

CLOUD

A play

by

H K Nicklin



Characters:

**Melpomene.** A descended (human) muse, female. A muse of tragedy, or 'the Songstress'.

**Angel.** An angel on death row imprisoned on earth. Male (can be played by either sex) youngish, medium to small height, dirty blonde longish hair.

**Icarus.** Student of geography at the University of Birmingham. Midlands accent with a hint of brummie. Male, young, tall.

A SAD BOY WITH BLONDE HAIR SITS ON A BENCH IN CALTHORPE PARK, IN EDGBASTON. IT'S EARLY, BUT LIGHT. THE BOY IS LOOKING AT THE GROUND, DANGLING A HALF FINISHED CORONA FROM THE TIPS OF HIS FINGERS. HE IS DRESSED IN A HOODY AND A SCARF, HE WEARS TROUSERS, DIRTY AT THE BOTTOM, AND VERY WORN SHOES. HE HAS LARGE WINGS WHICH ARE AN IVORY COLOR, THE BASE OF EACH FEATHER IS TINTED A PEARLESCENT GREEN-BLUE. HE SITS FOR A MINUTE, THEN OMITS A SMALL SIGH AND CLOSES HIS EYES. AS HIS EYES CLOSE THE PARK DARKENS, THERE IS THE SOUND OF TIRED FOOTSTEPS

ANGEL: (a loud, desperate half whispered voice over) Maybe I should have let him fall. I have been walking these streets [*for days*]... There was a second. every second I think I see him. It's cold here.

(The Angel opens his eyes and the footsteps stop, the lighting reverts. The angel sits for another 30seconds, takes a drink. A scruffy, slightly rough looking young person sits heavily down next to him. He has a wrecked Nike backpack that is slung over his shoulder. He lets it drop as he sits. There is a silence. The angel resents him for interrupting his well cultivated despair. The young person looks at him for a moment or two)

ICARUS: (then looks out) been to a fancy dress party?

ANGEL: (non committal, doesn't look up) mm.

ICARUS: who are you meant to be?

ANGEL: (laughs to himself) Icarus

ICARUS: that's a bit high brow for uni isn't it? (No reply) they're good though, very real-like.

ANGEL: (nods. Pause. looks up slightly) wait

ICARUS: mm?

ANGEL: what are?

ICARUS: the wings?

ANGEL: the- (pause. The angel sits up, and very slowly turns to look at Icarus)

(Blackout, the sound of a bottle being dropped and rolling away. Then footsteps in the darkness, the same almost whispered voice over:)

ANGEL: Maybe I should have let him fall. There's no justice to this. 263 hours of walking. Now? One hour. I said... If I ever see him again...

(Darkness still, the footsteps stop, there is the sound of an unseen door above the stage opening, there is the sound of someone wiping their feet and of another person rushing from another room to greet them. Offstage:)

MELPOMENE: you haven't got time for civilities get down there now

ANGEL: is he -

MELPOMENE: down there, where you left him

(A door opens at the top of a set of stairs to the left the stage revealing of a dirty basement, light spills down from it. There is a cement floor, it is damp stained, and there is a barely visible ceramic, stained and cracked sink with metal taps far to the right. In the middle of the room Icarus is gagged and tied to a chair. He looks away from the light.)

MELPOMENE: (still offstage & unseen) well go on!

ANGEL: I can't

MELPOMENE: don't you 'can't' me. I'm not risking my mortal neck to have you here /and not-

ANGEL: /sh, okay, okay. Just, just

MELPOMENE: (kindly as possible) 30 minutes Cloud.

(The angel sighs and we see his feet on the stairs and the Nike backpack hanging from his right hand as he begins to walk down)

Take this

ANGEL: but-

MELPOMENE: take it. (Pause) I know you; you'll want to untie him. Well do it, just take this (unseen he takes the object, places it in his hoody centre pocket. He walks down the stairs, stops halfway down and looks at Icarus, who is still avoiding the light. The door above slams the basement back into darkness and Melpomene's footsteps move back into the room they came from.)

ANGEL: shit

(He fumbles down the stairs for the light switch, he switches it on and the two blink bleary under the bright light from the unshaded bulb dangling above Icarus' head. Icarus has a swollen red eye, and a split eyebrow, he looks roughed up. The Angel is at the bottom of the stairs, he stands there awkwardly holding the bag, briefly closes his eyes. His wings look ruffled.)

