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CHARACTERS

PROZAK, a girl. Pierced, tattooed, leader of a band, the SSRIs.

PLATYPUS, Australian monotreme. Bit of a crooner, bit of a ham.

ARVIN, a scientist, studying sleep in the *PLATYPUS*. *PROZAK*'s father.

SUSAN, visiting research fellow.

BLUE, pure blue light, long blue hair. An angel who sings.

The SSRIs, the band.

SETTING

Australia, or a place where the platypus dwells. A rock club. A lab. The two locations are intertwined in the space, functioning simultaneously. The club consists of a small raised stage with a band set up, microphone down front, large projection screen behind. The stage is framed by a metal trapeze structure, rigged for human suspension or hooking ritual. The lab consists of a video monitoring station, several screens with live images of the *PLATYPUS* in the observation tank, and electronic readouts for the various telemetry devices implanted under the *PLATYPUS* skin. A laptop and digital recorder where *ARVIN* takes notes, all the paraphernalia of round the clock work. The *PLATYPUS* tank is separate, at a good distance from monitors, perhaps floating between both locations. A real tank is not necessary.

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ACT I

PROLOGUE

Spot on *PROZAK* close to audience sitting alone with her guitar, she strums a few chords, band picks up as she falls asleep. On the small raised stage of the club an empty *BLUE* shaft of light at the microphone. *BLUE*'s voice a distant, calling song in a dream language all her own. Band plays soft behind. Images move like water on the screen above. *BLUE* #1: THE DREAMING. *PROZAK* falls into deep sleep bent over her guitar; *ARVIN* asleep in the lab in front of a video monitor with a close up of a sleeping *PLATYPUS* (who also occasionally appears among the images on the large club screen); *PLATYPUS* is curled up asleep in the observation tank, twitching from time to time. *SUSAN* enters slowly rolling a suitcase through the audience. She's lost in a strange place, looking for someone with a sign to meet her. *BLUE* continues singing, empty shaft of blue light, lulling us into our dreams. On the screen an image of a woman under water, tangled in a white lab coat, fish pouring out of her mouth. *PROZAK* wakes gasping. *BLUE*'s voice and image disappear.

PROZAK

I want to go home. (Pulls out a pen and starts writing dream on her hand.)

SCENE 1: PROZAK IN THE LAB

ARVIN in lab, watching *PLATYPUS* on monitor. Upbeat, calling to *PROZAK*, who slings her guitar on her back and crosses to the monitoring station. *PLATYPUS* in tank with electrodes protruding from his skin.

ARVIN

Sara! Come have a look! We caught a platypus last night. Tip from a local farmer trying to free up his streambed. Feisty little feller -- you should have seen him — came up fighting in the net — nearly capsized the boat —

PROZAK

I woke up choking the house empty, dark like the exoskeleton of a beetle.

ARVIN

Enough Kafka —

PROZAK

Drag me to a fuckin Penal Colony

ARVIN
It s modern Australia —

PROZAK
Shoulda left me in LA.

ARVIN
(Pointing to monitor) Look, I ve got a platypus in a tank, a visiting fellow arriving, and a whole lab to organize.

PROZAK
Why bring me here?

ARVIN
It s a brand new place.

PROZAK
One lab looks just like another.

ARVIN
Okay, I was worried-- concerned — thought a change --

PROZAK
Of hemisphere?

ARVIN
(Switching object mid-stream: pointing to the PLATYPUS) -- he can t travel.

PROZAK
Who?

ARVIN
C mon Sara, unpack your boxes — make some friends — you re living like a gerbil in packing material

PROZAK
I was okay in LA.

ARVIN
You slept all day.

PROZAK
I need to go home.

(Silence)

ARVIN
(Another attempt.) Why don t you help us at the lab? You can come by everyday after class. You have no idea what this little creature is going to tell us

PROZAK, with all the energy of a fist punch, picks at new tattoo. ARVIN doesn t notice, mesmerized by PLATYPUS on the monitor.

ARVIN

(Excited) If we find REM sleep in a platypus, then it's a primitive brain function -- the terrain of reptiles, dinosaurs, encoded in our earliest genes. We'll look at the Serotonin levels, isolate the binding agents for the neurotransmitter like your mother hypothesized and we're on the path to a whole new generation of anti-depressants *(Pointing at sleeping PLATYPUS on monitor)* Look, he's a sleeper, sleeps 18 plus hours at a go.

PROZAK

Is he clinically depressed?

ARVIN

No, but delicate in captivity.

PROZAK

Give him some Prozac — like me.

ARVIN

We're studying natural sleep patterns —

PROZAK

Study me. I nightmare.

ARVIN

It would help if you slept in a bed.

PROZAK begins playing BLUE melody BLUE #1 THE DREAMING from prologue, trying to remember it on her guitar. Perhaps BLUE echoes. Her playing continues under her text.

PROZAK

Last night I dreamed about Mom tangled in her lab coat underwater this cloud of fish coming out of her mouth. And all these little kids were watching her like at an aquarium

ARVIN

(Beat) Dream content fluctuates, sweetheart — your visual cortex is being activated by random electrical signals from your pons. I can give you a light sedative before you sleep, you won't remember a thing when you wake up. I used it after she died.

PROZAK

Why is she screaming fish?

