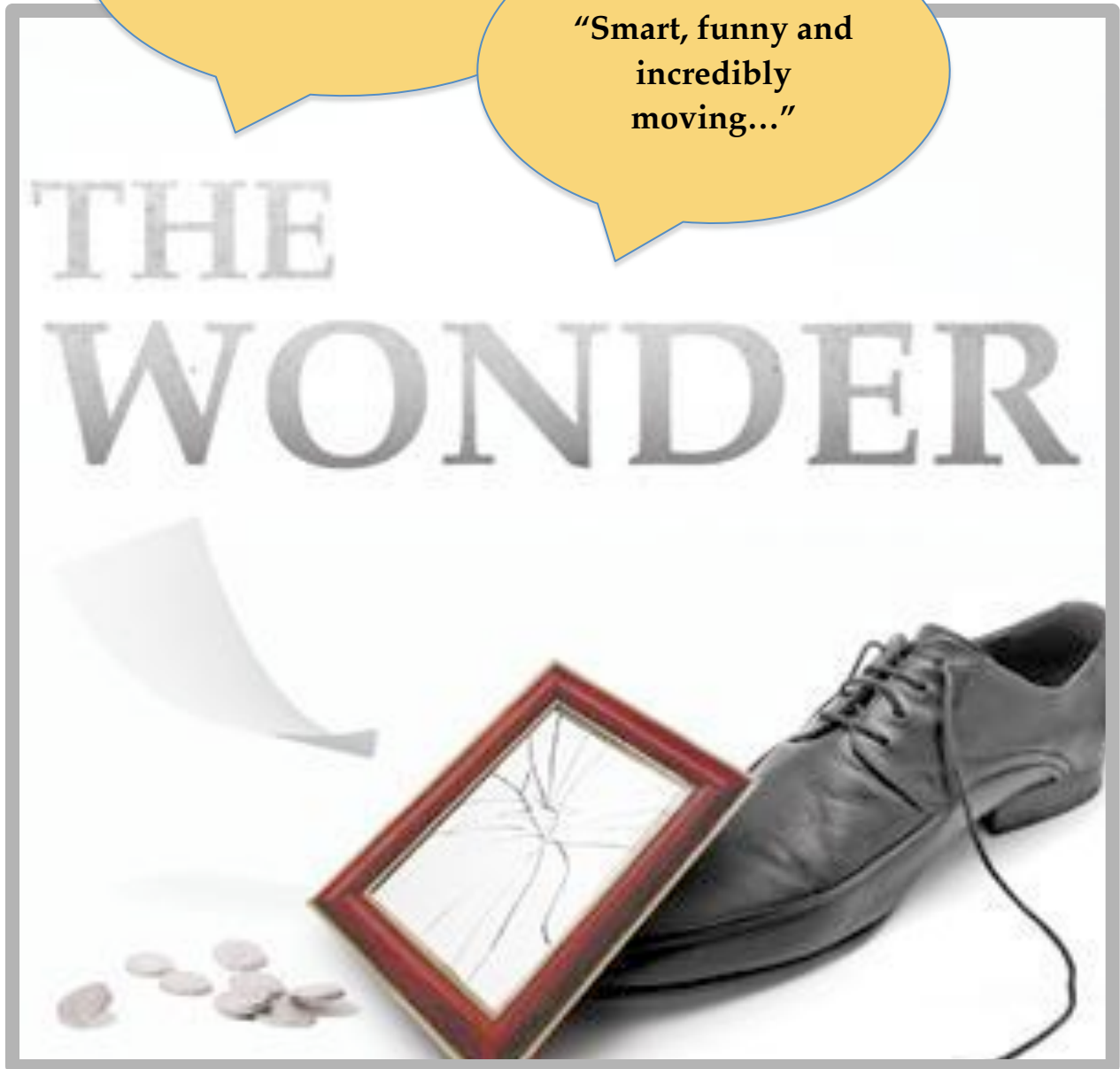


**"An extraordinary
piece of theatre..."**

**"Smart, funny and
incredibly
moving..."**

THE WONDER

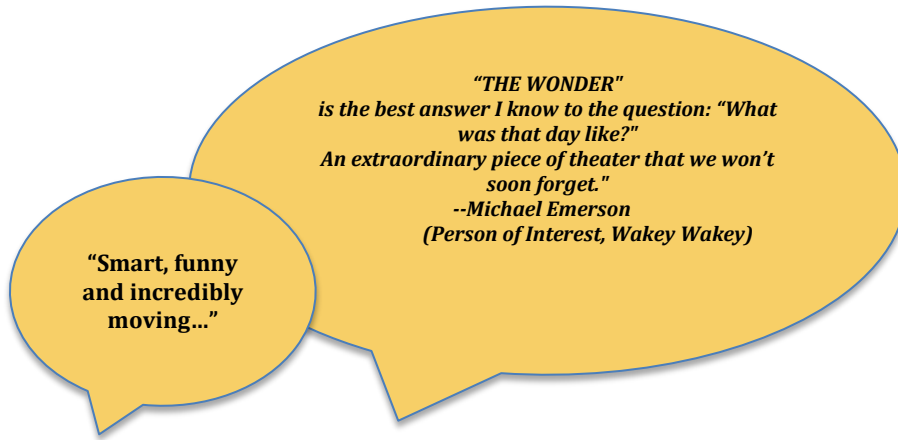


Twenty-four layers of clothing discarded in great, uneven heaps.