ANGEL: I'm sorry.

(Icarus turns his head and looks at him warily. The Angel deflates. Looks at his watch, closes his eyes briefly again. He opens them and holds out the backpack)

I realised we, er, I left this so I went back to get it

(Realising suddenly that Icarus can't stand to get it he gingerly lays it down next to him)

Just in case... there was anything... (Trails off) look. You're probably. Well. I know you must wonder why I've- you need to understand I mean you no harm, none whatsoever (desperate quick smile) this (gestures) is all. Look I just need you to listen to me and if I explained you wouldn't- I mean no one would so this is all I could do.

(Pause, the angel looks down from Icarus' stare)

I, (quietly) oh Mel was right, it's no use,

(He moves with purpose towards Icarus who looks scared.)

Look I'm just going to undo your (motions to his gag) I can't just talk at you. You've got to be

able to ask... things. Just, (he goes behind Icarus and then hesitates) oh, but you can't shout or anything ok? I don't think anyone will hear you but, well, please just don't

(He undoes Icarus' gag. Icarus gasps an in breath and looks at the left retreating angel. He licks his split lip and winces; the angel winds the yellow gag cloth around his left hand, has a thought, withdraws a gun from his hoody centre pocket and places it on the floor to the left in front of Icarus. Icarus stares at it)

ANGEL: Mel thought I should... have that

(He sits cross-legged on the floor and looks at the ground.

She's being very kind in letting us use here. Risking her skin so to speak. We'll be ok so long as she doesn't sing...

(Brief pause)

ICARUS: (rough voice) is she bad?

ANGEL: bad? Ha. No, astounding.

(Throughout the play we hear Melpomene moving about 'upstairs'. Long Pause)

ICARUS: (eyes the gun) why-

ANGEL: -what do you friends call you?

ICARUS: erm, Russ. People call me Russ.

ANGEL: that your full name?

ICARUS: no idea, orphan, and no birth certificate.

ANGEL: (mirthlessly) ha. (Pause) erm, do you want... anything? Anything to eat or drink or-

ICARUS: no.

ANGEL: you sure? Cause I can-

ICARUS: no. ta. I'd be sick

(Silence. The angel looks at him. He silently stands up and goes over to the dirty ceramic sink. The tap squeaks as he turns it, it splutters into

life. He wets the yellow cloth, turns off the tap and approaches Icarus. Icarus leans away)

ANGEL: I'm just gonna clear you up a bit, is that ok?

ICARUS: do I have a choice?

(Angel deflates but goes to help anyway he gently washes blood from Icarus' split lip and eye brow. His hand touches the boy)

ICARUS: (sharp in breath) your hands are cold

(The angel smiles, finishes, goes to the sink and rinses the cloth, Icarus watches this time, looks down when the angel looks back. He then looks very queasy. The angel comes back holding the cloth to do more.)

ANGEL: are you ok? What's-

ICARUS: I just feel really sick that's all.

ANGEL: can I... *[help]*

ICARUS: you could let me go

(long pause, the angel looks away)

This is just my luck

(silence. Angel sighs)

You know you could stop acting like the bloody victim here

ANGEL: I'm sorr-

ICARUS: you're sorry, that's nice

(silence)

ANGEL: I could get you a glass of water

ICARUS: (looks for a second- as if spelling out) I'd, be, sick.

ANGEL: well what can I- can I help?

ICARUS: apart from untying me? (another wave of nausea) look just go to my bag.

ANGEL: your- (glances to the left)

ICARUS: my bag (does so, pushing the cloth into his hoody centre pocket.) is there a little box in there? (Angel rummages and eventually withdraws a prescription pill box.) I just need a couple.

(Angel nods, puts the pills down on top of the bag and looks for something to put water in, he finds a dirty mug in the sink area, washes it thoroughly, fills it with water and goes back over to the pills. He crouches, putting the mug on the floor, and draws out a blister pack, he pops two blue pills into his hand, and puts the blister pack into the box, then absentmindedly puts the box in his hoody centre pocket. He goes behind Icarus who reservedly opens his mouth, the angel awkwardly puts the pills in then gives him a gulp of water, he puts the mug down to the right of the chair.)