ARVIN

You want to see fish — we'll go up to Cairns — snorkel together - dive off reefs — millions of species. The biodiversity is astounding -- a whole continent cut off like an island, where evolution took a different path. Open your eyes -- on my way back from the cafeteria this morning — the trees are covered with birds — lorikeets — brilliant colors and frogs the size of platters. *(She continues to play guitar, searching for BLUE melody.)* I'm not talking to a guitar.

PROZAK

Gotta practice. Try out with a band.

ARVIN

Where?

PROZAK

You come? *(Pause. So important, she can't ask.)* Listen to me play?

ARVIN

I can't, sweetheart. I have to be round the clock with the platypus. *(PROZAK heads for the door.)* Hey, get some sleep — don't stay out all hours -

PROZAK

Dad — you fuckin' never sleep -

ARVIN

Language.

PROZAK

How can you study sleep if you don't get any?

ARVIN

(Tender) Someone's got to watch. *(PROZAK stalks off. Louder:)* There's takeout in the fridge. *(She's gone, turning back to the screen.)* You didn't even look at the platypus

PLATYPUS agitated, makes small grunting sounds at ARVIN, who observes and makes notations, but does not respond in anyway. PLATYPUS frustrated, sulks in corner. Band starts revving up in club. PROZAK pumped, ready to come on stage. PLATYPUS becomes alert in tank, trying to sniff the music.

VOICE

(Announcing:) And now all the way from L.A. — capital of the Prozac Nation — making her first appearance down under in Ozzzzzzzzzz. It's Prozac and the SSRIs!

PROZAK in spot with guitar at microphone, playing guitar intro. With band, she performs JITTERS & CREEPS.

PROZAK

GOT A SMALL BOX WHERE I PUT MY PAIN
GOT A RUBBER STOPPER TO PLUG THE DRAIN
10 CUPS OF COFFEE BURNING IN MY BRAIN
MY SLEEP IS BRIGHT, MY DREAMS LIKE RAIN

SHE GOT THE JITTERS, SHE GOT THE CREEPS
SHE GOT A LITTLE PILL AWAKE WHEN SHE SLEEPS
SHE'S GOT THE JITTERS, SHE GOT THE CREEPS

WEEKS OF DARKNESS THEN A LIGHT
BRIGHT AS DAY IT FLOODS THE NIGHT
ON ALL NIGHT LIKE THE NEIGHBOR'S TV
A SCREEN SO BRIGHT INSTEAD OF ME

SHE GOT THE JITTERS, SHE GOT THE CREEPS
SHE GOT A LITTLE PILL AWAKE WHEN SHE SLEEPS
SHE'S GOT THE JITTERS, SHE GOT THE CREEPS

COOL THE SHEETS, INCREASE THE DOSE
NOW MY NIGHTS ARE BELLICOSE
TANGLED IN MY SHEETS I LIE

AND I M TOO TIRED TO WONDER WHY
I GOT THE JITTERS
I GOT THE — CREEPS
I GOT A LITTLE PILL AWAKE WHEN I SLEEP
I VE GOT THE JITTERS — CREEPS

YEAH!

NEW BOX SPRING, CUSHY MATTRESS PAD
GOT AMBIEN SO I DON T SLEEP SO BAD
CLICK OFF THE NEWS BEFORE THE WAR
GOIN TO SLEEP FOREVER MORE

I GOT THE JITTERS, I GOT THE CREEPS
GOT A LITTLE PILL AWAKE WHEN I SLEEP
I GOT THE JITTERS, I GOT THE CREEPS

NO MORE ITCH IN MY HAND
NO MORE NOISE IN MY BAND
NO MORE SEX IN MY THIGHS
NO MORE SCREAMS, NO MORE CRIES (2x) NO MORE CRIES

I GOT THE JITTERS, I GOT THE CREEPS
GOT A LITTLE PILL AWAKE WHEN I SLEEP
I GOT THE JITTERS, I GOT THE CREEPS

I GOT THE JITTERS
I GOT THE CREEPS
I GOT THE JITTERS
I GOT THE CREEPS

PROZAK exits. BLUE light at microphone as lights fade and BLUE S voice takes over, shadow of a woman in the light. PROZAK turns around, stops.

PROZAK
Who are you?

BLUE laughs continues singing under next scene. PROZAK writing on her arm: Blue. 2:35 a.m.

SCENE 2: OBSERVATION

ARVIN in lab taking notes into recorder. PLATYPUS asleep in tank.

ARVIN
Day 3. 4:35 a.m. subject showing distinct REM behavior in Alpha stage of sleep cycle. Webs twitching, paddling as if he were swimming in his sleep, chasing prey — behavior of a higher mammal. Rapid eye movement possible — not visible on camera.

SUSAN appears at threshold of lab space. PLATYPUS opens an inquisitive eye. Takes note of arrival.

SUSAN
(Still with suitcase) Excuse me. Susan — Susan Briggs

ARVIN
Oh - you scared me —

SUSAN
Middle of a sleep cycle?

ARVIN
It s 4 a.m..

SUSAN
I ll wait *(Sits on suitcase.)*

SUSAN
I- I m the Ruth Aldwich fellow —

ARVIN
Of course. Arvin, Arvin Mandel. Please. *(Invites her in.)* Had a good flight?

(Pause)

SUSAN
Ah. Long.

ARVIN
Good timing. I need an extra pair of eyes.

SUSAN
No one was at the airport.

ARVIN
Apologies!

