

Monologues Specifically for POC

The Colored Museum by George C. Wolf

A Soldier with a Secret

The Colored Museum is a series of exhibits in “a museum where the myths and madness of black/Negro/colored Americans are stored.” In this exhibit, Junie Robinson, a black combat soldier, “comes to life and smiles at the audience. Somewhat dim-witted, he has an easygoing charm about him.”

JUNIE: Pst. Pst. Guess what? I know the secret. The secret to your pain. ‘Course, I didn’t always know. First i had to die, then come back to life, ‘fore I had the gift.

Ya see, the Cappin sent me off up ahead to scout for screamin’ yella bastards. ‘Course, for the life of me I couldn’t understand why they’d be screamin’, seein’ as how we was tryin’ to kill them and they us.

But anyway, I’m off lookin’, when all of a sudden I find myself caught smack dead in the middle of this explosion. This blindin’, burnin’, scaldin’ explosion. Musta been a booby trap or something, ‘cause all around me is fire. Hell, I’m on fire. Like a piece of chicken dropped in a skillet of cracklin’ grease. Why, my flesh was justa peelin’ off of my bones.

But then I says to myself, “Junie, if yo’ flesh is on fire, how come you don’t feel no pain!” And I didn’t. I swear as I’m standin’ here, I felt nuthin’. That’s when I sort of put two and two together and realized I didn’t feel no whole lot of hurtin’ cause I done died.

Well I just picked myself up and walked right on out of that explosion. Hell, once you know you dead, why keep on dyin', ya know?

So, like I say, I walk right outta that explosion, fully expectin' to see white clouds, Jesus, and my mama, only all I saw was more war. Shootin' goin' on way off in this direction and that direction.

And there, standin' around, was all the guys. Hubert, J.F., the Cappin. I guess the sound of the explosion must of attracted 'em, and they all starin' at me like I'm some kind of ghost.

So I yells to 'em, "Hey there, Hubert! Hey there, Cappin!" But they just stare. So I tells 'em how I'd died and how I guess it wasn't my time 'cause here I am, "fully in the flesh and not a scratch to my bones." And they just stare. So I took to starin' back.

(The expression on Junie's face slowly turns to horror and disbelief.)

Only what I saw... well, I can't exactly to this day describe it. But I swear, as sure as they was wearin' green and holdin' guns, they was each wearin' a piece of the future on their faces.

Yea. All the hurt that was gonna get done to them and they was gonna to do folks was right there clear as day.

I saw how J.F., once he got back to Chicago was gonna get shot dead by this po-lice, and I saw how Hubert was gonna start beatin' up on his old lady, which I didn't understand 'cause all he could do was talk on and on about how much loved her. Each and everyone one of 'em had pain in his future and blood on his path. And God or the Devil one spoke to me and said, "Junie, these colored boys ain't gonna be the same after this war. They ain't gonna have no kind of happiness."

Well, right then and there it comes to me. The secret to their pain.

Late that night, after the medics done checked me over and found me fit for fightin', after everybody done settle down for the night, I sneaked over to where Hubert was sleepin', and with a needl I stole from the medics...pst, pst... I shot a little air into his veins. The second he died, all the hurtin'-to-come just left his face.

Two weeks later, I got J.F., and after that Woodrow... Jimmy Joe. I even spent all night waitin' by the latrine 'cause I knew the Cappin always made a late-night visit and... pst, pst... I got him. (Smiling, quite proud of himself.) That's how come I died and come back to life. 'Cause just like Jesus went around healin' the sick, I'm supposed to go around healin' the hurtin' all these colored boys wearin' from the war.

Pst, pst. I know the secret. The secret to your pain. The secret to yours, and yours. Pst. Pst. Pst. Pst.

The Gospel According to Miss Roc

Miss Roj appears. He is dressed in striped patio pants, white go-go boots, a halter, and cat shaped sunglasses. What would seem ridiculous on anyone else, Miss Roj wears as if it were high fashion. He carries himself with total elegance and absolute arrogance.