ICARUS: ta.

(This done the angel moves back a little not knowing what to do. Silence. The angel looks at the ground and then at his watch, he gives an inaudible groan/exhalation. He puts both hands inside his pocket and finds the pill packet)

ANGEL: oh. (He goes to put them back in the bag, reading them as he goes) des-i-pramine. (Putting them back in the bag) these stop you feeling sick?

ICARUS: (shakes his head) sort of. If I stop taking them they make me sick.

ANGEL: so why don't you take them

ICARUS: I missed last night, forgot. And today's-

ANGEL: (quickly) oh. (Sits down, knees to his chest, pause) what are they for?

ICARUS: (looks at him) crazy pills.

ANGEL: (half laughs) what?

ICARUS: crazy pills. Keep me sane.

(long pause)

ANGEL: they keep you - [sane]

ICARUS: yeah I got issues like (angel looks worried) nothing major. Jus get a bit down

ANGEL: what do you mean 'down'  
(Icarus shrugs, long silence)

ICARUS: don't work anyway

ANGEL: pardon?

ICARUS: don't work, Supposed to help me sleep but, well people who sleep don't generally find themselves wandering around parks at 6am getting kidnapped. Don't seem to work.  
(Pause, Icarus sighs)

ANGEL: how about your memory?  
(Pause. Icarus narrows his eyes)

ICARUS: what do you mean?

ANGEL: I mean do they have any side effects or anything?

ICARUS: mm. (shakes his head)  
(Long pause)

ANGEL: do they help?

ICARUS: (brief pause) mm. (shrugs, looks at the angel, thinks, carefully decides to indulge him) Feel like empty an stuff. Those are supposed to fill me up.  
(Angel nods, pause)  
Why have you brought me here?  
(Angel looks at him,)  
I don't understand, you seem like a nice guy.  
(Angel looks down)  
And please take that stupid costume off. I mean its good, very good but you're-

ANGEL: you said you were orphaned

ICARUS: -not playing. Yeh. apparently

ANGEL: appar-

ICARUS: I don't remember. Ages ago. Don't feel sad for me. don't remember anything to miss. don't know... my memory's a bit ... works different ... dreams 'n' ...

ANGEL: -weird how...

ICARUS: (pause, frowns) always falling, but it's not that I mind, it's the never getting anywhere that pisses me off, and there's water ... sorry, bullshit; dreams are, my brain's mucked up..

(The angel looks concerned again)

Don't worry, talked to loads of idiot doctors about it...

ANGEL: (quiet, nods) what do you do.

ICARUS: (pause) student

ANGEL: of what?

ICARUS: geography.

ANGEL: it going well?

ICARUS: what?

ANGEL: is it going well?

ICARUS: (vindictively) No.

ANGEL: oh.

(Pause)

ICARUS: come on, what's with the fucking small talk?

(No answer, Icarus gets angry)

What do you want from me? Oh yeah you want me listen to you right? Listen to you, so stop asking me fucking questions and talk, or just let me go!

(Angel looks and him then away. Silence. Icarus fumes. The Angel looks at the pill box he left on top of the Nike bag and lifts it up.)

ANGEL: "Desipramine is used to elevate the mood of patients with depression and to prevent the fluctuations in mood of patients who are... also has sedative properties"-

ICARUS: it lies.

ANGEL: (holds the tablets in one hand) look, why do you take these?

ICARUS: (tries to shrug but is limited by the rope, he looks down at his bonds)

Because.

ANGEL: do they help?

ICARUS: I don't know

(Pause)

ANGEL: what if they make you worse...

ICARUS: blah blah, heard it all before, I'd rather be dead to the world than feel so fucking wrong in it, so they make me forget things, probably stuff I wanted to forget.

ANGEL: have you always felt like - *[this]*

ICARUS: what are you, running some kind of kidnap counselling service

(Long painful silence, Angel looks at his watch)

ANGEL: I'm sorry, I was just-

ICARUS (bursts out) look I don't talk easily and I'm always tired but don't really sleep, oh I shut my eyes and then wake up later but it's not rest so I walk around the park 'cause it makes me feel a bit better - can see the sky... but I don't fit, never have, and can't remember anything that might help. I could be anyone and so might as well be no-one and actually it probably doesn't matter what you do with me, kill me for all I care

ANGEL: you don't fit?

