

September Gurls

By Stephen Fogle

CHARACTERS

Adrienne - Female

Ali - Female

During the course of the play, Adrienne and Ali will go from childhood to their mid-30s, though not always in a straight line. They should be played by the same two actors throughout.

SPACE

in this play is fluid. Just like time. You might want to keep your playing area open: change comes fast.

Ali enters.

She sits on the floor, hugging her knees.

Adrienne enters.

She goes to Ali and sits next to her. Their arms are touching.

After a while, Adrienne looks at Ali.

After a while Ali turns and looks at Adrienne.

SUMMER

Then they leap up into motion. An entirely different play. They're children debating evolution.

ALI

But you don't make a new cat. It takes millions of years.

ADRIENNE

I don't want a new cat. I want a lion. That's what I want.

ALI

A lion is so far away. Like twenty steps. You should be thinking bobcat.

ADRIENNE

Cherokee's already part bobcat.

ALI

OK, but it's still at least nineteen steps from a lion.

ADRIENNE

But you can skip all that. She just has to have a baby with a lion.

ALI

Cherokee can't have a baby with a lion.

ADRIENNE

Why not?

ALI

It would eat her.

ADRIENNE

Not if they're both cats. That's cannibalism.

ALI

That's nature.

ADRIENNE

Well some time a lion made a baby with a smaller cat or else how did cats get here?

ALI

I told you it takes a million years. It's like lion to tiger to leopard to jaguar to cougar to lynx to bobcat to huge cat to big cat to grumpy cat to fat cat to little cat.

ADRIENNE

There's gotta be another way to evolve Cherokee.

ALI

No. That's how it happens.

Adrienne steps out.

ADRIENNE

Days in summer last forever. It's because the pine air from the Blue Ridge Mountains. It slows down time. It's like ok, if we turn the lights up? Big bright summer sky. OK, and then we count: one second, two seconds. And every second is an hour. And the light keeps going. It's running across the sky, trying to go down over the mountains, but the pine wind comes, and the light's caught in slow motion.

ALI

I'm Ali.

ADRIENNE

I'm Adrienne.

Adrienne shows off her stuffed turtle.

ADRIENNE

This is Mr. Turtle.

ALI

OK. We're his parents. Let's raise him.

ADRIENNE
(mishearing)

You wanna *race* him?

They look at each other for a beat. YES.

They drop to the ground and cheer “go, Turtle! go! go!” as they manipulate Mr. Turtle across the stage.

Adrienne looks at her watch. Looks at the light.

Ali looks at her phone. Poses.

ALI

No its more like this.

ADRIENNE

Who took it?

ALI

Her boyfriend.

ADRIENNE

She has a boyfriend?

ALI

She’s famous.

ADRIENNE

Where’s her (pubic) hair?

ALI

It falls out when you get older.

ADRIENNE

I don’t think that’s true.

ALI

Anyway I’m glad we don’t have any. I’m over it.

ADRIENNE

I have a little.

ALI
You do?

Ali takes that in.

ALI
(striking new pose)
Here, look at this one.

Adrienne laughs.

ALI
You have to do this so it makes your butt look bigger.

Adrienne tries.

ALI
Try this one.

They are shoulder to shoulder looking.

ADRIENNE
(laughing)
Oh my god.

ALI
Those are real.

ADRIENNE
No they're not.

ALI
Ya-huh, I promise.

ADRIENNE
She looks so dumb.

ALI
This is what you're supposed to look like.

Adrienne spills her imaginary boobs onto Ali.

ADRIENNE
Like, 'oh, sorry, I dropped these.'"

ALI

You don't get it.

ADRIENNE

"Excuse me I'm falling out."

ALI

You're not mature enough to understand.

ADRIENNE

"Want to touch my big butt?"

ALI

This is stuff you need to understand when you're grown-up and famous.

They pose at each other.

Then Adrienne's pose is a tree, and Ali steps out.

ALI

My mom has allergies from the tree pollen which is super bad this time of year, so she never comes outside, but we play all day, and she locks the door. That's why it's lucky I live next to Adrienne.

Ali sits down in Adrienne's shade.

ALI

Sometimes my dog Buster comes with us and we take turns holding his leash. Since we moved to Asheville, me and Buster are never too hot. We're never stuck upstairs so someone can clean. Never left by ourselves for seven hours. Never forced to pee in the neighbor's ivy. We jump and duck and bark and spin. We bite the water from the hose. We scratch and paw and lay in the sun.

Ali lies down.

Adrienne looks at her watch. Looks at the sky.

Ali grabs Adrienne's ankles and looks up at her smiling. She kicks her feet up, and Adrienne grabs Ali's ankles.

They grin at each other, and Adrienne helps pull Ali into a headstand.

They look out through each other's legs.

ALI

Squirrel.

ADRIENNE

Fence.

ALI

Mrs. Hart.

ADRIENNE

Field.

ALI

What kind of field?

ADRIENNE

Flower field?

ALI

What kind of flowers?

ADRIENNE

Yellow?

ALI

Here. Let me see.

Ali puts her hands on the ground and "walks" herself out so they're in a kind of wheelbarrow position.

ALI

Those are butter and eggs!

ADRIENNE

Butter and eggs.

Adrienne sets Ali down so she's stretched out on her stomach. Then Adrienne lies next to her, 15 years old, saying

ADRIENNE

Oh my gosh you could fry an egg on my back.

ALI

But he doesn't drive.

ADRIENNE

Can't you walk to his house?

ALI

What if we want to go somewhere else?

ADRIENNE

You ask for a ride.

ALI

That's so awkward.

Pause.

ALI

Do you realize he may want to kiss me? And if he wants to kiss me, and there's someone there, that someone better turn away. Because if it's his friend Alfredo then that makes him a creeper. And if it's Nicky then she's another girl, and that's too much pressure.

ADRIENNE

They might be watching the road.

ALI

And either way, it's my first kiss, and no matter how long I've imagined it or how many ways, there is never an Alfredo behind the wheel, with me in the headlights trying to make my lips go right.

ADRIENNE

Why are you in the headlights?

ALI

(as if not even hearing Adrienne)

Because you only get first-kissed the first time and it's between two people or even one person, because maybe I told him I went out with Jamie last year, so he doesn't know it's my first. Technically. Secret?

ADRIENNE

Secret.

They roll over.

ADRIENNE

But you don't only get first-kissed the first time. There's a hundred first-kisses you get every time. Like I stubbed my toe today on the wheel of my bed, and it hurt worse than anything I can remember. Even though I stubbed my toe on it last week and the week before that. My toes never learned. And there could be like a hundred guys. Between us I think. And every one's a first time. Our lips never learn. And we'll think "what was I worried about then? Because Trey wasn't Mike. And Mike wasn't Beau. And Beau wasn't Chris. And Chris wasn't J. And J wasn't Mark. And Mark wasn't Dell. And Dell wasn't Steph. And Steph wasn't Steph wasn't Steph wasn't Steph wasn't...

ALI

We'll never learn.

ADRIENNE

We'll never learn.

Pause.

Suddenly they sing and move, free and uncomplicated with each other.

ADRIENNE

*I don't like you, but I love you
Seems that I'm always thinking of you
Though you treat me badly, I love you madly,
You really got a hold on me*

You really got a hold on me

*I don't want you, but I need you
Don't wanna kiss you, but I need to
Though you do me wrong now, my love is strong
now
You really got a hold on me*

You really got a hold on me

*I love you, and all I want you to do is
just hold me*

hold me, hold me

ALI

*I don't like you, but I love you
Seems that I'm always thinking of you
Though you treat me badly, I love you madly,
(You really got a hold on me)*

(You really got a hold on me) Baby!

