

Female from “For the Pleasure of Seeing Her Again” by Michel Tremblay

Listen to this. She was doing her wash, just like me this morning, and like me, she'd reached the point where she was pulling it through the wringer. But her washing machine wasn't as modern as mine, mine's electric, so she had to keep turning this big handle with her right hand while she slipped the wet clothes through the wringer with her left.

She says she was daydreaming, I say she's crazy. Anyway. Apparently the phone rang and she wanted to finish pushing Uncle Alfred's pyjama bottoms through the wringer before she answered, but she got all nervous – you know how she is – and she caught the tip of her left hand in the wringer. Well, she's so crazy she forgot to stop turning the handle with her right hand! So she keeps cranking away and before you know it she's put her whole arm through the wringer right up to the armpit!

Female from “The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds” by Paul Zindel

Today I saw it. Behind the glass a white cloud began to form. He placed a small piece of metal in the centre of the chamber and we waited until I saw the first one – a trace of smoke that came from nowhere and then disappeared. And then another and another, until I know it was coming from the metal. They looked like water sprays from a park fountain, and they went on and on for as long as I watched. And he told me the fountain of smoke would come forth for a long time, and if I wanted to, I could have stayed there all my life and it would never have ended, that fountain so close I could have touched it. In front of my eyes one part of the world was becoming another. Atoms exploding, flinging off tiny bullets that caused the fountain, atom after atom breaking down into something new. Atom. Atom. What a beautiful word.

Male from "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder

I'm celebrating because I've got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me. I'm glad you spoke to me like you did. But you'll see. I'm going to change. And Emily, I want to ask you a favor. Emily, if I go away to State Agricultural College next year, will you write me a letter? The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything about our town. Y' know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to Agricultural School to be a good farmer. And some of them say it's even a waste of time. And like you say, being gone all that time – in other places, and meeting other people. I guess new people probably aren't any better than old ones. Emily – I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns. Emily, I'm going to make up my mind right now – I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

Male from "Carousel" by Rogers and Hammerstein

It's the custom at these graduations to pick out some old duck like me to preach to the kids. Well, I can't preach at you. I know you all too well. I've brought most of you into the world, rubbed linament onto your backs, poured castor oil down your throats. I only hope that now I've got you this far that you'll turn out to be worth all the trouble I took with you. I can't tell you any sure way to happiness. I only know that you've got to go out and find it for yourselves. You can't lean on the success of your parents. That's their success. And don't be held back by their failures.

Makes no difference what they did or didn't do. You just stand on your own two feet. The world belongs to you as much as to the next fella so don't give it up. And try not to be scared of people not liking you. Just you try liking them. Just keep your faith and your courage and you'll turn out all right...