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CONCORD
THEATRICALS

Love is a Blue Tick Hound

and other remedies for the common ache

Audrey Cefaly

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
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LOVE IS A BLUE TICK HOUND first premiered in 2016 at Birmingham's Terrific New Theatre (Tam DeBolt, Artistic Director) in the author's home state of Alabama in 2016. It was produced by Sandra Taylor, Jim Gordy, and Carolyn Messina. The Production Stage Manager was Cari Oliver and the Technical Director was Kathleen Crawford Jensen. The cast and directors were as follows:

FIN & EUBA

Directed by John McGinnis

FIN . . . . . .Peggy Vanek-Titus

EUBA . . . . . Donna Thornton

CLEAN

Directed by Bethe Ensey

LINA . . . . . Carolyn Messina

ROBERTO . . . . . John McGinnis

STUCK

Directed by Alan Litsey

BOB . . . . . Barry Austin

MAGGIE . . . . . Jennifer Salvant

THE GULF

Directed by Tam DeBolt

KENDRA. . . . . Carolyn Messina

BETTY. . . . . Rebecca Yeager

AUTHOR'S NOTES

ON STORIES OF HEALING

There exists a state of inertia—a kind of reckless apathy—that is worse than death itself. A place where souls go to die, even as we stand back and allow it: a thankless job, a bad marriage, a dysfunctional family. And although we are not truly "stuck," we often convince ourselves that we are, through some idea of wholeness, an idea of our own creation, an idea that may very well be full of holes. Getting out requires math (the hard kind): Why do we settle…and what is the full cost of leaving? These are the central questions in *Love Is A Blue Tick Hound*. Through four intimate duets—*Fin & Euba, Clean, The Gulf,* and *Stuck*—we witness all the many facets of love as the pairings form, flounder and fall apart. These pieces are my founding documents, so to speak. They are connected thematically and represent a sort of literal rendering of how I came to know myself as an artist.

ON AGE RANGES

I have devoted my writing life to creating challenging roles for both women and men. Although the characters in these one-acts may be played by people of any age or ethnicity, there is a certain heartache known only to those who have been scarred and kicked around by life. I strongly urge casting directors to consider actors of all ages, shapes and sizes for the roles in my plays.

ON SILENCE

When a text is stripped to its essence, it returns the gift of tension. Much of the story that would otherwise be inaudible reveals itself in these quiet moments. I strive to create dialogue that is free from extraneous noise and filled with the richness of silence and shadow. Listen carefully as you read these plays and you will notice that the characters—and the elements of the worlds that surround them—assert themselves in the hushed and quiet moments: the call of a distant factory whistle or the sound of cars driving by on the lonely highway in *Fin & Euba*; the deafening calm that follows the big fight scene in *The Gulf*; the tender story of the Little Tree in *Stuck*; and the delicate moments in *Clean* just after the journal is discovered. These stories are not to be rushed. Directors of my material should make note of the quiet moments and the beats, not as throwaway stage directions, but as an indicator that the silence is yet another character in the narrative—and that is has something to say.

ON INCLUSION

As a playwright—and as a member of the human race—I believe I am the best reflection of myself when I am championing the under-represented. I value, and so encourage, diversity and inclusion, both

as a product and as a practice. By product, I mean my body of work. Thematically, the product often deals outright with elements of diversity. Additionally, in practice, casting, staging, and production decisions can and should reflect diversity whenever possible. I encourage flexibility in casting, especially with age-range and ethnicity. Herein, whenever explicit staging or production elements would preclude production or impede creativity, reasonable “work-arounds” and innovative approaches are encouraged.

FIN & EUBA

FIN & EUBA was first produced in Silver Spring, Maryland, where it won the 2003 Silver Spring Stage One-Act Festival. It subsequently won the Maryland One-Act Festival and the Eastern States One-Act Festival that same season. The production was directed by Michael Kharfen and the cast was as follows:

EUBA . . . . . Erika Imhoof

FIN . . . . . Audrey Cefaly

FIN & EUBA later debuted in New York where it won the 2006 Strawberry One-Act Festival. The play was directed by Joseph Holmgren and the cast was as follows:

EUBA . . . . . Carolyn Messina

FIN . . . . . Audrey Cefaly

CHARACTERS

EUBA: A woman of any age and ethnicity; quiet; a follower.

FIN: A woman of any age and ethnicity; self-assured; dry and gritty.

SETTING

The yard of an old boarding house in the deep South.

TIME

Autumn, late evening.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Fin and Euba are poor and scrappy. They say and do things that may seem surreal or comical, but in all things there is a truth to their ways. They are not *caricatures*. That is to say, they are very real people with real problems. Every effort should be made to identify their core beliefs and to portray them honestly.

STAGING

The below elements are not a requirement for staging. Reasonable workarounds and text edits are encouraged to meet the needs of the individual production. Please submit any edit requests to Samuel French for prior approval.

