

ST. JOHN OF SUBURBIA
(or, Lycanthrope Limbo)

A play

by
John P. Bray

CHARACTERS

Cath/Female Werewolf	F, almost 20
Her Dad/Old Man/ Priest/Security John	M, almost 40
Chrissie	F, roughly 10, Cath's younger sister
Her Grandma	F, 60s
Alvin	M, 20
Satan Dan	M, 20

Props:

Minimal, but you'll need a fedora that fits Alvin, a fedora for Old Man, and a big, gross werewolf mask that covers the entire head (for Female Werewolf).

Note:

Zine is pronounced *zeen*. Zines were photocopied, independently made magazines which were distributed at delis, bookstores, record shops, etc. Some were thrown away if the material was deemed offensive by the proprietor of an establishment. This play is lovingly dedicated to my old friend Zachariah Smith whose Zine was written for a very specific audience (maybe five of us?).

Music:

There are moments where humming or music is suggested. When I was in my late teens/early twenties, I feel like the world was constantly providing a soundtrack: music in stores, music in the car, music from the streets; generally speaking, folks seemed to hum more, too, and just sing for the sake of singing. Please feel free to hum, sing, add music, whatever you'd like to do.

Synopsis:

Fraternal twins Alvin and Satan Dan have been producing a monster-erotica Zine said to be the writings of a mystic that uses the alias St. John of God. Alvin has been studying religion and VCR repair at the community college and would rather remain anonymous. Satan Dan could spoil that. Or Alvin could blurt it out.

John P. Bray

A mix of dream and memory, St. John of Suburbia reminds us that those who choose to spend time with us, despite what we write, are more than enough in this fleeting life.

“I fear that, with our current veneration for the natural and the real, we have arrived at the opposite pole to all idealism and have landed in the region of the waxworks.”

- Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy

“Heaven, Heaven is a place, a place where nothing, nothing ever happens.”

- The Talking Heads

“How low can you go?”

- The Limbo

One night in a suburban town, the year is 1996.

AT RISE:

The stage is essentially bare. ALVIN is discovered. He's nervous. He might hold the props as described, or maybe not. It's more important that he sees the various props than we do. The fedora is a must, though.

He addresses us.

ALVIN

I rehearsed what to say. I rehearsed my posture. I rehearsed how I hold the flowers. I decided the John Lennon sunglasses come off. The fedora stays on. The penny loafers each armed with a quarter in case my car breaks down. Hoof it to a gas station somewhere. Call someone. Do something.

(Beat.)

God be with me. "What do you do, Alvin?": I'm studying religion. "Oh?" And VCR maintenance. You ever notice how you have to pray for TV signal or for the VCR to work? Heh.

(Beat.)

Okay. They might not ask. It's the third official date and I'm already meeting her dad. I'm fine. This is fine. This is good. Fedora at a jaunty angle. Paper clip on my navy-blue sports jacket. It has a good reason to be there. You never know when you'll need it. Is the tie straight? How long have I been standing here? Did I ring the bell? Will it ring? What if it rings and I don't hear it ring and think maybe it's broken and then knock but they've heard the ring and now they just think I'm insistent?

(Beat.)

Touching my fingertips together. The sound of the traffic on the highway behind me. The smell of the gas station and the smell of exhaust from the gas station. No, that smell is actually coming from the Ice Cream Parlor on the other side. Why does it also smell like exhaust? She said, "it's the house between the gas station and Temptation Ice Cream." I've driven by this place a thousand times. Always wondered who lived here. Now I know. A brown door in front of me. Pause. Breathe. Smell the flower

(inhales)

and blow out the candle.

(exhales)

"Who are you, I asked Love one evening? He said, I am Immortality, A Beautiful Life which has no end." Rumi. Don't go quoting Rumi. Be more practical.

(Beat.)

John P. Bray

ALVIN (CONT'D)

“Yes, sir, the problem is the heads of your VCR need to be cleaned, you’ll get a clearer image.”

HER DAD enters behind him and looks him over.

ALVIN

Just don’t tell him what you write. Don’t tell him who you are. Don’t tell him. Don’t tell him you write erotica about werewolves and—

HER DAD

You don’t look like Bowser.

Alvin freezes.

HER DAD

Bowser. You know. Like the character from what’s it.

ALVIN

Super Mario Brothers?

HER DAD

What’s that, the dragon?

ALVIN

Yeah.

HER DAD

No. I mean the bass from Sha Na Na. Before your time?

ALVIN

No, I, uh, remember Sha Na Na.

HER DAD

Caty doesn’t remember. She wasn’t born yet.

ALVIN

Ah.

(To us.)

We were born the same year, I mean to say. With the hat maybe I look too old. Maybe he doesn’t remember when Sha Na Na was on the air.

They “enter” the house.

HER DAD

Come in. Mind the dolls. My youngest didn't clean up, and I'm just getting home.

ALVIN

Sorry, am I too early?

HER DAD

Only by an hour or so. Ma! Caty's date is here.

HER GRANDMA

(off-stage)

Does he look like Bowser?

HER DAD

No, he doesn't. I say he looks more like a...

(taking him in)

like...like a *seventh-grade social studies teacher!*

HER GRANDMA

Well. Okay. At least he has a job.

HER DAD

No, I didn't mean...What do you do?

ALVIN

I work at the deli. That's where we met.

HER DAD

He's a deli guy!

(to Alvin)

Wait. Just wait.

(Slight pause, he listens for something. Nothing happens.)

Okay. I was worried she'd misunderstand and ask for a sandwich. Can I get you something?

ALVIN

I'm fine.

(To us.)

And all of my preparation. Gone. Why did he think I'd look like a greaser?

John P. Bray

CATH enters.

CATH
Hey.

ALVIN
Hey.

They move nervously. Hug? No hug? Handshake? They just nod and smile.

HER DAD
(witnessing the awkwardness of it all)
Wow. You mind helping me a bit with setting the table?

ALVIN
No, I don't mind.
(To Cath.)
Why did he think I'd be a greaser?

CATH
I told him you're originally from Jersey City.

ALVIN
Jersey City means greasers? Is there a cliché I don't know about?

CATH
I let him run with it. You look...not like a greaser.

ALVIN
Did you tell him I'm studying religion? And VCR maintenance?

CATH
Let's not tell him anything, okay? Let's just...eat and go.

ALVIN
Okay.
(To us.)
I set the table with Her Dad. Cath is trying to corral her sister.

GRANDMA enters.

St. John of Suburbia

GRANDMA

Look at you in that hat. You're like Sinatra. And what are you doing? Caty should be setting the table.

HER DAD

No, we men folk are fine.

(To Cath.)

What are you doing? I told you to get Chrissie in here.

CATH

CHRISSIE!

HER DAD

I could have done that.

CHRISSIE

(off-stage)

I'm buuuuuss-sssy!

HER DAD

Dinner! Company! Now!

CHRISSIE enters.

CHRISSIE

Okay, okay.