A stage littered with debris.

The landscape of a city, shed.

A true story told.



*"THE WONDER"
is the best answer I know to the question: "What
was that day like?"
An extraordinary piece of theater that we won't
soon forget."
--Michael Emerson
(Person of Interest, Wakey Wakey)*

*"Smart, funny
and incredibly
moving..."*

CONTACT THE WONDER TEAM

thewonderrsvp@gmail.com

917-406-7485

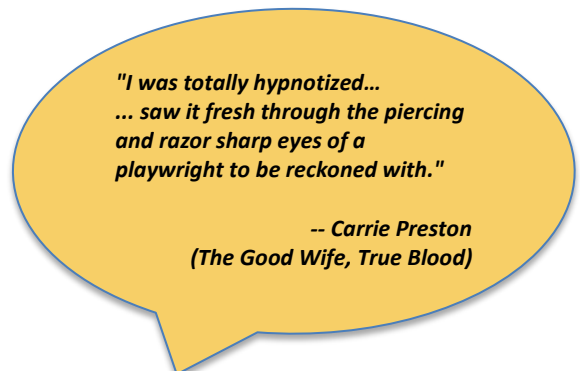
SYNOPSIS

You live across from the Twin Towers. It's a beautiful Tuesday morning. Someone asks for help. **THE WONDER** follows a New Yorker through the city on a seemingly ordinary day. The ordinary people we meet, the ordinary things we see, on an extraordinary day in a time marked forever. It's September 11, 2001. This is a true story about a neighborhood and its people as experienced by the playwright and her diabetic cat. A clear-eyed telling of survival; of discovery and, thankfully, humor.

**A true story recorded for the archives of the 9/11 Museum,
this is the playwright's memory of the day.**

DEVELOPMENT, AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

- Award-winning **THE WONDER** was first developed at Off-Broadway's Cherry Lane Theatre in Manhattan as part of terraNova Collective's New Play Series Workshop.
- Performed in the International United Solo Festival on Theatre Row in Manhattan – **BEST PRODUCTION, BEST OF THE FESTIVAL.**
- Nominated for the Doric Wilson Independent Playwright Award
- Nominated for the William Saroyan Human Rights/Social Justice Award
- Semi-finalist for the Eugene O'Neill National Playwrights Conference



*"I was totally hypnotized...
... saw it fresh through the piercing
and razor sharp eyes of a
playwright to be reckoned with."*

*-- Carrie Preston
(The Good Wife, True Blood)*

THE TEAM

Playwright: Susan Ferrara (Originated Role)
Directors: Julie Ann Emery and Kevin Earley
Sound: Julie Ann Emery
Lighting: Dan O'Brien
Logo: Mina Widmer
Photo: Kevin Earley



SUSAN FERRARA (Playwright/Performer)

Award-winning playwright and actor, Susan is a three-time O'Neill semi-finalist, two-time New Dramatist and Leah Ryan Finalist. She has been seen on stage at the Public Theater, Actors Theatre of Louisville, among many. Her play, *THE WONDER* (Writer/Actor, Directors – Julie Ann Emery and Kevin Earley, nominated for both the Doric Wilson Independent Playwright Award, William Saroyan Human Rights/Social Justice Award, terraNova's New Play Series (workshop reading at Cherry Lane Theatre) won Best of the Festival at the 2014 United Solo International Festival. Web/Film: Onion News Network; award-nominated series regular on the award winning webseries *THEN WE GOT HELP* (written and directed by Julie Ann Emery), *BRIDESBURG* (directed by Jeff Barry), *PRESIDENT OF THE FAN CLUB* (written by Clay McLeod Chapman). Her plays include *BUZZ* (Dir – Carrie Preston; Winner, Reverie Next Generation Playwriting Award; development readings with Off-Broadway's Atlantic Theater Company and New York Theatre Workshop's Mondays@3; Finalist, Baltic Writing Residency (Brora, Scotland); Women's Project Lab Semi-Finalist; Honorable Mention, Jane Chambers Award); *THE MACHINE* (Global Age Finalist); *THE SILVER KITCHEN* trilogy (which includes *THE SILVER KITCHEN* - Development, *Naked Angels*, *Tuesdays@9*; finalist, Red

Theatre Chicago Playwriting Competition and *FRANK* - 2016 Friday Night Footlights Staged Reading); *GERTRUDE* (advanced to second round, Sundance MENA Theatre Lab in Morocco, DecadesOut reading and workshop; semi-finalist, Bridge Playwriting Contest (pending)), among many. terraNova Groundbreakers alumna.



