

1 (KATHY, and her younger] [discuss the
2 problems of growing old.)
3 KATHY: John, is Mom home yet?
4 Not yet.
5 KATHY: Did she say when she'd get home?
6 JOHN Nope.
7 KATHY: No note? Nothing?
8 JOHN No note, nothing.
9 KATHY: Great. Have you started dinner?
10 JOHN No. Was I supposed to? No one told me.
11 KATHY: Just once it would be really nice if you did something
12 without having to be told.
13 JOHN (A beat) Yeah. OK.
14 KATHY: You are something else, you know that?
15 JOHN Uh-huh
16 KATHY: Did you at least clean up the dishes?
17 JOHN No, Kathy, I didn't clean up the dishes.
18 KATHY: Good grief, you are beyond belief.
19 JOHN I'll do it, OK. I was planning on doing it later. Not
20 everything has to be done on some mythical schedule
21 you've decided on.
22 KATHY: Well, please, don't put yourself out. God forbid that
23 you might actually help out around here without having
24 to be told.
25 JOHN I said I'd do the dishes later.
26 KATHY: Forget it. Don't bother getting up, please. I'll take
27 care of them. God knows I take care of everything else
28 around here lately.
29 JOHN Martyr mode. Good.
30 KATHY: And just what does that mean?
31 JOHN Just that you're at your happiest when you can do it
32 all and make sure that everyone knows you're the one
33 doing it.
34 KATHY: Someone's got to follow through around here. It's for
35 sure that it isn't going to be you.

1 JOHN Fine! You want them done now, I'll do them now!
2 KATHY: Good! Do it!
3 JOHN What are you going to do?
4 KATHY: Well, I can assume that there is still laundry sitting
5 on the washer that has yet to be done, the carpets need
6 vacuuming, and dinner needs to be started. So, I guess
7 that will keep me busy, unless, of course, you managed to
8 take care of at least some of the chores. (No response from
9 JULIA) Just as I thought.
10 JOHN I said I'd take care of the dishes for you.
11 KATHY: What do you mean for me? You are not doing me any
12 favors, you know. Why, all of a sudden, are you thinking
13 you're doing the dishes for me?
14 JOHN Forget it. (She begins to exit.)
15 KATHY: And clean up your crap from the room.
16 JOHN Why don't you quit telling me what to do?
17 KATHY: Because if I don't, nothing gets done. And Mom
18 doesn't need to come home to the house looking like this.
19 JOHN She won't even notice.
20 KATHY: The hell she won't.
21 JOHN She doesn't notice anything anymore. We could not
22 even be here and she wouldn't miss us.
23 KATHY: Is there anyone more selfish than you?
24 JOHN Well, she wouldn't.
25 KATHY: For once in your life, quit thinking about yourself and
26 think about someone else. Mom is going through enough
27 right now without you throwing your attitude at her.
28 JOHN I don't know why she has to be at the hospital all
29 the time.
30 KATHY: Because her father is dying. Grandpa is dying.
31 JOHN He's been dying. Why doesn't he get it over with?
32 KATHY: (A beat) I can't believe you just said that.
33 JOHN (Quietly) Well, I did. And I mean it, too.
34 KATHY: No, you don't.
35 JOHN Yeah, I do.

1 KATHY: I have never in my life heard anything so awful come
 2 out of your mouth. I've known you to be unbelievably
 3 selfish, self-centered and wrapped up completely in your
 4 own needs, but this is out of control, even for you.
 5 JOHN Why is it selfish? Honestly, why? He's going to die
 6 anyway, isn't he?
 7 KATHY: He's had bad times before and pulled out of them.
 8 He'll pull out of this one, too.
 9 JOHN Take off the rose-colored glasses, Kathy. Join the real
 10 world. Grandpa is dying. He's been sick for a long time
 11 and dying a little bit more everyday. He's done nothing
 12 but get worse.
 13 KATHY: He has good days.
 14 JOHN When? When was the last good day he had? A year ago?
 15 Maybe longer?
 16 KATHY: How would you know? When was the last time you
 17 went to see him?
 18 JOHN What's the point? He doesn't even remember who we
 19 are anymore.
 20 KATHY: He does too remember. Maybe not our names, but he
 21 knows we are family. His eyes light up when we come in
 22 the room and hug him.
 23 JOHN His eyes light up whenever anyone walks in the room
 24 and gives him a hug. He's a friendly guy. However,
 25 whether you want to accept this or not, he has no idea
 26 who we are.
 27 KATHY: You are so cold.
 28 JOHN No, I'm not. I'm realistic. I've watched Grandpa
 29 shuffling around, looking at all of us without really
 30 knowing who we are, unable to complete a coherent
 31 sentence, and then I watch Mom get sadder and sadder.
 32 There is no point to this.
 33 KATHY: God does not give us more than we can bear. What
 34 does not kill us makes us stronger.
 35 JOHN Well, I feel better now. Clichés sure can brighten up a

