

Excerpt terms and conditions

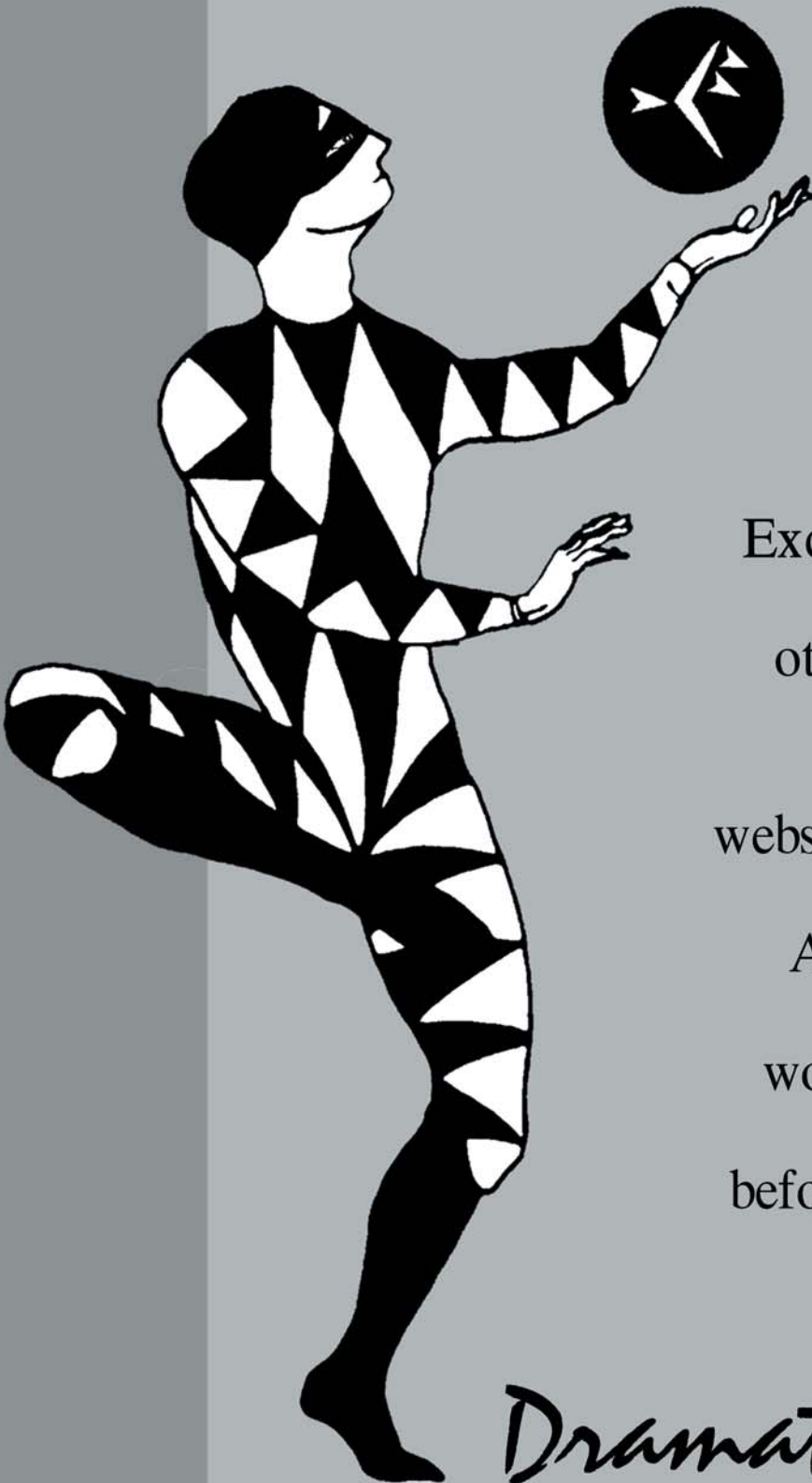
This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing



**OH, HOLY ALLEN GINSBERG:
Oh, Holy-Shit-Sweet-Jesus-Tantric-
Buddha-Dharma-Road**

By
NICHOLAS A. PATRICCA

(Manuscript form)