*I don't want you, but I need you
Don't wanna kiss you, but I need to
Though you do me wrong now, my love is strong
now
(You really got a hold on me)*

(You really got a hold on me) Baby!

I love you, and all I want you to do is

(hold me)

hold me, hold me

Lights shift.

Adrienne looks at the sky. She looks down at her watch.

ADRIENNE

Four hundred seconds. Four hundred hours. Two and a half weeks.

ALI

When night washed in we hit the lawns again.

Ali and Adrienne slowly perambulate the stage, catching fireflies.

Now they are lit by their jars.

ALI

When you die they throw dirt on your face. And you stay there forever. Until your skin falls off. And you're a skeleton.

ADRIENNE

When you die your soul's a ghost. And your body's a demon.

ALI

A zombie.

ADRIENNE

It hunts for its soul.

ALI

Your soul hunts for a new body.

ADRIENNE

But not if you pray.

ALI

Even if you pray.

ADRIENNE

Not if you don't sin.

ALI

Even then.

Ali breaks the motion.

ALI

I saw my mom with Tattoo Guy who works Saturdays at the spicer. Remember when we were building castles on the French Broad, and you got hungry and had to go home early? I came through the door, and I smelled him like pine and sweat. I tried to go to my room, but I heard them moving too fast, and they found me. She was in her turkey t-shirt. And he had his shirt off behind her, by the window by her bed.

ADRIENNE

What did they do?

ALI

She made me shake his hand. His name's Buntz.

She starts the motion again. Or a new one.

ADRIENNE

Do you ever think like all these fireflies are worth the same as us?

ALI

No.

ADRIENNE

They were born and they die and their moms loved them

ALI

Their moms don't even know which ones they are

ADRIENNE

I bet they do. What do you know? Are you a firefly?

ALI

I'm just saying there's like a million of them

ADRIENNE

Pretend ok? Pretend their moms know.

ALI

And pretend there's a God and God knows.

Motion breaks.

ADRIENNE

There is a God.

I don't know. ALI

ADRIENNE
Al!

I'm just not sure. ALI

Pause.

ADRIENNE
What makes you so sure?

ADRIENNE
You'll go to hell.

ALI
Not if it's not real.

Pause.

ADRIENNE
My grandpa believed in God. And when he was about to die he said he was going to Heaven. And he'd wait for me and watch me.

Pause.

ALI
Well imagine God cares about all these fireflies, too. If he cares about us so much.

ADRIENNE
OK.

ALI
They live really short lives. In our yards.

ADRIENNE
In our jars.

ALI
A day or two.

ADRIENNE
And then they're gone forever.

ALI

When you die you're dead forever.

They shift. High school party.

ADRIENNE

Ali I'm gonna die!

ALI

You're not gonna die. You just need to throw up.

ADRIENNE

No.

ALI

You have to.

ADRIENNE

I never throw up.

ALI

You never drink. Trust me, you'll feel better.

ADRIENNE

Don't judge me cause I'm not an expert alcoholic like you guys

ALI

No one here is an alcoholic, and no one is judging you

ADRIENNE

Just let me die.

ALI

No! No! You can't go to sleep.

ADRIENNE

Unnnhh.

ALI

Drink some more water.

Adrienne vomits.

Then sobs as Ali pats her.

ALI

It's ok. You're doing dandy. I got you.

ADRIENNE

Did I ruin your night?

ALI

Not even.

ADRIENNE

You were finally gonna talk to Aaron Pereira, the hottest guy in school --

ALI

Aaron left with the soccer team, and it was a dumb fucking idea anyway --

ADRIENNE

-- I love you so much. No more pineapple pizza.

ALI

No more pineapple pizza.

ADRIENNE

No like. You're my best friend.

ALI

I know.

ADRIENNE

No, no. Like even more than if I had a sister. And I know we're not talking to each other right now, but...

Shift. Lying in the park.

ALI

When you die you're dead forever.

ADRIENNE

But this is pretty good.

ALI

I don't see how it gets better.

They list ways it could be better.

ADRIENNE

Ice cream.

Boys. ALI

Bonfire. ADRIENNE

A lake. ALI

Full moon. ADRIENNE

New moon. Just stars. ALI

We don't have to go to college. ADRIENNE

Pause.

I do have ice cream. ALI

Where? ADRIENNE

Well I have spoons. ALI

Spoons? ADRIENNE

I have a plastic pack in my car. They're sporks, as a matter of fact. ALI

Sporks! ADRIENNE

Aaron and I were always stopping to get ice cream. So I laid in an emergency supply. ALI

Ok But how are we gonna get ice cream? Neither of us should drive. ADRIENNE

Ehhhhh... ALI

No. ADRIENNE

No. ALI

Pause.

We'll just have to make do. ALI

This is pretty perfect. ADRIENNE

I don't see how it gets better. ALI

Shift. At the edge of the water.

ALI
(a challenge)
When you die you're dead forever!

I'm scared! ADRIENNE

There's no one here. ALI

Yeah, now. ADRIENNE

It's the middle of the night. ALI

It's gonna be freezing. ADRIENNE

Don't make me do it alone. ALI

They get ready and jump in, shrieking (and shushing each other).

Shift. Sitting up on Adrienne's bed.

ADRIENNE
Say it.

ALI
I can't.

ADRIENNE
(invoking the old code)
When you die you're dead forever.

ALI
OK. OK. He kept poking his fingers around my hips. And the hotter it got the more he'd like run them inside my pants, right up here, just right at the top, but on the inside. He'd dip in and come back out. His hands were like everywhere.

ADRIENNE
What did you do?

ALI
I had to do something. I unbuttoned his jeans and put my hand all the way down.

ADRIENNE
You felt it?

ALI
I grabbed it.

Pause.

ADRIENNE
What did he do?

ALI
He stuck his hand all the way down. He didn't really know what he was doing. I had to kind of tell him. And show him. Which was hard cause it was. Stop! Well it was difficult to concentrate. It was a little embarrassing.

ADRIENNE
Yeah.

ALI
But it was amazing.

ADRIENNE
And he touched you?

ALI

Oh yeah. Oh god. For like an hour.

Pause.

ALI

And I made him come.

ADRIENNE

Where?

ALI

We were at the playground.

ADRIENNE

No, like. Where did he go?

ALI

In his pants, kind of.

ADRIENNE

Ew, did it get on your hand?

ALI

Yeah. But it was kind of. I don't know.

Adrienne releases her fireflies.

Now she's in shadow.

ALI

Nothing happened until I told it to Adrienne. First times, worst times. Sex or drugs. It's like taking a photograph of a place you've seen, a bridge or mountain, with no one in it. Until she saw me standing on the peak, I wasn't really there. But when I told her, and I saw her face, the things I did became mine, and I was the person who did them. Me. Ali.

(pause)

I guess that's why the secrets. The first time was when Grandma Neat died.

(sharing with Adrienne)

I didn't tell you I prayed for it, leaning out my window where I couldn't smell her Shalimar. I wanted her out of my room. With her flower dresses and the sounds her body made. But I didn't want you to see me like someone who prayed her grandma dead. And since I never told you, it never happened. It's a photo without a subject. I might've found it online, maybe.

