an excerpt from
sandblasted
a play in progress

by charly evon simpson
ANGELA  black woman in her 30s. a safety cat which is a scaredy cat, but it is exactly what a scaredy cat would call herself.

ODESSA  black woman in her 30s. a bit of a show off before...and after. like before you might have been a little annoyed with her because she got all the attention, but it doesn’t matter now.

ADAH  older black woman. she is somewhere between 100 and 200 or between 40 and 90. no one knows. she is like oprah when oprah shares pictures of her veggies on Instagram and you wonder if she went out and tended to the garden herself or if she has folks who do it for her.

JAMAL  black man in late 20s/early 30s. ANGELA’s younger brother. he’s a bartender.

Also, there’s a VOICE. It can be recorded. It should be recorded by an older black man.

Adah should be played by an actor who is at least 40 and, most importantly, looks and feels older than Angela and Odessa. Also, Adah rhymes with Jada.

place.

where the sand is.
the beach should feel different than the desert.
the other places are built on top of the sand.

time.

now.
after.
future.
for aunt adah and aunt louise

--

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

- Audre Lorde

I was talking about time. It’s so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it’s not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world.

- Beloved, Toni Morrison

Yes, something seems to have occurred, something has seemed to occur, and nothing has occurred, nothing at all...

- Happy Days, Samuel Beckett
we’re not at the beginning, but also not at the end.

think: wide expanse. desert. there needs to be sand. a lot of sand.

and it’s quiet.

after we’ve sat there for a while, the sand moves.

and someone sits up in the sand, spitting and gasping for air.

it is ANGELA.

ANGELA
shit
it’s all in my hair now

ANGELA gets up and tries to wipe the sand off.

never gonna get it out
just going to be in there
every damn time I comb through it
little flakes
little granules
flying through the air
getting in my eyes
finding their ways

then there is a rumble.

ODESSA emerges from the sand.

ODESSA
it’s gonna be all in the cracks and everything

ANGELA
that’s what I was saying

ODESSA
I can feel it
up my underwear

ANGELA
I never understand how it gets there

ODESSA
just so small

ANGELA
but how does it get through all the layers

ODESSA
no one knows
it’s just something we all accept

ODESSA tries to wipe the sand off.
she wipes some off her arm.
then her arm falls off, landing in the sand.

ANGELA doesn’t notice while ODESSA just stares at it.

ODESSA
oh shit

ANGELA
what?

ANGELA looks at ODESSA.

oh shit.

ODESSA
come on.
not now.

ANGELA
OH SHIT

ODESSA stares at her arm in the sand.

does it hurt?

ODESSA
not physically
ANGELA
is there blood?

ODESSA looks around.

ODESSA
not a drop.

ANGELA
so strange
even with such a large body part
no blood

ODESSA
this lady who used to go to my church when I was growing up
she was singing amazing grace
and then WHAM!
ear just falls off
clean and crisp

ANGELA
really?

ODESSA
yeah
best part is she just picked it up and kept singing

ANGELA
that’s dedication

ODESSA
that’s...well...it’s something.

ADAH enters from off stage.

ADAH
what’s the racket?

can hear you all the way up there in the rocks

ODESSA
my arm.

ADAH
what?

ANGELA
her arm

ODESSA
it’s fallen off.

ANGELA points to the arm in the sand.

ADAH
shit

ODESSA
I know

ANGELA
I thought it would take a while longer to...
to get

ADAH
longer?

ANGELA
yeah
a lot of breaths
months of stewing
months of incubation
I thought it would take a number of sleepless nights
for a part so large to...

ADAH
just like you to trust in something like time and sense

ANGELA
I just trust that time will get us
will not outlive us
or
or

a moment.

wind.
sand.

time passing.

ANGELA
you trust the sand

ADAH
what?

ANGELA
you had us lie in the sand like you trust it. you trust it?

ADAH
I’m not sure I do.

ANGELA
why not?

ADAH
well

she points to ODESSA

ODESSA	ADAH
my arm	her arm

ANGELA
right

ADAH
it didn’t work

ANGELA
right but--

ADAH
I thought if you could
lie in the sand
take a sand bath and let the heat from the seat
seep into your skin
I thought it could slow the process...

ODESSA
it didn’t

**ADAH**
sorry

a lull.

**ODESSA**
ugh!

**ADAH**
something else?

**ODESSA**
no. just the arm.

**ADAH**
does it matter when? when it happens, does it matter?

**ANGELA and ODESSA** stare at **ADAH** as though she doesn’t understand a thing.

**ANGELA and ODESSA**
of course it does

**ODESSA**
location
age
situation

**ANGELA**
some times may be inconvenient
or—

**ADAH**
it is always inconvenient
it is always the wrong place, wrong time

**ANGELA**
warm in bed at 100 sounds pretty good to me.

**ADAH**
okay
well
fine
let’s go

**ODESSA**
where we going?

**ADAH**
someplace else

**ANGELA**
but we just got here

**ADAH**
clearly this place didn’t work

**ANGELA**
right

**ADAH**
so we going someplace else

**ODESSA**
fine

**ANGELA**

fine

**ADAH**
we’ll put you back together, Odie

**ANGELA**
we’re running out of glue

**ADAH**
tape?

**ANGELA**
gets all sandy

**ADAH**
we’ll restock
ANGELA
when?

ADAH walks over and picks up ODESSA’s arm

ADAH
chin up

ODESSA
it’s just...

I’m sick of falling apart

ADAH
I know

ODESSA
will you ever just tell us how you have lasted so long?

ANGELA and ODESSA look at ADAH

ADAH
what

ANGELA
no parts of you are...

ODESSA
still
like you are still...

ANGELA
so...

ODESSA
how?

ADAH
...
...
...
...
magic
they frown.

I don’t know!
I don’t know.

spinach?

**ODESSA**
I eat spinach

**ANGELA**
I definitely don’t

but I will
I can

**ODESSA**
I eat spinach
and I’m still falling apart

**ADAH**
they suggest spinach
and exercise

**ANGELA**
I exercise
I ran a marathon

**ODESSA**
good for you

**ADAH**
well hopefully that’ll help

**ODESSA**
can we go
I just
you don’t really give us any answers
and then you say
spinach
spinach?!
fucking spinach is your answer
ODESSA huffs and exits.

ADAH
I also said magic

ANGELA
yeah I’m not sure you should say that one again

ADAH exits with the arm.

ANGELA looks around, sighs, and then exits.

shift.