(Icarus exhales frustrated)

ANGEL: you feel like you don't fit

ICARUS: I guess

ANGEL: (darkens) no justice

ICARUS: (has been shifting in his seat and not heard) hm?

ANGEL: (smiles tightly, motions 'nothing')  
(Long Pause)

ICARUS: why have you brought me here?  
(The angel shifts uncomfortably)  
Aren't those wings getting a bit annoying?

ANGEL: (wry smile) you don't know the half of it.

ICARUS: well then, take em off, you're beginning to seem a little less than sane yourself  
(Another pause. The angel stands, goes over to Icarus and sits cross-legged leaning forward so the wings are near Icarus' left hand)

ICARUS: (scared) what/ are you

ANGEL: /touch them, can you reach?

ICARUS: yeah but/ why

ANGEL: just

ICARUS: (looks up) don't get this.. maybe it's all made up, I always feel like I'm never quite - maybe this is it, maybe I'm hallucinating

ANGEL: you think?

ICARUS: (quiet, stretches out his hand to touch the wings, sharp in breath) so what? they're cold. (Angel stands quickly and holds his hand to the boy's cheek) shit! (Pulls his head away)

ANGEL: notice anything?

ICARUS: apart from how fucking freezing they are! (The angel moves his hand against Icarus' craned away head. Icarus flinches and frowns but as his hand moves the frown softens) your hands feel the same

ANGEL: the same?

ICARUS: I mean they're just as cold, but they actually - touch - the same... like... silk or steel... (The angel removes his hand) I don't understand. I don't understand why and what this/ has to do with

ANGEL: (quick breath) /I'm an angel/

(Icarus stops)

ICARUS: an-

ANGEL: you heard.

(The angel looks at his watch and closes his eyes)

ICARUS: why do you keep on doing that?

ANGEL: do you believe me?

ICARUS: no of course I don't believe you, I'm just choosing to put that one down to you being a bit crazy in the head, help yourself to my pills like

ANGEL: I'm sorry to rush this on you but I've not got *[the time]*... look it's true Icarus

ICARUS: what did you call me?

ANGEL: it's true

ICARUS: why did you call me that?

ANGEL: you have to believe me

ICARUS: (beat) oh yeah, ok fine, I believe you, where's your white dress and harp eh? And I don't think your hair's quite blonde enough. C'mon I want you to prove it, you can call the sky yellow if you want but it's not real, words are words, to make something real you have to prove it. So, fly.

ANGEL: I, I can't

ICARUS: no harps, dresses, flying, what on earth do you guys do? I mean What are the fecking wings for?!

ANGEL: no, no angels *can* fly, I just, can't at the moment.

ICARUS: convenient.

(Pause. Angel goes to speak, Icarus interrupts:)

Shoot yourself then.

ANGEL: what?

ICARUS: (nods at the gun) prove it, shoot yourself

ANGEL: who said angels can't die?

ICARUS: you're not an angel

ANGEL: I am

ICARUS: you're not

(Silence)

Ok leaving aside the fact that you're crazy and I'm seeing things, just as a for-instance, if you are an angel, why on earth are you... on earth, and what do you want from me?

(Angel looks at Icarus as in pain)

I wouldn't believe you right? Try me.

ANGEL: (quietly) you wanted proof

ICARUS: what?

ANGEL: do you want proof?

ICARUS: sure why not

ANGEL: (sighs) the last stain on your soul was blood.

ICARUS: ... what

ANGEL: You cut yourself, badly. Not on purpose. But there's a blue tinge, fascination around it: you didn't stop, you watched, and were maybe a little happy you had the accident

(Space)

ICARUS: bullshit

ANGEL: I-

ICARUS: you saw it when you dragged me here and made an educated guess; I've been talking about feeling empty, it's not a great leap to say someone numbed would enjoy feeling/

(Angel sighs again, digs into Icarus' bag and brings out a sharp flip knife- survival style, he opens it and stands, Icarus looks scared.)

ANGEL: you were whittling a branch in the park, trying to remind yourself that everything has insides.

ICARUS: (cautious pause) you've been spying /on me

ANGEL: /that everything has somewhere it came from. Where do you come from/

ICARUS: /you asshole/

ANGEL: /try and remember/

ICARUS: /(loudly) fuck you!