(pivot)

I never told you about Chris Gaddy. Even after you would've stopped caring or forgot who he was even. I called him the night Aaron dumped me. I was in shorts on the lawn, and we flirted for hours while the mosquitoes sucked us dry. I wanted to do it, I wanted to grab him and mush my skin into him. Except I couldn't forget it was Chris Gaddy, and what you would say. After all the times we made fun of him for his cracked voice and crucifix shirts. At four in the morning I put my head on his chest. He held me until I fell asleep. Then for a while he texted three times a day. I never answered. I never told you because I'm not the kind of person who tries to hook up with Chris Gaddy or flirts with him all night then goes to sleep on his bony chest. And I'm not the kind of person who uses somebody weak and never talks to them again. That's not me. Except what I figured out was for that to be not me meant I was hiding from you. And the more I hid the more sometimes I felt like even with you I couldn't find me in the photo. Bridge. Mountain. City. Moon.

Ali lets her fireflies go.

They're both in the dark.

ADRIENNE

Ali thought I was a virgin until freshman year of college. But I let Marc Lafleur go down on me in a dark bedroom at Corey Kuhn's party when I was drunk and we weren't talking. After I told her, she said I'd changed our story. So we weren't who we were. Like she and I had been singing in the branches, but I'd cut down the tree. We had to start again.

Lights shift.

WINTER

They sing again, but this song is from the other side of puberty, no longer totally innocent of its subject. More than that, their oneness is no longer, but for rare circumstances, natural, thoughtless: even in their joining they are two different people, conscious, at least a little, of their separation.

ADRIENNE

*Well I met him on a Sunday**Ooo**Ooo**Well I found him on a Tuesday**Ooo**Ooo**Well I kissed him on Thursday**Ooo**Ooo**When he showed up Saturday**I said, "Bye, bye baby"**Doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo oo oo oo ooo*

ALI

*Ooo**And I missed him on Monday**Ooo**Ooo**And I dated him Wednesday**Ooo**Ooo**And he didn't come Friday**Ooo**I said, "Bye, bye, baby"**Doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo ronde ronde ronde pa pa**doo oo oo oo ooo*

ALI

Winter is my favorite season.

ADRIENNE

These are four winter memories.

ALI

In no particular order.

Adrienne enters Ali's apartment. They are older than they've yet been. They don't touch.

ADRIENNE

Can I?

ALI

Oh yeah. Throw it anywhere. I'm still a mess.

ADRIENNE

Better than my place.

ALI

For real?

ADRIENNE

Just lately. Thesis season. Books and pants everywhere. And bottles. I brought something for you.

ALI

You didn't have to bring any --

Adrienne pulls out Mr. Turtle.

ALI

Oh, hey there, Mr. Turtle.

Ali does not take the turtle, so Adrienne is left holding it for a moment.

ADRIENNE

Thanks for sending him to me. I feel like he's becoming our traveling pants.

ALI

I was gonna make some hot chocolate.

ADRIENNE

That sounds amazing.

Ali starts to prepare hot chocolate. Adrienne hunts for somewhere to put the turtle down.

ADRIENNE

This place is really big.

ALI

Yeah. Well. Jen went home to Newport.

ADRIENNE

I know. My apartment seemed endless when Marina left. That's new isn't it?

Ali turns around. What? Adrienne taps the back of her own neck. (Ali has a tattoo).

ALI

Oh. Yeah. I got it over the summer.

ADRIENNE

That's right, I saw the pictures you put up. I love it.

ALI

You should get one. It hurts like a bitch.

ADRIENNE

(re: hot chocolate)

Do you not do it on the stove?

ALI

Huh?

ADRIENNE

Oh. Nothing.

ALI

I just microwave it. Tastes the same to me.

ADRIENNE

Oh totally. I can't even tell the difference. I don't know why I...did you design it yourself?

ALI

Yep.

Pause.

ALI

The others, too.

ADRIENNE

Wow. That's so cool. You could make money. I bet.

ALI

Wasn't that hard.

ADRIENNE

I'm just so glad you're still doing things.

Pause.

ADRIENNE

Do you ever take classes?

ALI

Niet.

ADRIENNE

Because I thought you were still thinking about

ALI

Not yet. Don't know.

ADRIENNE

I just think it sucks that because of one professor...

ALI

Yep.

ADRIENNE

I just think it really sucks.

ALI

Was there snow on 40?

The scene continues to stutter as they attempt to get the engine started.

ADRIENNE

Yeah but it all melted when it hit the pavement. People are still driving like jerks though. Took me forever to get through the tunnels.

ALI

How long did it take?

ADRIENNE

Only four hours so it wasn't that bad. But it felt like, uuughh, move it! I gotta get to Ali.

ALI

That's not that bad.

ADRIENNE

No it's not that bad.

Pause.

ADRIENNE

I saw your old car on the curb.

ALI

Still kicking.

Ali knocks on wood.

ALI

Still guzzling gas.

ADRIENNE

Yeah. Made me laugh.

Pause.

ALI

Do your parents like Atlanta?

ADRIENNE

No. They miss it here. I keep telling them to move back.

ALI

My mom hates the new neighbors.

ADRIENNE

Good. I'll move in when I make my first million. I can't believe I'm gonna spend another Christmas in Georgia.

ALI

Stay with us?

ADRIENNE

I wish.

Shift.

Ali and Adrienne are getting ready to watch a movie on the couch.

ALI

I'm Judy Garland.

ADRIENNE

I'm Judy Garland.

ALI

I'm Dorothy.

ADRIENNE

I'm the Lion.

(singing)

If I were King of the Forest...

ALI

I'm the Tin Man.

Ali does Tin Man dance.

Adrienne plays with her. They fall onto the couch.

ALI

What would you ask the wizard for?

ADRIENNE

I think I'd ask to fly.

ALI

People already fly.

ADRIENNE

No, I mean for real fly, with --

ALI

That's definitely gonna happen during our lifetime. You need to dream bigger.

ADRIENNE

What would you ask for?

ALI

I want to live forever.

ADRIENNE

What?

ALI

Yeah. Just not die.

ADRIENNE

You'll get so bored.

ALI

Why would I get bored?

ADRIENNE

I'd be dead. And you'd be around. Forever.

ALI

OK, it's not so much like I have to live forever, as I want *assurance* from the wizard that I won't die before I'm thirty.

ADRIENNE

Yeah, I'm still asking to fly.

ALI

What time is it?

ADRIENNE

Only ten.

ALI

We have to stay up this year.

ADRIENNE

I'm sorry, it was my fault last time.

ALI

No I was tired too. But I slept ten hours last night, so I should be good to go.

ADRIENNE

And we can keep each other up.

ALI

Your mom showed me all the Dr. Pepper in the garage.

ADRIENNE

My dad ordered us a pizza.

ALI

With pineapples?

ADRIENNE

Duh.

ALI

We're definitely gonna make it.

They start the movie.

They hum and imitate the sounds of the opening credits, slowly drifting off to sleep to the tune of “Somewhere Over The Rainbow”.

Then we shift back.

The drinks are both suitably hot. Ali brings them over.