JULIE ANN EMERY (Director) Best known as an actress in the feature film *HITCH* (opposite Eva Mendes & Will Smith) and just appeared in *GIFTED* with Octavia Spencer and Chris Evans. Her writing/directing credits include her award winning digital series *THEN WE GOT HELP!*, the short 6-9 (starring Zack Calhoon), and an upcoming pilot for Battleplan Productions. This year Julie joins the cast of *PREACHER* Season two on AMC but more recently you may have seen Ms. Emery as Betsy Kettleman on AMC's *BETTER CALL SAUL*, as Ida Thurman in FX's *FARGO* (Emmy Winner Best Mini-Series) or playing Dallas Roberts' wife on *UNFORGETTABLE*. She also starred in Rod Lurie's critically acclaimed series *LINE OF FIRE*, Lurie's *COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF* (with Geena Davis & Donald Southerland), Stephen Spielberg's Sci-Fi mini-series *TAKEN* (Emmy Nomination Best Mini-Series), recurring on *SUITS*, *DAMAGES*, *THE RICHES*, and guest starring on *DEXTER*, *NCIS*, *ROYAL PAINS*, *TERMINATOR: SARAH CONNOR CHRONICLES*, or *PERCEPTION*. You can also catch Julie Ann on Netflix in the first ever hit Indie Sci-Fi-Musical-Romantic-Comedy *HISTORY OF FUTURE FOLK*.



KEVIN EARLEY (Director) Co-Director with Julie Ann Emery of *THE WONDER*. Winner, Best Production at the United Solo Festival, Kevin just finished 2016 with 3 leading roles in 3 brand new musicals: *EMPIRE (The Musical)* at La Mirada Theater, *JOSEPHINE* at ASOLO and *CHASING RAINBOWS* at Goodspeed Musicals. Broadway credits include *THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE*, *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*, and *LES MISERABLES*. Of Broadway, as Death in *DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY* (Roundabout Theatre), Kevin received a 2012 Drama Desk Nomination. Regionally, he garnered the L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Award for *1776 (Reprise)*, four Ovation Award Nominations (*Can-Can*, *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*, *It Came From Beyond* and *Sideshow*), and starred as Young Hub in the Broadway bound production of *Secondhand Lions* (5th Avenue Theatre). Hometown Chicago Credits include Tommy in *BRIGADOON* at The Goodman, Theatre Apple Tree's *Assassins* (Balladeer-Jeff Award), Marriott Lincolnshire's *The Pirates of Penzance* (Pirate King-Jeff Award Nomination). Broadway/Cast albums include *Death Takes a Holiday* and *Tale of Two Cities*. Concert work includes Disney Hall, Hollywood Bowl, Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Pasadena Pops with Michael Feinstein.


DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

THE WONDER is such an effective and visual piece, that Kevin and I want to lend to its strengths without diluting them. The character arrives on a stage littered with shoes and wearing layers and layers of clothing. So many layers we can't count them. Is she a bag lady? A street clown? While the audience might ask these questions, what they discover is that each layer of clothing represents a person, place, or thing that she encountered on the day (including the South Tower represented by a gray checked men's shirt stained with a crescent shaped black hole). While the discovery of new people through the layers will be interesting for the audience, we believe it holds a larger meaning. Our main character begins the piece carrying these people, literally on her back. Through the telling of the story, she slowly sheds the people, places, even the building itself. What winds up in heaps covering the stage representing the landscape of the day was once on her back. By the end of the play, she is dressed as herself as she walks away from all that she has been carrying with her. The telling of the story is both a way to pay homage and to relieve her burden.

The primary focus of our development work on The Wonder has been to explore the moment of trauma, not what trauma feels like months later. It asks: What happens that allows us to see the impossible and move through it and survive? We have never seen anything written from this point of view. Our goal with every directorial element is to bring the audience further into the dissociative state with our main character. This moves the play beyond the theme of 9/11 to a wider theme of surviving tragic and traumatic events.

In the staging, ordinary objects become extraordinary. An aluminum ladder becomes the South Tower – covered with the gray checked shirt off our character's back. The trash bags lined up waiting for pick-up become the piles of papers and framed photos littering the streets.

The accompanying soundscape is not music, but instead is the sounds of the city, the subway, foreign tourists. This soundscape evolves into the same dissociative state that our main character does. When she hears a freight train barreling through a tornado instead of a building falling down, so do we. When she sees a gaggle of geese instead of a group of Japanese tourists, we hear it. When she sees a silent movie instead of the explosion cloud from the collapse of the building, we hear a silent movie. Through all this, The Wonder becomes an alternately harrowing and at times humorous journey through a day marked forever in our history. 9/11. While we still mourn those we lost, there were survivors of the day. They all had stories. And they are worth seeing, hearing, telling, investing, and empowering us.



*"...deeply moving...I was grateful
I got to see it."*

- Susie Misner (The Americans)

*"THE WONDER actually makes
you feel as though you are inside her
experience...it's smart, funny and
incredibly moving."*

- Marcia DeBonis (The Big C)

The first time I saw THE WONDER, I remembered the kindness and compassion I experienced as a New Yorker that day. Susan captured that day with poetic writing, necessary levity, and a huge heart.

*- Jennifer Conley Darling
(Producing Artistic Director, terraNova Collective)*

This is a story of a city.