SUSAN
Got all turned around.

ARVIN
We ve been preoccupied with our new arrival. *(Pointing at monitor. PLATYPUS quickly feigns sleep.)*

SUSAN
Is this the animal? *(Looking at monitor)* Wo w

ARVIN
Yes, quite a sleeper 18 hours at a go

SUSAN
REM?

ARVIN
Looks promising.

SUSAN

(Looking at monitor) Look at the extension and hyper-articulation of the front web — they do that when they fight for a mate, don't they?

(PLATYPUS pleased, jazzing it up for her benefit)

ARVIN

Done your reading, eh? *(Pointing to electronic readouts)* And look, we're just entering an Alpha cycle — how about that?

SUSAN

(Riveted by the animal who is now making goo-goo eyes at her on monitor.) He's woken up

ARVIN

We still have to collect electronic brainwave data. *(Pointing to various readouts:)* EEG, EMG, EOG, ECG. And I'm counting on your fMRI technique — a couple good brain scans could be the clincher — all those rainbow colors look great on a screen. I've got BBC Nature interested — the Aussie angle -- everyone loves a platypus

(PLATYPUS posing for camera.)

SUSAN

If you prove REM sleep in a pre-mammalian life form

ARVIN

I know, it's big. Blows Dr. Freud out of the water. Try analyzing the dream of a T-rex, Sigmund. Study the nightmares of a trilobite to understand their sexual dysfunction. [Dreaming is so much bigger than that, older than we are — a basic brain function stretching across vast number of species -- birds, reptiles, possibly even dinosaurs. It's a primitive survival mechanism, not a pipeline to our personal neurosis.] We prove this guy's got REM sleep behavior and it's registering electrically in his noggin — we got it in the bag — he's a dreamer

(PLATYPUS perks up genuinely interested.)

SUSAN

I was reading on the flight that the Aborigines here believe animals sleep under the earth and dream the whole world into being. They call it Dreamtime.

ARVIN

(Joking) Well, we get us a little Dreamtime going on here in the lab and we're golden. It's just hard to get him to settle down.

SUSAN

(A bit of a babble) You may have to sing to him — that's how they do it. They walk — vast distances — following the animal's dream tracks — singing about how the animals created the mountains, sink holes, and caves where they made love -- *(Catches ARVIN, looking at her with a what have I gotten into expression.)* If they don't remember the dream the land dies, and they become disconnected. Like our brains — no REM sleep — no dreams -- no neurogenesis — You read my article on memory consolidation in REM sleep?

ARVIN

Cover of Science. Who could miss it? But what about all those people on MAOIs, missing out on REM sleep, still remembering where they put their car keys?

SUSAN

Your wife studied long term adaptive changes in monoamines she thought that was how SSRIs worked and why people develop a tolerance to anti-depressants with time certainly there s a link to REM sleep (*Awkward, becomes a babble. On stage at club PROZAK begins working out intro to a song on her guitar: EMPTY GLASS.*) Ruth was one of my heroes. I- I heard her Rockefeller lecture on Serotonin as REM sleep inhibitor — I was only a graduate student — you see I started late -- it s taken me a long time — a whole line of famous scientists and she s explaining to me the binding agent she used to mark the neurotransmitter. Her eyes are completely focused on me -- not darting around the room scanning for danger or opportunity — her pupils stayed right on me. Later, when I was trying to analyze this behavior I wrote: eyes saying: yes room saying no. So for me to - to have a fellowship in her name come to Australia to work in your new lab when I got the acceptance letter I had a party with my rats - extra pellets for five days - threw off the results, but the paper was already published so it didn t matter and they were happy and I - I am honored — (*Sees him looking at her. Stops short. Dry.*) I haven t slept for five days.

ARVIN

Well then, you better pinch yourself (*Pinches his wrist.*) Wakes you right up.

ARVIN and SUSAN continue working at monitors: he showing her the ropes, she catching on fast. PROZAK rehearsing EMPTY GLASS with the band. Over intro:

PROZAK

So this is a song I wrote for my Mom nah, probably shouldn t say that (*To band*)

PROZAK sings EMPTY GLASS. At some point during the song, ARVIN takes SUSAN S suitcase, checks monitoring systems and they leave the lab.

PROZAK

ALL ALONE IN MY HEAD
EMPTY GLASS BY THE BED
ALL THE TEARS TURNED TO STONE
AND I FEEL SO ALONE
EMPTY GLASS BY THE BED
YOU ARE COLD, YOU ARE DEAD
AND THE ROOM S SHRINKING SMALL
WHERE D YOU GO WHEN YOU WENT?
WHEN YOUR HEARTBEATS WERE SPENT
AND YOU FUCKIN LIED
YEAH, YOU FUCKIN LIED
NEVER TOLD ME YOU DIED
ALL ALONE IN MY HEAD
EMPTY GLASS BY THE BED
EMPTY GLASS

AND A GLASS GOTTA SMASH
GOTTA BREAK GOTTA SLASH
GOTTA GOUGE GOTTA SLICE
CUT THROUGH EVERYTHING TWICE
CUT THROUGH ME CUT THROUGH YOU
CUT THE SKIN WHERE IT S BLUE
AND THE TEARS GOTTA FLOW
GOTTA BE EMPTY GLASS
EMPTY GLASS

EMPTY GLASS, EMPTY MUG, EMPTY CUP, EMPTY BOWL
EMPTY SHELF, EMPTY ROOM, JUST A BIG EMPTY HOLE
EMPTY HANDS, EMPTY HEAD
AND STILL BY THE BED
AND STILL BY THE BED
EMPTY GLASS
EMPTY GLASS

SCENE 3: WHAT'S IN THE TANK?