Oh my gosh yes. Thank you. ADRIENNE

Thanks for coming. ALI

I know it feels like forever. ADRIENNE

Time can lick my balls. ALI

Days are getting shorter. ADRIENNE

We’ll probably be dead soon. ALI

You know what happens when you’re dead. ADRIENNE

Mm-hmm. ALI

I want to see you more. My life is stupid without you. ADRIENNE

What do you want to do while you’re here? ALI

I don’t know. Build a snow man? ADRIENNE

We could do that. ALI

ADRIENNE

I don't know. Did you have any plans?

ALI

Weeelll. Nope. Nope. Not really. I told my friends Matt and Karen we'd hang out this weekend. Matt wants to have a party. So we could go there.

ADRIENNE

Ok.

ALI

And there's. I don't know if you saw on Facebook; a bunch of people are meeting up at Wicked Weed.

ADRIENNE

Like high school people?

ALI

Uh-huh.

ADRIENNE

Unhh.

ALI

Franny wants to go. I told her maybe.

ADRIENNE

I forgot you guys were friends now. So weird.

ALI

Yeah. She's a lot different. A lot of them are. Different.

ADRIENNE

You've seen them?

ALI

They did the same thing at Thanksgiving. Now it's kind of a standing get-together. Anyway you don't have to go. There's plenty of other stuff to do.

ADRIENNE

I'm just excited to see you.

ALI

Me, too.

Shift.

Ali and Adrienne are coming in from the cold, covered in snow.

Snow-people!
ALI

Snow-people!
ADRIENNE

Cold!
ALI

Cold!
ADRIENNE

They rush around waving their arms, smacking themselves. Removing layers.

They knock snow off each other's backs.

Uhhhggg!
ALI

Aaaaahhh!
ADRIENNE

They roll around getting down to their inner layers.

Actors, please feel free to ad lib exclamations or short direction words. Goofy stuff: "I'm gonna die!" "I'm melting!" "Get it off me!" That kind of thing.

They hug each other and rub and slap each other and breathe on each other's faces.

We should get in the tub.
ALI

We'll get in the tub.
ADRIENNE

I'll run it.

ALI

The frenzy comes to a sudden stop, and they return to their positions from before.

Shift back.

In Ali's apartment.

ADRIENNE
Do you have any food? I'm starving from the drive.

ALI
Ah. Ok. Kinda need to go shopping. Sorry.

ADRIENNE
It's ok.

ALI
I have bread. And here's an apple...that I wouldn't eat...never mind. Condiments! Cheese? Cheese. I can make grilled cheese.

ADRIENNE
That sounds perfect.

ALI
Ooh gorgonzola?

ADRIENNE
Ew. No. Please.

ALI
I forgot. You and bleu cheese.

ADRIENNE
It smells like toe jam. And freaks me out.

ALI
Relax. There're some singles in here, too.

ADRIENNE
Here.

Ali moves away from Adrienne.

ALI

I can do it.

ADRIENNE

I know you can make grilled cheese. I just wanna help.

They still have no physical contact.

ALI

Sorry.

ADRIENNE

Sorry.

ALI

I should've gone shopping.

ADRIENNE

No, I just had a long drive. I'm being a jerk.

ALI

No, I should've had food, you've been on the road.

ADRIENNE

No, I should've stopped before I got here, and I should be bringing you food, since you're putting me up

ALI

No, that's ridiculous, I'm so happy to see you.

ADRIENNE

I'm happy to see you too. I miss you.

ALI

I know.

Silence.

ALI

There's more marshmallows too if you want to eat those while we

ADRIENNE

I was about to stuff them in my face.

They laugh. Silence.

ALI

So do you still talk to Ryan?

ADRIENNE

Not since October. He texts me when he's drunk. Which is every weekend. And Wednesdays.

ALI

Wednesdays?

ADRIENNE

It's a party day. I only answered once. He was trying to hook up.

ALI

Fuck him.

ADRIENNE

It's fine now. Oh my gosh, did I tell you? This is how I finally got over it. He was -- ok, you're not even gonna believe this; I didn't believe it, and I had sex with him for a year -- he was feeling sick one night, like a stomachache or something, which, yeah, shocking, only he really wants to go out because it's Halloween.

ALI

And he's going as a giant cock.

ADRIENNE

He walks to CVS and buys an enema kit.

ALI

No.

ADRIENNE

Gives himself an enema. Or like, puts it up his butthole.

ALI

No.

ADRIENNE

Only he's been pre-gaming this whole time. He sits down to wait, and he ends up passing out in his bed.

Yes.

ALI

ADRIENNE

He pooped himself. He pooped all up in his pants. All over the bed. His brothers found him and threw him and his mattress on the lawn.

ALI

Oh my god, it's too good.

ADRIENNE

Ah. After that. I was free.

ALI

And he still thinks you'll hook up with him.

ADRIENNE

He's an idiot who poops himself.

Grilled cheese is done.

ALI

Look good?

ADRIENNE

Looks so good. Thank you. Will you share with me?

ALI

No, you have that one.

ADRIENNE

You have more bread?

ALI

No, but I ate earlier.

ADRIENNE

Split it with me.

ALI

You were starving.

ADRIENNE

I'll survive.

I'm really not hungry.

ALI

Pause.

ADRIENNE

What about you? Any boys?

ALI

No boys.

ADRIENNE

None?

ALI

Not in a while.

ADRIENNE

And do you talk to Waylon?

ALI

I do not.

ADRIENNE

But it's ok?

ALI

Yep. Happy being me.

ADRIENNE

That's good.

ALI

I'm too busy anyway.

ADRIENNE

I know. It takes up so much time.

ALI

And I'd rather spend it with friends anyway.

Shift.

Adrienne and Ali hang Christmas ornaments.
Ali drops one.

ADRIENNE

It's ok.

ALI

Not if you say it like that.

ADRIENNE

It was an old ornament.

ALI

I'm so sorry. Can I get you a new one?

ADRIENNE

You don't have to.

ALI

I know I don't have to, will you let me feel better about it?

ADRIENNE

Feel whatever you want. I don't know why you're upset. It's my ornament.

ALI

It is not just your ornament. I always hang it. Every year.

ADRIENNE

Hang something else. We've got plenty. Steal the snowman off the big tree.

In the silence, Ali gets out her phone and texts.

Adrienne watches her.

ALI

I've gotta leave in a little. I'm going over to Aaron's dad's.

ADRIENNE

Yep.

ALI

What? It's not like you want me here.

ADRIENNE

I knew you didn't want to be here.

ALI

Then why did you ask me?

ADRIENNE

I won't anymore. You've got Aaron and the poms whores to hang around.

ALI

They're not whores, and you could hang out too if you weren't such a bitch around them.

ADRIENNE

I don't want to hang out, and I'm normal -- you're the one who acts like a totally different person

ALI

When?

ADRIENNE

Any time you're around a guy

ALI

I'm a different person?

ADRIENNE

you pretty much just hang on his dick. It's pathetic and degrading.

ALI

You're the one who's suddenly all Creepella Creecher and leading on a bunch of lesbians because you can't get a guy.

ADRIENNE

I don't want your guys, and maybe I am a lesbian

ALI

Since when? You fucked yourself with a carrot in sixth grade while watching Robin Hood.

That was really low.

ADRIENNE

That doesn't mean --

ALI

I'm sorry

ADRIENNE

That doesn't mean anything, and if you fucking say that to your new friends

ALI
I wouldn't

ADRIENNE
I don't know what you'd do because you're a total sellout

ALI
That's not true.

ADRIENNE
You're a sellout, and your friends are whores.

ALI
What did I sell out?