Of fresh socks for the workers at the site.

Of volunteering.

Of blood drives.

Of ladders and companies.

Of letterhead.

This is the first story of its kind for this city.

It was (and is) our world.

Every day.

Every moment.

There was a story there.

THE WONDER

By Susan Ferrara

CHARACTER

A woman or man Ageless.

LOCATION

On the street. Off the street. In and out of buildings. Rooms. In front of windows. In hallways and stairwells.

TIME

Present day. That morning.

(Lights up. The space is empty but for a pair of black, men's dress shoes down stage. A large woman stands. Her head is jammed atop a giant body. She wears layers upon layers of clothing: socks, bangles, a trench coat, a hat. She looks like someone, sadly, you'd avoid on the street. A great slash of red lipstick on her thin lips; a hint of who she might be; could be. Russian Red, Mac, \$16.00 from the store she walks by daily. Her clothing has captured debris, odds and ends – all of which is stuffed in her folds. She discards her clothing in great, uneven heaps as she speaks. A landscape of her story; a skin and city, shed.)

It was the week everyone called me Wonder Woman.

I wore red lipstick.

And my hair was dark.

Dark-ish.

So all the drunks on the street crossed on the diagonal.

Pointing.

At me.

Wonder Woman.

(She points. A pencil, an eraser falls from her sleeve.)

They were drunk.

Drunk-ish.

Whatever.

And not just one drunk.

But *many*.

Many drunks crossed on the diagonal.

And *many* drunks called me.

Wonder Woman.

That's New York City.

It means nothing.

(Pulls out a pair of women's flats from her trench coat pockets.
Tosses them aside. A candy wrapper may pop out as well. A
handful of pens.)

Nothing.

It was Tuesday morning.

Early.

Like 7:00.

7:15.

And I was helping my friend with her two pugs.

Dogs.

George and Lola.

They, the three of them, lived on the upper west side.

So I took the train from downtown.

Where I lived.

To uptown.

To help my friend and her two pugs.

George and Lola.

When I finished, it was about eight.

So I left them.

The three of them.

And I walked.

(Beat. She takes off a trench coat. It falls at her feet. A golf ball rolls from a pocket.)

It was a beautiful day.

A gorgeous day.

And it was just beginning.

(She pulls tokens, MTA cards from her vest. Clasps them in her hands. A few pens, a token, may fall to the floor. Paper coffee cup. Sugar packets. Hot dog wrappers. All drift to the floor.)

Everyone says that now.

Everyone says.

“It was a beautiful day”.

A “gorgeous day”.

I know.

But it was (and it is).

And so.

I say it now.

(Short beat.)

It was a beautiful day.

So, at about 8:00.

I made my way to the subway.

Left my friend.

George and Lola.

To go back downtown.

To the bottom of the island.

Where I live.

But.

Something was wrong at the 59th Street entrance.

My card ran out.

(A card falls.)

Or maybe we had tokens then.

(A token drops.)

I don't know.

I don't remember.

Whatever it was.

Whichever it was.

I didn't have what I needed.

I couldn't get on the train.

(Pulls off a sweater. It clings for a moment, then falls to the floor.)

A French person asked for directions.

A man.

What?

What?

I don't speak French.

No.

I'm serious.

I DON'T SPEAK FRENCH.

I'M NOT SMILING BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND YOU.

I'M SMILING BECAUSE I'M UNCOMFORTABLE.

I'm from Chicago.

That's what we do.

(Short beat.)

A woman.

French woman.

Now she asks.

Typical.

Doesn't think I can understand her husband.

Thinks she can do better.

(Beat. Listens. Listens some more.)

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR FRENCH.

DOESN'T MATTER WHO SPEAKS IT.

I UNDERSTAND NEITHER OF YOU.

(Beat.)

They're having trouble getting on the train.

I'm guessing.

Their card ran out.

(A gesture. Swipes an MTA card.)

Or maybe they didn't have tokens.

(Another gesture. A token drops. Half-sandwich.)

Something.

Because they keep talking.

And I start walking.

Not talking to them.

Not understanding.

Figuring it all out.

Took five minutes.

So I walked, with the French, to 50th Street.

Red line.

Downtown.

Five minutes later than I would have.

I don't think this is important.

But it is.

I don't know what time it is when we get on the train.

I kinda lose the French.

Which is fine.

We no longer have anything to talk about.

(Beat. Takes off, in quick succession: shirt, skirt, a sweater. Pulls things from her pockets. They scatter across the stage.)

And it was quiet.

The train.

Early morning quiet.

New Yorkers on their way to work quiet.

Too early for talking quiet.

For nonsense.

Even for reading.

We go.

(Look at the subway car's map above, to the left.)

One stop.

Two.

On our way downtown.

I'm thinking about.

(Short beat.)

Breakfast.

Money.

What comes next.

Diabetic cat.

Movie I want to see.

Friends I miss.

Man I kinda love.

(Smiles.)

I think about all them.

All at the same time.

And all on the train.

The doors open.

And in he walks.

On the diagonal, this guy.

He's covered in flour.

In dust.