PROZAK walks into the lab space, her guitar is always with her. BLUE S voice singing: BLUE # 3 LOUNGE. The lab is empty, still. ARVIN and SUSAN gone. She sits in his chair by the monitors, spins in it, and rolls it over to the tank. Pulls out a pill bottle, shakes it like a rattle. Says: P-P-P-Prozak Checks her watch, and takes one. Catches her reflection in the glass. Pockets pills. Sits staring. Silence, as the PLATYPUS approaches wall of tank, sizes up how to deal with this new creature. PROZAK makes a face at herself in the glass. PLATYPUS is taken aback. Tries to respond. Another face. BLUE S voice continues under beginning of scene.

PLATYPUS

Makin faces at the walls of me tank, eh?

PROZAK

Huh?

PLATYPUS

Look inside.

PROZAK

Wha?

PLATYPUS

Through the glass.

(PROZAK investigates.)

Is handsome and airy with a sharp set of webs.

PROZAK

Who are you?

PLATYPUS

Read me label.

PROZAK

(reading) Ornithoryncus Anatinus. A duck-billed platypus.

PLATYPUS

What's your name?

PROZAK

Fluoxetine hydrochloride. Prozak.

PLATYPUS

What's a Prozak?

PROZAK

A drug. To make you un-depressed.

PLATYPUS

What s depressed?

PROZAK

You know, life sucks you can t stay awake you can t sleep can t get outta your head you can t stay in it you hate yourself everyone hates you and wish you were dead.

PLATYPUS

Sounds terrible.

PROZAK

It is.

PLATYPUS

A bit like me ere in this tank.

PROZAK

Look, I m not talking to some chirpy-assed Disney duck-bill about it.

PLATYPUS

Watch it, you peppy little pumped up pile of drug I m your ancestor got a few million years on you

PROZAK

Back off, dude

PLATYPUS

Lift me mood. At s your profession, ain t it?

PROZAK

I m a musician.

PLATYPUS

Good, I need one of those — I hear dreams like music.

PROZAK

Dreams?

PLATYPUS

Gotta catch me one. Like a fish I can hold up and measure, and show them, then they ll let me go.

PROZAK

You re fuckin with my brain here.

PLATYPUS

I need your medicine.

PROZAK

Talk to my dad. He dispenses.

PLATYPUS

No, you got what I need. Play us some chords, luv, let s see what you got.

SUSAN

(Entering lab with briefcase, and tote bag of her effects. Both are startled.) Excuse me I — I - thought you were someone else

PROZAK

(Very noire, private eye, checking her out:) The doctor is otherwise engaged. The name is Prozak. *(Firm hand out stretched)* What can I do for you?

SUSAN

I - I m the Ruth Aldwich fellow

PROZAK

Pleased to meet you ah

SUSAN

Uh Susan Susan Briggs *(SUSAN extends her hand, they shake.)*

PROZAK

He s been expecting you, Susan Briggs. Welcome to the lab where smart women disappear You better take my card.

SUSAN

O h *(Taken aback, moved)* You look like

PROZAK

The doctor? Sheer coincidence.

SUSAN

No Dr. Aldwich

PROZAK

Any resemblance is purely genetic. *(SUSAN S eyes stay on her. Quiet:)* My Mom.

SUSAN

(Eyes on her still focused, mouth babbling:) I — I m sorry I m really about about Ruth was extraordinary you have her you really have her eyes

PROZAK

(Overlapping) No fairies [fucking worries] as they say here. Shit happens. I d appreciate it, Susan, you not telling the doctor I was here. *(PROZAK exits.)*

SUSAN

I- I guess I better go come back when he s I ll just leave a few things

SUSAN quickly pulls things out of bag to set up her work station: super-organized, big on post-its, colored markers etc. PLATYPUS examines her.

PLATYPUS

(Tapping on glass, first to SUSAN, then to anyone who ll listen. SUSAN does not register.) Hey, I m wondering if you could help me out here. You see I m feeling a bit claustrophobic in the pickle jar. Can t tell what s inside and what s out. I mean *(SUSAN exits. Freak out, panic attack, out of control.)* I M FREAKIN OUT IN HERE! GOIN EXTINCT ! CAN T BREATHE! HAVIN A ME-ASTHMA *(Back in control, embarrassed:)* Excuse me. I m usually very quiet. Quite retiring by nature sleep out the day in me burrow 18 hours at a go Never been in the lime-light before don t mean to be a bother Hello, hellooo , hellooo any one out there?

PROZAK comes back in with guitar. Stands directly in front of tank.

PROZAK

Gotta stop talking. Can t help you. My brains fucked-up enough as it without hearing a duck-billed platypus. Okay, man?

PLATYPUS

The name s Frankie.

PROZAK

Okay Frankie -- chill.

PLATYPUS

Frankie Chill Ats good. Like that And now, ladies and gentlemen, presentin the inimitable Frankie Chill Alive in his very own tank so chilly he makes you hot

PROZAK

Oh please -

PLATYPUS

Aw c mon just a little base line bump bump bump bah-dah-dah bump bump bump

PROZAK relents, strumming guitar to herself at first. PLATYPUS sings TALKIN PLATY. PROZAK towards end joins, with band all singing chorus.