Bailiwick Dublin Production Text
May 2006



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*****NOTICE*****

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our Web site: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, P.O. Box 129, Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including but not limited to the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMVI by
NICHOLAS A. PATRICCA

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
(OH, HOLY ALLEN GINSBERG: Oh, Holy-Shit-Sweet-Jesus-Tantric-
Buddha-Dharma-Road - manuscript)

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

OH, HOLY ALLEN GINSBERG: Oh, Holy-Shit-Sweet-Jesus-Tantric-Buddha-Dharma-Road was presented by Bailiwick Repertory, Chicago, March 23, 2006. The production was directed by David Zak, assistant director was Zack Brenner, lighting designer was Dennis Remer, production stage manager was Deanna Cox. The production featured:

Michael Jason Matthew Palmer
Josh Mike Driscoll
Gerry Danne W. Taylor
Dr. Keith David Blatt
Leonor Aemilia Scott
Monsignor Bononi Tom Lally
Scott Scott Sponsler

* * * *

For this Bailiwick production text presented at the third annual Dublin International Gay Theatre Festival May 11 through May 14, 2006, Nick Patricca received “The Oscar Wilde Award for Outstanding Achievement in New Writing for the Theatre.”

OH, HOLY ALLEN GINSBERG: Oh, Holy-Shit-Sweet-Jesus-Tantric- Buddha-Dharma-Road

PERSONAE:

MICHAEL (French) - young man, early thirties, nurse and performance artist.

JOSH (Kaplan) - Gerry's lover, mid-forties, professor of English at a Catholic university in Chicago, Jewish, family from Highland Park, a Chicago suburb.

GERRY (Gallagher) - Josh's lover, mid-fifties, born and bred Chicago Irish-Catholic, diocesan priest of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, pastor of St. Sebastian's church in New Town, Chicago, a Gerard Manley Hopkins scholar.

LEONOR (Beltrán) - late thirties, Puerto Rican housekeeper for Fr. Gerry.

MONSIGNOR BONONI (Tony) - late forties, born and bred Chicago Italian-American, diocesan priest, an official representative of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.

KEITH (Burton) - "burnt-out" physician from Boston, mid-thirties.

SCOTT (Peterson) - early thirties, theatre artist.

SETTING: Chicago, Northside. First year of the new millennium. Two decades into the AIDS epidemic. A few months before the raging storm erupts concerning clergy sexual abuse.

TIME: February. Deep Chicago winter. Wondrous clear, crisp winter light. A few days before the feast of St. Valentine.

SET: A unit set that is capable of communicating the various "realistic" spaces and times of the play: the apartment of Josh Kaplan, the rectory kitchen of Fr. Gerry's parish, the medical office of Dr. Keith Burton, a special-care ward of a hospital, Club Lower Links performance art space in which Michael performs, and the modest sanctuary of St. Sebastian's parish.

ACT ONE

1. MEDICAL OFFICES AT THE HOSPITAL

AS THE AUDIENCE ENTERS THE THEATRE. . .

SINGLE SPOT ON FR. GERRY ALONE ON STAGE. HE IS ANXIOUSLY WAITING IN EXAMINING ROOM FOR DR. DAVID TO ATTEND HIM.

AT CURTAIN. . .

MICHAEL RUSHES INTO THE EXAMINING ROOM.

MICHAEL: Fr. Gerry, David's not here.

GERRY: What do you mean?! David's always here!

MICHAEL: This new doc's covering for him.

GERRY: (FLUSTERED) Where's David?

MICHAEL: I don't know. I'm sure the new doc's a good doctor.

GERRY: When will David be back?

MICHAEL: I really don't know anything. I've been making rounds all day. I spent some time with Scott. I'm performing a new piece tonight at Club Lower Links. Scott was helping me think through some things. I'm on my way there now.

GERRY: How's Scott doing?

MICHAEL: Not so good. (PAUSE) I don't think he has much time left.

GERRY: I know.

MICHAEL: When Danny died, I figured Scott wouldn't hang around much longer.

GERRY: Each death has its own way of dying. I've never seen two alike.

MICHAEL: I'm sure Scott'll write his own exit. Great sense of humor.

GERRY: He keeps me sane.

MICHAEL: I really gotta go.

GERRY: "Break a leg."

MICHAEL LEAVES.

ENTER KEITH.