Chrissie stares at Alvin.

CATH

You don't have to stare at him.

CHRISSIE

Why is he wearing that hat?

CATH

It's because...why do you wear the hat?

ALVIN

Oh, sorry.

He takes it off.

John P. Bray

CATH

Oh, you don't have to take it off.

HER DAD

He's in the house.

ALVIN

I'm in the house.

CATH

(quiet)

It's good to see you.

ALVIN

(quiet)

You look a doll.

CATH

(quiet)

What?

ALVIN

(quiet)

You look *like* a doll, I mean. I mean, you're pretty.

HER DAD

What doll?

ALVIN

Doll?

HER DAD

Yeah, I said don't mind the dolls, they're everywhere.

CATH

(quiet, smiling)

Did you just call me a doll? What are you, ninety?

ALVIN

Sorry.

CATH

I mean. Thanks, but don't use doll that way. You might as well say "broad."

ALVIN

(To us.)

Why did I wear a tie? A fedora? Her Dad already must think I'm terrible, useless. And ten years older than I am.

HER DAD

I'm not much of a cook. I threw this all in a crockpot before I left.

HER GRANDMA

I said I'd cook. You don't let me cook!

HER DAD

Maybe next time you can bring something from the deli.

HER GRADMA

Which deli?

ALVIN

It's up the road on 9G.

(To us, hopeful)

He said *next time*.

HER GRANDMA

The one in town?

ALVIN

No, about eight minutes north.

(To us.)

Next time. Maybe I don't have to tell him about religion or VCR maintenance. If I talk like a normal person, maybe I can survive.

HER GRANDMA

I don't know any deli out there.

ALVIN

(To us.)

Be normal be normal be normal.

ALVIN (CONT'D)

(To Her Grandma.)

It's nestled among the trees, large bushy ones that make a shhhh sound when the breezes pass through. Mighty oaks, lean elms, opulent conifers that hold the snow with Herculean strength. There's an occasional sound of a passing car. I shouldn't say we don't have customers—there are wise old man torn from the pages of Plato's *Republic* that discuss world events, fast women, and slow horses over Dan's incredible Italian combos, and they feast like philosopher kings. I hope you'll visit us.

Awkward pause.

HER GRANDMA

It's your deli?

ALVIN

There's been talk Dan and I might get it.

CATH

Dan's his twin, grandma.

HER GRANDMA

His twin? Heh heh. How do you know he's the right one? Heh heh. How do you know he didn't switch out on you?

CATH

They're fraternal.

HER GRANDMA

(indicating Cath's neck)

You with that dog collar on. If I were him, I would have switched out with his brother.

ALVIN

I like her dog collar.

CHRISSIE

I like it, too.

CATH

They're *fraternal*.

St. John of Suburbia

HER GRANDMA

You do? Why? What does it mean to you?

ALVIN

I just...it looks nice, that's all.

CATH

And he has a tie. I could lead him around just like he leads me.

HER GRANDMA

He leads you?

ALVIN

No.

CATH

Yes.

HER DAD

I should have worn a tie. Make it more formal.

CHRISSIE

It's not a dog collar. It's a werewolf collar.

Alvin looks at her.

CHRISSIE

That's what she said. But werewolves don't wear collars, so it doesn't make sense. Dad, do werewolves wear collars?

HER DAD

I guess if the man was wearing a collar before he transformed, then yeah, the werewolf would have a collar.

CHRISSIE

It would pop off!

HER GRANDMA

Collars are strong. They have to hold the dog back. The beast has to be held back otherwise it could attack the children. Beware child, when the wolfbane blooms.

HER DAD

You wear a tie at the deli?

ALVIN

No, it was because I was coming over. I also brought some, uh, some flowers. I left them on the table. They're for you. Cath mentioned she lived with her Grandma.

HER GRANDMA

No, I live with *them*.

CHRISSIE

Do I get flowers?

CATH

Do I get flowers?

HER DAD

Do I get flowers?

ALVIN

They're...for...everyone...

A shift. Her Dad addresses us.

HER DAD

I'm not rooting against him. At least he looks clean. She's been dating on and off for six years. I don't like it. But I don't say anything. Parent intervention just creates common cause. I don't want that. And it doesn't matter. What does it matter? My daughter, Cath...she likes to be called Cath. Not Caty. Cath. I don't like the way it sounds. Words that have a TH in them rub me the wrong way, but I manage. I try. The *th* sounds makes my teeth

(winces)

itch. When I go to scrub myself, I say, "I'm going to clean myself in the tub tonight." I like that. It's a complete thought. I don't say "I'm going to take a..." you know. Anyway, my daughter. Caty.

(Beat.)

Cath. She doesn't know how old I am really. I tell her I'm forty-five. I had her young, but not too young. We had her young, but not too young. Her mother had her young, but not too young. When we were in our twenties. Mid-twenties. And her mother didn't survive. She died. She's gone. That's it. That's what she knows. The real story, though. The real story is I'm only thirty-nine right now. It was my birth

(winces)

HER DAD (CONT'D)

day last week. Caty is nineteen. Almost twenty. You do the mathem...

(winces)

...the arithma...

(winces)

...adding and subtracting to figure it out for yourself. And the last thing Caty's mother did was leave a note on the table that we still eat from. "Goodbye, buddy, thanks a lot!" Not dead. But. You know. I'm a left man. I'd much rather be a widower. And here we are. Me. My mother. God. Don't get pregnant, I say with my eyes. But not my words. That would make me a grandfather for sure. And Chrissie? Oh, she's from my second marriage. That's what I say. But it's not true. She's my biological brother's daughter. He's been in jail since before she was born. It's a sad story, but. It's not my story to tell. This is our family. My mother, who raised me and my brother on her own, lives here. She helps with this house. My daughter. And Chrissie. There's a pecking order here. I'm surrounded by women. I look at her date. "Don't get her pregnant," I say with my eyes. "But, please stay. And lose the damn tie. No one cares."

A shift. Back at dinner.

HER DAD

Okay. No, you don't have to get up. I'll clean up the dishes. You can sit.

CATH

Damn. I got something on my shirt. I hate that. Come with me, I'll show you my room.

HER GRANDMA

You're taking him to your room to change your shirt?

CATH

I'll leave the door open.

HER GRANDMA

I wouldn't.

(*To us.*)

But there they go. The door is open. You can hear everything. But I don't want to. I go over and turn on my Sinatra tape.

Cath and Alvin stand on opposite sides.