ADRIENNE
You ignore me.

ALI
I do not you are so full of shit

ADRIENNE
You ignore me

ALI
I never ignored you. You ditched me because I didn't want to play angry goth with you and chop my hair and wear two-dollar skull earrings.

ADRIENNE
See you're so condescending

ALI
And you laugh at me with your stupid vampire friends. What are you even angry about? You're just faking it like everybody else.

ADRIENNE
I am angry.

ALI
So what, I'm angry, too

ADRIENNE
I am fucking angry.

ALI
Drink a milkshake and blow me.

ADRIENNE
I can't even

ALI
Then don't. I'm leaving.

ADRIENNE
You don't celebrate Christmas anyway.

ALI
You're right, that's why I broke *your* ornament.

ADRIENNE
I'm just saying there's no more point in us doing this.

ALI
Great. Next year come over and shit in my latkes, then we'll call it quits. Bye.

ADRIENNE
Bye.

Shift back.

They're in the kitchen with grilled cheese.

ALI
I'd rather spend time with friends anyway.

Pause.

ADRIENNE
Totally. Relationships are overrated.

ALI
Having my life to myself is underrated.

ADRIENNE
Totally.

Pause.

ADRIENNE
It's harder to meet people when you're out of school. There's just work, and that's a whole thing. What?

ALI

I told you I'm going to finish, you don't need to

Heavy overlapping.

ADRIENNE

Oh my gosh that's not what I'm doing, I

ALI

Bring it up and poke me with it every three minutes since you walked in the door

ADRIENNE

Didn't mean it that way at all -- what are you talking about? I haven't even

ALI

I know it's awesome that you've got a thesis. I know it sucks that I failed out.

ADRIENNE

Who said that? It's not that awesome, for one thing, I never said

ALI

I know it's cool you've got college friends who shit themselves

ADRIENNE

It's not about cool -- and he is not a friend.

ALI

I know it's lame I've got high school friends who live with their parents.

ADRIENNE

You're not hearing me.

ALI

I'm hearing you. Listen to yourself.

ADRIENNE

If you want to be crazy defensive about

ALI

I'm not defensive and I'm not crazy. You make me feel like shit.

Beat.

ALI

You come here and make me feel like my life is shit.

Beat.

ALI

I'm happy you're happy, but god.

ADRIENNE

I'm not happy.

Pause.

ADRIENNE

My life is shit. I don't care about my friends. They don't know me and don't want to talk about what's going on. My place isn't a mess because of my thesis, it's because I live on the futon and don't do laundry or shower or throw out the trash, I eat wine and drink pizza and watch TV. Life is a fog, and it's so heavy it weighs me down.

ALI

Have you seen anyone?

ADRIENNE

Yeah. She says I should write down everything that makes me anxious and everything that makes me happy. You showed up in both columns. My parents wanted me to come straight home, to Atlanta. Because they're worried. But I thought I needed you. And I was scared if I was wrong.

Silence.

ALI

I didn't know it was like that.

ADRIENNE

I've been watching myself be disgusting. You'd think it'd make me want to move, but.

ALI

You came here.

ADRIENNE

Then I have to go be with my parents.

ALI

You can stay all break. Jen's gone. It'll be just us.

ADRIENNE

I wish I could.

ALI

I'm glad you came.

ADRIENNE

Are you?

ALI

I didn't tell you everything that happened with Waylon. At the end it was really bad.

Ali is visibly upset.

ADRIENNE

Are you ok?

ALI

So I never told you when we broke up -- he?

(break)

I've been a really shitty person. Since I left school. And I was seeing all these other guys. Like the whole time. Kind of. I was...I don't know. I don't know. I didn't think it was connected. And when he found out he got so mad. And so jealous. He threw me down and yelled at me, and called me everything.

ADRIENNE

Oh my god. Ali.

ALI

I was so scared I thought it would be easier if I just let him...do what he wanted (with me).

ADRIENNE

Oh my god.

ALI

Then after he was done he left, and I never told anyone.

ADRIENNE

Are you ok?

ALI

I'm fine. I'm fine. Like?

ADRIENNE

When did this happen?

ALI

August. After the Mountain Fair.

ADRIENNE

God. I am so so sorry. Is there anything I can do? Can I kill him for you?

ALI

No.

ADRIENNE

Have you seen him?

Ali nods slightly.

ADRIENNE

Do you want to...is there anything you want to...

ALI

We don't have to talk about it any more.

ADRIENNE

I'm glad you told me.

Adrienne touches Ali.

ADRIENNE

You're still here.

Long beat.

ADRIENNE

Does my breath smell like grilled cheese?

Ali laughs.

ALI

We should go to the store.

ADRIENNE

Ok. Or. We can sit on the couch. And order pineapple pizza. And watch a movie.

ALI

That sounds good. You haven't had too much of that?

ADRIENNE

It's different with you.

They sit down, resting on each other, to watch a movie.

SPRING

When they sing they are older, even, than when Winter ended. As before, they have grown into the song. And are more finely tuned to each other because they are different.

ALI

(singing)

*Wind wind blo oo oww wind
wind wind blo oo oww wind
When the cool summer breeze
Sends a chill down my spine
and I long for my love's sweet caress*

(Ali forgets or doesn't know the words)

ADRIENNE

(singing)

*Wind wind blo oo oww wind
wind wind blo oo oww wind
When the cool summer breeze
Sends a chill down my spine
and I long for my love's sweet caress
I know she is gone
but my love lingers on
In a dream that the wind brings to me*

Oooh Oooh Oooh

ADRIENNE

The thing about Spring.

ALI

Spring, spring.

ADRIENNE

The thing about Spring.

ALI

Is...

ADRIENNE

I never really liked Spring.

ALI

Does anyone like Spring?

ADRIENNE

The cuffs of your jeans were always wet from the grass.

ALI

And you wore shorts, but your socks were still soaked.

ADRIENNE

And the whole town was moist like it just got born.

ALI

The thing about Spring

ADRIENNE

Is...

ALI

It's the bad daylight savings.

ADRIENNE

Honestly I never even know when it begins or ends.

ALI

Like it's cold and rainy, then it's slightly less cold and rainy, and then suddenly it's a warm night

ADRIENNE

And you can hear summer's voice calling down the highway

ALI

Driving your car with the windows down.

ADRIENNE

Feeling it on your skin.

ALI

The thing about Spring

ADRIENNE

Is it's not all bad.

ALI

You got so horny.

ADRIENNE

And the world was suddenly full of guys.

ALI

Like they'd sprouted in the thaw.

ADRIENNE

And you wanted to throw them against the wall.

ALI

Mmm.

ADRIENNE

Mmm.

ADRIENNE

But you never got them till summer.

ALI

Whenever that was.

Adrienne reveals Mr. Turtle.

She reads her poem.

ADRIENNE

For your seventeenth birthday I
gave you my stuffed turtle because we
always loved turtles and talked about raising them. Except
that one time, you remember?
It sounded like you said *racing*?
And we laughed into the corners of the afternoon
cheering on our racing turtle and dressing him
in champions' bows.

For your seventeenth birthday I
gave you our turtle
and watched you unwrap it with fox hands,
shredding the paper without reflection.
Your body was a kind of flight risk then, when we
took to the hallways
or Haywood nights when the college guys were out,
and you were now clearly the more beautiful and always would be.