Alcohol, Smoking, Open Flame

*(**SETTING:** The yard of an old boarding house with an abundance of tacky yard art, gnomes and all things ridiculous. The house overlooks both a lonely highway and, in the distance, a paper mill. A porch light is visible near an area that represents the house.)*

*(**AT RISE:** **EUBA** exits the house onto the porch. She goes through her nightly ritual of retrieving an old coffee can from under the porch and situating herself in a lawn chair so she can light a cigarette. She sorts through a small stack of mail. A letter draws her attention. She hides it hastily as* **FIN** *enters the yard.)*

FIN. Hey.

EUBA. Hey.

FIN. Can I bum one?

*(***EUBA** *passes her the pack.)*

Where is she?

EUBA. Same as always. Back in the back watching Home Shoppin'.

FIN. God. Ain't she got enough of them creepy critters?

EUBA. They keep disappearing. She keeps buyin' more.

*(***FIN** *points to a gnome and looks to* **EUBA** *for an explanation.)*

It's new. *Buddy.*

FIN. Buddy? They have *names*? Gross.

(They stare out at the highway. An occasional car speeds by.)

It's gettin' cold.

EUBA. Yeah.

FIN. Don't you think it's gettin' cold?

EUBA. Yeah, it's gettin' cold.

(silence)

FIN. Bernice told me you got a letter in mail-call today.

(beat)

From *Life Magazine*?

EUBA. Bernice talks too much.

FIN. Well, ain't you gonna tell me what it says? You been waitin' for that letter since June.

EUBA. No.

FIN. No?

EUBA. I ain't read it.

FIN. Why not?

EUBA. Personal reasons.

FIN. What?

EUBA. Private reasons.

FIN. Oooh. Oh, I see. Okay. Alright. That's fine…you don't want to tell me.

EUBA. Good.

FIN. Your best friend.

EUBA. Yup.

FIN. The only person you could trust in the whole wide world.

EUBA. Yup.

FIN. But you don't want to tell me –

EUBA. Nope.

(silence)

FIN. Shoulda worn my jacket.

EUBA. Mnnn hmn.

FIN. Two weeks till Thanksgiving, you believe that?

EUBA. Double shifts again next week.

FIN. You're kiddin'?!

EUBA. Fat Charlie told Thelma 'n' Thelma told me.

FIN. Good! I need the money.

EUBA. I need sleep more than I need the money.

FIN. That's the truth.

(beat)

I heard something, but you ain't gon' like it.

EUBA. What?

FIN. Miss Vera's fixin' to raise the rent next month.

EUBA. Where'd you hear that?!

FIN. Bernice. Said she overheard her talkin' about it on the phone to Brother Herbert.

EUBA. Shit.

FIN. Yup.

EUBA. How much?

FIN. *(through an exhale of cigarette smoke)* I don't know.

(pause)

EUBA. You know I'd move in a heartbeat.

FIN. Me too!

EUBA. Too many rules.

FIN. I know it!

EUBA. Better not let her see you smokin' out here. She'll kick us out for sure.

*(***FIN** *blows a defiant puff of smoke toward the house.)*

FIN. Let's do it.

EUBA. What?

FIN. Move.

EUBA. You're crazy.

FIN. I'm serious!

EUBA. It's too far, Fin. The next rooming house is two miles down. That's way too far to walk to work.

FIN. Lou Anne lives down there at Scooter's. We could ride in with her. And he ain't have no rules, neither, except cash only.

EUBA. Cash only?
FIN. Cash only. And no pets.
EUBA. No pets?
FIN. No pets.
EUBA. What about a fish?

(beat)

Could I have a fish?
FIN. I bet you could have a fish.
EUBA. Maybe I'd like a fish.
FIN. What, like a goldfish?
EUBA. No, one of them pretty ones, with the pretty colors.
FIN. Oh yeah! I like them. Fish are good.

(beat)

What do you think?
EUBA. I don't know.
FIN. I'll call Scooter tomorrow.
EUBA. *I don't know.*
FIN. We could think on it.
EUBA. Yeah…
FIN. Let's just think on it.
EUBA. Okay.
FIN. We'll just think on it. That's what we'll do.
EUBA. *(trying to close the subject)* Okay. Let's think on it.
FIN. *(overlapping)* Okay.

(beat)

I'm thinkin'.

(silence)

EUBA. We got any beer?
FIN. Hangin' off the dock out back!

*(***FIN** *exits.)*

EUBA. *(calling)* You better hope she don't find it.

FIN. I hope she does!

*(***EUBA** *pulls out the unopened letter and holds it, contemplating.)*

EUBA. *(to herself)* Stupid.

*(***EUBA** *looks at Buddy, who is staring back at her.)*

(to Buddy) Shut up.

*(***EUBA** *hides the note as* **FIN** *returns with the beer.)*

FIN. Shiiiiittt, these are cold!

EUBA. Well what do you expect, pond's about froze over.

*(***FIN** *hands* **EUBA** *a beer.)*

Damn!!

FIN. I told you.

FIN. Man…there's nothin' better!!