HER GRANDMA

Real Frankie fans don't like "My Way" or "New York, New York." And I'm a real fan. Quiz me on anything. No? Cowards. I saw him in concert once, only once. Years ago. This was before that Ava Gardner got her mits into him. When was this, early 40s? He might have been with the Dorsey orchestra. My sister liked Bing, not Sinatra "Can't sing," she says. I didn't care. I get tickets to see him, and I decide to take my sister to show her she's wrong! We get all dressed up. I'm so excited I can feel my heart in my throat. And he hits the stage! Oh, those pure blue eyes, scanning the crowd. "Look at me," I think. "Look at me." And then my sister, she shouts at him, "get off the stage you stewed bum, you can't sing!" And then he looks right *at me*. "It wasn't me!" I say, but not out loud, I can't say anything out loud. Who forms words anymore? That look he's giving me. I run out in tears. I never truly loved my sister after that. I wished her misery. I wished her pain. I wished her...you know, you need to be careful what you wish for. Oh, she's not dead. Wishes backfire sometimes. She's married someone rich. I see her every three years. She's grown cold. Silent. I can't even remember what she sounds like anymore until she opens her mouth. But that Frankie, though. Oh, that voice.

(referencing Alvin.)

And then this dope comes in with a fedora. You should warn a gal.

Cath and Alvin are just looking out and talking, not performing. Her Grandma hums a song that might sound like a Sinatra song, but if we don't have the rights, the humming can be way off. When we hum we think we're getting the tune, but we're usually not anyway. The point is, she hums something while Cath and Alvin talk.

CATH

Here it is.

ALVIN

Huh.

CATH

Not what you expected?

ALVIN

It's bright. Blues and yellows like the sun in the summer sky. The rest of the house is wood paneling. Brown.

CATH

Faux wood paneling. Not like the opulent trees you described.

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

You must love living here, though. Sandwiched between Temptation Ice Cream and the gas station. I'd be living at those places.

CATH

They lose their luster.

ALVIN

Have you ever seen Sha Na Na?

CATH

No. Why?

ALVIN

No reason.

CATH

Here's my window. Easy to open from the outside. I keep this little wooden thing here on the slide, so I need to move it to open the window. That's my security. But I'm right here on the first floor, you know? Not facing the street. Right here. Noreen visits sometimes late at night. She taps on the window, I enact security removal protocols, and she comes in. We talk for hours. Or read the latest adventures by St. John of God. The latest is St. John and the Temptation of the Werewolf. Do you know that Zine?

Alvin doesn't answer. A shift. Cath addresses us. Her Grandma continues to hum.

CATH

(To us.)

A month ago, I was at instructional media at DCC. There's a room where you can watch videos for class, and highspeed tape dubbers so you can copy the language audio cassettes on hold. And there's a photocopier you can use if you have a code and stacks of multicolored paper. I'm in instructional media on a work study. My dad doesn't know.

CHRISSIE

(as if presenting a slideshow)

The lycanthrope, in popular fiction, represents the carnal. But we already know that. Consider *Little Red Riding Hood* or the other cautionary tales we tell children, particularly, girls.

CATH

I don't tell dad about how I'm affording college or what I'm doing. He thinks it's all scholarships or whatever, or maybe that it's free like it was for him in the seventies.

CHRISSIE

(still presenting)

Secrets make Baby Jesus Cry.

CATH

Anyway, I know Alvin and the gang from the quad on campus. Whenever he's with his little group of like religious pals we call them Alvin and the ChipMonks. You can't see how I'm spelling Monks, but it's M-O-N-K-S, like a religious order. Alvin and the ChipMonks. And he's always polite, tips his hat. Even though we dog him like crazy. And then, one day, I see him photocopying pages. No one asks him why he's using all the paper and toner. He has a good reputation. If he was juggling lit dynamite the Dean would think it's for a good cause. But I catch a glimpse. And it's what I think it is! It's the latest Zine [pronounced *zeen*] by St. John of God. So, like, St. John has been shrouded in mystery. He says he's a Catholic priest who's been driven to write "erotic fiction," basically porn, by the devil. He can't sin with a woman, being Catholic, but monsters present something of a loophole. Vampires. Werewolves. Between all of the bloodletting, and body morphing, and like other like sex stuff, it's oddly poetic. Almost beautiful. And it's written by...

She looks at the incredibly stiff Alvin.

CHRISSIE

Nietzsche teaches us we are driven by two desires, which he locates in Apollonian and Dionysian impulses. The God Apollo represents the plastic arts, where we find, reason, structures, the manners that maketh man. Dionysus, the God of drinking and screwing, lives inside the Apollo casing, wanting to be an animal, a beast. To gorge himself. He is the werewolf. I write my doctoral dissertation focusing on *The Birth of Tragedy* and independent cinema of the 1990s. That comes later. Right now, I'm watching a VHS tape of *The Smurfs*. I can't get the tracking right. Something's wrong with the VCR. Something is always wrong with the VCR.

She steps away. Back to Cath looking at Alvin.

CATH

I want him to know I know he's been writing them. I want him to know that I'm in. But, not like super in, like...just kind of in. I take my shirt off. He looks at the wall. (*Note: She does not actually do this. She only says it. No one takes their shirt off in this play.*) Why'd you turn around?

A shift. She talks to him.

ALVIN

You took your shirt off.

CATH

We're dating.

ALVIN

Yeah, I mean. We are. But.

CATH

Too soon?

ALVIN

I don't know.

HER DAD

Cath?

ALVIN

Oh, no!

Alvin stands in front of her, like shielding her from anyone possibly seeing her. He's not looking.

HER DAD

You coming back?

CATH
(quietly)

Ohmygod.

(To Her Dad)

One second.

For a moment, Alvin and Cath are facing each other. He turns around and looks at the floor.

ALVIN

I like your carpet. Kind of shaggy. Reminds me of a place my parents rented years ago when I was like four.

CATH

The carpet downstairs reminds me of dryer lint. It's all...gray. Parts are brown. Torn up. Dryer lint makes my teeth feel fuzzy.

ALVIN

Your teeth feel fuzzy?

CATH

Yeah.

(smiles)

Okay. What do you think?

He turns. They perform a dance together. If Her Grandma has stopped humming, she hums again. It's a close dance. They're both smiling.

ALVIN

(To us.)

And when I face her. Her cheeks are red. I want to sit on her bed and look at the posters on her wall—movies I haven't seen, music I haven't listened to. I wear a hat because it makes me look interesting. Because Humphrey Bogart is my hero. Because black and white movies are the best. Someday, when I'm in my forties, I'll think the hat wasn't that interesting after all. It was just a hat meant to be worn outdoors. In the 1950s. Her shirt is really cute. I've forgotten how to talk.

CATH

You gonna tell them what else you do? I know you're St. John.

ALVIN

...oh...

CATH

I couldn't believe it was you.

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

(To us.)

I'm ready to deny it.

(Beat. To her.)

Yeah.

CATH

It's the best Zine.

ALVIN

Not many people read it. They threw it out at school, you know. They had some at the cafeteria and they all got dumped.

CATH

It happens.

ALVIN

Someone said it was porn, but it's not, you know. Porn. Maybe erotica.

CATH

You know the difference between porn and erotica? Lighting.

ALVIN

Ha.

CATH

You should tell people you study religion for like research purposes. I think folks would really get into it.

ALVIN

Nah, I don't know.

CATH

Why not?

ALVIN

(To us)

Because it's not research.