KEITH: Fr. Gallagher, I'm Dr. Burton. I've reviewed your intake exam. . . the work up on you indicates. . .

GERRY: (COLLECTS HIS COAT) Sorry, but I really need to speak with David.

KEITH: Fr. Gallagher, I think you have TB.

GERRY: TB?!

KEITH: Yes, TB.

GERRY: In my elbow?

KEITH: We need to do more tests to make sure, but I'm sure.

GERRY STARTS TO LEAVE.

KEITH: Where are you going?

GERRY: Have Michael phone me when David gets back.

KEITH: You need to take confirmatory tests now. We need to start treating you. This is serious!

GERRY: When's David coming back?

KEITH: I don't know. A month. Maybe never. Don't you think David deserves a little time for himself. He hasn't had a vacation in sixteen years?!

GERRY: I'll wait for David.

KEITH: Father. . .

GERRY: Stop calling me "Father"!

KEITH: In the first stages, there's Anger and Denial.

GERRY: Don't quote Kubler-Ross to me. That's condescending.

GERRY MOVES TO OFFICE DOOR TO EXIT.

KEITH: Some opportunistic mycobacterium took advantage of your HIV condition. We just need to know exactly what type it is. . . *(Realizing that Gerry is leaving, Keith blocks his path and shouts in frustration)* I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP!

GERRY: Sorry.

KEITH: No problem. I'm used to it. Attack the physician, Dr. Kubler-Ross failed to adequately explore this stage in her classic study on death and dying.

GERRY: I wasn't attacking you.

KEITH: Yes, you were. And yes you are. And yes you will.

GERRY: Why in the hell did David have to go now?

KEITH: Because he's a human being, that's why. It's taken us doctors a hundred years or so to admit it, but we are human, very human. (PAUSE) Don't you ever get sick of it, sick of having to be understanding and sympathetic, and full of all the right answers? Don't you ever just want to say, "Bye bye, you'll all have to get along without me"?

GERRY: Every day.

KEITH: Good. Now we're getting somewhere. (WRITES OUT A PRESCRIPTION) Take this to the lab. We need to culture a specimen from the swelling on your elbow. When we know what specific type of TB we're dealing with. (PAUSE) Actually, it could be a non-TB-type of mycobacterium. Same difference really. When we know what it is, we'll know how to fix it.

KEITH HANDS THE PRESCRIPTION TO GERRY, STARTS TO LEAVE.

GERRY: Is this your first job?

KEITH: Father, excuse me, Mr. Gallagher, I'm board certified in three specializations. Would you like to read my resume?

GERRY: I'm fifty-five years old. Perhaps if you weren't board certified in three specializations you would consider a less exotic diagnosis, like arthritis? Or tennis elbow?

KEITH: I apologize for my specialized knowledge in opportunistic infections. Do you play tennis?

GERRY: No.

KEITH: I didn't think so. Do you spend endless hours working on the computer?

GERRY: I didn't even own a computer until yesterday.

KEITH: I can appreciate that. I have my own Luddite tendencies. In our initial intake interview you said you travel to Hawaii. How often?

GERRY: At least once a year.

KEITH: Kiss any toads there?

GERRY: You mean the kind that turn into princes or the ones that turn into trolls?

KEITH: I'm talking about the brown-colored toads that make all the racket at night. They, among other critters, carry several types of disease-causing mycobacteria.

GERRY: Putting aside all your fancy degrees, is this your first clinical experience? Too much education can do strange things.

KEITH: For the last six years I was medical director of St. Catherine's Hospital Outpatient Clinic in Boston. Last month I quit. This month I'm covering for David while he tries to regain his sanity. When David comes back, I'll wait tables at some fancy restaurant where the most I'll have to worry about is spilling things on obnoxious diners.

GERRY: You're indulging yourself.

KEITH: Neither my genetic inheritance nor my expensive scientific training render me capable of indulging myself. Unfortunately.

GERRY: What can you possibly know after six years? I've been a priest for twenty-five years. You just do what you can.

KEITH: When one of your parishioners is dying, how much time do you give them?

GERRY: As much as I can. As much as they need.