I found him in a box in the attic,
with the old toys and winter clothes.
Everyone else was too tired to play,
but his shell still sparkled like when we were kids.
And I thought friendship was a thing you could catch like a cold

For your seventeenth birthday I
 gave you Mr. Turtle
 and watched you place him in a bag under
 the table at Salsas next to bracelets, gift cards, and
 a book you'd never read.
 But I didn't feel sad until later because
 the food was good, and we weren't the closest then.

ALI

When did you write that?

ADRIENNE

College. Poetry For Future Lawyers.

ALI

Well I feel like a scumbag.

ADRIENNE

No, that's not why I wanted to

ALI

(re: turtle)

How the fuck do you have Mr. Turtle anyway?

ADRIENNE

The funny thing is I look back at high school -- what do you mean, he was right there

ALI

But how'd he get there? I swore you left him with me.

ADRIENNE

When?

ALI

When I moved out of Grove Street. The last time we were us.

ADRIENNE

Yeah, but that's not. All I wanted to say was, I look back at high school, and the funny
 thing is I usually think that's the happiest we ever were.

ALI

Apparently not.

ADRIENNE

No. Except. Remember prom night?

ALI

...what about it?

ADRIENNE

You were in that black satin mermaid dress with tulle on the bottom.

ALI

I remember. Vintage Barbie. Real cool.

Adrienne steps into the scene. Searches music on her cell phone.

ADRIENNE

So it's May, and the moon is huge. The dance is about to end

ALI

Are you sure you wanna

ADRIENNE

it must be like 11?

Ali gets into position.

ALI

Oh god.

Adrienne dances to the music.

Ali makes out with her air-boyfriend, grinding up on the set.

ADRIENNE

And then I saw you on the other side of the chocolate fountain -- I still don't understand why they did that -- and I -- Ali? Ali?

Adrienne steps out and sees Ali.

ADRIENNE

Oh!

ALI

What?

ADRIENNE

Why are you making out with -- (Aaron Pereira)

ALI

Because it's Junior Prom.

ADRIENNE

We're at Senior Prom.

ALI

I wore the clingy thing senior year.

...well this is embarrassing.

ADRIENNE

Oh. Sorry.

ALI

No problem.

Ali maybe even tugs her "dress" back into place.

ADRIENNE

Sorry.

ALI

It's fine.

ADRIENNE

Now I'm all confused.

ALI

Senior year?

ADRIENNE

Right! Well actually we should back up. I wear a cloud-blue spaghetti-strap with little pink rosettes and sparkly beading, a sheer strip above the chest and a ruffle in the skirt. You're in the clingy thing, it's red, with one shoulder and ribbons --

ALI

I look awful.

ADRIENNE

You look amazing.

ADRIENNE

And before we dance we were in that weird bathroom under the big staircase.

ALI

Hold on a second. Is this when I thought I was pregnant?!

Adrienne is back in the memory.

ADRIENNE

Ali, stop crying. Stop crying. We'll go out right now. We'll get a test. I can drive. Someone can drive.

Ali leaps into it suddenly, full force.

ALI

I'll have to beg Aaron to take me back and raise my goddamn child.

ADRIENNE

You're almost a hundred percent definitely not pregnant.

ALI

(aside)

You're saying this is the happiest we ever were?

ADRIENNE

We'll get an abortion. I'll go with you. There's nothing to be scared of. OK, then we'll raise it together. I'll be your baby daddy. Yeah, I totally will. I'm not joking. But we're raising her Jehovah's Witness, no arguments. And you have to start doing your Kegels because I'm gettin back in that box right away. I'm talking as soon as that baby's born, you gotta tighten it up. Daddy wants.

By this point Adrienne is smiling and prodding a laughing Ali.

ALI

You're out of control.

ADRIENNE

I know I haven't been a good friend. But I'm here now. I'm the damn paterfamilias.

ALI

I love you, too.

Adrienne gets her phone out.

ADRIENNE

(aside)

And then the music plays.

Adrienne starts to move a little to the beat,
pulling Ali.

ADRIENNE

C'mon! We danced.

ALI

We were almost teen moms.

ADRIENNE

And dads!

ALI

This isn't happy.

ADRIENNE

Fine, let's go back to Junior Year. You can have your way with the [she points to whatever
set element Ali made out with].

ALI

We don't have to do that.

ADRIENNE

No, I'm sure it's a fascinating story.

ALI

You've already heard it.

ADRIENNE

(playful)

Really? I can't seem to recall...

ALI

Are you being serious?

Adrienne shrugs, playing dumb.

ALI

Fine.

(out)

THE NIGHT ALI LOST HER VIRGINITY.

Adrienne cracks up.

ADRIENNE

Oh wait, I do know this one.

ALI

My mom is in Tampa, so Aaron and I barely wait for the last song. I had all these fucking candles in my bedroom I planned to light, but with his lips on my neck and his hands on my ass it all just...goes away.

Ali is getting pretty involved with Aaron.
Adrienne sits, facing a different direction, her phone out. Ali's phone rings (a song), and she digs around for it. She sees who it is. Drops the phone.

ALI

(to invisible Aaron)

It's ok. I promise, it's no one. Don't stop.

They get back to it, but Ali is distracted, she casts a look at the turtle, who is looking at her from the shelf.

Phone is still ringing.

A few moments later she pushes away from Aaron. This action occurs simultaneously with with Adrienne's voice-mail.

ALI

(to Aaron)

Just a teensy moment, ladies and gentlemen.

Ali looks at the turtle. Turns it around to face away from the bed.

ALI

(to Aaron)

No, you're good. Maybe put the (condom on) -- do you need help?

ADRIENNE

Hi Al, it's me. I just wanted to say. I didn't mean for us to be at the same restaurant tonight. Paul didn't know, obviously. I hope it wasn't. Since we haven't been talking.

Which is maybe my fault. It was actually nice to see you, be there. Or something. Anyway. I hope you and Aaron had a good prom. Sorry.

Ali starts to have sex with Aaron.

Adrienne pauses. Looks at her phone. Waits. The voice comes on asking if she'd like to delete the message. She does.

ALI

(to Adrienne)

A part of me is thinking how weird it is. That you're not here.

ADRIENNE

That I'm not there?

ALI

You know what I mean. We almost practiced for it. And when it's over, you're not the first person I call. I remember that as much as anything. When I try to daydream about it, it's an empty photograph.

ADRIENNE

You never told me that part.

ALI

Well. We aren't the closest right now.

Pause.

ALI

Was that what you wanted?

ADRIENNE

But you see what I'm trying to say?

ALI

Most definitely not.

ADRIENNE

I thought that was the happiest we ever were! And at the time it was awful!

ALI

Yeah, I never thought that.

ADRIENNE

Which, that it was awful or we were happy?

ALI

Either. Both.

ADRIENNE

See you never wanted to talk about this stuff. When we lived on Grove Street --

ALI

Things were better for a while. I don't see the point in reminiscing about--

ADRIENNE

What's your favorite memory in that apartment?

ALI

I don't know. We were there a couple years.

ADRIENNE

What? What do you look back at and say, huh, that was a good time, I miss that.

ALI

The dinner party?

ADRIENNE

Great!

Adrienne gets into position. Ali hops to it.

ALI

Oh fuckballs. It's gone globby on us! Adrienne! I think the sauce is like scrambling or some shit.

ADRIENNE

Serve it up?

ALI

No we absolutely cannot serve this.