(To her.)

There's the deli. Me and Dan are going to run it.

John P. Bray

CATH

Yeah, but, as a side thing. You know? You could be famous.

ALVIN

We should head down.

HER GRANDMA

You should head down.

HER DAD

You should head down.

They all gather together.

HER GRANDMA

Took you long enough.

HER DAD

So, what are your plans?

ALVIN

We're going to a movie and then the deli. I gotta pick up my brother. We share a car.

HER DAD

Okay.

ALVIN

And then I'm seeing a friend tonight, so I'll have her back by eleven.

HER DAD

Okay. I like that. Okay.

CHRISSIE

What movie are you going to see?

ALVIN

Something at Hyde Park.

CATH

I get to choose.

ALVIN

She gets to choose.

HER DAD

You haven't chosen a movie, you don't know the time. And yet you're going to see something and pick up your brother and have her home by eleven and then see a friend?

(More to us.)

I'm not trying to break your balls. I'm not even insinuating that the friend you're seeing after eleven is a drug dealer. These kinds of thoughts never come to mind.

ALVIN

No, I guess I didn't plan it through.

CATH

They have an arcade in front. If the movies suck, we'll hit an arcade.

HER DAD

I don't like that word.

CATH

Fine, if the movies blow, we'll hit an arcade.

HER DAD

I think that's better.

HER GRANDMA

I need my pills.

CHRISSIE

I wanna see Grandma take her teeth out.

HER GRADMA

I don't take my teeth out for pills.

HER DAD

Just be careful, okay? I know you like each other.

CATH

I like him but that doesn't mean I'm not gonna try to get Noreen pregnant every once in a while.

John P. Bray

HER DAD

You shouldn't say that to him, you might put him off. He might not know you're joking. Noreen's her friend.

ALVIN

Thank you for dinner.

HER DAD

(To us.)

And they leave.

HER GRADMA

(To us.)

They leave.

CHRISSIE

(To us.)

They leave. We disappear into the dark. I wait for the next moment to be seen again. But the idea of being seen isn't too important to me yet. I watch Grandma remove her teeth. I watch Dad sit in front of the TV. He's not actually watching it. He's just looking at it. I ask if I can put on a tape. The image is warped. The tape could get chewed! He really needs to call a repair man.

HER DAD

Chrissie. Put on your pajamas. I need you to come to work with me.

CHRISSIE

Come on!

HER DAD

I have no idea when your sister will be back.

CHRISSIE

Eleven.

HER DAD

Right. If she's back by eleven I'll buy you your own werewolf.

Chrissie and Her Dad exit.

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

(To us.)

We head to the car. I look at the faint freckles across her nose.

CATH

You're looking at me. What are you looking at me with?

ALVIN

Looking?

CATH

Oh.

ALVIN

I don't read people well.

CATH

Try. What do you see?

ALVIN

Freckles. Blushing. A dog collar.

(To us, looking at her.)

What I don't say: bright eyes. Bright smile. Everything about you is bright.

CATH

Is that all you see?

ALVIN

(To us, looking at her.)

What I don't say: I am new at this. Are you new at this, too?

CATH

So, before we go in, I want to play you something. Okay? Here.

ALVIN

What is it?

CATH

This is my tape. I want you to play it.

ALVIN

Okay.

CATH

It's, um, musique concrète. I call it St. John's Head.

They pop in the cassette. Music comes on. If you're not familiar with musique concrète, it is essentially compositions where the material is recorded sounds, produced in a way that makes it sounds like a musical composition. It can be beautiful. It can be terrifying. It can be bad. It can be amazing. Cath's composition should be a little bit of all of the above, but it needs to have heart. They listen.

CATH

I used, um, the straw broom. That's the kind of shushshush sweeping sound. I used the sound my dad makes when I say Cattttthhhhh. He hates that sound. It makes him make a kind of click in the side of his face. I used a few of your words in here, and my sister playing with her doll. And I found some, um, recordings of wolves, and messed around with them a bit. I mixed this in the audio booth in the CSB Building late one night. No one knew I was there. I had the whole place to myself. So, when I think of like the piece of time we've spent together, and everything that has happened since the first night you came over to the CSB, it sounds like this. This is what you sound like to me.

(Beat.)

And, um, I know it's raw, but to me it's beautiful. And, you know, no matter what happens, I'm just glad you got to hear this.

ALVIN

Thank you.

Sounds of a video game. They stand next to each other. Maybe they're taking turns.

CATH

Why don't you want people to know it's you?

ALVIN

I don't actually want fame. I just want a pile of money to do stuff people don't know I'm doing.

CATH

So, tell no one, you mean.

St. John of Suburbia

Right. ALVIN

CATH
(*Beat.*)
I think people already know.

ALVIN
What people?

She shrugs.

ALVIN
Have you...you didn't...?

CATH
I don't think the ChipMonks know.

ALVIN
Oh, God. Okay. I mean. I can just say it's Satan.

CATH
Yeah, that they'd believe. But. I don't know. You deserve credit.

ALVIN
Again, credit is overrated.

CATH
I'd want the credit even more than money, I think. I want folks to know this is my soul in here. But I'm not brave like you. I don't even get my work out there.

ALVIN
I'm not brave.

CATH
You kind of are. Even if you're like...hiding behind a name, you're still letting others know your soul. Brave.

ALVIN
You shared your song with me. Brave.

The video game ends. They hold hands. They're now in a car.

CATH

The light of the deli are on. It's pretty bright. Is this an all-night deli? Is there such a thing as an all-night deli?

ALVIN

No. Satan doesn't like to close on time.

CATH

Why do you call your brother Satan?

ALVIN

Satan Dan, then. But you can just call him Dan.

SATAN DAN appears. An old man sits at a table. There's some food wrappers and racing forms, lottery tickets; in short, old man gambles.

OLD MAN

You really got nothing for me?

SATAN DAN

We can hit OTB next time. Right now, my luck is terrible.

OLD MAN

What you mean you got bad luck? At your age? Don't you own this place?

SATAN DAN

No, a family friend. He says he might sell it to me and Alvin one day. We'll see. What I really want to do is play golf.

OLD MAN

You like golf?

SATAN DAN

Never played it. But I like the hats.

OLD MAN

Ha! He likes the hats! Hear that? He likes the hats!

ALVIN

You still open?

St. John of Suburbia

SATAN DAN

I can't leave, I got people sitting here.

ALVIN

It's after nine.

SATAN DAN

Yeah?

ALVIN

We're supposed to close at five.

SATAN DAN

We're trying to figure out who has a better tip.

ALVIN

You're heading to OTB?

CATH

OTB?

SATAN DAN/OLD MAN/ALVIN

Off Track Betting.

OLD MAN

He tells me he doesn't know nothing. So, I'm telling him I know nothing. We'll see who wins.

ALVIN

Is Nothing the name of a horse?

OLD MAN and SATAN DAN

Haha!

OLD MAN

Okay. And how are you, Cath?

