

Acting Edition

**for colored girls who
have considered
suicide/when the
rainbow is enuf**

a choreopoem/
Ntozake Shange

This sample is an excerpt of a
Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles
are for perusal and cannot be used for
performance or downloaded, printed,
and distributed in any way.

This sample may not reflect the version
of the play currently in print.

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

Copyright © 1975, 1976, 1977, 2010 by Ntozake Shange
All Rights Reserved

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all member countries of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Universal Copyright Convention, and/or the World Trade Organization conforming to the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-71290-6

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

info@concordtheatricals.com

1-866-979-0447

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE

licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk

020-7054-7298

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals Corp., depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* may not be licensed by Concord Theatricals Corp. in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Concord Theatricals Corp. office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from Concord Theatricals Corp. prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of federal law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to civil penalties. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Concord Theatricals Corp.

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Corp.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, scanned, uploaded, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, digital, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. The text of this title(s), or any portion thereof, may not be utilized as an input or prompt in any generative artificial intelligence or machine learning system, software, website, program, or similar technology. No one shall utilize this title(s), or any part of this title(s), for the purpose of training any artificial intelligence or machine learning technologies. No one shall share this title(s), or any part of this title(s), through any social media or file hosting websites.

For all inquiries regarding motion picture, television, online/digital and other media rights, please contact Concord Theatricals Corp.

MUSIC AND THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music and/or other copyrighted third-party materials (e.g. artworks, logos) in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music and materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, including without limitation music, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Corp., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees. For music, please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf was originally produced on Broadway by Joseph Papp and Woodie King, Jr., and premiered at the Booth Theatre on September 15, 1976. The production was directed by Oz Scott, with scenery by Ming Cho Lee, lighting by Jennifer Tipton, costumes by Judy Dearing, choreography by Paula Moss, and music for “I Found God in Myself” by Diana Wharton. The cast was as follows:

lady in brown	Janet League
lady in yellow	Aku Kadogo
lady in red	Trazana Beverley
lady in green	Paula Moss
lady in purple	Rise Collins
lady in blue	Laurie Carlos
lady in orange	Ntozake Shange

for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf was revived on Broadway by Nelle Nugent, Ron Simons, Kenneth Teaton, and The Public Theater, and premiered at the Booth Theatre on April 20, 2022. The production was directed and choreographed by Camille A. Brown, with scenic design by Myung Hee Cho, lighting design by Jiyoung Chang, costume design by Sarafina Bush, and sound design by Justin Ellington. The production stage manager was Bernita Robinson. The cast was as follows:

lady in brown	Tendayi Kuumba
lady in yellow	D. Woods
lady in red	Kenita R. Miller
lady in green	Okwui Okpokwasili
lady in purple	Alexandria Wailes
lady in blue	Stacey Sargeant
lady in orange	Amara Granderson

CHARACTERS

lady in brown

lady in yellow

lady in red

lady in green

lady in purple

lady in blue

lady in orange

lady in purple *and lady in green* begin
onstage and start moving in silence.

The **actors** *enter the space – one by one. The*
Evocation of the Black Girl begins.

dark phrases

lady in brown.

dark phrases of womanhood
of never havin been a girl
half-notes scattered
without rhythm/ no tune
distraught laughter fallin
over a black girl's shoulder
it's funny/ it's hysterical
the melody-less-ness of her dance
don't tell nobody don't tell a soul
she's dancin on beer cans & shingles

this must be the spook house
another song with no singers
lyrics/ no voices
& interrupted solos
unseen performances

are we ghouls?
children of horror?
the joke?

don't tell nobody don't tell a soul
are we animals? have we gone crazy?

i can't hear anything
but maddening screams
& the soft strains of death
& you promised me
you promised me...
somebody/ anybody
sing a black girl's song
bring her out
to know herself
to know you
but sing her rhythms
carin/ struggle/ hard times
sing her song of life
she's been dead so long
closed in silence so long
she doesn't know the sound
of her own voice
her infinite beauty
she's half-notes scattered
without rhyghm/ no tune
sing her sighs
sing the song of her possibilities
sing a righteous gospel
let her be born
let her be born
& handled warmly.

Introductions

*Each **actor** names their personal hometown.*

lady in brown.

i'm outside [chicago]

lady in yellow.

i'm outside [detroit]

lady in purple.

i'm outside [houston]

lady in red.

i'm outside [baltimore]

lady in green.

i'm outside [san francisco]

lady in blue.

i'm outside [manhattan]

lady in orange.

i'm outside [st. louis]

lady in brown.

& this is for colored girls who have considered suicide
but moved to the ends of their own rainbows.