KEITH: Exactly. I get six minutes. Six minutes per patient. Do you know who controls the medical establishment? Insurance companies and hospital conglomerates. White men in dark suits with BMWs and MBAs. At St. Catherine's I was forced to impose their business school management rules on my medical staff. And what was my job as medical director? Taking care of patients. Are you kidding? Figuring out ways to reduce costs by not treating or not testing, or by shifting costs away from my budget to some other jerk's budget, or better yet figuring out some really elegant way of maximizing reimbursements from Medicare, Medicaid, and whatever other pot of gold was available for plundering. (LOOKS AT THIS WATCH) Your time's up. If I spend any more time getting to know you, I'll ruin my average patient per hour load performance rate.

GERRY: I'm sorry. I didn't understand.

KEITH: I came out of med school owing 250,000 dollars. A quarter of a million dollars. It took me six years to pay off those loans. Six years. You know the lyric "I owe my soul to the company store"? Well, as of last month, nobody owns my soul but me.

GERRY: I'm sorry. . .

KEITH: Just when you think you're learning how to help people living with HIV to stay healthy, you bash your head right into the solid evil wall of crystal-meth. I don't know why people are so dedicated to self-destruction. I don't know how to help people endure pain; and I certainly don't know how to help them die.

GERRY: I'm sorry. I didn't mean. . .

KEITH: (INTERRUPTING GERRY) Stop saying "Sorry." It's driving me nuts.

GERRY: Doctor. . .

KEITH: And don't call me "Doctor."

GERRY: Mr Burton, may I ask you a personal question?

KEITH: Fire away.

GERRY: Are you a Catholic?

KEITH: Associated Congregational Reformed Presbyterian. Lapsed. (PAUSE) I don't think converting to Catholicism is going to help.

GERRY: Just now you taught me some things about being a doctor that I didn't know. (PAUSE) How much do you know about how it is to be a priest?

KEITH: I've had two, well, make that three, Irish Catholic lovers. They're hard to avoid in Boston. Look, I don't have to be a Catholic to appreciate the situation you're in. I do understand.

GERRY: No you don't.

KEITH: OK, have it your way. I don't understand. I'll phone the lab to tell them you're coming right over.

GERRY: I'm not ready to take these tests.

KEITH: The sooner we start treatment the better.

GERRY: For whom? You or me?

KEITH: Both of us.

GERRY: You're still operating out of the same arrogance that makes you think you can fix things.

KEITH: Mr. Gallagher,

GERRY: Gerry.

KEITH: Gerry, you have been HIV positive for 15 years. You've been doing pretty well with the various chemical cocktails David's been brewing for you, but now you've come down with a very serious, possibly life-threatening opportunistic infection. I need to know what kind of bug it is so I can treat it.

GERRY: You're not listening.

KEITH: OK, I give up. Mr. Gallagher, why did you come here? . . . to talk theology?

GERRY: I came to see David.

KEITH: You know, I'm beginning to admire your stubborn, tedious single-mindedness.

GERRY: Your whole focus is on what you feel you need to do. You're not focused on me. Medicine is your tool for fixing things. It's not mine. Right now at this time I need someone to talk to. David's been my doctor for over 20 years. I need someone who understands me.

KEITH: And David is your someone?

GERRY: Yes.

KEITH: No significant other?

GERRY: We just broke up.

KEITH: Sorry. . . How long were you together?

GERRY: Almost nine years. We met in Hawaii. Josh was on sabbatical. We hit it off, right away. Josh loves poetry.

KEITH: Where does he teach?

GERRY: Loyola. English literature. He was working on a book for publication. I was in one of my periodic "why am I a priest" modes. I have always thought it propitious that we met on St. Valentine's Day.

KEITH: Well, you can see how much I learned in my psych classes. You're right, I didn't understand. I apologize.

GERRY: There's no need. You're just doing your job.

KEITH: Yep, just doing my job. Can't wait till David gets back. You need to contact your sexual partners.

GERRY: I haven't had sex with anyone but Josh.

KEITH: Is Josh HIV positive?

GERRY: He's never been tested?

KEITH: Josh needs to be tested for HIV and he needs to be tested for TB.

GERRY: He won't do it.

KEITH: Persuade him.

GERRY: I told you, we broke up! We had this really big fight. . .