CATH

Okay.

OLD MAN

You tell your dad you're working here yet?

John P. Bray

CATH

I just started last week, so.

OLD MAN

I would tell him. He finds out you're making extra money he might get worried.

CATH

I'm twenty.

OLD MAN

Not yet you're not. And I'm just saying if I was making extra money, my parents would want to know.

CATH

It's fine.

OLD MAN

Okay.

ALVIN

How do you know so much about who's doing what?

OLD MAN

Where do I go, huh? Where do I go? With your brother's amazing sandwiches and lack of knowledge on horses, where else would I go? You three ain't quiet. None of you is ever quiet. You talk talk talk about everything. I sit here opening to close listening. And watching. I see her come in here, talk to you a few times, next thing you know she's putting her name on a paper sack with her number, applying for a job I'm meant to believe, and it's all "don't I see you on campus?" and "when can you start?" I hear it all, see it all. Everyone's gotta have a hobby. So. Did you have a nice date with this square?

CATH

He's okay.

OLD MAN

Uh-oh. Only okay! In my day, I was more than okay. I was a real cracker at whist.

(conspiratorially)

You let her win?

CATH

I let *him* win.

OLD MAN

Ha ha! Okay! New World! Ha ha!

CATH

I have to use the bathroom.

Cath exits.

OLD MAN

Hey. I didn't want to say anything in front of Cath, because I don't know how much you want her to know. So, Security John, the guy that works the plaza Oscar's is in? He says there's some big city publisher that gets his breakfast there every Thursday morning.

SATAN DAN

You told us this.

OLD MAN

Yeah, I'm telling you again. Because tomorrow is Thursday. Why don't you pass one of your zines off to him? Wait outside the place in the morning and hand it to him? Don't do anything too risky.

ALVIN

Sorry, Old Man. I don't have any magazines, and I don't know what you're talking about.

SATAN DAN

Besides, Oscar wouldn't let us near the place on account of us being competition.

Alvin gives him a quick elbow, as if to say "dude, we're not telling anyone." Then Satan Dan elbows him back, as if to say "dude, don't elbow me." It goes back and forth. They act like they're not doing it. Old Man watches. They final stop.

OLD MAN

(Beat.)

Okay, whatever you say. Keep being young, okay? Ha! Take care!

A shift. Old Man addresses us.

OLD MAN

Like I say, they talk talk talk. I know they're writing these zines. They're not for me. They lose me at "werewolf." But, if they're making them, why not try to get them to someone that can help? Eh, they won't listen to me because I'm old. When you get to be old, you're pushed away. It happens in stages. First, you hit middle age, and you find yourself sandwiched between a generation that's showing you the door out and a generation that never made room for you at the table. Look at them. The world exists for their youth and their problems. My God. Problems. They really don't know, do they. Look at him. He's hooked. I wish them luck. Love is the worst thing in the world because it's the greatest thing in the world. The hardest thing about being old is the dreams. You dream about youth, about friends that are gone, about first dates. You want to live in those dreams. Then you wake up. And what have you got? Bum tips and cheap sandwiches. Let that be my epitaph. Old man. They don't even know my name. It's Vinny. But not even that matters. When you're old, you don't have a name. You're just Old Man or Old Woman. And when you die the only thing that happens is folks that loved you are sad. I don't want to be the last. Ah, enough. Look at them. Why the hell is that kid wearing that stupid hat?

He puts the same kind of Fedora Alvin has on his head and exits.

ALVIN

Maybe the Old Man is right. Maybe we can just, I don't know. Put them there in the morning.

SATAN DAN

They threw them out last time.

ALVIN

But Satan Dan—

SATAN DAN

Threw. Them. Out.

ALVIN

Or we can meet him outside after he gets his coffee.

SATAN DAN

He'd just throw it out. He has to *want* to pick it up.

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

Okay. You think this will hit?

SATAN DAN

Yeah. Maybe enough we can buy the deli.

ALVIN

I like the way you dream. What do you think of her?

SATAN DAN

Who? Oh, her? She's okay. Casual?

ALVIN

Yeah. I met her Dad tonight.

SATAN DAN

Very casual.

ALVIN

She says she might cheat on me with Noreen.

SATAN DAN

Hell, *I'd* cheat on you with Noreen. What's with the dog collar?

ALVIN

I kind of like it.

SATAN DAN

Yeah, I bet she knows you like it. Think about losing the tie.

Cath enters and listens.

ALVIN

I like the tie.

SATAN DAN

And the hat.

ALVIN

I like the hat.

John P. Bray

SATAN DAN

You need to loosen up. Be yourself.

ALVIN

What if this is me?

CATH

If this is you...I kind of like it. You don't need work.

SATAN DAN

You don't think he needs work?

CATH

Nah.

She takes the hat and puts it on.

ALVIN

Hey.

SATAN DAN

The hat looks better on you.

CATH

Most hats do.

ALVIN

Okay.

CATH

You want it back?

ALVIN

Well...

CATH

You can have it when you drop me off. Maybe.

SATAN DAN

Please keep it.

CATH

You really have to take me home now?

SATAN DAN

Yeah, we gotta meet “O.”

CATH

Okay. So, you really do have plans tonight.

ALVIN

You didn’t believe me?

CATH

You might have been playing cool. But you can call me after if you want. Noreen might come by my window. I mean, you know, like. Whatever.

SATAN DAN

Very casual.

CATH

(To us.)

And they drop me off. I get out of the car. The house is dark. So very dark. And to my right, a gas station. The light glows yellow and the pumps glow blue. Someone inside is buying a lottery ticket. A couple of guys that go to the high school crouch over an adult mag looking around to make sure the man behind the counter doesn’t see them. Of course, he does. He just doesn’t care. As long as they don’t steal it. As long as they get it back in that plastic cover to make it look convincing. That’s what it’s all about. Just looking the other way. We don’t ask for much, do we. There’s a song I like. A young woman sings, “we owe the world nothing, we owe each other the world.” I’d tell you which young woman but I much rather you go out into the world with your ears open and find her.

ALVIN

(To us.)

We are perfectly imperfect. I look at the stars. I catch my reflection. My crooked jaw. The zits on her chin. The hair Satan Dan missed when shaving that goatee. There’s a song I like. An old man sings “there is a crack in everything, that’s how the light gets in.” If you don’t know the old man, go out into the world with your ears open and find him.

John P. Bray

SATAN DAN

I really want to go. I can almost hear them thinking. I cover my ears with my brain.

CATH

Goodnight, guys.

ALVIN

Goodnight.

(*To us.*)

She leans through the window. Our faces get close.

CATH

(*To us.*)

I don't like kissing people in public. And I could just go in. Call Noreen. Play it cool. I put the hat on his head.

She does. They look at each other.

SATAN DAN

You guys are dating! Kiss!

They peck. Satan Dan sighs.

CATH

Good night.