“Black Girl Joy” Transition

everyone.

mama’s little baby likes shortnin, shortnin,
mama’s little baby likes shortnin bread
mama’s little baby likes shortnin, shortnin,
mama’s little baby likes shortnin bread

little sally walker, sittin in a saucer
rise, sally, rise, wipe your weepin eyes
an put your hands on your hips
an let your backbone slip
o, shake it to the east
o, shake it to the west
shake it to the one
that you like the best

lady in yellow.

you’re it

*Immediately dance music suitable
for the production is heard.* All of
the **ladies** start to dance.*

* A license to produce *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted recordings. Licensees should create their own.

graduation nite

lady in yellow.

it was graduation nite & i waz the only virgin in the
crowd
bobby mills martin jerome & sammy yates eddie jones
& randi
all cousins
all the prettiest niggers in this factory town
carried me out wit em
in a deep black buick
smellin of thunderbird & ladies in heat
we rambled from camden to mount holly
laughin at the afternoon's speeches
& danglin our tassles from the rear view mirror
climbin different sorta project stairs
movin toward snappin beer cans &
GET IT GET IT THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT MAMA
all mercer county graduated the same nite
cosmetology secretarial pre-college autoshop &
business
all us movin from mama to what ever waz out there
that nite we raced a big ol truck from the barbeque
stand
trying to tell him bout the party at jacqui's
where folks graduated last year waz waitin to hit it
wid us
i got drunk & cdnt figure out
whose hand waz on my thigh/ but it didn't matter
cuz these cousins martin eddie sammy jerome & bobby
waz my sweethearts alternately since the seventh grade
& everybody knew i always started cryin if somebody
actually
tried to take advantage of me

at jacqui's
 ulinda mason was stickin her mouth all out
 while we tumbled out the buick
 eddie jones waz her lickin stick
 but i knew how to dance
 it got soo hot
 vincent ramos puked all in the punch
 & harly jumped all in tico's face
 cuz he was leavin for the navy in the mornin
 hadda kick ass so we'd all remember how bad he waz
 seems like sheila & marguerite waz fraid
 to get their hair turnin back
 so they laid up against the wall
 lookin almost sexy
 didnt wanna sweat
 but me & my fellas we waz dancin
 since [1993] i'd won all kinda contests
 wid the cousins at the POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE
 DANCES
 all mercer county knew
 any kin to martin yates cd turn somersaults
 fore Christopher Wiliams cd get a woman excited

*A classic soul song from the '60s is heard.
 Continue with '80s jazz-funk.**

we danced doin nasty ol tricks

doin nasty ol tricks i'd been thinkin since may
 cuz graduation nite had to be hot
 & i waz the only virgin
 so i hadda make like my hips waz inta some business
 that way everybody thot whoever was gettin it

* A license to produce *for colored girls who have considered suicide/when the rainbow is enuf* does not include a performance license for any third-party or copyrighted recordings. Licensees should create their own.

was a older man cdnt run the streets wit youngsters
martin slipped his leg round my thigh
SWV bumped “i’m so into you” up & down—up &
down the new carver homes
WE WAZ GROWN WE WAZ FINALLY GROWN
ulinda alla sudden went crazy
went over to eddie cursin & carryin on
tearin his skin wid her nails
the cousins tried to talk sense to her
tried to hold her arms
lissin bitch sammy went on
bobby whispered i shd go wit him
fore they go ta cuttin
fore the police arrived
we teetered silently thru the parkin lot
no un uhuh
we didn’t know nothin bout no party
bobby started lookin at me
yeah
he started looking at me real strange
like i waz a woman or somethin/
started talkin real soft
in the backseat of that ol buick
WOW
by daybreak
i just cdnt stop grinnin.

Transition into:

now i love somebody more than

lady in blue.

you gave it up in a buick?

lady in yellow.

yeh, and honey, it was wonderful

lady in green.

we used to do it all up in the dark
in the corners...

lady in blue.

some niggah sweating all over you.

lady in red.

it was good!

lady in blue.

i never did like to grind.

lady in yellow.

what other kind of dances are there?

lady in blue.

mambo, bomba, merengue

when i waz sixteen i ran off to the south Bronx
cuz i waz gonna meet up wit willie colon
& dance all the time

mamba bomba merengue

lady in yellow.

do you speak spanish?

lady in blue.

olà
my papa thot he was puerto rican & we wda been
cept we waz just reglar niggahs wit hints of Spanish
so off i made it to this 36 hour marathon dance
con salsa con ricardo