Something.

Particular.

Can barely see his eyes.

Which are blinking.

Looks right at me.

(She looks away.)

Tells me there are.

Eight planes.

Eight planes.

What?

Wait.

What?

He says it again.

“There are eight planes.”

“Eight planes.”

I don't know what that means.

He's obviously drunk.

Eight planes.

Come ON.

He's drunk.

Makes eye contact with me.

(Long beat. Staring.)

Wonder Woman.

That's what this is.

He crossed on the diagonal.

It's this week, man.

The week of the diagonal.

No one moved.

No one said a word.

No one noticed the man covered in flour.

In dust.

Something.

Particular.

Why would they?

This is New York.

Eight planes.

That's so stupid.

(Short beat.)

The subway doors open.

It's not my stop.

It's Park Place.

(Listens. Weird.)

We're all asked to leave the train.

Why?

Everything looks the same.

It's mechanical.

Something.

Track work.

Something.

It's the subway.

That's what it is.

Everything looks the same.

What the hell is he talking about?

This guy.

WHAT ?

(Short beat.)

The entrance to the stairs to the street.

The same.

A piece of paper floating.

(Paper floats from the hem of her shirt.)

Another.

Walk up the stairs.

Papers swirling.

Some on fire.

The papers.

Can read someone's handwriting.

(Pulls something from her pocket. Paperwork. Writing. It falls from her hand.)

A note.

Stationary.

No.

Letterhead.

From an office.

An office?

Can't make out the name.

Cantor Fitzgerald.

(Short beat.)

Keep walking.

(A glance to the right.)

The south tower has a crescent-shaped black hole in it.

Ringed by fire.

(Beat.)

That's different.

(Beat.)

Hold on.

(A wallet falls from her pocket; her hands.)

The south tower has a hole in it.

A hole.

LOOK DOWN.

Shoe.

Framed photo of some kid.

(Look.)

The ground is covered.

You can't see the concrete.

The pavement.

(She holds a pair of thick reading glasses. Puts them on. Takes them off. Drops them.)

Someone said it was a small plane.

She saw it.

She said she saw it.

It was some small plane, she said.

I think to myself.

That's a big hole for such a small plane.

But what do I know?

Keep walking.

Diabetic cat is waiting due west.

My building is four blocks away.

The cat needs two shots a day.

One every twelve hours.

(A pocket watch dangles from her vest. Swings. Drops to the ground.)

I have an hour to get home before the next shot.

An hour to walk four blocks.

Block three.

Block two.

Block one.

WALK.

What street is this?

Liberty?

Don't know.

I should know.

I live here.

This is where I live.

(Short beat. Looks around.)

What is that?

Paperwork.

Wait.

No.

More letterhead.

Stationery.

From an office.

An office?

(Leans down to take a look. An earring. A ring. Roll to the ground.)

Don't read it.

WALK.

Some people are on the ground.

Holding cell phones.

Others are shouting.

Standing up.

The streets are littered with –

What is that?

That looks like –

(Peers into the distance. Some coins jump from her pockets. A hat. A glove. Crushed under her feet as she walks.)

WALK.

More people are on the ground.

Clutching cell phones.

They can't get a dial-tone.

Their phones aren't working.

Why aren't their phones working?

Mine is in my pocket.

I don't know if it works.

I don't check it.

WALK.

The street is closing behind me.

Policeman pointing.

Walk north, he says.

Large blue police horses swinging from left and right.

Like giant, New York City gauntlets.

Blocking our way.

Blocking my way.

WALK

Large blue police horses in a row behind me.

(Short beat.)

Cops.

Rows of them.

Hundreds of them now.

Shouting.

Pointing.

Red faces puffing.

WALK.

The street is closing.

Filing cabinet.

Desk.

Paperweight.

More pens.

(Takes off a sweater. Some rings. Walks upstage. Tries on one pair of shoes. Discards. Another. Walks about.)

The street is closing.

Clock.

Note pad.

More framed photos.

Wedding.

Something.

Two people smiling.

WALK.

A fireman blocks the way.

He calmly tells me to run north.

The policeman said walk.

He says run.

I note the difference.

(Her mouth opens and closes. Like a fish.)

I am without language.

But manage to st-t-tutter about my cat.

Look down to gather my thoughts.

More shoes.

More frames.

A desk mat.

Some cabinets.

A TV.

Broken.

On its side.

I tell the fireman again.

“Diabetic cat.”

“In that building.”

It’s right behind him.

I’m so close, now.

Right there.

Right across the street.

He lives there, too, he says.

He has a dog.

(Her mouth opens and closes. Like a fish.)

I don’t respond.

I have no language.

Which is fine because we both hear it.

And turn together to see.

A popping sound coming from the building.

Maybe shattered glass.

(Beat. Look.)

They're throwing railroad ties out the windows.

Railroad ties.

Why are they throwing railroad ties - ?

(Watch as the railroad tie makes its way to the ground.)

It's a tie.

A man's tie.

Twirling.

He's wearing a tie.

Down.

It all stops when the railroad tie.

The man in the tie.

Reaches the ground.