Satan Dan and Alvin lean together and start singing or humming a song such as "Goodnite, Sweetheart, Goodnite," if rights allow. If that doesn't work, maybe they can just sing "Sha Na Na Na," to the rhythm of "Goodnite, Sweetheart" and just have a moment doing that, as long as it is played straight. She listens to them. She turns to us.

CATH

(*To us.*)

They didn't even leave the porch light on for me. The stars follow me in. Even with the house lights off, I never stand in darkness.

She exits. Alvin stares off. Satan Dan notices. Chuckles.

SATAN DAN

When's the last time you dated?

ALVIN

Joan.

SATAN DAN

Joan?! You dated her for nine whole days in tenth grade!

ALVIN

It was longer than that.

SATAN DAN

Longer enough to correct me?

ALVIN

Time means nothing when you feel...fine, I'm not correcting you.

SATAN DAN

Told her you loved her after a week.

ALVIN

You don't have to prick out.

SATAN DAN

I'm not pricking out. I'm saying you're an ass hat. You like her. Loosen up a bit.

ALVIN

I don't know, man. I feel like if I loosen up, I'll mess it up. It won't work.

SATAN DAN

Don't worry about whether it's going to work. Just be in the moment, have fun, don't intentionally hurt feelings, learn something, and enjoy. You think the stars say "hey, I might blink out! Should I worry about blinking out?" No. They do their thing. And it's beautiful. Do your thing. Be beautiful.

ALVIN

What's the last time *you* were with a girl?

SATAN DAN

That...that isn't what we're talking about.

John P. Bray

ALVIN

Okay.

SATAN DAN

You nervous?

ALVIN

About Cath?

SATAN DAN

About breaking into Oscar's.

ALVIN

No, I lie.

SATAN DAN

Good, I respond, knowing he's lying. The editor is gonna love it. He's gonna bring it back to Arbitrary Cottages and tell them to stop the press, like they do in the movies.

ALVIN

That's newspapers.

SATAN DAN

And we're gonna get credit for inventing a whole new awesome genre.

ALVIN

Okay. We don't know what he looks like.

SATAN DAN

I hear he drives a Cadillac.

ALVIN

Plenty of people drive Cadillacs.

SATAN DAN

Name five.

ALVIN

Name five?

St. John of Suburbia

SATAN DAN

You said plenty.

ALVIN

I didn't say plenty of people *I know*.

SATAN DAN

See? You can't name five.

(Beat.)

How is this one?

ALVIN

So good!

SATAN DAN

Worth getting busted for? You know if we get caught, everyone will know your name. You know that, right? Breaking and entering and leaving behind werewolf erotica that you wrote.

ALVIN

I thought you wrote it.

SATAN DAN

Okay. You got your paper clip?

Alvin holds it up.

SATAN DAN

On break. BREAK!

ALVIN

And it's mission impossible.

The two face us. Music such as the Mission Impossible theme plays.

SATAN DAN

But not quite. Because of copyright.

ALVIN

There are a couple of cameras in the lot.

SATAN DAN

I hear they're bullshit.

ALVIN

(To us.)

And Security John who drives around. I don't know him. I don't want to know him. It's not because of him. I feel like the only way I'll know him is if we're busted. I look around the plaza. There's an all-night diner. There's a Great American Grocery store. Oscar's Deli. A few parked cars. It's getting cold.

SATAN DAN

Why are you still wearing the hat? Everyone will recognize you because of the hat!

ALVIN

You said the cameras were bullshit!

(a beat. Tossing off the hat)

Step one: open the door.

SATAN DAN

(using the paper clip)

I'm gonna MacGyver this thing.

ALVIN

Step two: enter the code.

SATAN DAN

Oscar is a sicko: sixty-nine, sixty-nine.

ALVIN

Step three: put our Zines on top of the Penny Savers by the gumball machines.

SATAN DAN

They won't notice coming in. No one looks at the magazines when they open a store. They just open and get ready.

ALVIN

Step four: sit in the car with binoculars.

SATAN DAN

And above all, make sure Security John doesn't see us.

St. John of Suburbia

Music stops. Lights change. They relax. Alvin puts his hat back on.

SATAN DAN

Okay, that was easier than I thought it would be. Give me those binoculars. Now, the waiting game. Heh. So, you said this one is good?

ALVIN

Yes.

SATAN DAN

What happens?

ALVIN

The priest sits in a hair shirt, repenting for the sin of lust.

A PRIEST enters, stiff and uncomfortable.

SATAN DAN

He's doing the what now?

PRIEST

IT ITCHES!!!

ALVIN

He lays down on the bed.

PRIEST

God, forgive cruel, sick, me.

ALVIN

And the Female Werewolf enters.

FEMALE WEREWOLF enters. She wears a giant werewolf rubber mask—it should look good—and a totally black costume otherwise. This can be the same actor that plays Cath.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

Grrr.

ALVIN

And her head has transformed into a giant hairy head of a monstrous dog.

John P. Bray

FEMALE WEREWOLF

Grrr.

ALVIN

And she's otherwise a sexy woman.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

...grrr?

ALVIN

With a soul that oozes sensuality.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

(seductive)

Grrr...

ALVIN

And he's afraid.

PRIEST

I'm afraid!!

ALVIN

And she licks his foot.

Long, awkward pause.

SATAN DAN

Ew!

PRIEST

Dude!

FEMALE WEREWOLF

Why the hell would I do that?

ALVIN

Because you're a dog and dogs do that.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

That's a terrible answer!

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

I'm trying to go for verisimilitude.

SATAN DAN

That's not what we agreed on!

ALVIN

You said you wanted to wrestle with sin and do some tongue-play.

SATAN DAN

Like...Michelle Pfeiffer in *Batman Returns*, Alvin! Damn! Who's going to want *this*?

ALVIN

You think the dog should lick his face?

SATAN DAN

NO! You got the werewolf wrong! Have you seen *Howling II: Your Sister is a Werewolf?*

ALVIN

NOBODY has seen that movie!

SATAN DAN

They make it, I don't know, hot! Women werewolves can be hot!

ALVIN

I don't care about hot, Satan Dan! I care about art, AND THIS IS ART!

SATAN DAN

God! GOD!!!

PRIEST

I don't like it.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

I...I'm just going to take myself for a walk...

Priest and Female Werewolf nod in agreement and exit.

ALVIN

What happened to "do your thing, be beautiful?"

John P. Bray

SATAN DAN

I take it back. Don't be you. For the love of God, NEVER be you! Okay. Okay. It's not like anyone knows we write this stuff, right?

ALVIN

Well...

SATAN DAN

Right, Cath knows.

(*A realization.*)

OH, GOD! Oh, God! Oh, God! That explains the Dog Collar! Oh, GOD!!!!

ALVIN

Wait. You think she wore the dog collar...because...she likes me?

SATAN DAN

Damn, you're dense!

ALVIN

I just figured she's goth.

SATAN DAN

She listen to, I don't know, Bauhaus or Smiths or Siouxsie and the Banshees, or The Cure, or, um...Japan? She smoke clove cigarettes? Is her room all dark?

