Sisters of Sisters

by Cynthia L. Cooper

Ginny — 13 Female — Serious

(This play recounts the story of three pairs of sisters: two women who really are sisters, and each of their two daughters. They are all at turning points in their lives as they struggle to define themselves and their sister-relationships. In the following monolog, Ginny is standing outside the door of her older sister's apartment. Ginny is trying to decide whether or not to return home rather than spend the summer living with her older sister, who is 20 years old. The monolog invites a number of personal interpretations from the actor: Does Ginny feel comfortable or uncomfortable now in her older sister's company? Is her final exit an act of personal independence, an expression of dislike towards her sister, or a frightened avoidance of someone Ginny knows will want to know "all about it" (the troubles in Ginny's life)? In any case, the actress should avoid playing the piece as low energy, dreamy recollections of childhood, because Ginny is really wrestling with a very important issue at this point in her life. What issue? The actor should invent a good one! And the auditors should see Ginny as a young woman courageously grappling with a problem and then standing up to make a decision that is risky and uncertain, yet surely the best one for her to make!)

I remember when I was only a kid — back in the sixth grade. Mandy Pollack was my best friend, and we were always writing notes to each other. And then one day I went back to my desk and found a note, all folded up. I

can still remember pulling each little fold out. And then I read it. It said, "Dear Ginny: You've never really been my friend. I hate you. Don't you ever talk to me again. Mandy." Well, you gotta understand, I was just a kid then, and ... well, I got sick. Literally. I had to leave school and go home early. And when I got home, Mom was there, and nobody else was, so I showed her the note. And she just looked at it and kind of laughed. "It'll blow over," she said. "It's just one of those grade school things, don't you know." So I took the note back from her and I went to my room and cried on it until all the ink blurred. And then you came home, and you read the note. Do you remember? And you know what you said? You said I was a very good person and a much better friend than Mandy and that I didn't deserve a note like that. And then you started crying, too. Do you know what I'm saying? You're the only person that's ever cried for me, Cheryl. The only person. *(GINNY stands there a minute, looks at the letter, then exits.)*

The Sister

by Timothy Miller

Teddy — 8-15 years-old — Male — Comic

(This brief selection probably expresses a common feeling of older siblings at the arrival of a new baby in the house. The student should avoid presenting the monolog as a series of "rambling" thoughts as Teddy speaks, and instead remember that Teddy is really wrestling with a problem. This will tend to give the delivery more energy, and a sense of urgency and development. For maximum effect, the piece should reach a climax at the final "punch line.")

Mom came back from the hospital yesterday. It will be nice to have some decent food and have the family together again, only it isn't like it was before. *(Pause. Ominously:)* See, she didn't come back alone. She brought my brother's new baby sister with her. She isn't MY baby sister, that's for sure. I would NEVER have a sister — especially one like that! She's bald, for one, like Aunt MaryLee. And she's the wrong color. Kinda reddish. And she makes horrible noises — from both ends! She doesn't sleep when everybody else does, and she doesn't smell so good most of the time either. Dad seems excited about her, though. But I've seen Dad get excited about stuff before and it almost always turns out bad. Like, he was REALLY excited about putting in the new garage door opener. The next day, he seemed less excited about having to replace the whole front of the garage with a big tarp. I'm just sure this whole sister thing is gonna go just as bad. *(Pause.)* I'll give it a couple

more days, let Mom and Dad get over the pride of new ownership, and then I'll put my foot down. She's got to go back. We don't need any more kids around here — the ones we have don't have enough stuff anyway. *(Pause.)* I wonder if the hospital will give us a refund?

Sea of Forms

by Megan Terry

Two – 20s Male or Female – Seriocomic

This monolog gives the actor a built-in vis-à-vis for strong communication, and an exciting situation for the actor to play. The excitement, though, shouldn't be played as a news flash – energy should also spring from Two's enthusiasm for the discovery that he/she is announcing. Above all, the tender moments and humorous references should be inserted deftly, like soft counterpoint, to the overall pace and intensity of the main narrative.

Have you heard: that the latest headline from the biology lab is a fact of exquisite beauty? Did you know that if you allow a scientist to extract two, only two, two out of the billions of cells in your body, to pluck these two cells from you and place them side-by-side in a Pyrex dish — that these two cells without a philharmonic orchestra — that these two cells — without a conductor — that these two cells — without the shelter of you — that these two cells, on their own in the wide world, will beat together in a perfect pulse. Will pulse together in a perfect beat. As long as they are together, outside of you on the Pyrex dish, they will beat as lovers' hearts beat. Two together, in harmony as one. But — if you separate these cells, and place one cell in one of your grandmother's Pyrex dishes and the other in another dish, they will beat separately. The same two cells from the same body, they will beat on their own and alone.

Night Luster
by Laura Harrington

Roma — 20s

Female — Serious

This ladder-type monolog contains a wonderful palette of emotional colors. The vis-à-vis is probably best played as a confidante; and there are two challenges here. One is to identify the three or four needs Roma is describing, and then give them a pattern or shape in performance that can be played effectively from beginning to the final climax. The other challenge is to avoid allowing the "dream" section to defuse the energy or slow the pace of the monolog. Roma's description of her dream should not be played as a nostalgic, winsome moment of indulgence, but instead as a puzzling non sequitur of which she's struggling to make sense.