I GOT SPIKE LIKE AN ECHIDNA

I GOT POISON IN ME TOES

ME FEET IS NICE AN WEBBED

AT S WHAT EVERYBODY K N O W S

EY LIKE TO CALL ME DUCK BILL, AS IF I WAS A BIRD

BUT ME EXISTENTIAL DRAMA IS REALLY MORE ABSURD

I M A WARM BLOODED, EGG LAYING,

CLOACAL MONOTREME, THEY GOT ME LYIN IN A TANK

SEE IF I CAN DREAM

GOT ME PLUGGED INTO THE BLEEPER

AND ME BRAINS BLEEPIN THE BLEEP

GOT ME HOOKED UP TO A MONITOR

SO THEY CAN WATCH ME SLEEP

GOT ELECTRODES SENDING SIGNALS

FROM UNDERNEATH MY SKIN

KNOCKED ME OUT WITH KETAMINE

WHEN THEY STUCK EM IN

I M A WARM BLOODED, EGG LAYING,
CLOACAL MONOTREME, THEY GOT ME IN A TANK
TO SEE IF I CAN DREAM

HOW D THAT HAPPEN? FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK... (2x)

WELL, I WOKE UP IN THE EVENIN ,
I WAS SWIMMIN IN ME STREAM,
YABBIES MIGHTY TASTY
IF YOU KNOW JUST WHAT I MEAN,
SEE, I CHASE EM DOWN WITH LAGER
OR A BIT OF AMBER ALE.
I BREAK THEIR LITTLE NECKS
AN REGURGITATE THEIR TA I L S

I M A WARM BLOODED, EGG LAYING,
CLOACAL MONOTREME, THEY GOT ME IN A TANK
TO SEE IF I CAN DREAM *(SUSAN enters. Music stops.)*

SUSAN
I heard some noise

PROZAK
Ah just practicing I ll go.

SUSAN
Dr. Mandel should be here. He was supposed to meet me. We are starting a new sleep cycle

PROZAK
(Leaving) Good luck. He s none too sleepy

SUSAN starts observing PLATYPUS on monitor, who continues with song. Trying to get audience to join on chorus.

WATER GETS ALL CLOUDY
AND SILT BEGINS TO CHURN,
MOTOR LIKE A CYCLONE,
AND MY EARS BEGIN TO BURN.
I M HIDIN IN THE EEL GRASS
HOOK COMES FROM THE SKY
LIFT ME UP INTO A BOAT
NO, I DON T WANNA D I E
SO THEY MADE ME PART OF SCIENCE
AND I M LIVING IN A GLASS
STARING AT CAPTIVITY
AN HOW THE TIME WILL PASS.
WELL, I M LOOKING FOR AN ANSWER
INSIDE THIER PRYING EYES
WONDERING IF A PLATYPUS
CAN TAKE EM BY SURPRISE TAKE EM BY SURPRISE

I M A WARM BLOODED, EGG LAYING,
CLOACAL MONOTREME,
GOT ME IN A TANK
TO SEE IF I CAN DREAM

I M A WARM BLOODED, EGG LAYING,
CLOACAL MONOTREME,
GOT ME IN A TANK
TO SEE IF I CAN DREAM

TO SEE IF I CAN DREAM
I WISH THAT I CAN DREAM
I HOPE THAT I CAN DREAM
I D REALLY LOVE TO DREAM

Towards end of song ARVIN enters lab, late, hurriedly collecting papers, laptop, preparing for lecture. SUSAN is vigilant at monitor.

ARVIN
(At laptop) Where are the slides? The secretary put the whole thing in Power Point but I can't find the f-ing file.
(Glancing at monitor) How's our subject?

SUSAN
Quite active — very awake. These odd rhythmic hops. I'm worried the implants will come out.

ARVIN
I stuck them in pretty deep when he was out on Ketamine, they should hold. *(Looking into monitor)* Fascinating creature, huh?

PLATYPUS
(Moving into camera, giving ARVIN a close up of the big ole hairy eyeball on the screen.) Arvin oh Aaahrvin your girl's good we should go hear her play. Have a cool tube [beer]. Relax. Get to know each other. I can tell you what's goin' on in me head. Be a lot simpler. *(Pointing to the various implants in his body)* EEG EOG EMG ECG — fuck objective data mate. Don't exist. You'd go barmy in a tank with electrodes under your skin. *(Makes some weird ass close up PLATY faces)* You're studying a lunatic

ARVIN
(He has taken none of this on board) Wish me luck.

ARVIN leaves lab.

SCENE 4: NEUROSCIENCE AND DREAMS

ARVIN at his most charismatic, strides up to a podium. A technician (BLUE) plugs in his laptop, puts first projection on screen, hands ARVIN the remote. Slide: several charts of sleep spindles for different sleep states. ARVIN points with a little red light laser pointer on the projection screen.