ALVIN

Her room is bright.

SATAN DAN

Yep.

ALVIN

Her room is *bright!*

SATAN DAN

There you go!

ALVIN

So...she really likes me?

SATAN DAN

I'm gonna kick your ass, dude.

ALVIN

Huh.

(smiles)

Okay, that's. Yeah. Okay. Heh. *Werewolf Collar*. Heh.

SATAN DAN

God. That means Noreen knows!

ALVIN

She did say other people know. Wait, you like Noreen?

SATAN DAN

Of course, I like Noreen! What do you mean do I like Noreen? Doesn't everybody? She's got that belly ring. I love bellies, man.

ALVIN

Ah.

SATAN DAN

Damn! Now she's gonna think I have a bestiality foot fetish, you turd!

ALVIN

Sorry. You do have a foot fetish, though.

SATAN DAN

What?!

ALVIN

You were on and on about toe rings last year.

SATAN DAN

They're cute!

ALVIN

Now it's belly rings. So. Maybe not a fetish, but you like accessories that draw the eyes to parts of the body that are usually hidden. But you noticed Cath's collar and necks aren't hidden.

SATAN DAN

The collar's hard to miss. I don't have a fetish. Asshat.

(beat)

Okay. There's John.

John P. Bray

ALVIN

Security John?

SATAN DAN

Yeah. He's gonna go by in just a moment. Duck down.

A light passes over them.

ALVIN

Now what?

SATAN DAN

I can't believe you told her. You were all "I don't want anyone to know."

ALVIN

She already knew. She figured it out. What am I gonna do? Lie?

SATAN DAN

I guess you deserve some of the credit.

ALVIN

I did write them.

SATAN DAN

They're my ideas. You just...

ALVIN

Sit down, rewrite them entirely, type them up, cut up the pages, arrange them, photocopy them using different colored paper for effect, and distribute them in the dead of night?

SATAN DAN

Which is it—do you want credit or don't you?

ALVIN

I want to be public and entirely private at the same time. I want to preach, but I also need...to write this. Can't I do both?

SATAN DAN

You really want to preach?

ALVIN

Yeah, I think I do. I think I'm being called. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I just like God. Maybe I like God and I don't mind sin.

SATAN DAN

If you're gonna preach, I'm not sure if you can be cool with sin. God. I don't care if someone knows I'm writing what we usually write, but *THIS* turn of events? I trusted you to like *do this* and *do it right*. Damn. You need oversight. Damn. Okay, we got no choice.

ALVIN

No choice but to what?

SATAN DAN

We steal them back.

ALVIN

Security John is out there!

SATAN DAN

WE STEAL THEM BACK! And then I'LL write it. Damn.

ALVIN

(To us.)

I'm torn. On one hand, I don't want to go back. I want the editor from Arbitrary Cottages to read it. I want him to love it. I want him to track us down. To find us in the deli. To produce a contract. To let me keep the name St. John. On the other?

SATAN DAN

(To us.)

I really want those issues back.

(To Alvin.)

Break!

Music such as the Mission Impossible theme, but not quite, starts to play. They move around in tableau poses as if trying to be spies.

SECURITY JOHN

(Off-stage)

The hell do you think you're doing?

John P. Bray

SECURITY JOHN enters. Music stops.

ALVIN

Busted!

SATAN DAN

Hey, Security John.

SECURITY JOHN

You know me?

SATAN DAN

We never met, but you're a friend of a friend. Old Guy. What's his name, um...

Security John looks at Dan. Looks at Alvin.

SECURITY JOHN

Bowser?

ALVIN

(To Satan Dan)

Cath's Dad is Security John?!

Chrissie enters.

CHRISSIE

Dad? Hat guy?

ALVIN

(Weakly)

My nightmare.

CHRISSIE

YOU'RE BREAKING INTO THE DELI!

SATAN DAN

It's not what you think!

CHRISSIE

You want to steal those Zines!

St. John of Suburbia

SATAN DAN

It is what you think!

SECURITY JOHN

Why??? Can't you wait until tomorrow when they open?

CHRISSIE

Do you arrest them or shoot them?

ALVIN and SATAN DAN

NO!

SECURITY JOHN

Couldn't you wait until morning to pick one up?

ALVIN

It's not that. Oh, God. It's so much worse than you think.

CHRISSIE

Did you guys kill someone?

ALVIN and SATAN DAN

NO!

ALVIN

It's so much worse than that.

CHRISSIE

Did you guys write the werewolf porn?

ALVIN

NO!

SATAN DAN

(Beat.)

Yes.

SECURITY JOHN

You know about porn?

CHRISSIE

Cath has a whole stack of this stuff in her room. Noreen calls it porn.

John P. Bray

SECURITY JOHN

Go wait by the car.

CHRISSIE

Why?

SECURITY JOHN

Because.

CHRISSIE

You know that's not a good reason.

SECURITY JOHN

I don't have a reason. Just do it.

She moves aside.

SECURITY JOHN

You write the priest and werewolf porn.

ALVIN

Would you call it porn?

SECURITY JOHN

Wouldn't you?

ALVIN

It's not...it's supposed to be mysticism. Something like Rumi would write.

Alvin sinks to his knees, clearly embarrassed, destroyed, done.

SECURITY JOHN

Who?

ALVIN

He was a thirteenth century mystic. You know? He became one with God and the universe through his sensuality.

(Reciting)

If anyone asks you
how the perfect satisfaction
of all our sexual wanting

ALVIN (CONT'D)
(*Reciting*)

will look, lift your face
and say,
Like this.

When someone mentions the gracefulness
of the night sky, climb up on the roof
and dance and say,
Like this.

If anyone wants to know what “spirit” is,
or what “God’s fragrance” means,
lean your head toward him or her.
Keep your face there close.
Like this.

When someone quotes the old poetic image
about clouds gradually uncovering the moon,
slowly loosen knot by knot the strings
of your robe.
Like this.

If anyone wonders how Jesus raised the dead,
don’t try to explain the miracle.
Kiss me on the lips.
Like this.

SECURITY JOHN
(*interrupting*)

Got it.

ALVIN

I want to write like Rumi, to experience *being* in a way that moves beyond
intension, a givenness that situates us not as a mere construct, but as unknown
subjects brought together by grace.

Security John gives Satan Dan a puzzled look.

SATAN DAN

“Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter.” (*note: he’s quoting Yoda.*)

SECURITY JOHN

You want to be like...a...priest?

ALVIN

Not a Catholic. I know they can't date. But it's something I think I'm called to do. It's very confusing to me, but it's...I'm being called to something. To find a light inside here, and to join that light with the light I know lives in others. To be in oneness. I think that's what I'm trying to do.

SECURITY JOHN

Is this why you're studying religion at DCC?

ALVIN

That and VCR maintenance.

SECURITY JOHN

(perks up)

VCR maintenance?

ALVIN

Yeah.