EUBA. Nope.

FIN. I love a good cold beer.

EUBA. *Really cold…*

FIN. You OK?

EUBA. Yup.

FIN. Ice headache?

EUBA. Yup.

FIN. Well drink some more, you'll be alright.

(A factory whistle is heard in the distance.)

BOTH. 10 o'clock.

FIN. They got a new foreman comin' in next week.

EUBA. Where's Lila?

FIN. Fat Charlie sent her home. She couldn't keep up.

EUBA. When's the baby due?

FIN. Any day.

EUBA. How's she look?

FIN. She looks good. She looks real good. *Big.*

EUBA. I miss havin' her on my shift.

FIN. I know it. She's so funny. You remember back last fall when we had that real bad storm and everybody was down at Piggly Wiggly fightin' over toilet paper? Well, I saw Lila, Terrell and I don't know who all else, a big ol' crowd of folks standin' around Bobby Johnson's butcher counter cuz one of the stock boys had gotten all pissed off at Bobby one night and had went and built a Kotex Maxi-Pad display inside the meat case.

EUBA. I forgot all about that.

FIN. So Lila says, "That's a mighty fine display, Bobby. You havin' a special?" I'm gon' miss her.

EUBA. She'll be back.

FIN. Nuh uh! She's movin'.

EUBA. What?

FIN. Well, you remember how her husband went through basic training last summer?

EUBA. Yeah.

FIN. They just assigned him to a unit at Ft. Bragg and they're movin' soon as the baby's born.

EUBA. What?

FIN. She's mad as a hornet too. She just got the baby's room all fixed up and everything.

(The front porch light flashes.)

BOTH. *(ad lib)* Oh…Oh man…Shit.

(They hide their beers.)

FIN. *(to* **EUBA***)* Fifteen minutes. *(calling)* Yes, ma'am!

EUBA. *(overlapping)* God, I can't stand that woman!

FIN. *(overlapping)* She gives me the creeps! Her and them thirteen cats.

EUBA. *Seventeen.* Ginger had her litter this mornin'.

FIN. *(warning)* That's it! We're movin' to Scooter's'. I mean it, Euba! I'm callin' Scooter tomorrow. My hands are frozen.

EUBA. I'll get a blanket.

*(***EUBA** *exits into the house to get a blanket.* **FIN** *sips her beer quietly, looking around the yard. She goes over to Buddy, the gnome, and quietly picks him up. She takes him off stage and throws him into the pond. We hear a splash. She re-enters cavalierly rolling up her shirt sleeves.)*

FIN. Oops.

*(***FIN** *notices that* **EUBA** *has left her letter behind. She casually picks it up and tries to decode it from the outside. She is nearly caught as* **EUBA** *returns.)*

EUBA. *(calling back)* Yes ma'am! *(mimicking)* "Ain't you girls comin' in? I flashed that light a hundred times." Here, I stole you a cookie.

*(***EUBA** *hands* **FIN** *the blanket. She looks at the letter and then at* **FIN**, *who is casually looking away.)*

FIN. Yumm. What'd you tell her?

EUBA. Nothing. I just looked at her. She was still yacking away when I left.

FIN. Yack. Yack. That woman could talk the chicken offa bone.

(beat)

I wonder how somebody could do that much talkin' and still not say anything.

(beat)

Euba?

EUBA. Yeah?

FIN. When you gon' open that letter?

EUBA. *Life Magazine* does not care about any of the stupid pictures I took in high school, Fin. Get real.

FIN. I didn't send 'em those, Miss Smartypants. I sent 'em the ones you took at the plant during the strike last summer.

EUBA. Whatever.

FIN. What if it's a job offer?

EUBA. *(overlapping)* Oh, get serious, Fin. You think you can just send my pictures to some big shot at *Life Magazine* and expect a job offer?

FIN. *(overlapping)* Oh, give me a little more credit, will ya? I did not just send them to any old big shot. I sent them to the *Executive Editor*, if you must know. I took his name right off the inside cover.

EUBA. Now, that makes all the difference don't it?

FIN. *(staring at* **EUBA** *blankly)* You are so negative. Negative. Negative. Negative.

EUBA. *(overlapping) Realistic.*

FIN. Yes. That too! And negative.

(beat)

I bet it's a job offer! What do ya think?

EUBA. I don't know and I don't care.

FIN. Don't lie.

EUBA. I ain't lyin'. I don't want to know.

FIN. Why?

EUBA. It's better not knowing.

FIN. Better?

EUBA. I didn't send the pictures, Fin! You did!

FIN. It's what you wanted.

EUBA. No, Fin. It's what you wanted.

FIN. You said. You dreamed about it.

EUBA. No I didn't.

FIN. Don't lie! Euba. You have been dreamin' about taking pictures for *Life Magazine* ever since high school.

EUBA. OK, yeah, alright. Yeah I dreamed about it, but that don't mean I want it.

(beat)

FIN. That don't make no sense, Euba. Dreamin'… wantin'…same thing.

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