ARVIN
(Directly to audience:) What is Rapid Eye Movement sleep? R-E-M, REM - also called paradoxical sleep — paradoxical because after several stages of Non-REM sleep where the brain truly seems at rest — we have this mysterious desynchronized state where the brain is wide awake, but the body is paralyzed — or more accurately subject to involuntary movements — it is the time of our deepest sleep, when human subjects report the most vivid dreams. *(Slide: a painting, Rousseau's The Dreamer : a lion leaning over a sleeping gypsy.)* In REM the neural substrates responsible for our

critical self-reflection fail us. We feel intense emotions and are left with fragmentary images, while the rational, decision-making part of our brains, the pre-frontal cortex, is quiet. Why? The adaptive function of the dream state is unknown. With this ancient creature (*Slide: image of a platypus.*) we are going back in evolutionary time to track the origins of REM sleep. Ornithyorniscus Anatinus, the duck billed platypus — one of only three species of monotremes - - diverged from the mammalian line over 140 million years ago — and hasn't changed much since. Found only in Australia. (*Slide image of subway advertisement, woman with head in her hands, caption: Can't sleep? Are you depressed?*) Why our focus on sleep? Disruptions in the sleep cycle are at the core of human mental illness, particularly depression — in which a surfeit or inability to sleep are widespread symptoms. Anti-depressants actually alter REM sleep patterns — the long-term effect of which seems to be an alleviation of the depressive symptoms. We don't know why. But in fact we don't know why we sleep. [*Possible cut: (Slide: diagram of Serotonin molecule.) Three groups of neurotransmitters are in the off- position during REM sleep: Serotonin, Histamine, Neuroephrine - Serotonin is the one to watch — it is at the heart of our neural information system with receptors spread through out the body. Interestingly, there's a concentration in the heart—providing a link between cardiac disease and the depression that often accompanies it. In people with chronically low levels of Serotonin — SSRIs — Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors — like Prozac, block the reuptake of Serotonin at the receptor site increasing the levels of Serotonin the neural synapse — often have a powerful mood elevating effect.*] We're looking deep into our evolutionary past, into the chemistry of REM sleep to provide more direct route to alleviating depressive symptoms. I'll leave you with an open invitation to visit us at our new lab at the University of Queensland, Brisbane or our website [www.uq.mandelab\(online\).edu](http://www.uq.mandelab(online).edu). and watch our progress with the platypus in the exciting weeks to come. Thanks to all my old colleagues in San Diego (*Slide: happy lab group photo under palm trees, with long list of names. Then slide: happy photo of ARVIN and Ruth arm and arm in lab. Ruth dressed in blue shirt, with white mouse on her shoulder.*) And my wife, Dr. Ruth Aldwich, without whose enormous contributions, this research would not be possible.

Applause. ARVIN leaves podium.

SCENE 5: AFTER HOURS

PROZAK making some noise alone in the lab. Alone with guitar, working on a song. PLATYPUS antsy in tank.

PROZAK

(Writing a song:) GOTTA GET ME SOME SOME OF YOUR LOVE GOTTA GET ME SOME I DON'T KNOW
WHAT GOTTA GET ME SOME YEAH GOTTA GET ME SOME

PLATYPUS

Eh — Prozak?

PROZAK

You talkin' to me again?

PLATYPUS

How do you dream?

PROZAK

You tell me flat foot.

PLATYPUS

Don't have any. Zip, zero zilch. The big goose egg.

PROZAK *working on chorus:* GOTTA GET ME SOME

PLATYPUS

What do dreams like to eat?

PROZAK

Well, they like spicy pizza before you go to sleep.

PLATYPUS

How do you allure one?

PROZAK

Chorus is gonna be killer, if I can get the hook. *(Working again:)* I gotta get me some some of your love

PLATYPUS

Please, it s important.

PROZAK

Gotta remember em when you wake up write em down — *(holds out her hands which are covered with lettering)*

PLATYPUS

Can t spell

PROZAK

(Reading from one hand, showing it to him) F- I — S — H

PLATYPUS

FF — I-I-I-SSH.

PROZAK

Ats right, flat-foot.

PLATYPUS

I like fish.

PROZAK

(Looking at her hands.) Little fishies. Pourin out of her mouth. Like a scream.

PLATYPUS

(Opens his mouth wide)

PROZAK

Yeah. No sound. Just fish. Dr. Sleep s too scared to examine that data.

PLATYPUS

Yeah, but you seem like a real expert.

PROZAK

(Pause) She never said anything before she killed herself. Now it s like her fish are swimming around my head. Don t know how to get rid of them. Maybe it ll happen to me too.

PLATYPUS

How about catchin one?

PROZAK

What?

PLATYPUS

A dream. You know eels, live bait?

PROZAK stares off in zone of her own. PLATYPUS in his. Both quiet.

PLATYPUS

(Truly mournful) I m gonna die here

PROZAK

PROZAK starts making up a song for the PLATYPUS. She starts singing, PLATYPUS joins, making it up as they go.
GOIN FISHIN .