MISS ROJ: God created black people and black people created style. The name's Miss Roj... that's R.O.J. thank you and you can find me every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights at "The Bottomless Pit," the watering hole for the wild and weary which asks the question, "Is there life after Jherri-curl?"

Thanks, doll. *Yes*, If they be black and swish, the B.P. has seen them, which is not to suggest the Pit is lacking in cultural diversity. Oh no. There are your hinge queens, white men who like their chicken legs dark. And let's not forget, "Los Muchachos de la Neighborhood." But the speciality of the house is The Snap Queens. (*He snaps his fingers.*) We are a rare breed.

For, you see, when something strikes our fancy, when the truth comes piercing through the dark, well you just can't let it pass unnoticed. No darling. You must pronounce it with a snap. (*He snaps*).

Snapping comes from another galaxy, as do all snap queens. That's right. I ain't just your regular oppressed American Negro. No-no-no! I am an extraterrestrial. And I ain't talkin' none of that shit you seen in the movies! I have real power.

Yes, I was placed here on Earth to study the life habits of a deteriorating society, and child when we talkin' new York City, we are discussing the Queen of Deterioration. Miss New York is doing a slow dance with death, and I am here to warn you all, but before I do, I must know... don't you just love my patio pants? Annette Funicello immortalized them in "Beach Blanket Bingo," and I have continued the legacy. And my go-gos? I realize white after Labor Day is very gauche, but as the saying goes, if you've got it flaunt it, if you don't, front it and snap to death any bastard who dares to defy you. (*Laughing*) Oh ho! My demons are showing. Yes, my demons live at the bottom of my Bacardi and Coke.

FULL MONOLOGUE: https://www.african-americanshakes.org/wp-content/uploads/the-colored-museum_miss-roj.pdf

The Last Mama on the Couch Play

LADY:

She was a creature of regal beauty
who in ancient time graced the temples of the Nile
with her womanliness

But here she was, stuck being colored
and a woman in a world that valued neither.

Feet flat, back broke,
she looked at the man who, though he be thirty
still ain't got his own apartment.

Yeah, he's still livin' with his Mama!

And she asked herself, was this the life
for a Princess Colored, who by the
translucence of her skin, knew the
universe was her sister.

And she cried for her sisters in Detroit
Who knew, as she, that their souls belonged on the Nile.

And she cried for her sisters in Chicago
who, like her, their life has become
one colored hell.

Lala's Opening

LALA: (*Laughing*) I get it. It's a plot, isn't it. A nasty little CIA, FBI kind of plot. Well let me tell you muthafuckers one thing, there is nothing in that closet, real or manufactured, that will be a dimmer to the glimmer that is Lamé the star. You may have gotten Billie and Bessie and a little piece of everyone else who's come along since but you won't get Lala. My clothes are too fabulous! My hair is too long! My accent is too french. That's why I came home to America. To prove you ain't got nothing on me!

LALA: I must tell you this dream I had last night. Simply magnifique. In this dream, I'm running naked in Sammy Davis Junior's hair. (*Crazed laughter*)

Yes! I'm caught in this larger than life, deep, dark forest of savage, nappy-nappy hair. The kinky-kinks are choking me, wrapped around my naked arms, thighs, breast, face. I can't breath. And there was nothing in that closet!

And I'm thinking if only I had a machete, I could cut away the kinks. Remove once and for all the roughness. But then I look up and it's coming toward me. Flowing like lava. It's pomade!

Ohhh, Sammy!

Yes, cakes and cakes of pomade. Making everything nice and white and smooth and shiny, like my black/white/black/white/black/white/black behiney.

Mama no!

And then spikes cutting through the pomade. Combing the coated kink. Cutting through the kink, into me. There are bloodlines on my back. On my thighs.

It's all over. All over... all over me. All over for me.

Permutations

The Party

TOPSY: (*Dancing about.*) Yoho! Party! Party! Turn up the music! Turn up the music!

Have yaw ever been to a party where there was one fool in the middle of the room, dancing harder and yelling louder than everybody in the entire place? Well, hunny, that fool was me!

Yes, child! The name is Topsy Washington and I love to party. As a matter of fact, when God created the world, on the seventh day, he didn't rest. No child he P-A-R-T-I-E-D. Partied!