1 cloudy day. Why don't you tell Mom that when she comes
 2 back from watching her father deteriorate into an empty
 3 shell.
 4 KATHY: *(She looks at JULIA for a moment, then quietly)* I have
 5 things to take care of.
 6 JOHN Yes, do what you always do. Walk away from reality.
 7 For God's sake, don't face what is happening.
 8 KATHY: Oh, be like you? Wish Grandpa right into his grave.
 9 JOHN If you had any compassion, you would.
 10 KATHY: Compassion? You talk to me about compassion? Who
 11 makes sure things are taken care of? Not you. Who tries
 12 to comfort Mom when she feels down about everything
 13 that is going on? Not you. Who goes to visit Grandpa in
 14 the home? Not you.
 15 JOHN I do my share, dammit. Maybe I'm not as vigilant
 16 about dusting the nooks and crannies of this house, but
 17 I do help out. And I do try to talk to Mom, but it's hard.
 18 KATHY: And visiting Grandpa? What about that?
 19 JOHN I can't. I just can't. It's too hard to take.
 20 KATHY: Ah, here we go. Now we're getting down to it. It's too
 21 hard to take for poor little Julia. Never mind the times he
 22 was there for you. Let's just forget all about that. Forget
 23 about the Disneyland trips, the donut hunts, dancing at
 24 parties, basketball games. Let's just forget everything we
 25 ever did with Grandpa and take care of ourselves. That is
 26 just so typical of you.
 27 JOHN You don't get it, do you? Don't you see that those are the
 28 memories I want to keep alive? I want to remember that
 29 man that I loved, that I looked up to, the way he was then,
 30 not the way he is right now. I don't even know this person.
 31 KATHY: Well, you better try to know him while there's still
 32 time to do so.
 33 JOHN That's just it. There is no time anymore. I didn't tell
 34 you this, but I did go down to see him about a month ago.
 35 KATHY: Why didn't you tell me?

1 JOHN I didn't want to talk about it.
 2 KATHY: Why? When did you go?
 Jia 3 JOHN I went down to the home after school one day to see
 4 how he was. It had been a long time, at least a couple
 5 months since I'd been down there. You know what he
 6 did? He looked at me. No, he looked through me.
 7 KATHY: Did you tell him who you were?
 8 JOHN I shouldn't have to tell him who I am. I'm his
 9 granddaughter for God's sake. He was in the delivery
 10 room when I was born. He should know who I am.
 11 KATHY: He can't help what is happening to him.
 12 JOHN I know that, I'm not stupid. But it gets worse. I stayed
 13 for just a few minutes, and then he said he had to use the
 14 bathroom.
 15 KATHY: Did you call someone to help him?
 16 JOHN It was too late. He had gone already.
 17 KATHY: He did?
 18 JOHN (*Quietly*) Yeah. He looked so helpless, so confused.
 19 Then, when the nurse came to get him, he smiled at her
 20 like he smiled at me and he just walked away with her.
 21 He just walked right away with her as if he had
 22 completely forgotten I was there. And he probably had.
 23 KATHY: I didn't know he had lost control over his bodily
 24 functions.
 25 JOHN Why don't you just say it? He peed all over himself.
 26 That's what he did. And I had to stand there and watch.
 27 Just watch and there was nothing, not a damned thing I
 28 could do. And if it makes me feel this bad, how do you
 29 think it makes Mom feel? It's her father, the man who
 30 raised her, who taught her about life, who changed her
 31 diapers. Now she has to change his. It's just not fair.
 32 KATHY: No, it's not, but it has to be dealt with.
 33 JOHN Why? Why does it have to be dealt with like this? Do
 34 you remember Duchess?
 35 KATHY: The cat?