KEITH: I don't know what David would say, but, for what it's worth, you don't spend nine years with someone and then blow it all off in one fight. (PAUSE) Your health and Josh's health are too important to be sidetracked by a lover's quarrel.

GERRY: (WITH SOME ANGER) I'll talk with him. (WITH RESIGNATION) But he won't do it.

KEITH: Have Josh invite me to dinner. You come too.

GERRY: What're you talking about?

KEITH: Consider it an act of kindness, taking pity on a newcomer, all alone, dangerously horny with nothing to do on his first weekend in Chicago, an act of mercy really.

GERRY: Mr. Burton,

KEITH: Keith.

GERRY: Keith, I can't break up with Josh and then invite you to Josh's house for dinner.

KEITH: I think it has a certain endearing ballsy character to it, don't you? Tell the learned professor he needs to set me up with some really hot students. (PAUSE) Female students, preferably not Irish Catholic. The sex is dynamite but I've had my fill of Irish Catholic guilt.

GERRY: You have an unusual bedside manner.

KEITH: I'm running late. Leave Josh's phone number and address with the receptionist.

FR. GERRY IS LEFT ALL ALONE. LIGHTS START TO FADE .

BLACK OUT.

2. CLUB LOWER LINKS PERFORMANCE ARTS SPACE, CHICAGO

LIGHTS UP. SPOT FOCUSES ON MICHAEL. HIS BACK FACES THE AUDIENCE. MICHAEL IS DRESSED IN CIRCUIT BOY DRAG: BARE CHESTED, TIGHT LEVIS, BAREFOOT, WHITE TEE TUCKED IN POCKET OR BETWEEN HIS WAIST AND BELTLESS JEANS.

AS THE SPOT HITS HIGHEST INTENSITY IT BECOMES STROBE LIGHTS OF A CIRCUIT PARTY.

MICHAEL TURNS TO FACE THE AUDIENCE.

[BECAUSE OF THE TOPICAL NATURE OF CIRCUIT PARTIES AND THEIR VENUES, MICHAEL'S PERFORMANCE MAY BE CONSTRUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRODUCTION CONCEPT OF THE DIRECTOR. THE VERSION BELOW REPRESENTS THE ONE PERFORMED IN DUBLIN]

MICHAEL: The Circuit.

CIRCUIT MUSIC STARTS. MICHAEL DANCES.

At first I came for the music. White Party, Palm Springs. The hottest DJs on earth. Then I discovered "better living through chemistry."

MICHAEL REMOVES HIS LEVIS, REVEALING SEXY UNDERWEAR.

The Red Party, Montreal.

Ecstasy love, Viagra sex, Prozac anti-depression, Xanax just in case, reds to stay up up and up.

Then I discovered sex.

MICHAEL TAKES OFF HIS UNDERWEAR. HE IS WEARING A BLACK LEATHER JOCK STRAP.

IML Chicago.

LIGHT SHIFT.

[AS NIKI]

Hi, I'm Niki. I'm from San Francisco. Love the outdoors, but right now I'm focused on getting to know the right people. No boyfriend yet, but I'm hopeful. Do I really want to fly? For sure, dude. Oh, by the way, I'm a bottom.

LIGHT SHIFT.

[AS BRUCE]

At last Mr. Right. Super K, G, crystal. . . Sure, dude, no problem. Now I'm really flying. Twelve hours nonstop, ball-busting, ass-smashing, cock-sucking, totally awesome SEX.

I was in Chicago visit'n some friends when I started noticing all these sores in my mouth—they hurt like hell. I let it go for a while, you know, hoping they would go away, smearing all sorts of over-the-counter shit on them. Then, David, this doctor I know there, he made me take these tests. You know, I don't know why they say negative when the news is positive and positive when it's negative.

LIGHT SHIFT.