But now let me tell you 'bout this function I went to the other night, way uptown. And baby when I say way uptown, I mean way-way-way-way-way-way-way-way uptown. Somewhere between 125th Street and infinity.

Inside was the largest gathering of black/Negro/colored Americans you'd ever want to see. Over in once corner you got Nat Turner sippin' champagne out of Eartha Kitt's slipper. And over in another corner, Bert Williams and Malcolm X was discussing existentialism as it relates to the shuffle-ball change. Girl, Aunt Jemima and Angela Davis was in the kitchen sharing a plate of greens and just goin' off about South Africa.

And then Fats sat down and started to work them eighty-eights. And then Stevie joined in. And then Miles and Duke and Ella and Jimi and Charlie and Sly and Lightin' and Count and Louie!

And then everybody joined in. I tell you all the children was just all up in there, dancing to the rhythm of one beat. Dancing to the rhythm of their own definition. Celebrating in their cuturwl madness.

And then the floor started to shake. And the walls started to move. And before anybody knew what was happening, the entire room lifted up off the ground. The whole place just took off and

went flying through space —defying logic and limitations. Just a spinning and a a spinning and a spinning until it disappeared inside of my head.

(Topsy stops dancing and regained her balance and begins to listen to the music in her head.)

That's right, girl, there's a party goin' on inside of here. That's why when I walk down the street my hips just sashay all over the place. 'Cause I'm dancing to the music of the madness in me. and whereas I used to jump into a rage anytime anybody tried to deny who I was, now all I got to do is give attitude, quicker than light, and I'm dancing to the music of the madness in m.

And here I was, all this time I been thinking we gave up our drums. But, naw, we still got 'em. I know I got mine. They're here, in my speech, my walk, my hair, my God, my style, my smile, and my eyes. And everything I need to get over in this world, is inside here, connecting me to everybody and everything that's ever been.

So, hunny, don't waste your time trying to label or define me.

... 'cause I'm not what I was ten years ago or ten minutes ago. I'm all of that and then some.

And whereas I can't live inside yesterday's pain, I can't live without it.

Mulatto by Langston Hughes

Character description: Robert Lewis, eighteen, the youngest boy; strong and well built; a light mulatto with ivory-yellow skin and proud thin features like his father's... resenting his blood and circumstances of his birth

ROBERT: *You* can do it if you to, but I'm ashamed of you. I've been away from here for six years. (*boasting*) I've learned something, seen people in Atlanta, and Richmond, and Washington

where the football team went — real colored people who don't have to take off their hats to white folks or let 'em go to bed with their sisters — like that Higgins boy, asking me what night Sallie was comin' to town. A damn cracker! *(to Cora)* 'Scuse me, ma. *(continuing)* Back here in these woods maybe Sam and Livonia and you and mama and everybody's got their places fixed for 'em, but not me. *(seriously)* Nobody's gonna fix a place for me. I'm old man Norwood's son. Nobody fixed a place for him. *(playfully again)* Look at me. I'm a 'fay boy. *(pretends to shake his hair back)* See these gray eyes? I got the right to everything everybody else has. *(punching his brother in the belly)* Don't talk to me, old slavery-time Uncle Tom.

Character Description: Cora Lewis, a brown woman in her forties who has kept the house and been the mistress of Colonel Norwood for some thirty years.

CORA: My boy can't get to de swamps now. They's telephoned the white folks down that way. So he'll come back home now. Maybe he'll turn into de crick and follow de branch home directly. *(protectively)* But they shan't get him. I'll make a place for to hide him. I'll make a place upstairs down under de, under ma bed. IN a minute ma boy'll be runnin' from de white folks with their hounds and their ropes and their guns and everything they uses to kill po' colored folks with. *(distressed)* Ma boy'll be out there runnin'. *(turning to the body on the floor)* Colonel Tom, you hear me? Our boy, out there runnin'. *(fiercely)* You said he was ma boy — *ma* bastard boy. I heard you ... but he's yours too ... but yonder in de dark runnin' — runnin' from yo' people, from white people. *(pleadingly)* Why don't you get up and stop 'em? He's *your* boy. His eyes is gray — like your eyes. He's tall like you's tall. He's proud like you's proud. And he's