PROZAK

WENT OUT TO FISH IN A DEEP BLUE SEA
ONLY A PLATYPUS AND ME

PLATYPUS

WENT OUT TO SEA TO CATCH A DREAM
STEAD OF JUST SITTING ALL ALONE IN MY STREAM

P&P

CAUGHT A FEW WINKS BESIDE THE SHORE
THEY WAS SO TASTY, I WANTED SOME MORE
PR: WE GOT IN A BOAT PL: WELL MORE LIKE A R A F T
P&P: STARTED TO MOVE LIKE A HOVERCRAFT

STARTED TO FLY

STARTED TO RACE
WITH A SCHOOL OF MANTARAYS
YEAH, THESE ARE THE DAYS TO GO OUT FISHIN

PLATYPUS

ALL OF SUDDEN THE SKY WENT BLACK
ALL THE OTHER FISHIN BLOKES, THEY TURNED BACK
BUT THE FISHIES WAS JUMPIN, MY EYES WERE LIKE PIES
ME HOOKS WERE TIED WITH DRAGON FLIES

P&P

STARTED TO ROCK
STARTED TO KEEL
DRINKIN TOO MUCH GIN WITH A MORAY EEL
YEAH, THESE ARE THE DAYS TO GO OUT FISHIN

PROZAK

WELL, AREN T YOU GLAD I CAME ALONG
WHEN YOU LOST YOUR WAY?
THEY AREN T REALLY FISH AT ALL
JUST YOUR BRAIN AT PLAY
SO BAIT THE LINES, SET THE NET
THINK OF ALL THE DREAMS WE LL GET
YEAH, MAYBE WE LL CAT C H THE BIG ONE YET

PLATYPUS
FISHIN FOR A WHALE, NEVER FELT SO ALIVE
HOOKED A GREAT BLUE, BUT IT STARTED TO DIVE

PROZAK
TOOK YOU OVERBOARD, YOU MANKY MONOTREME,
I SAVED YOUR DUCK-BILLED ASS, FROM A VERY BAD DREAM

P&P
STARTED TO BREACH
STARTED TO BLOW
GREAT BLUE WHALE GIVIN US A TOW

LINES ARE STRONG
LINES ARE TIGHT
CASTING DEEP INTO THE NIGHT
YEAH, MAYBE WE LL CAT C H
YEAH, MAYBE WE LL CATCH
THE BIG ONE

BLUE's voice takes over BLUE # 4: BLUESY BLUE. BLUE appears high above in a web of ropes and wires that will ultimately be used in PROZAK S hooking ritual. She looks like a beautiful luminous spider in a dream catcher web.

BLUE
(Sung/scatted in flow with music) You think you dream only when you sleep? *(Laugh that's a song of its own.)* I m here all the time if you care to see me

PROZAK
(PROZAK looks up.) What s that?

BLUE is gone. Darkness. PLATYPUS scratching at the corner of his tank, sniffing the air for the song.

PLATYPUS
Something was ere Can t smell a thing inside this fuckin Tupperware. Lose me music *(Kicks glass)*

PROZAK
(Fiddling with a piercing above her eye.) You think pain is a bad thing to feel?

PLATYPUS
Miss me mud me stream bed me eel grass

PROZAK
All these pills inside like fish... nothing s real. Insert a hook *(Tugging at it)* and it s there inside the fish

PROZAK begins to play BLUE melody on the guitar, again trying to remember it and hum along. PLATYPUS curls up. ARVIN enters pumped from lecture, SUSAN in tow. ARVIN is in a very excited mood and not listening much.

ARVIN
(Over music, entering to SUSAN) So the guy to the right is head of Neuro-biology does some interesting work on dolphins, but the real dolphin guy, as you know, is Sergej in Ukraine Black Sea, used to train them for Soviet navy *(Reacting to PROZAK S singing and guitar)* Sara, this is a lab. I love your guitar playing, but do it with friends, not here. *(Keeps playing)* It disturbs the animals.

PROZAK

Maybe they LIKE singing —

ARVIN

Sara, this is a colleague —

SUSAN

(Becomes babble) No one has studied the effect of music on platypi... I do a little Brandenburgs for my rats learning tasks they seem to you see that s just what I was saying coming down here they walk great distances to sing to an animal

PROZAK

What s wrong with you?

ARVIN

Sara! —

PROZAK

Prozak!

SUSAN

(To PROZAK) I can t pretend as if I ve never seen you before.

ARVIN

What!?

SUSAN

The behavior is too complicated. She was in the lab with the --

PROZAK starts playing loud and singing: GOTTA GET ME SOME, SOME OF YOUR LOVE. PLATYPUS bouncing around the tank, in the groove on the chorus.

ARVIN

Stop it! *(Over music to PROZAK trying to get her to stop)* If you stimulate him, keep him awake, we ll never get a good reading.

PROZAK

He s looking for a dream.

ARVIN

Well, actually you may be right, we think he s having dreams, but he just can t see them. His brainstem — the older part of the brain, located back here -- *(Touching the back of her head at the top of the neck)* which regulates emotions and the limbic system — all active during REM sleep in mammals — it s firing away like a sparkler, but it s not connecting to the forebrain, the visual cortex — up here. *(Touching her third eye)* So he may well be dreaming But he doesn t see anything

PROZAK

What s it take to connect?

ARVIN

A couple million years of evolutionary time, and some unknown reason why it s advantageous for us to see our dreams

PROZAK

I dream about Mom every night here. I want to know what she is saying.

ARVIN

(A bit off hand) Susan works on Memory Consolidation during REM sleep — maybe she can help —

SUSAN

But Dr. Mandel doesn't buy it —

ARVIN

There are too many people on anti-depressants for many years, losing REM sleep, but who still remember things

PROZAK

What are you talking about?

SUSAN

Chronic increase in Serotonin blocks REM sleep REM isn't the only time you dream but your Dad's right — it is very significant

PROZAK

It affects how I dream? It's amazing how little you know about the stuff I am swallowing!