ADRIENNE

But our guests are

ALI

Our guests are gonna eat *us* if we don't have something for them soon. Are we out of crackers?

ADRIENNE
(mouth full of crackers)

Yep.

ALI
Maybe I'll put this on ice. Is that a thing? Or throw an ice cube in there.

ADRIENNE
(aside)
Sadly, yes, but we didn't know it at the time.

ALI
No that's insane. Muffin, I'm going insane.

ADRIENNE
I can open another bottle of wine.

ALI
Good idea. Keep them drinking.

ADRIENNE
I meant for us.

ALI
Even better.

Ali is whisking like mad to break up the sauce,
blowing on it, holding the whole pan in the
refrigerator to cool it down.

She stops to grab the bottle of wine.

ALI
Cheers.

Take a very long pull.

ALI
We're the worst. Oh my god, we're so bad at this! We are failures at being adults.

ADRIENNE
Speaking of things that are curdling...

ALI

Oh hell no. Get out there and tell Brian to shut his mouth. No, stay here with me. Are Jasmine and Robbie hitting it off at least? Jesus Christ.

(re the pan)

Is this working at all?

She touches the side of the pan with her fingers.
Burns her finger and drops the pan.

ALI

Fuckballs! I'm fine! Please order a garbage can full of wings. We're never having a dinner party again.

Shift out.

ADRIENNE

And so it was.

ALI

And so it was.

ADRIENNE

But how much fun was it at the time?

ALI

Before or after the wings?

ADRIENNE

I'm saying it became something. Like when you thought you were pregnant.

ALI

Yep. Memories are dumb.

ADRIENNE

Like I think about Buster's funeral.

Ali sobs.

ALI

He was the best dog in the world!

Ali holds her arms out, as if clinging to
Adrienne.

ALI

He's the first thing I ever knew since he was a baby. And now he's gone.

Adrienne slides into Ali's arms to comfort her.

ADRIENNE

He was the best.

Adrienne gives Ali Mr. Turtle.

As Ali continues to cry.

ADRIENNE

You put your head on my shoulder. Your mom finished spreading Buster's ashes in the Nantahala. But we didn't move. Maybe anyone can be happy together. And being sad together is what's really...I don't know.

Ali breaks out of it.

ALI

I cry a lot in your memories.

ADRIENNE

You're a crier.

ALI

You'd think it'd be the other way.

ADRIENNE

For me that was happy. Even though we didn't know it. And living together was happy.

ALI

Even though we didn't know it.

ADRIENNE

How could we have known.

ALI

At no distance.

Shift.

They sit facing opposite, as if on two sides of a wall. Ali digs into her stash box and grinds some weed before packing it into a bowl. Adrienne huddles further under her blanket.

Long silence.

Ali goes to Adrienne's room.

ALI

You awake, Muffin?

ADRIENNE

Mmm.

ALI

I might make some mac'n'cheese.

ADRIENNE

(neutral)

Mmm.

Ali makes a decision and steps further in.

ALI

Wanna help me draw something?

ADRIENNE

You know I can't draw.

ALI

You're not moving much these days, and I was thinking I could use a model...

ADRIENNE

Don't draw me.

ALI

You'd just be a model. The subject could be someone else. Like when a prostitute poses for the Virgin Mary.

Adrienne shoots Ali a look.

ALI

You can get out of bed and wear something stupid.

ADRIENNE

I'm depressed; not a child.

(beat)

It hurts.

ALI

I don't see it.

ADRIENNE

Of course you don't see it.

ALI

No, I mean that's not what I'm looking at. I've never taught you how to look?

ADRIENNE

It wears off.

ALI

Soften your eyes, it'll give you something to do. Ok, what do you still see? Does it have a value, a shape, a color? Is it active? Does it have force? In what direction? Focus a little more, where is it leading you? What's it connected to? Are you riding a wave or buzzing through a copper wire? What do you have to pass through on the way? Relax your eyes again. Pick another point.

Shift.

ALI

You never learned to trust me.

ADRIENNE

Yeah, well you could only leave me alone by leaving me alone.

ALI

How many nights did I sleep in your room?

ADRIENNE

And make me feel guilty for it. Like I was drowning you --

ALI

You made me feel guilty coming and going.

Adrienne holds onto Ali's arm.

ADRIENNE

Anyway. Looking back. Having you there.

Shift. Several scenes at once.

ADRIENNE

I'm sick of cleaning your dishes every time I want to use the sink.

ALI

All I'm saying is if he stays here all the time he should have to pay!

ADRIENNE

Drunk or high every single day.

ALI

Can we not? Can we not?

ADRIENNE

What does that even mean?

ALI

If this were first, or the fourth, or the fiftieth time you lost my tools, I'd probably --

ADRIENNE

Leave me alone.

They snap out of it. Pause. Look at each other.

ALI

The happiest we ever were.

Shift.

ALI

Hey so what are you up to?

Adrienne shrugs.

ALI

Got a minute.

Adrienne nods.

ALI

There's something I've been meaning to talk to you about.

ADRIENNE

Oh no.

ALI

Don't freak out. Nobody's dying.

ADRIENNE

Everybody's dying.

ALI

Nobody we know is dying right now. That we know of. But I can't live here next year.

Adrienne falls back with a grunt.

ALI

You know I've been having trouble with the rent.

ADRIENNE

My parents said they can help with that --

ALI

I'm not taking money from your parents. I'm not doing it. It's cool that you do, but --

ADRIENNE

Hey, that's not accurate, I barely got anything from them the last --

ALI

Honestly I don't think it's a healthy place for us to be any more. So I'm stopping.

Silence.

ADRIENNE

Ok. I didn't realize you felt that way.

ALI

Yeah. Don't you?

ADRIENNE

I'd have to think about it. Do you have a new roommate?

ALI

I haven't decided anything yet.

Pause.

ALI

It's not like we won't see each other.

ADRIENNE

No.

ALI

We're gonna hang out all the time. Frankly, you might see me more if I can finally quit waitressing.

ADRIENNE

Yeah.

ALI

We'll talk about it some more. Just wanted you to know.

ADRIENNE

Yeah.

Shift.

ADRIENNE

And now maybe this will be, you know when it's years from now, and we're looking back and thinking right now, this is the happiest we ever were.

ALI

But we're not together.

ADRIENNE

Right.

Silence.

ALI

I used to have nightmares about you. After I missed your graduation. Four solid months I dreamed we were friends again, and you'd come smile at me and forgive me and we would laugh like we were together somehow. Then I'd wake up and remember we weren't us anymore.

Pause.

ALI

What did happen to Mr. Turtle?

They start to toss the turtle back and forth.

ADRIENNE

I give him back to you when you leave for school.

ALI

But I leave him in your dorm room. When you're sleeping off my visit.

ADRIENNE

And I mail him to you after you drop out. With gummy bears and coloring books.

ALI

And I send him back when you move, with pictures we took all over Asheville.

ADRIENNE

I bring him that winter we're fighting again.

ALI

I sneak him back in your bag on the way out the door.

ADRIENNE

But I thought.

ALI

And I thought.

The turtle goes away.

ADRIENNE

Is that where it ended?

ALI

I guess so. Except...

ADRIENNE

Yeah!

ADRIENNE

I did give him back.

ALI

I left him with you.

ADRIENNE

The day we moved in.

ALI

The day I moved out.

ADRIENNE

- 32 Grove Street.

ALI

- the last day of Spring.