runnin' — runnin' from po' white trash what ain't worth de little finger o' nobody what's got your blood in 'em, Tom. (*demandingly*) Why don't you get up form there and stop 'em, Colonel Tom? What's that you say? He ain't your chile? He's ma bastard chile? My yellow bastard chile? (*proudly*) Yes, he's mine. But don't call him that. Don't you touch him. Don't you put your white hands on him. You's beat him enough and cussed him enough. Don't you touch him now. He *is* ma boy, and no white folks gonna touch him now. That's finished. I'm gonna make a place for him upstairs under ma bed. (*backs away from the body towards the stairs*) He's ma chile. Don't you come in ma bedroom while he's up there. Don't you come to ma bed no mo'. I calls you to help me now, and you just lays there. I calls for you to wake up, and you just lays there.

Whenever you called me, in de night, I woke up. When you called for me to love, I always reached out ma arms fo' you. I burned you five chilluns and now one of 'em is out yonder in de dark runnin' from yo' people. Our youngest boy out yonder in de dark runnin'. (*accusingly*) He's runnin' from you, too. You said he warn't your'n — he's just Cora's po' little yellow bastard. But he *is* your'n, Colonel Tom. (*sadly*) And he's runnin' from you. You are out yonder in de dark (*points toward the door*) runnin' our chile, with de hounds and de gun in yo' hand, and Talbot's followin' 'hind you with a rope to hang Robert with. (*confidently*) I been sleepin' with you too long, Colonel Tom, not to know that this ain't you layin' down there with yo' eyes shut on de floor. You can't fool me — you ain't never been so still like this before — you's out yonder runnin' ma boy. (*scornfully*) Colonel Thomas Norwood, runnin' ma boy through de fields in de dark, runnin' ma poor little helpless Bert through de fields in de dark to lynch him ... Damn you, Colonel Norwood! (*backing slowly up the stairs, staring at the rigid body below her*) Damn you, Thomas Norwood! God damn you!

Native Son by Paul Green and Richard Wright

Character Description: Bigger Thomas; Negro youth about twenty or twenty one years old.

BIGGER: Pshaw, nothing but that old piece of tin banging. They ain't found me yet! From the first jump I out-figure 'em. (*stopping*) Uhm — everything sleepy and 'way off — (*with sudden loudness*) I ain't scared, naw. They all scared, feeling me in the night, feel me walking behind 'em.... And everywhere, the bulls is searching them old nigger houses — Indiana, Calumet, Prairie, Wabash! Ha! But I ain't 'mong the niggers. (*calling softly*) Clara! (*he listens at the door at the right*) Why don't she come on here? (*he sinks down on an old boxing pulls his blanket shiveringly about him. The flopping tin bangs off at the left. He springs instinctively and nervously up, then sits down again*) Ain't nothing — that old tin banging again, hanging loose and ready to fall. Fall on down, old tin, but I ain't gonna fall. They ain't gonna get me (*gazing back over his shoulder at the night sky. Chuckling with low and bitter irony*) They smart, them white folks! Yeh, they get the niggers. But maybe not too smart — (*he spits in the air. He beats his arms about him and stares into the night*) That's right! Flash away, old sign! "Sun-kissed oranges." Ha! I'll be in them orange-groves soon... with the sun on my back! (*he raises his head more and sees far away, above him, the revolving beam of the beacon in the sky*) Uhmm — an' look at that old Lindbergh beacon, shining there 'way out through the darkness — (*musingly*) Old Lindbergh — he knowed the way. Boiling icy water below him, the thunder and the lightning, the freezing and the hail around him. Keep on driving — riding through. (*imitating the sound of an airplane propeller with his numbed lips*) V-r-r-r-rh-h-h-h! V-r-r-r-ruh-uh-uh! Yes, he

made it, got there. And all the people running and shouting, and the headlights switching and sweeping the sky! Old Lindbergh — he made it — got home, safe home. He not scared! *(snapping his head up, his hollow eyes burning through the shadows before him)* Aw, I ain't scared neither! *(he laughs)* An' when I light, ain't goin' to be no lot of people running to *me* with flowers! Hell, no! When I come, they run! Run like Hell!