(Silence. Long beat.)

The fireman points again.

“There’s a bar in that building.”

My building.

The building with the diabetic cat.

“Go there.”

He says.

“You can get in there.”

He says.

WALK.

A gaggle.

A gaggle.

Is that right?

A gaggle of Japanese tourists find me.

Are they tourists?

I don’t know.

I’m guessing so.

There are eight or nine of them.

I DON’T SPEAK JAPANESE.

I NEVER STUDIED IT.

They point.

(Look up.)

There are planes overhead.

I see fighter planes.

(Short beat.)

Remember the drunk on the subway.

“Eight planes.”

“Eight planes.”

The drunk was right.

Gather the Japanese.

LOOK UP.

See two planes.

Three.

There will be five more.

If the drunk was right.

(Short beat.)

Remember myself as a child trained in tornadoes.

Find a brick corner.

Something solid.

Leave them there.

The Japanese.

Speaking in a language I don't understand.

This takes ten minutes.

Ten minutes.

I don't think this is important.

But it is.

WALK.

The ground isn't the ground here either.

(Look.)

Another filing cabinet.

More framed photos.

Graduations.

Weddings.

First dates.

Holidays.

A phone.

Portfolio.

And pieces of paper

Paper.

More letterhead.

Letterhead.

Cantor Fitzgerald.

Again.

Cantor Fitzgerald.

Again.

A memo about.

A memo about.

A memo ab -

(Drops the stack of paper. It doesn't float. It lands hard at her feet.)

Don't pick it up.

You think about picking it up because you recognize.

Even in the moment of not having language.

That it's important.

This piece of paper.

Singed.

Burning.

But.

It's not a keepsake.

Not something to be saved.

Somebody typed that.

Wrote that.

Filed that.

And you have no idea –

So you walk.

You see a chapel in the side of your building.

A chapel.

When did they put that there?

Step in.

(Short beat.)

Is there holy water?

Dip your fingers in remembering you're Catholic.

(Short beat.)

The room is empty.

If there's a light on.

It's yellow.

The whole room is yellow.

(A series of small votive candles ignite. A few fall from her pockets; the folks of her clothes. Lit.)

There's a small row of candles burning.

Offerings.

Prayers.

Pay a dollar.

Pay a dollar and pray.

For?

Who do I pray for?

(A moment.)

The shoes.

The.

The.

The.

All of it on the street.

You pray for the people who did this.

And that doesn't seem weird.

You pray for the framed photos.

(Beat.)

Again.

(Beat.)

You remember you don't know how to pray.

You do it anyway.

(Short beat.)

Walk back outside.

The bar is tucked in the back of the building.

A bartender stands.

Hair disheveled.

Eyes, unfocused.

Pouring drinks.

A row of half empty glasses before her.

She pours.

Back and forth.

Back and forth.

Missing some glasses.

Hitting others.

Worst bartender in Manhattan.

What is she *doing*?

She doesn't care.

Her eyes aren't on the drinks.

Or the four ruffled patrons before her.

But on the TV behind her.

(Short beat.)

The flashing.

The burning.

She pours.

Back and forth.

Back and forth.

On the TV.

It's the Pentagon.

On fire.

(Short beat.)

The Pentagon's on fire.

(Short beat.)

Now I think I understand.

I understand.

(Short beat.)

No I don't.

I don't understand.

Eight planes.

Hole in the building.

The street covered in.

In.

In.

(From a sleeve, a pocket; a series of men's dress ties fall.)

Railroad ties.

Railroad ties litter the ground.

(Short beat.)

That's what your brain tells you.

So that's what you see.

You'll remember it differently later.

You remember the man in the tie.

WALK.

Cut through the lobby.

Take the elevator upstairs.

Open the door.

Diabetic cat waits.

Put your purse on the futon.

See the giant, picture window.

(Short beat.)

Decide not to look out.

(Short beat.)

You hear a sound.

And you remember.

You don't need to look out that window.

Not now.

Not ever.

You remember that.

I grew up by railroad tracks.

I grew up tornado.

I understand natural disasters.

Machinery.

The sound of great engines.

And I don't have to look out the window to know that sound.

It's a tornado.

A freight train.

Both barrelin' right through your window.

Don't look.

Don't think.

Put the diabetic cat in the empty backpack.

Grab your cell phone.

Your keys.

(Short beat.)

Fireman said run.

Cop said walk.

You'll do both, you think.

Take the stairs this time.

Because you remember.

Elevators are bad in fires.

In tornadoes.

When you get hit by trains.

And that doesn't even make sense.

A train barrelin' through your 30th floor window.

But that doesn't matter.

Because that's what your brain says.

So that's what you believe.

So you take the stairs this time.

But before you move.

You realize you're speaking in third person.

Because you're not really there anymore.

It's not real.

None of it.

Because it all feels like a movie.

And you're not the star.

You're not even in the cast.

You're just some ancillary camera.

Something to the side.

Running tape.

Shooting film.

Wasting video.

Maybe they'll use your shot.

Maybe they won't.

But still you shoot.

Standing there.

With your cell phone.

Your keys.

And a diabetic cat.