(The angel walks suddenly towards Icarus with the knife, Icarus leans back quickly and the force means he begins to fall backwards in the chair, the angel throws down the knife and leaps forward just stopping Icarus from hitting the floor. )

ANGEL: I'm sorry. I'm not going to hurt you. I know words aren't enough,

(The angel slowly rights him, kneels heart racing to the right of the chair.)

do you want proof.

(Icarus is quiet)

The best proof I can give

(The angel reaches for the knife, Icarus eyes it. The angel turns to him and kneels, he holds out his arm and draws the knife across it, Icarus yells in objection but as he sees the arm he quietens. The angel is bleeding)

ICARUS: it's... grey, silver- [*a trick.*] (shakes his head)

ANGEL: cut my wings

ICARUS: what?

(The angel puts his arm down and covers it with the yellow cloth from his pocket, tying it. He then moves towards Icarus who flinches a little again, the angel cuts away a couple of the bonds holding the boy's left arm and puts the knife gently in his hand. The angel crouches down in front of him)

ANGEL: if it's a trick it doesn't matter. If it isn't then it's proof.

ICARUS: but I-

ANGEL: (louder) cut them

(Shaken, Icarus hold the knife, the angel moves his wings against it making Icarus cut him, he winces silently in a lot more pain than with his arm. Icarus peers at the wings, drops the knife and touches the wound gently, he brings his fingers away as the angel rises and goes to perch on the ceramic sink. Icarus rubs his fingers together, feeling the silver blood)

ICARUS: ...a trick

ANGEL: (quietly, sitting down where he was kneeling) if you like. But will you listen to me?

ICARUS: (confused) will you let me go?

(angel, thinks for a second, quietly nods, then looks down, picks the knife up off the floor and cuts the bonds holding him down Icarus sits and rubs his arms. The angel tidies up the knife to the bag picks up the gun and puts it back in his hoody pocket. He then picks up the rope, placing it under the sink. Icarus looks up at the angel, still sitting. The angel moves halfway back, looking at the ground. )

ANGEL: the door is locked from the outside, if you knock twice Mel will let you out, but please, just wait a bit, listen.

ICARUS: (glances to the door, then to the floor, rubbing his wrists, he looks torn, narrows his eyes an half looks up to the angel) talk.

ANGEL: (breath) um... I'm an angel and - um... look the angels serve the gods. Er... The gods fluctuate, they're created and maintained by belief- like there's a god up there for every belief there ever was, and each as powerful as their believers. We are... servants, messengers, workers and we also look after earth, look over humans when the gods get bored of them... I mean I say this with venom but it is extremely hard for an angel, any angel to have anything but subservient thoughts. To believe that the gods are fallible is a human luxury, for us, an extraordinary gift.

(pause)

Mm, the gods deal with this 'rare gift' by allowing angels to opt out. As soon as you understand your sorry state they take you aside and offer you

humanity- a life. You are offered an existence made of being rather than of doing- you are offered food, taste, breath and sex in exchange for your wings.

ICARUS: (torn between fascination and disbelief) you're saying angels can't eat?

ANGEL: we can eat- but there's no taste. we can drink... and get drunk, we're allowed that, in fact my 'gift' allowed me to see that because the truth tends to out when you're drunk, alcohol is useful to weed out more dissidents, after all, that's what sparked the argument that sent the Morningstar to hell.

ICARUS: Morningstar? Hang on, you're saying there's a hell?

ANGEL: there is. Humans get sent there too but it wasn't designed for them- it was designed for rebel angels and spirits. Mostly for the angels that wouldn't take humanity. Morningstar has a few names but um, I think you'd know Lucifer.

(Icarus nods conciliatorily)

k... so angels as you now know are cold to the touch, we have a lower body temperature 'cause we move closer to the suns. We can be killed- each angels' wings are completely individual in shape, colour size- like a fingerprint and it's a coincidence that I'm blonde, there are black, Asian, Aryan angels made of all colours.

ICARUS: and the harps?

ANGEL: (smiles) there are musicians, to play songs written by the muses, but they're not good, it takes imagination to be a good musician.

ICARUS: (suspiciously) this is all very nice, well done... but you made a mistake

ANGEL: what?