SECURITY JOHN

Huh. Okay, here's the deal. Will you stand up? Here's the deal.

(To us).

And here's what I don't say. The zines you're writing. They're really good. Don't look at me like that I'm a single dad with two jobs. What do you think I do here most nights? I pick up the condom wrappers, the coffee cups, the detritus of lives spent in the wastelands of suburbia. I once saved a bat that was living under like the flap of a shopping cart. Like where a child sits. It must have figured it to be a shutter of a window or a tree limb. Something. And then I read. I read whatever is left lying on the ground. I've pulled issues of St. John out of the dumpster to have something and...I'm hooked.

CHRISSIE

Are they arrested yet?

SECURITY JOHN

(Holds up a finger to Chrissie.)

The deal is this never happened. You never tried to break in. I didn't see it. And in exchange...

St. John of Suburbia

ALVIN

(To us.)

And I know what's coming. He's going to tell me to stop seeing Cath. He can't have her see a guy that writes this stuff. He knows who I am. I've never been more naked.

SECURITY JOHN

In exchange, take Chrissie home. Get out of this parking lot, take Chrissie home.

ALVIN

That's it?

SECURITY JOHN

Yes, that's it. Take her home. And maybe...could you look at the VCR?

(To us.)

I lied to Chrissie. There is no "take your daughter to work day" when you work security. There's "my mother's pills knock her out and I didn't trust Hat-Boy would have Caty home in time so you have to come with me" day. But, Caty's home. They can drop her off. Maybe have a laugh about what happened here. I can't believe he writes this stuff. I feel kind of in awe and kind of sick. Because it's actually beautiful. I hate how much I love it.

SATAN DAN

Thank you. We promise we won't try to break back in.

SECURITY JOHN

Back in?

ALVIN

IN. We won't try to break *in.* Again.

SECURITY JOHN

Right.

ALVIN

Sir? Thank you.

He nods at them. He looks at us one more time.

SECURITY JOHN

(To us.)

There's a guy that comes in on Thursdays from Arbitrary Cottages. I'll make sure he gets one. I've given him one before. Maybe, I don't know. Maybe it'll help, maybe it won't. We'll see.

He exits.

ALVIN

(Crestfallen.)

We write porn.

SATAN DAN

(Correcting.)

We write erotic art.

ALVIN

You know the difference between porn and erotica?

CHRISSIE

Lighting.

They both look at her.

ALVIN

How were you going to end it?

SATAN DAN

The story? Oh, they were going to meet under the moonlight.

Priest and Female Werewolf enter.

SATAN DAN

They were going to be close. She was going to transform him with her passion.

FEMALE WEREWOLF

Grrr.

PRIEST

Grrr.

St. John of Suburbia

SATAN DAN

And they run off into the woods, never to be seen again, but always loving, always with each other, always. Transformed. That's how I would end it.

ALVIN

That...is the ending to *Wolf*, your moron! With Jack Nicholson?!

SATAN DAN

So?

ALVIN

It's infringement!

SATAN DAN

It's homage! Like Tarantino does!

ALVIN

Why don't you just have them say:

FEMALE WEREWOLF

I love you.

PRIEST

I know.

ALVIN

Or:

FEMALE WEREWOLF
(*grabbing Alvin's hat.*)

Here's looking at you, kid.

SATAN DAN

There are only seven plots in the world, you know.

ALVIN

And one of them is *Wolf*?

SATAN DAN

And one of them is *Wolf*.

Female Werewolf puts the hat back on Alvin's head. Female Werewolf and Priest exit.

ALVIN

We're never going to own the deli are we.

SATAN DAN

No. Probably not.

ALVIN

And this is not gonna hit big, is it?

SATAN DAN

For your sake, I hope not. Hey, but if nothing else we have Cath. And Noreen.

CHRISSIE

Can I tell you something? I think I'm part werewolf.

ALVIN

Yeah?

CHRISSIE

When there's a full moon I can't sleep. I wake up. I see the moon. It's giant. It could smash us. It scares me but I like it. It gets me excited to be alive. So, I'm a werewolf. Except I don't go around killing people. So, I might just be part werewolf.

SATAN DAN

She makes a compelling case.

CHRISSIE

Will you look at the VCR when we get in?

ALVIN

Yeah, your Dad already asked me to. I don't think I ever responded. But, yeah.

CHRISSIE

Cool. I love the moon. I love looking at it.

(To us.)

And I fall asleep right there. Looking at the moon. It was the most exciting "take your daughter to work" day ever. And it shaped what I wanted to study.

St. John of Suburbia

Chrissie falls asleep.

ALVIN

Did...did she just fall asleep?

SATAN DAN

Late night for her.

ALVIN

Yeah.

(Beat.)

I kind of like Cath, Dan. Dog collar and all.

SATAN DAN

You would, you little creep.

(Warmly puts his hand on his brother's shoulder.)

You would. Give her a call. I don't want to freak her out by us just showing up.

ALVIN

I thought you liked freaking people out. You did when we were kids.

SATAN DAN

Yeah, but that was back when I was Satan Dan. I'm just Dan now, Alvin. Have been for years.

ALVIN

Huh.

(To us.)

And I think about the things he said about being beautiful. About not wanting me to be embarrassed by this last issue. And the way he treats Cath at the store. He has become Just Dan. Satan Dan no more. I pull a quarter from my penny loafer. It's dull. It doesn't shine. The year on it. 1976. The year I was born. I'm back where I started the evening. Calling on Cath and saying something, I don't know. Something about liking her? Something about the heart, something about...man, how do you rehearse this? Plan it all out in your head to make the conversation less awkward? Maybe that's it. Maybe it's supposed to be awkward and I'm planning too much. She showed me her window. I'll call her. I'll tell her what we're up to. Is she up to company? Wait by the window. We'll be there.

Alvin exits.

JUST DAN

Hurry up.

(Beat. To us.)

I look at the kid sleeping in the back. This is not the night I signed on for. But it's not one I'll forget. I look at the cameras which I know are bullshit. I look at the night sky. The air gets colder. I wish it would snow. When you drive in the snow along the highway, the way the snow comes whooshing towards you it feels like you're in *Star Wars* flying the Millennium Falcon at lightspeed. It all comes so fast and gentle, like a future. A future that opens its hands to you and says, "welcome home."

(opens his hand.)

Like this.

Alvin re-enters.

ALVIN

She'll wait by the door.

JUST DAN

You didn't really think we'd need to go in through her window, did you? Is, uh...?

ALVIN

Noreen's there, too.

JUST DAN

Yes!

ALVIN

You carry the kid, I'm on the VCR.

JUST DAN

Sounds good.

Just Dan drives. He sings "Good Nite, Sweetheart, Good Nite," if rights allow. Or they will need to hum something similar. Alvin joins him. Chrissie sleeps. Cath enters, singing along, and puts her hand on ALVIN's shoulder. Her Grandma and Her Dad enter, also singing. lights fade.

THE END