They move in. Or rather, Adrienne is moving in and Ali is moving out.

ADRIENNE
Can I put this here?

ALI
I'll leave this here.

ADRIENNE
I got us one of these.

ALI
Do you want this?

ADRIENNE
Almost done.

ALI
Not much left.

ADRIENNE
I kind of can't believe it.

ALI
Maybe we don't talk about it.

ADRIENNE
Our own place.

ALI
It's not the end.

ADRIENNE
Truck's all clear.

ALI
Truck's all full.

ADRIENNE
One more thing.

ALI
One more thing.

Adrienne and Ali pull out matching turtles.

ALI
Oh.

ADRIENNE

Oh.

They accept their friend's turtle.

ADRIENNE

What do we do now?

FALL

Long breath.

ALI

I left the apartment and moved in with my mom. It was supposed to be temporary, but I ended up staying almost two years. And I'm not seeing Adrienne at all really, like we said we would. I'm twenty-four, twenty-five. Once every few months. Brunches I dread going to, and after the second mimosa I hear myself swearing I should do it more often. I think about blocking alerts from her accounts, unfollowing her because every time I see a picture this bell in the hollow part of me rolls over and gongs and I feel like closing my eyes and going back to bed. Adrienne's in law school. Adrienne's at Folly Beach with her class. Adrienne's graduating. I'm on the frieze carpet, my back against my mom's green couch, half-drunk and rubbing her new Jack Russell's belly. Then I get up. I start to work. I'm twenty-seven, and sharing a place with a lithographer and her girlfriends. I drop my newest piece on my foot. It's painted on a stolen yield sign and my right shoes won't fit for a month, but I'm off my mom's health insurance so I won't see a doctor. The thing calcifies, and even though the swelling goes down, my foot never looks the same again. In January Adrienne's dad dies of a cancer she never heard he'd been diagnosed with. Another firefly winks out. It turns out the problem isn't that they're too small or too many, but that there aren't enough of them. I see it on Facebook and wonder if she's going to call or should I. I've never been to the house in Atlanta, but it's filled with things I remember from when we were kids. The stuffed members of the Beatles over the mantle. My charcoal drawing of Adrienne on the staircase. And even higher, in a massive frame with like twenty pictures, there's me. With my arms around her at every occasion. I hold her hand as they bury her dad, and at night we sleep in the same bed. Another year, and she'd meet Darren. Another year, I'd sell my first work. Two more, she'd be married. Three more I'd be back in school. Five years out, we'd both be pregnant. When we were little we took up less space. We touched each other without thinking. Now my feet hang over the mattress, and when my arm is around her I feel like I'm holding a redwood or something twice as huge inside.

ADRIENNE

I lived on Grove Street for another year. While I was applying to law school. My new roommate was a night owl, and she never washed dishes, but I didn't care enough to fight her. It's absurdly humid, the summer I leave for Durham.

Ali's supposed to hang out with me. We're going to eat pineapple pizza and wander down Haywood, and I'm convinced she'll cancel somehow, until the second she shows up. That's just what. Anyway. Duke Law was. Duke Law was. When I picture the end of the world, I see walls flap up and down without a sound, like in a rat's maze, and there's no one behind them. I look for Ali, but she's walking away. I counted the number of calls since the last time she picked up. At school, I met Anna, who's a bridesmaid in my wedding. I traveled outside the country for the first time. And just when I said I wouldn't call again, Ali called me back. I told her about France: the green mounds of the Puy and seeing the light in Provence where her favorites painted. I told her I was happy. I had friends who didn't know me before I was me. I didn't tell her that part. But it's true. I know people now who think I've always been able to eat bleu cheese and smile at strangers when we meet. At Folly Beach I ran into the water when just the moon was up, my clothes were on the shore, and the whole Atlantic rocked below me, and they thought I was that girl. Because they weren't there the first time my friend dragged me in. When I think of the end of the world, I think of me dying. I'm under a thin sheet, and I'm going away tomorrow, I know it, it's the end of me, and the end, and Ali isn't there. When you die you're dead forever. I saw her on her thirtieth birthday. She was back in school. She'd been selling paintings and teaching downtown. We drank pitchers of margarita, and when she started to laugh I noticed...I could read through the layers of her skin, the extra weight, the softness and smile lines. On the outside was a new Ali, she'd settled in the world like water. Under that was years of stranger -- brittle and secret -- whatever she'd been hiding on the other side of the phone, and if she told me I'd still never understand. Under that, in her eyes I guess, and her shoulders' bounce, the sudden pace of her voice...I started to cry. I thought of a conversation we had when we were kids about evolving my cat into a lion. When I picture the end of the world, there's a bed of leaves on an Autumn day. A long gray street with naked trees. I hold a rake and look at the piles of leaves. No one to help me, no one to jump in with.

Ali, a child again, rushes over and jumps in a pile of leaves on the ground. She swims through them, yipping.

ALI

They're coming to get us! Hide!

ADRIENNE

Who's coming to get us?

ALI

Boll weevils. You have to get in.

Adrienne drops into the pile of leaves.

ADRIENNE

What do boll weevils look like?

ALI

They're huge with big sucking noses and they eat everything. Put some on top to cover up. They'll suck your blood right out.

ADRIENNE

Should we warn everybody?

ALI

It's too late. We're probably the only ones left.
(she slurps)

ADRIENNE

Maybe it's boll weevil Thanksgiving too.

ALI

Oh my god and we're the feast.

ADRIENNE

It's just like what happened to the Indians.

ALI

We have to survive to save humanity.

ADRIENNE

We'll rebuild civilization. My house is the new White House.

ALI

My house is the United Nations.

ADRIENNE

Lake Powhatan is my swimming pool.

ALI

North Carolina is my back yard.

ADRIENNE

It's my garage.

ALI

It can't be your garage.

ADRIENNE

Yeah because all the cars are mine.

ALI

OK well we should probably share. Fighting is how we got eaten to death by boll weevils in the first place. Besides we have to make a baby.

ADRIENNE

We can't make a baby. We're neighbors.

ALI

We're not neighbors. We're grown-ups.

ADRIENNE

I didn't know we were different people.

ALI

-- hold still. Does your leg itch?

ADRIENNE

Boll weevils!

They burst out and run around shouting like mad for a bit.

Ali tags Adrienne.

ALI

Tag! You're it! No tag backs.

Adrienne looks at Ali. Shrugs like, so what am I supposed to do now?

ADRIENNE

When are we allowed back in?

ALI

Not til food's ready.

Adrienne picks up acorns and throws them.

ADRIENNE

We should run away.

ALI

Throw at the tree remember.

ADRIENNE

Do you wanna come with me?

ALI

Yeah. But we have to rake the leaves again first.

ADRIENNE

Oops. Rake's inside. Guess we can't.

ALI

Perfect. I hate when they take them away. This is how I love it right now. The whole world's tilting just the right way.

ADRIENNE

Except I'm hungry.

ALI

You know what tomorrow is right?

ADRIENNE

What?

ALI

No school!

ADRIENNE

A whole day off.

ALI

And no stupid family dinner.

ADRIENNE

Then the weekend.

ALI

Then two more days.

ADRIENNE

We can go to the mountains.

We have so much time to kill.

ALI

What time is it now?

ADRIENNE

Four thirty.

ALI

We have so much time to kill.

ADRIENNE

They look at each other across the yard.

We'll come up with something.

ALI

End Of Play.