ICARUS: you said freedom in exchange for your wings right?

ANGEL: yes?

ICARUS: you still have your wings, but if you weren't free you couldn't talk to me like this, you talk like you're free

ANGEL: in mind. Look Icarus, I know /you can't understand but

ICARUS: / (standing) why do you keep on calling me that?/

ANGEL: what happened to me... I know you can't remember and yes it's a glitch... a one in a million... I acted on my free thoughts before the gods could get to me

ICARUS: what do you mean?

ANGEL: I committed a crime

ICARUS: that I should remember?

ANGEL: a terrible thing

(Pause, Icarus walks over to the bottom of the stairs, looks up, then exhales angrily, and turns round)

ICARUS: what?

(the angel, hanging onto the basin slowly and painfully sinks to the floor as if aching all over, Icarus sits facing him on the very right edge of the bottom step. The angel sits with eyes closed, puts his head in his left hand then moves it quickly off and looks out)

What was it?

ANGEL: I fell in love. With a mortal. I fell in love and it was like... it was one second, I fell in love and I - it was like, like only ever having seen things in black and white and then seeing graffiti, human blood, the sea, the sky and someone's green eyes, all at the same time. And I was also filled with this greed - with a need to keep this person, this person being punished by the gods

ICARUS: what so you're not allowed to love now?

ANGEL: We love, but everything, we don't discern one thing from another, we love everything so might as well not ... I[carus]- (looks to Icarus) Russ, please say you're willing to believe me

ICARUS: (pause, carefully) this person you loved...

ANGEL: was being punished. Punished for nothing but their innocence, I couldn't- ... I interfered... (looks up) you must/ remember

ICARUS: (stands up and moves over to the seat, sits across it facing the angel) I'm sorry but I can't.

ANGEL you have to...

(pause)

ICARUS: so they punished you

ANGEL: Death row.

ICARUS: they're gonna kill you?

ANGEL: not that simple; (too pained to continue)

ICARUS: well what then?

ANGEL: (looks up, distant) I am going to be... it will be the first soul death ever to be executed, they will cleave my soul in two; it wont be death, it wont be hell or earth, it will be extinction...

(Silence)

ICARUS: this isn't... this is, (torn between disbelief and curiosity) look I don't get it... there must be a way out.

ANGEL: oh yes. Yes. The gods have to leave a get-out-clause. I mean there has to be hope, otherwise you can't understand hopelessness: (pause) Eleven /days

ICARUS: /eleven? (The number eleven has sparked something in him)

ANGEL: eleven days and the whole of time and space. They took my love and placed them somewhere in all of time and space.

ICARUS: eleven days to find -

ANGEL: him. yes, the whole of it. Walking and searching.. 263 hours with your mind on a knife edge, your whole body leaning forward, each step and thought a stab of pain in loss of this person, driven forward by (spits the word) hope. It reached four hours to go and I nearly gave up. I wanted somewhere grey, I wanted a beer, I came here but it was still ... (resents) beautiful, I'd been walking under street light all night. I came here, and it was cold and slightly misty the sun was low and the air tasted of grass and mute life and I couldn't walk any further. I sat down. Gave up

ICARUS: and I sat down next to you

ANGEL: I'm an angel and your full name is Icarus

ICARUS: my name is Russ

ANGEL: you saw my wings

ICARUS: so?

ANGEL: I found you

ICARUS: I found you

ANGEL: yes, you did, look have you ever felt real?

ICARUS: what kind of- *[question is that]*

ANGEL: ...have you?

ICARUS: I'm ill...

ANGEL: you flew too high, your father warned you

ICARUS: I know the story of Icarus, it happened thousands of years ago

ANGEL: Russ, this is important, what did you feel like when you saw me

ICARUS: what did I-

ANGEL: what did you feel like? Think...

ICARUS: (against his will) ...you looked - like sad... but as if you were glowing, look jus 'cause I have no memories doesn't mean you can- *[fuck around with me]*

ANGEL: why did you sit down next to me?

(silence)

Please think

ICARUS: (Icarus strains and puts his head in his hands kleanign them on his knees, he clenches his hair and then looks up) because I... I felt drawn to you, like out of everything you were something that might...

ANGEL: belong to you?

ICARUS: (pulls his hands out of his hair) why are you doing this to me?

