

THE CONTRAST

you New England gentlemen have such a laudable curiosity of seeing the bottom of everything;—why, to be honest, I confess I saw the blooming cherub of a consequence smiling in its angelic mother's arms, about ten months afterwards.

JONATHAN: Well, if I follow all your plans, make them six bows, and all that, shall I have such little cherubim consequences?

JESSAMY: Undoubtedly. —What are you musing upon?

JONATHAN: You say you'll certainly make me acquainted? —Why, I was thinking then how I should contrive to pass this broken piece of silver—won't it buy a sugar-dram?

JESSAMY: What is that, the love-token from the deacon's daughter?—You come on bravely. But I must hasten to my master. Adieu, my dear friend.

JONATHAN: Stay, Mr. Jessamy—must I buss her when I am introduced to her?

JESSAMY: I told you, you must kiss her.

JONATHAN: Well, but must I buss her?

JESSAMY: Why kiss and buss, and buss and kiss, is all one.

JONATHAN: Oh! my dear friend, though you have a profound knowledge of all, a pugnency of tribulation, you don't know everything. *(Exit)*

JESSAMY: *(Alone)* Well, certainly I improve; my master could not have insinuated himself with more address into the heart of a man he despised. Now will this blundering dog sicken Jenny with his nauseous pawings, until she flies into my arms for very ease. How sweet will the contrast be between the blundering Jonathan and the courtly and accomplished Jessamy!

THE DIVINERS

by Jim Leonard, Jr.

Buddy (mid-teens) - Showers (30)

The Play: Set in a small town in Indiana in the 1930's, the play deals with events leading to the death of Buddy, a young, troubled, boy. When he was very little he and his mother were in a traumatic accident that resulted in his mother drowning. Since the accident, he has developed a phobia of water, so much so that he doesn't even wash. However, Buddy's acute fear had led to his ability to "divine" water. Raised by his father and sister, he needs more help than they can provide to overcome his fears. These are poor people living in difficult times with little if any assistance available for troubled children. Seen as the "idiot boy" by the townspeople, life has stopped going forward for Buddy until Showers, a young preacher, comes into his life. Doubting his faith and his ability to preach, Showers has left his home and family in search of a new purpose in life. He secures a job as a mechanic working for Buddy's father and becomes involved with Buddy's sister. The town, in need of a good preacher, tries to persuade Showers to take on the responsibility. As the play progresses, Showers resists the townspeople, while at the same time becoming more and more determined to help Buddy overcome his fears. The play reaches its startling climax at the river when finally Showers persuades Buddy to let him help him wash. The town sees this as a baptism and startles the boy who eventually slips away and drowns. This very human story of youth, troubled by circumstances beyond their control, is told theatrically and poetically. The characters are rich and the relationships intriguing and sensitive.

The Scene: It is early in the morning. By this time in the play's action, Buddy has begun to place some trust in Showers. They are outdoors.

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(Morning. Faint sounds of birds. As the light rises we see BUDDY creeping onto the stage, bent low with one hand held out as he tries to befriend a small bird.)

BUDDY: Ain't you so pretty, huh? Ain't you so pretty. You're the color a the sky. Yes, you are. You want a be up there, now, don't you. In the sun and the wind. Well, hold still, now. Hold still.

He ain't gonna hurt you. *(SHOWERS enters as the boy catches the bird.)* You're too little to fly. Shhh, you're alright.

SHOWERS: Is he hurt?

BUDDY: Look at him, C.C. He's little.

SHOWERS: It's an awful pretty bird.

BUDDY: See his feathers?

SHOWERS: Those're blue.

BUDDY: Blue?

SHOWERS: Blue like your eyes.

BUDDY: His eyes is blue?

SHOWERS: Like the bird, like the sky—that's all blue.

BUDDY: Boy. You want a lift him, C.C.? Put him back to his Mama? *(BUDDY climbs on SHOWERS' shoulders and they move downstage to the edge of the stage.)*

SHOWERS: Careful, now, pal. You alright?

BUDDY: Yeah. How bout you?

SHOWERS: Oh, you're awful heavy! Now watch yourself up there. You got him?

BUDDY: *(As he places the bird in the tree.)* What color's that?

SHOWERS: That's green.

BUDDY: Green? Trees is green. Weeds is green. Grass is green. And birds're blue.

SHOWERS: *(Letting the boy down.)* You're awful smart first thing in the mornin.

(BUDDY lies on the stage floor looking up at the trees.)

BUDDY: Like to live up there with him. His arms turn to wings and his wings turn to feathers.

SHOWERS: How'd you get down?

BUDDY: He'd just fly down, C.C.