In a never empty backpack.

The whole of yourself rests somewhere.

At the back of your stomach.

With the rest of your "gut checks".

And random bits of information about safety.

SAFETY.

Walk to the stairs.

Open the door.

You're on the 30th floor.

Smoke is rushing up the stairwell.

And still you make your way down.

Through the smoke.

Dust.

Airless.

Particulate.

On the 29th Floor.

The door opens.

(Short beat.)

You can still breathe.

An old woman sits in a wheelchair.

Caretaker standing close by.

Frozen.

Unmoving.

A snapshot.

She looks old enough to remember the last Great War.

You think.

Old enough to remember bombs over London.

Pearl Harbor.

Allies rushing into camps.

You see her eyes remember things.

And you think to yourself.

If she could walk.

She would beat you down those stairs at a dead run.

Because she's never seen anything this before.

Not this.

No.

WALK.

The next floor and the next.

On the 22nd floor, the door opens.

A boy and his mother stand.

You think she's his mother.

They look alike.

Neither looks as though they know what to do.

Or maybe that's what you thought as you made your way down.

I don't know what I'm doing.

I don't know what to do.

WALK.

Into the smoke.

The dark.

The airless.

Particulate.

A door opens.

Another floor.

A woman stands.

Mouth wide open.

Doesn't say a thing.

Like a horror film.

A poster.

You think about waving.

(Her hand comes up in a wave. She waves.)

But that's weird.

You're just uncomfortable.

Because now you want to laugh.

Like you always do.

When you're uncomfortable.

So you stop.

You look.

You make eye contact.

And somehow that helps her.

Or maybe it doesn't.

(Short beat.)

But she closes her mouth.

She closes the door.

And she vanishes.

(Short beat.)

WALK.

Down.

Down.

Down.

Into darkness.

Into.

The lobby.

The air is still thick.

To the right.

The building.

With the great, crescent hole in it.

But you can't see it.

Because the sky is dark.

The building is dark.

And to the left is light.

It's light.

White flakes.

Cover the trees.

And the ground.

Snow in the middle of a non-snow season.

(Short beat.)

The doorman shouts.

(Beat.)

I can't remember his name.

(Beat.)

I used to know his name.

But now I can't remember it.

He shouts to.

"Stay inside."

"Someone will come."

You think that's what he says.

But you don't care.

Because you think that's ridiculous.

Inside, there's screaming.

Inside, there's chaos.

Inside we're trapped.

Locked in.

Can't find the exits.

Outside.

Is the River.

The Hudson.

So you break open the door.

A trick you learned when you were a kid.

No one notices.

No one cares.

WALK.

You don't look to your right.

You can't.

You don't want to see the building.

The darkness.

The sudden.

The nothing.

But then.

You see a sea.

A sea of grown men running toward you.

Toward the river.

To your left.

All dressed the same.

Black pants.

White shirt.

Black tie.

They're shouting.

But you can't understand.

But you pause anyway.

You have no choice.

To let them pass.

To let them run.

To the edge of the walkway.

The drop to the river.

Fifteen feet or more is what you remember.

(Short beat.)

There are boats lined up now.

You can hear their engines.

Engines?

Is that right?

Or maybe just one boat.

But the men running don't know that.

They don't know there's only one boat.

So they continue to throw themselves over the edge.

And into the water.

Onto the deck of the boat.

And you hear the bodies hit.

The railings.

The deck.

But still.

They continue to run.

There are so many more of them.

You see that some of their shirts are speckled with blood.

(A coat comes off. A small rubber ball bounces out of its folds. A trinket. More pens.)

Others are covered with blood.

(A shirt comes off. A vest. A polaroid drifts to the floor. She clutches another in her hand.)

One of them tells me.

I have to jump.

And swim.

Swim across the river.

I tell him I have a diabetic cat in my backpack.

(She picks up her backpack; her cat.)

And I couldn't possibly.

He doesn't care.

He continues to run.

To jump.

To hit the railing.

The deck.

Break the surface.

The water.

There are so many of them now.

That I imagine looking out onto the River.

Which I don't.

And seeing a thousand bobbing heads.

WALK.

(Beat. Takes off a shirt. A scarf. It all drops.)

The FBI walks with me.

I know this because they have hard, black plastic badges.

On the pockets of their shirts.

F-B-I.

They grab the fleshy part of my arm.

Pull me forward.

No language.

No sound.

RUUUUUUUUUUUUUUN.

(Short beat.)

Run faster.

(Panting; running.)

I will slow them down.

So.

They leave me.

(Short beat.)

While a silent film plays to my right.

That's what it looks like.

A large billow of smoke plays.

It moves in silence.

It's larger than.

Larger than the sky it covers.

And it moves slow.

Quickly.

It doesn't look soft.

Like a cloud.

It looks like sandpaper.

Broken parts.

Small rocks.

Shards.

Something sharp.

Particulate.

(Short beat.)

I don't look long but realize.

I will not make it if it hits.

I will be blown into the water.

Consumed.

Made part of it.

So I run.

And hit the edge of a building.

As the silent film hits.