'sugggggggggggar' ray on southern blvd
next door to this fotografi place
jammed wit burial weddin & communion relics
next door to la real ideal genuine spanish barber
 up up up up up stairs & stairs & lotsa hallway
wit my colored new jersey self
didn't know what anybody waz saying
cept if dancin waz proof of origin
 i was jibarita herself that nite
& the next day
i kept smilin & right on steppin
if he cd lead i waz ready to dance
if he cdnt lead
i caught this attitude
 i'd seen rosa do
& wd not be bothered
i waz twirlin hippin givin much quik feet
& bein a mute cute colored puerto rican
til saturday afternoon when the disc-jockey say
'SORRY FOLKS WILLIE COLON AINT GONNA
MAKE IT TODAY'
& alla my niggah temper came outta control
& i wdnt dance wit nobody
& i talked english loud
& i love you more than i waz mad
uh huh uh huh
more than more than
when i discovered archie shepp & subtle blues
doncha know i wore out the magic of juju
heroically resistin being possessed
oooooooooooooh the sounds
sneakin in under age to slug's
to stare ata real "artiste"
& every word outta imamu's mouth waz gospel
& if jesus cdnt play a horn like shepp

waznt no need for colored folks to bear no cross at all
& poem is my thank-you for music
& i love you more than poem
more than aureliano buendia loved macondo more
than hector lavoe loved himself
more than the lady loved gardenias
more than celia loves cuba or graciela loves el son
more than the flamingoes shoo-do-n-doo-wah love
bein pretty

oyè négro
te amo mas que te amo mas que
when you play
yr flute

everyone. (*very softly*)

te amo mas que te amo mas que

no assistance**lady in red.**

without any assistance or guidance from you
i have loved you assiduously for 8 months 2 wks & a
day
i have been stood up four times
i've left 7 packages on yr doorstep
forty poems 2 plants & 3 handmade notecards i left
town so i cd send to you have been no help to me
on my job
you call at 3:00 in the mornin on weekdays
so i cd drive 27½ miles cross the bay before i go to work
charmin charmin
but you are of no assistance
i want you to know
this waz an experiment
to see how selfish i cd be
if i wd really carry on to snare a possible lover
if i waz capable of debasin my self for the love of
another
if i cd stand not being wanted
when i wanted to be wanted
& i cannot
so
with no further assistance & no guidance from you
i am endin this affair

this note is attached to a plant
i've been waterin since the day i met you
you may water it
yr damn self

i'm a poet who

lady in orange.

i dont wanna write
in english or in spanish
i wanna sing make you dance
like the bata dance scream
twitch hips wit me cuz
i done forgot all abt words
aint got no definitions
i wanna whirl
 with you
our whole body
wrapped like a ripe mango
ramblin whippin thru space
on the corner in the park
where the rug useta be
let willie colon take you out
swing your head
push your leg to the moon with me

i'm on the lower east side
in New York
and i can't i can't
talk witchu no more

Transition.

we gotta dance

lady in yellow.

we gotta dance to keep from cryin

lady in brown.

we gotta dance to keep from dyin

lady in red.

so come on

lady in brown.

come on

lady in purple.

come on

lady in orange.

hold yr head like it was ruby sapphire

i'm a poet

who writes in english

come to share the worlds witchu

everyone.

come to share our worlds witchu

we come here to be dancin

to be dancin

to be dancin

baya

latent rapists

lady in blue.

a friend is hard to press charges against
if you know him
you must have wanted it
a misunderstanding
you know
these things happen
are you sure
you didn't suggest
had you been drinkin

lady in yellow.

a rapist is always to be a stranger
to be legitimate
someone you never saw
a man wit obvious problems
pin-ups attached to the insides of his lapels
ticket stubs from porno flicks in his pocket
a lil dick
or a strong mother
or just a brutal virgin

lady in blue.

but if you've been seen in public wit him
danced one dance
kissed him good-bye lightly
wit closed mouth
pressin charges will be as hard
as keepin yr legs closed

lady in yellow.

while five fools try to run a train on you

lady in blue.

these men friends of ours
who smile nice

stay employed and take us out to dinner
lock the door behind you
wit fist in face to fuck

lady in yellow.

who make elaborate mediterranean dinners
& let the art ensemble carry all ethical burdens
while they invite a coupla friends over to have you
are sufferin from latent rapist bravado
& we are left wit the scars

lady in blue.

bein betrayed by men who know us
& expect
like the stranger we always thot waz coming
that we will submit

lady in yellow.

we must have known
women relinquish all personal rights
in the presence of a man
who apparently cd be considered a rapist
especially if he has been considered a friend
& is no less worthy of bein beat witin an inch of his life
bein publicly ridiculed
havin two fists shoved up his ass
than the stranger
we always thot it wd be
who never showed up

lady in blue.

cuz it turns out the nature of rape has changed

lady in yellow.

we can now meet them in circles we frequent for
companionship
we see them at the coffeehouse

lady in blue.

wit someone else we know

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and anything theater-related, follow us on our social media channels.

@ConcordShows and **@ConcordUKShows** on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

concord
theatricals