if you shouldn't make friends with your ghosts instead of fighting them. In that moment when you raise your hand to beg for charity, instead of raising it to pick up your paintbrush, you're allowing yourself to be defeated.

VICENTE: I lifted a spoon instead of a paintbrush. I'm all out of paintbrushes, so I filled a spoon with my intense yellow and I painted a Sun, the best Sun I ever painted.

WEISSENBRUCH: I don't believe you. You have to be destroyed and then rebuilt in order to be an artist. You have to be destroyed and then arm yourself anew. This will be the proof that you are ready for redemption. Although for that, you will still miss painting many canvases with your spit. So now go on, and continue dying of hunger.

VICENTE: As soon as I mix my fear, coffee and spit, I'll reach the color yellow. I don't know how it happened, but it was the intense yellow that I liked—and in that moment, I forgot the hunger, and the cold and I felt full like never before. It was only afterwards that I knew what I wanted to paint. And I painted it! But do you know how I could have achieved that color? I think my spit had a bit of bile in it, because of my fever, Weissenbruch, and upon mixing it with the coffee... Why don't we mix my bile, my spit, and my fever—I'll owe it the coffee since I've already finished it—along

with your food, we have to see what color we get my respectable and distinguished friend, Weissenbruch??

WEISSENBRUCH: Get out of here already! You're making me sick!

VICENTE: That's fine. I feel I've made you lose your appetite. One day my paintings are going to sell the way no one has ever dreamed a painting of yours could. I hope you'll be alive to see it. Then you'll come to me and I will receive you warmly into my house—if I'm still alive then—and you'll ask me for a piece of bread and I will give you more than that, my esteemed, Weissenbruch. I'd give you more than that. I swear. I like your excessive talk about the sacrifice of the artist. You speak so prettily. You could be a great leader. But what do you know about hunger? What do you know about human suffering? Did you once go into a peasant's house? Have you seen them eat potatoes around your table? Have you felt the love that fills the space then? That's how I'm going to make you feel, Weissenbruch. I promise you that. Let's hope that we're both alive then. Let's hope.

(VICENTE CROSSES THE THRESHOLD OF THE "DOOR." THEN HE DOUBLES OVER IN PAIN AND HUNGER.)

GONZALO: New York is expensive, man! New York is New Yoooooork!

(IMAGES FROM THE VIDEO ENTER THE SPACE)

VICENTE (VO): A distant cry in the dawn released from I-don't-know-who's throat.  
(IMAGES: A BROKEN SCOOTER ATTACHED TO A LAMP POST. THE BEAUTIFUL LEGS OF A WOMAN CROSSING THE STREET.)

The wail of an ambulance, of fire trucks, of police patrols.

(AN ARAB VENDOR SELLS SOMETHING TO AN ARAB WOMAN FROM HIS STREET STALL.)

I'm the hungry meow of a cat on a ladder—the highest one, the unreachable one, the one nearest to the Moon. The cat wants rabbit meat tonight. He's been fed up with the rats for a long time.

(THE IMAGES BEGIN TO SWIRL. VICENTE LOOKS LIKE HE IS CAUGHT IN THE CENTER OF A WHIRLWIND OF EMOTIONS. HE BEGINS TO SHOW THE SYMPTOMS OF AN EPILEPTIC FIT, WHILE THE IMAGES OF THE VIDEO UNFOLD.)

I'm a shop window mannequin that comes to life from the overflowing energy of people who run at dawn.

(A PAINTING IN A GALLERY WINDOW. AN ELEGANT BLACK LEATHER CHAIR ABANDONED IN THE MIDDLE OF A BUNCH OF BLACK GARBAGE BAGS AND GARBAGE CANS.)

The furious foot of a man who violently strikes the cold wind.

(A YOUNG MAN HOLDS A BAT MENACINGLY IN HIS HANDS.)

Half a howl from a badly wounded dog, the brilliant lights of the World Trade Center—

(A VERTIGO OF IMAGES AND LIGHTS)

The perfume model on every corner.

(WALLS COVERED IN GRAFFITI. A HOMELESS MAN SLEEPING IN A CORNER FROM WHICH HE UNCOILS LIKE A DREAM WHERE IMAGES UNWIND FROM A BLANK RIBBON OF FILM UNTIL REACHING A LIT MOVIE SCREEN. SOME PEOPLE ARE SEATED IN THAT THEATER.)

I'm the theaters, all the theaters—all me—actress, actor, dancer, painter, novelist, poet, storyteller, usher, box office clerk, cameraman—even the poster! I'm everything that can be and then some. I'm essentially proud and grand—no one forced me to be nor did I force myself. Pure exhibitionism at every turn. I'm poems written on walls, in the air, on the floor, in the heart of every passerby.

(ANOTHER HOMELESS MAN IN THE DOORWAY OF A SHOP. AN OBSCENE MESSAGE WRITTEN IN A PUBLIC TELEPHONE BOOTH MAKING A SOCIO-POLITICAL COMMENTARY. A HOMELESS MAN WHO IS STOOPED OVER. A HEADLESS MANNEQUIN COMPLETELY WRAPPED IN PAPER AND TIED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM BEHIND A SHOP WINDOW.)

Overflowing riches rising from the exhaust of a Mercedes that blends with the breath of a beggar.

(A YOUNG FATHER GENTLY ROCKS HIS DAUGHTER IN HIS ARMS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET. A TWISTED BICYCLE RIM.)

A magic train filled with a thousand faces transforming their expressions—

(A GAP-TOOTHED SMILE OF A HOMELESS PERSON)

—in seconds. Flawless windows watching those already on the street, destitute and so close to the cold of December.

(A YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL MODEL BEHIND A SHOP WINDOW, IS PARTIALLY RECLINING ON A MATTRESS. FROM UNDER THE SHEETS SHE WATCHES ANOTHER YOUNG WOMAN OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, YEARNING FOR HER FREEDOM. VIDEO OUT.)

(ENTERING FROM DOWN RIGHT OF THE STAGE, AS IF SHROUDED IN A DREAM, A BEAUTIFUL AND SOPHISTICATED WOMAN APPEARS. SHE APPROACHES VICENTE WITH A FRIENDLY SMILE, MOVING UP TO THE "DOOR." VICENTE GOES TO HER. NEITHER ONE CAN SAY ANYTHING. SOMETHING LIKE A MAGNET ATTRACTS THEM TO EACH OTHER. THEY CROSS THE DOORWAY, EMBRACE, KISS, UNDRRESS, AND CARESS. THEIR PASSION BEGINS TO WIND DOWN. SHE TENDERLY CARESSES HIM.)

VICENTE: (EMBARRASSED) I suppose we won't see each other again, Ursula.