I don't know. I get this feeling sometimes like I'm invisible or something. I can be standing there in a room and I'm talking and everything, and it's like my words aren't getting anywhere and I look down at myself and *Jesus!* Sometimes my body isn't getting anywhere either. It's like I'm standing behind a one-way mirror and I can see the guys and I can hear the guys but they can't see me and they can't hear me. And I start to wonder if maybe I'm ugly or something, like maybe I'm some alien species from another planet, and I don't speak the language and I look totally weird. But I don't know this, you see, because on this other planet I had this really nice mother who told me I was beautiful and that I had a voice to die for because she loved me so much, not because it was true. And I arrive here on

earth and I'm so filled with her love and her belief in me that I walk around like I'm beautiful and I sing like I have a voice to die for. And because I'm so convinced and so strange and so *deluded*, people *pretend* to listen to me... because they're being polite or something — or maybe they're afraid of me. And at first I don't notice because I sing with my eyes closed. But then one day I open my eyes and I find out I'm living in this world where nobody sees me and nobody hears me. I'm just lookin' for that one guy who's gonna hear me, see me, ...really take a chance. I mean, I *hear* them. I'm listening so hard, I hear promises when somebody's just sayin' hello. Jesus, if anybody ever heard what I've got locked up inside of me, I'd be a *star*.

Sally's Gone, She Left Her Name

by Russell Davis

Sally — 17 Female — Serious

This monolog contains strong emotional colors right from the outset, and permits the actor a clear vis-à-vis. Christopher is Sally's brother and she desperately needs his understanding because their mother has left the home and Sally feels at fault. Though her confusion is evident, she clearly develops more confidence by the time she finishes. There is also a strong challenge here to avoid playing Sally as too defeated and beaten down by her situation. This is the speech of a person trying to win understanding — not to whine about her condition.

Chris, everyone says corny stuff in private. In particular, me. I say things in my head, hopes, stuff like that, that sound just awful when I say them out loud. I've tried it. Doesn't sound at all like it did when I just thought it. It's the same with everybody. The same, I bet. 'Cause there's some kind of background music inside your head. If I say in my head, for example, I love you, Christopher, there's a background music. Otherwise how could I say it? I don't mean there's music, Chris, but something, and I can get goosebumps on my arms from thinking about you, Christopher. I can. But if I actually said to you, I love you, Christopher, immediately I would feel phony or something's awkward. And we'd have to argue right away to get back to normal. And I don't understand how come. How come you have to keep it in your head. How come the older you get, the

more and more stuff you have to keep in your head. Any kind of hopes you ever had about living, all of it inside your head, until you can't hold it up anymore, and you're ashamed, and you fall over, get old, and die. *(Pause.)* I love you, Christopher. *(Pause.)* I love dad, too. *(Pause.)* Mom. *(Pause.)* I love you, mom, from as far away as you have to get from me.

Sunday Sermon
by David Henry Hwang

Minister — 28

Male — Comic

The context of this darkly humorous monolog is a church service and the vis-à-vis is the congregation — a situation that allows the actor to play the speech directly to the audience. Another unique feature of this piece is that it permits extreme rhetorical gestures and vocal interpretation, prodding the actor to exploit the language to its full extent. Needless to say, the Minister must be played seriously in order for the humor to emerge.

We thank the choir for that inspiring and enthusiastic rendition. Today's choice of anthem seems particularly appropriate in view of today's sermon topic: "How to Spread the Gospel in the Event of Nuclear War." I know there are people who would rather we shy away from the tough decisions every Christian must make once the bombs hit the ground. I do not count myself among them. Many of us have been conditioned to stereotype a nuclear holocaust as a bad thing. This is simply narrow minded. A nuclear war can be a great tragedy or a great opportunity, a vehicle for Satan or for the soldiers of righteousness. If we don't reap the harvest of such an event, you can be sure that scores of Satan's little workers will be out sowing the seeds of evil, out amongst the maimed and wounded, enslaving them to illicit drugs, performing abortions, teaching evolution, and encouraging positive portrayals of homosexuals on our television networks. What a difference a nuclear war

will make for us, the soul winners! No more houses of prostitution, no more ERA, no more drugs, no more Kurt Vonnegut! Gone will be gun control laws, homosexual housing ordinances, busing, and teenage free clinics! And we will be able to start once again, hand-in-hand to re-create the world envisioned by the founding fathers: a nation of free men, mule and woman by their side, working the land with their hands and organizing television boycotts! When we look at it this way, is a nuclear holocaust all that bad?

The Emerald Circle

by Max Bush

Dave — Teens Male — Serious

In this monolog Dave tries to explain his terrible fears to his best friend and his mother. He has just lost his temper during a backyard basketball game with his friend and started a fist-fight, even threatening his mother while "out of control." Here Dave reveals how he was shamed recently in front of his girlfriend Sandy by a strange, older bully. It happened one night in the cemetery where Dave and Sandy were meeting, and Dave was helpless to prevent the bully from dragging Sandy off with him. Dave has been silent around the house and at school since the incident, and this is where he first begins to "open up" and tell others about the incident.

I keep seeing that night over and over again. I hear him. It's like he's right here, right next to me, talking to me, talking. I can't shut him up. And I dream about her. I'm underground, hiding or dead or something, and I can't breathe. I can't push the ground off me. I can't move. I keep looking for that guy. I even think I see him sometimes and I get ready and it's not him. Everywhere I go I think he's watching me. You can't see at night. Like at the movies, tonight. He could just come up, come up out of nowhere again. So I got to stay ready, I got to be ready this time. I want a gun. I think about a gun all the time. Then I'd be ready. Then that crazy bastard wouldn't get away. But I — I can't trust myself. I'll shoot somebody else, I know I will. I hit you, didn't I? I hit you! So a knife, I'll carry a knife — and —and I

do, all the time. I have a knife. But they don't let you have a knife in school and I know he was there, he was watching Sandy there, at school. He was watching us all over. He called her by her name. And me. He called me by my name, too. He was watching me, too. I wish he'd come back. I even went out to the cemetery looking for him, calling for him, but he wasn't there. I'm sorry I hit you. You can hit me back; I won't do anything. I'm sorry I hit you.