

A shift. They sit in different chairs with vacant seats next to them.

*Maybe the actors are silent and their texts are projected, over music:**

Start

M. I have to go do a new clinical trial in Washington. I have to get these horrible infusions. Text me to distract me?

S. Sure.

I am on the quiet car on the Amtrak train going past a lot of water in Connecticut. Does Connecticut need to be this big?

M. We are in the land of space, in America. I have a king-sized bed. I have white sheets on it so it looks even more fathomless. It's like sleeping on Moby Dick.

S. So many pools of water, so many empty seats.

M. Commuters and marshes are both mostly water.

S. True.

M. This infusion is hellish.

S. Why?

M. Hyper-acidifies the bloodstream. You get chills and insatiable thirst.

S. Like Tantalus?

M. Yeah if he had to lug a boulder to the bathroom and back to the pond.

S. Ha ha. What are you reading?

M. Nothing. Have I ever told you the Confucian proverb I like: "A few days without reading makes conversation taste like food with no salt"? I feel that way – having lots of Unsalted Potato Chip conversations.

S. I hate unsalted conversations. Who do you like better Emily or Charlotte Bronte?

* See the Music and Third-Party Materials Use Note on page iii.

Spoken text again:

Speaking of books, I'm working on my book. The working title is *Four Reincarnations*. Give me some brutal feedback.

S. Because I'm so brutal.

M. Brunch? Where to get a good pancake in this dump of a city?

Or lunch on the Upper East Side?

S. The only two reasons I go to the upper east side from Brooklyn are highlights or mammograms.

M. I can come to Brooklyn.

S. Meet me at the Iris Café.

Encl

A shift. Iris Café.

Happy twenty-third birthday!!! How was it?

M. Great! Me and my new poet friend Elizabeth sang Karaoke.

A fragment:

*M sings a tiny fragment of an amazing Karaoke song. In real life, it was a hopeful ballad sung on a magic carpet in an animated film.**

S. Amazing.

M. Oh and Elizabeth works at the LA review of books and wants to publish one of your poems if that's okay with you!

S. What? Really? Yes, sure, sure. Wow, my first poem published at the age of forty and all because of you.

M. Mazel!

* See the Music and Third-Party Materials Use Note on page iii.