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SHOWERS: Well, if you're gonna be barnstormin you'd best get your wings out.

BUDDY: Like a bird?

(SHOWERS holds onto the boy's arms, slowly lifting his upper body until the boy stands on his toes with his arms extended.)

SHOWERS: Like a bird.

BUDDY: Is he flyin'?

SHOWERS: Shut your eyes, now.

BUDDY: Is he flyin'?

SHOWERS: If you're willin to fly, pal, I'm willin to witness.

BUDDY: Lift him higher.

SHOWERS: Higher?

BUDDY: Lift him way up the sky! Clear up the sky!

SHOWERS: Higher?

BUDDY: Higher! *(BUDDY runs to a high platform.)*

SHOWERS: *(As if calling a great distance.)* How's the air up there?

BUDDY: Blue!

SHOWERS: Where's Buddy Layman?

BUDDY: He's flyin'!

SHOWERS: Flyin'!

BUDDY: Flyin' clear up the sky! Way up the sky!

SHOWERS: Have you seen Mr. Lindbergh? Any word from Mr. Lindbergh?

BUDDY: Mr. Who?

SHOWERS: Mr. Lindbergh!

BUDDY: Ain't nobody flyin' but birds.

SHOWERS: Any sign a Buddy Layman?

BUDDY: Who's Buddy Layman!

SHOWERS: He's a good boy.

BUDDY: *(Pleased.)* He is?

SHOWERS: He's a smart boy. I know him.

BUDDY: Have you seen Mr. C.C.?

SHOWERS: Mr. Who?

BUDDY: Mr. C.C.?

SHOWERS: Who's Mr. C.C.?

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BUDDY: He's a bird!
(*SHOWERS has spread his arms and moved up behind the boy. The distance games with their voices stop.*)
SHOWERS: A bird brain, you mean.
BUDDY: Hey, C.C.? You flyin?
SHOWERS: Keep your eyes closed.
BUDDY: (*Amazed.*) You're flyin.
SHOWERS: Want to go higher?
BUDDY: He wants to go where you go, C.C.
SHOWERS: I'm stayin right here with you.
BUDDY: You like it here?
SHOWERS: I like it just fine.
BUDDY: (*Softly.*) You like the wind?
SHOWERS: Feels nice...
BUDDY: Feels soft...
SHOWERS: That's a nice sort a feelin.
BUDDY: His Mama's soft like the wind. Her voice's soft when he's sleepin.
SHOWERS: That's a dream, my friend.
BUDDY: (*Concerned.*) Is angels a dream?
SHOWERS: Buddy.
BUDDY: How come he can't find her?
SHOWERS: Your Mama's been gone a long time now.
BUDDY: He wants her so bad.
SHOWERS: I know.
BUDDY: If his arms turn to wings and his wings turn to feathers he could find her in the sky, maybe, C.C. (*The boy moves away from SHOWERS.*) If he's flyin he could be with his Mama.
SHOWERS: Buddy, listen to me...
BUDDY: (*Overlapping.*) They could fly in the sky, in the wind, in the sun! He could be with his Mama! They could fly and they fly and they fly!
SHOWERS: (*Overlapping from the next to last "fly".*) Your Mama's not here anymore!
BUDDY: He has to find her!

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SHOWERS: (*Forceful.*) No! You have to remember! She's left you a father and a sister and there's friends here for Buddy! And they want him and need him and love him! And he isn't a bird—he's a boy! You're a boy. You're a son. You're a brother. And you're a friend.
BUDDY (*Moved.*) And you like him?
SHOWERS: I like him a lot.
BUDDY: That's somethin, huh?
SHOWERS: You know it is.
BUDDY: Hey C.C.? You know what?
SHOWERS: What?
BUDDY: (*Shakes his hand.*) You're a good guy.
SHOWERS: I am, huh? Well you too!
BUDDY: Buddy is?
SHOWERS: Sure you are.
BUDDY: You know what else he is, C.C.? He's itchin.
SHOWERS: Still itchin?
BUDDY: Right there, C.C. Itchin right there.
SHOWERS: Well, the skin looks a little red yet.
BUDDY: He don't want no more itch-juice.
SHOWERS: You'll never get better if you keep scratchin, Bud.
BUDDY: Well it itches!
SHOWERS: I know—but anytime your legs start to get at you, you say "I'm gonna save this scratch for another time." (*SHOWERS starts to cross away.*)
BUDDY: Hey, C.C.? When's it gonna be another time?
SHOWERS; After you're better.
BUDDY: Is he better now?
SHOWERS: Nope.
BUDDY: Not yet?
SHOWERS: Not quite.