[AS NIKI]

I take good care of myself. I work out every day. I got a great routine: biceps, triceps, lats, calfs, ass, thighs. Every day a different muscle group. I ride my bike through Golden Gate to work the lungs and heart—and eye the men. I look great. A lot of guys have natural looks but they don't know how to present themselves. I can do leather, preppy, muscle beach, raunch-out punk, buff rad valley, Malibu surfer—for that I bleach out my hair and paste surf knobs on my ankles. I can even do Babylon-by-the-Bay lesbian push'n a cart through Berkeley Bowl. Name me one dude that can pass that off, rapping with the sisters about what to name the kids and how to get HIV free sperm—genetically super and politically correct. I get a raised brow when I tell them I prefer the old-fashioned way: pick the best hunk of beef on the block and let him do it. I'm doing the scene at Cafe Flor. It's right across from my gym on Market. I'm in one of my all-American-boy-next-door-naive-innocent-with-just-the-right-touch-of-bad outfits. I spy this guy out of the corner of my right eye. When his eye catches mine, I shyly turn my head aside, just a little—men love this—then I slowly lift my caffe latte to my ever-so slightly trembling lips. Now this

is what really gets them. As you lift your latte you give him this quick, almost painful look which says I really can't control myself because you're just too fuck'n powerful much. That did it. Before you could say Cinderella, we're on our way to the airport, to a 500 dollar-a-day-per-person paradise in the sun. Like, whenever he wanted me, no matter where he was, tickets and cash, by private messenger. Everything with style, high style. I'd take a shower, grab my toothbrush, and off I'd go. I didn't even look at where the tickets were for until I got to the airport. He'd have all the outfits I needed when I got there. And I got to keep them.

LIGHT SHIFT.

[AS BRUCE]

I see thousands and thousands of him. All perfectly buffed bodies, close-cropped hair. Tattoos in the right places. Thousands of boys dancing.

LIGHT SHIFT.

[AS NIKI]

It was in New York. A play he'd directed won some award. We'd just come from this fancy do. There I was, tux and all, look'n first rate, primo, fuck'n perfect when he pops it—I'm expect'n the marriage question, right? "Niki, I'm sorry, it's been a great ride. We've done the whole circuit. It's been fun, but now, now it's time to move on."

There's this big mirror in the hallway of my apartment where I always take one last look at myself before I hit the street. When I got back I looked into it. I saw this boy in it. I made him take off all his clothes. I looked him over real good.

MUSIC.

He's: Dancing. (PULSING LIGHTS)

I'm dancing: as hard as I can

I'm dancing: as fast as I can

I'm dancing: as sexy as I can

Got my tickets for the Jungle Party, Houston; Carnivale, Rio; Decadence, New Orleans.

I'm dancing, and dancing, and dancing

I'm dying

MUSIC AND PULSING LIGHTS STOP.

I'm dying
and I'm beautiful

I'm everything you've asked me to be.

BLACK OUT.

LIGHTS UP.

End of excerpt. A note from the author follows.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am grateful to David Zak of Bailiwick and Brian Merriman of the Dublin International Gay Theatre Festival for this opportunity to rework my play *Oh, Holy Allen Ginsberg*. . .originally presented by Bailiwick at The Theatre Building in May 1993 under the direction of Steve Scott of the Goodman Theatre. The rapid and dramatic changes in gay culture regarding the medical management of AIDS, the catastrophic crisis of crystal-meth addiction, the sudden rise of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among certain population groups, combined with the social crises of clergy sexual abuse and the so-called “problem of gay clergy,” compelled me to rewrite the play for our contemporary situation. *Oh, Holy Allen Ginsberg*. . .is not primarily a discussion play; it is not primarily about clergy sexual abuse and the cover-ups thereof, or the destructive elements in gay culture. Rather, it is a serious comedy about a gay Catholic priest who tries to live honestly in fidelity to his true nature, his love for another man, and his commitment to the priesthood. I do want the play to make the statement that, historically and in our present culture, gay clergy make an important and positive contribution to civil society as well as to the church. For me, however, the dramatic heart of the play is how Fr. Gerry comes to make the decision which resolves his predicament and irrevocably defines his identity, marking his place in the world until his death.

I would like to dedicate this production of *Oh, Holy Allen Ginsberg*. . .to the memory of my beloved friends: Scott McPherson, Steve Mendelson and Charles Kuschinski.

I would like to thank all who have helped in the making of this production. Here I can only cite the special contributions of Dr. Lawrence “Bopper” Deyton, Dr. Roger Trinh, Fr. Jim Heneghan, Ben Butler, Steven Rosenberg, Anne V. McGravie and Nicholas Kuschinski.

Although my play describes real issues in our society, all of the events and characters are fictional constructs of my poetic imagination.

Nick Patricca, March 2006