(Darkness. Sound. Flickers of light. A beat. Lights up.)

I am covered in flour.

In dust.

Something.

Particular.

I am the drunk on the subway.

Crossing on the diagonal.

I am the people I'll see later on the television.

I look around me.

We all look the same.

Weeks later, my skin will shed.

The flour is not flour.

But building.

The dust is not dust.

But small bits of something sharp.

And every day.

Every week.

My face will be new again.

Every day.

My face.

My skin.

My body.

Will shed.

(Short beat.)

I stand next to the building.

The building that stopped the silent film.

And I hear an alarm.

Two tones.

Up and down.

They'll tell me later that that's the sound a jacket makes.

When it stops moving.

(softly) *I can't say it.*

(Beat.)

A fireman's jacket.

I didn't know that then.

I don't know if it's true now.

But I do know that a thousand car alarms have gone off.

That's the sound.

And I look to my right.

Where the building with the hole once stood.

And there is nothing.

There is no building.

No neighborhood.

No cars.

No people.

There is only.

Flatness.

Empty.

Nothing.

(Beat.)

Until the FedEx trucks come.

Barreling down the West Side Highway.

On their way to the buildings.

The buildings that were.

Make shift ambulances.

For what was lost.

That's what you were told.

Back doors swinging open into the sun.

(Long beat.)

You notice it's light again.

You notice it's quiet.

Silent.

Except for the alarms.

You notice you're walking.

Faster.

You run.

(Panting; running.)

You hit a wall.

Of books.

School bags.

A high school.

Something.

In the distance.

Pouring dominoes out its doors.

Falling atop one another.

Not knowing.

Not understanding.

How they're connected.

Dominoes.

That's dumb.

(Laughs.)

They look right at you.

And you see them see.

A sea.

A gaggle.

An emperor's clay army.

Covered in dust.

And you feel yourself.

Move through them.

Mumbling.

Oh my God.

You're that person.

On the diagonal.

Covered in flour.

Dust.

Something.

Particular.

You notice they're only fifteen.

Fourteen.

Thirteen.

And there's no time to tell them.

Cop said walk.

Fireman said run.

FBI.

Pick up the pace.

So you bounce off their shoulders.

Kick at their feet.

Because you have to see the water.

The Hudson.

The River.

Because you're still too close.

There are planes over head.

You can hear their engines.

But you don't look up.

So you run.

(Panting; running.)

Past the dominoes.

The fumbling.

The lost.

The unknowing.

Can't see.

Can't hear.

Can't speak.

(Panting; running.)

STOP.

(Short beat.)

You're on 23rd Street now.

40 minutes later.

40 minutes after.

(Catch your breath.)

STOP.

What do you need?

(Thinks.)

Money.

For bridges.

Water.

This is an island.

Gas.

Steal a car.

Catfood.

Get it.

(Short beat.)

You see a yoga studio.

Across the street.

A yoga studio.

Empty.

Deserted.

So you break in.

A trick you learned when you were a kid.

Mats.

Blankets.

Power bars.

No.

Find the cash box.

Yes.

Take.

Thirty dollars.

Leave the rest.

An IOU.

Close the door.

You'll return it all in three days.

After a military escort to your apartment.

Up thirty flights.

And down.

In five minutes.

That's what they gave you.

M-16 bouncing off his back.

In a week.

You'll need a passport.

To water your plants.

Your building is a crime scene.

They're looking for a black box.

And the fast food place on the corner.

Where you used to have breakfast.

Every Friday.

Is a "morgue".

(Short beat.)

Close the door behind you.

(Short beat.)

People are running.

Join them.

(Panting; running.)

Pick up the pace.

Running on the diagonal.

24th Street.

26th Street.

27th Street.

28th.

(Gasping; panting.)

You fall.

You sit.

They run by you.

Leave you.

Gone.

(Catch your breath.)

(softly) Stop.

(Long beat. From the ground, she looks up.)

A woman stands.

Black.

Tall.

Beautiful.

Her lips are moving.

I don't understand.

I can't hear you.

I don't know what you're saying.

(Beat.)

She hands you a cell phone.

“Make your call.”

(Long beat.)

And you dial.

The only number you can remember.

You dial your childhood.

Your blind stepdad answers.

And you have language.

(Long beat.)

“It's me.”

(Hangs up the phone. A beat.)

And in a moment you notice.

It's light again.

You notice it's quiet.

(Long beat.)

And then you remember.

There was a story there.

A story about going to work.

Storming a building.

Air tanks on their backs.

Getting cash from the ATM.

Climbing up to the 80th floor.

Grabbing a sandwich.

Meeting friends.

Buying a book.

Helping someone down.

A sweater.

Bringing a framed photo to put on your desk.

There was a story there.

A story about a folder with paperwork to file.

After work drinks to be had.

Emails to be sent.

Letters to be written.

Drop what you can't carry.

There was a story there.

A story.

Something particular.

Something you once heard.

There was a story.

This is a story.

About one day.

Maybe five, short hours.

This is one story.

My story.

Our story.

One story among many.

New York City.

(Silence. She exits. A moment. Lights out. End of play.)