

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.