Take a Giant Step by Louis Peterson

Character Description: SPENCER SCOTT... is a Negro boy of seventeen.

SPENCE: That's the one. Well, today they started talking about the Civil War and one of the smart little skirts at the back of the room wanted to know why the Negroes in the South didn't rebel against slavery. Why did they wait for the Northerners to come down and help them? And this Miss Crowley went on to explain how they were stupid and didn't have sense enough to help themselves. *(crosses chair left of table; sits)* Well, anyway, Gram, when she got through talking they sounded like the worst morons that ever lived and I began to wonder how they managed to live a few thousand years all by themselves in Africa with nobody's help. I would have let it pass — see — except that the whole class was whispering and giggling and turning around and looking at me — so I got up and just stood next to my desk looking at her. She looked at me for a couple of minutes and asked if perhaps I had something to say in the discussion. I said I might have a lot of things to say if I didn't have to say them in the company of such dumb jerks. Then I asked her frankly what college she went to... She told me I was being impudent. I told her I was not being impudent but I would honestly like to know. So she puts one hand on her hip — kinda throwing the other hip out of joint at the same time — and like she wants to spit on me she says

“Scoville.” Then I says, “And they didn’t teach nothing about the *uprising* of the slaves during the Civil War — or Frederick Douglass?” she says, “No — they didn’t.” “In that case,” I said, “I don’t want to be in your crummy history class.” And I walk out of the room. When I get out in the hall, Gram, I’m shaking, I’m so mad — and I had this cigar I was going to sell for a sundae. I knew I couldn’t eat a sundae now ‘cause it would just make me sick so i went into the Men’s Room and smoked the cigar. I just had about two drags on the thing when in comes the janitor and hauls me down to old Hasbrook’s office — and when I get down there — there’s Miss Crowley and old Hasbrook talking me over in low tones — and in five short minutes he’d thrown me out of school.

MAY: We’ve given you boys everything that you could possibly want. You’ve never been deprived of anything, Spence. I don’t need to tell you how hard we both work, and the fact that I’m in pain now doesn’t seem to make a difference to you. I have arthritis in my wrist now, so badly that I can barely stand it, and it certainly doesn’t hep it to hear any talk like this... You’re not sorry at all. If you were, you’d do something about it. We’ve bent over every effort to see that you were raised in a decent neighborhood and you wouldn’t have to live in slums because we always wanted the best for you. But now I’m not sure we haven’t made a terrible mistake — because you seem not to realize what you are. You’re a little colored boy — that’s what you are — and you have no business talking back to white women, no matter what they say or what they do. If you were in the South you could be lynched for that and you father and I couldn’t do anything about it. So from now on my advice to you is to try and remember your place.

CHRISTINE: (*laughing*) I wanted something better, I guess. I decided I was coming up North to try my luck. I worked for a whole year before I'd saved the money, and the day I had what I thought was enough, I went down to the railroad station. (*stops work*) Boy was that some day! The sun was shining and I felt real good like you feel maybe once or twice in your whole life. When I got to the ticket window, the man had a calendar, and it had an advertisement for a big insurance company on it. So I looked at the name of the town and then told him that that's where I wanted my ticket to take me. Then I went home and packed my mama's cardboard suitcase, and that same night I caught the train. And that's the last I ever saw of my mother and my brothers and sisters and Rusty... Rusty was my dog. Well, I didn't go to work for the insurance company I went into service for a while and then I got married. And that's what I meant when I was telling you about the doors. See, my husband died about two years after that and about two months after he died, I had a baby and he was born dead... Well, I tell you for a while I felt like all I wanted to do was die myself. Then I realized that you can't go on like that. It's like your mind is divided into little rooms and each time you go back into one of those rooms your heart likes to break in two. So all you do is shut the doors — and lock them — to those little rooms in your mind and never let yourself in them again. So I've got two little locked rooms in mind. One for Bert, my husband, and one for my baby that never had a name. Do you want some more to eat?