1 JOHN Yeah, the cat. We had that cat forever.
 2 KATHY: Mom and Dad got it before we were born.
 3 JOHN Didn't you love that cat?
 4 KATHY: Yes, of course I loved Duchess.
 5 JOHN More than you love Grandpa?
 6 KATHY: Two different things.
 7 JOHN OK, fine, but let's say Grandpa was drowning and so
 8 was Duchess the cat. Who would you try to save?
 9 KATHY: Grandpa, of course.
 10 JOHN So you love Grandpa more, OK?
 11 KATHY: OK. What's your point?
 12 JOHN How did Duchess die?
 13 KATHY: We had to put her to sleep because she...
 14 JOHN She what?
 15 KATHY: Nothing...
 16 JOHN Don't say nothing, Kath. We had to put her to sleep
 17 because...
 18 KATHY: (*A beat*) Because she was...I don't want to talk about
 19 this. I really don't.
 20 JOHN We need to talk about this. We put her to sleep because
 21 she got old and sick and "lost control of her bodily
 22 functions."
 23 KATHY: Duchess was a cat.
 24 JOHN So why is a cat allowed to die with dignity? Why is it
 25 humans are forced to live a life of degradation?
 26 KATHY: I said I don't want to talk about this.
 27 JOHN How do you think Grandpa would feel if he knew what
 28 was going on? Do you think he'd want to live like this?
 29 KATHY: I don't know.
 30 JOHN The hell you don't. Would you want to? I know I
 31 wouldn't.
 32 KATHY: You can't say that.
 33 JOHN Yes, I can. Let me tell you right now, sister dear, that if
 34 I should come down with this horrible humiliating
 35 disease called Alzheimer's, put a pillow over my face and

1 call it a day. There is no way I'd want to live like that.
 2 KATHY: So what do you suggest we do? Smother Grandpa in his
 3 bed? Take him out of the home on a trip and leave him on
 4 some city street? Maybe throw him in front of an oncoming
 5 car. What do you think would be the humane thing?
 6 JOHN I have no idea. But I do know that this is all wrong.
 7 There is nothing right about what he is going through.
 8 KATHY: Well, just thank God our family has enough money to
 9 provide a good place for him to live comfortably.
 10 JOHN And that's another thing. What about people that
 11 don't have that kind of money? You didn't go with Mom
 12 when she had to finally make the decision to put Grandpa
 13 in a home. You should have seen some of those places.
 14 Dirty, disgusting, smelly. Some of those old people were
 15 walking around with clothes that reeked of urine. Not
 16 nearly enough caretakers for the patients. How do you
 17 think those families feel who can't afford what we can in
 18 the way of care and they have to visit their mothers,
 19 fathers, grandparents? And what about us? Grandpa is
 20 only sixty-seven years old. He could live for another ten
 21 years like this, lingering in and out of consciousness,
 22 that dull vacant look in his eyes when he does come
 23 around. Financially this could wipe Mom and Dad out.
 24 KATHY; And what if it's hereditary?
 25 JOHN What?
 26 KATHY: I'll be honest with you. I have thought about all of
 27 this. Maybe that's why I'm so obsessed with doing
 28 everything around here. It's my way of not thinking.
 29 JOHN Thinking about what?
 30 KATHY: About that this might be genetic. Mom could get it,
 31 then it could be us. Then what?
 32 JOHN: It won't happen. They'll have a cure by then.
 33 KATHY: You think? I don't. There's tons of money going for
 34 cancer and for AIDS. But what about Alzheimer's? You
 35 never hear anything about it. There won't be a cure if

1 there is no research.
 2 JOHN There will be. There has to be.
 3 KATHY: I'm scared all the time. Everytime Mom comes in a
 4 room and forgets why she came in, it scares me. When
 5 she misplaces something, it freaks me out.
 6 JOHN Everyone does that. We all forget things. It doesn't
 7 mean...
 8 KATHY: I know it doesn't. Intellectually I know. But
 9 emotionally...
 10 JOHN I thought you were the strong one through all this.
 11 KATHY: That's what I try to be. I keep thinking that if I keep
 12 busy, if I keep things going here in the house and make
 13 sure that everyone is taken care of, then maybe nothing
 14 will happen.
 15 JOHN You can't stop things from happening. Like I said,
 16 Grandpa is going to die. He should get it over with. And I
 17 don't mean that in a cruel way.
 18 KATHY: I know.
 19 JOHN He should have dropped dead of a heart attack five
 20 years ago on the basketball court. That's how he would
 21 have liked to go. That's a memory I would have loved.
 22 Grandpa's last days being who he was – active, fun, and
 23 doing what he loved. Not this shell of a man who just
 24 stares into space.
 25 KATHY: It would have been better. Better than this.
 26 JOHN Yeah. *(They sit for a moment in silence.)* I'll do the dishes.
 27 KATHY: OK. Mom should be home pretty soon.
 28 JOHN I think we should talk to her.
 29 KATHY: Why?
 30 JOHN Because she probably feels exactly what we are
 31 feeling, but is too guilty to talk about it. She needs to be
 32 able to talk about it. Like we just did.
 33 KATHY: Yeah. I guess so. Yeah. God, this sucks.
 34 JOHN It does, doesn't it?
 35