ANGEL: I'm trying to help you

ICARUS: I don't want your help

ANGEL: what about your dreams? The falling, Icarus, you flew too high. Your father warned you

ICARUS: (struggling, again something jogs his memory) my father.

ANGEL: called Daedalus. But you were young.

ICARUS: with grey in his beard

ANGEL: He thought you dead, when your wings melted he saw you fall into the sea (hesitates)

ICARUS: but-

ANGEL: I -

ICARUS: you caught me

ANGEL: yes

ICARUS: (pause, he looks into the distance) it was... hot... and the wind stung and I ... but the water looked perfect and... you- [caught me] (is in tears), it's your fault, you, interfered!

ANGEL: I'm sorry

ICARUS: (stands, pause. Throughout this (to "leave me alone") Icarus gets closer and closer until he is shouting in the cowering angel's face)

you, you're the reason, you're the reason I can't open my eyes without offending my surroundings, you're the reason it rejects me, I'm not supposed to be here in mind or body. And my life? No memories, no reason for being, you stole me! What I am is made up! forced into!

ANGEL: I'm sorry!

ICARUS: what do you want from me?! You've found me -take what's left! Solve your problem and use me for whatever but please just fucking do it now and /leave me- [alone]

ANGEL: stop it!

ICARUS: fuck you! Do it, do whatever you want then leave me alone!

(Angel cries silently. A fuming silence. Icarus spins round and walks to the door)

ANGEL: (quietly) you have to love me

(Icarus stops in his tracks. A long silence)

You have to

ICARUS: I heard. (Doesn't turn round, pause;) and you know, I can't, I'm empty.

(Silence, Icarus sways as if feeling faint)

Why don't you do something, run away?

ANGEL: I can't

ICARUS: go to hell or something

ANGEL: I can't, have to be sent or sin and die

ICARUS: (turns round) shoot yourself

ANGEL: I can't, don't have that luxury

ICARUS: I'll do it

ANGEL: (protectively) no!- look if you killed me, I'd go straight to heaven, much good as that'd do, but everything- all my sins would be taken on by you, a murderer steals life and at that point all the stains on the victims' soul.

ICARUS: (shrugs) so I'd absolve you

ANGEL: no... only human slates can be wiped clean

(pause)

ICARUS: how long have you got left?

ANGEL: (looks at his watch and cringes) minutes

(silence)

I should have let you fall

ICARUS: being here killed me anyway

(Silence. Upstairs, footsteps as Melpomene (the now 'descended' or mortal, muse of tragedy) moves to a different room. She begins to sing 'Icarus' by Ani DiFranco. It is like rain on a hot hot day, Icarus and Angel breathe in silence)

MELPOMENE: and your tiny little life gets  
even smaller  
as you heed the heaven's mighty show

and I don't mean heaven  
like god-like  
the animal in me knows very well  
nature is our teacher, our leader, and our lover  
and god is just another story that we tell

and you're trying not to grasp-not to start  
grasping  
at straws -or sticks- or stones  
just learn how to sit inside your sadness  
even if you're sitting there alone

it's just like Icarus ascending  
never intending to look back  
nature's law and your tragic flaw  
are vying to send you  
flying into the arms of another Venus flytrap

ANGEL: I love you

ICARUS: I know. Can I go?

(pause)

ANGEL: I didn't mean- [to]

ICARUS: I know

ANGEL: you're free

(Icarus stands, turns to go, the angel tenses with his arms in his centre hoody pocket. Icarus pauses and turns round. He looks at the angel, then walks briskly over to him and placing his downstage hand on his face he kisses him on the lips. He looks at him for a second, then carefully whispers inaudibly into the angel's upstage ear, the angel's face doesn't change except for a slow closing of the eyes. Icarus then draws back, he turns and leaves, picks up his bag, turns back briefly,)

ICARUS: ta.

(Icarus turns and walks, jaded, to the stairs. The angel stares straight down at the floor with both hands still in the pocket. In the beat of a heart the angel - without looking up - whips out the gun and with a straight right arm shoots Icarus in the head who crumples to the ground at the bottom of the stairs. There is splattered blood on the wall. The angel doesn't look. He hangs his right arm by his side taking deep breaths. The lights fade.)

CURTAIN