PLATYPUS lets out mournful whelp that only PROZAK seems to register. PROZAK starts staring at him; PLATYPUS at her.

ARVIN

We're making inroads into the neural circuitry of the brain, down to ion channels across cell membranes. We're beginning to understand the genetic information that contributes to a mental illness. Soon we'll be able to treat many more conditions that were once thought to be untreatable —

PROZAK

But not yet.

ARVIN

No, not yet.

PROZAK

(Heart felt, fierce) So, in the mean time let him go.

ARVIN

Why?

PROZAK

Because it makes me sad to see him in here. *(Starts crying, for real.)*

ARVIN

Sara it's only a platypus, only a few weeks what's wrong? I don't kill animals. I treat them well. He'll be fine. *(Trying to comfort)* Sara, Sara *(Sobbing increases, totally out of control.)*

PROZAK

(Angry through tears) Prozak. My name's not Sara, it's Prozak.

ARVIN

Are you on too low a dose? *(She exits.)* What did I say? Oh my God. *(Putting his head in his hands, shaking his head.)*
What an idiot I am. *(Exits.)*

PROZAK crosses to band. Sings NATURAL SELECTION.

CAN T TALK TO YOU
I M POISON SAD
DON T COME NEAR
I M ROTTEN BAD

RIVER RUN DRY
BIRDS CAN T FLY
DUNNO WHY, I DUNNO WHY

I M A LITTLE DRUG
MAKIN RIGHT FROM WRONG
SIT INSIDE YOUR BRAIN
AND SING A LITTLE SONG HERE S MY LITTLE SONG

MY NAME IS PROZAK
THAT S PROZAK WITH A WITH A K
BETTER THAN A PHARMACY
TO BLOW YOUR BLUES AWAY
DRINK ME SAYS MY LABEL
I LL SHAKE YOU FROM INSIDE
WAKE YOU EVERY MORNING
AND I LL TAKE YOU FOR A

R-R-R-R IDE (Etc.)

GOTTEN ANGRY
GOTTEN MEAN
DARK IN A CORNER
WHERE I CAN T BE SEEN

RIVER S RUN DRY
BIRDS CAN T FLY
DUNNO WHY, I DUNNO WHY

HEY, MY NAME IS PROZAK
THAT S PROZAK WITH A K
SO ELI LILLY LAWYERS
GET THE FUCK OUTTA MY WAY
FLOUOXETINE S MY FANCY NAME
MOLECULES ARE HOWLIN
WAKE UP AND HEAR --
THE SEROTONIN GROWLIN

G-G-G-ROWLIN (Etc.)

EVOLUTION S PRIDE

NO PAIN INSIDE
NO ATTACK OF PANIC
NO ATTACK OF FEAR
I M HERE
DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?
I M HERE
CAN YOU SPELL IT WITH A K?
DO YOU KNOW I M HERE?
YEAH, I M HERE
LET ME HEAR YOU SAY IT WITH A K
THAT S P-R-O-Z-A-K
THAT S WITH A SPECIAL K
I M HERE TO STAY
I GOT A SPECIAL K —

It s loud, glorious, out of control, band trying to follow. Wreckage. BLUE standing near PROZAK, to make sure she and the equipment are okay. PROZAK trying to recover at edge of stage. BLUE brings glass of water.

PROZAK

I choke, when I sing. Like I can t get enough air for what I feel inside. [I fuckin corpsed up there.]

BLUE crosses to microphone sings, big lilting, free and easy.

PROZAK

(Listening to BLUE) You are I wish I m so tired of me gotta get outta my stupid lonely little pill head and dream

SCENE 7: REM PLATY

SUSAN still working in the lab, seated at monitors and readouts, watching. PLATYPUS curled up in ball. All is still and quiet.

ARVIN

Good evening.

SUSAN

(Startled awake) Ah! You scared me.

ARVIN

Stopped by... to see if everything was all right.

SUSAN

It s fine.

ARVIN

Good. *(Awkward pause. He doesn t leave.)*

SUSAN

Quiet Sleep — moderate voltage. QS-M, I should say. *(Pause)* Everything s under control. You can go home.

ARVIN

Everything s under control at home, so I came here. *(Still doesn t leave. Examining readouts. They work.)* Interesting PGO spikes...

SUSAN
Irregular pattern.

(They work.)

ARVIN
Do you find me cold?

SUSAN
I don't know you.

ARVIN
The Bio-psychiatry department says I need to smile more.

SUSAN
Smile more?

ARVIN
As if that were a criteria for good teaching.

SUSAN
Don't teach much. *(Pause.)* A smile. I'll use it.

ARVIN
Learned behavior.

He practices a smile, she does too. Cracks them up. They work. All is quiet, still. In the silence, PLATYPUS starts swimming motions in his sleep, his webbed flippers moving through soft currents, his bill munching. They both simultaneously rush to the close up monitor, tripping over each other.

SUSAN
I'm sorry.

ARVIN
Didn't mean to —

SUSAN
It's my fault —

ARVIN
No, my apologies --

SUSAN
Not used to — to —

ARVIN & SUSAN
Sharing — sharing a monitor --

PLATYPUS is now doing water ballet in his sleep. SUSAN checks readouts to make sure they are recording. ARVIN and SUSAN stand together, watching, enthralled by what they see on the screens and readouts.

ARVIN

(Back to readout) We got some clear REM-H activity.

SUSAN

(On screen) Looks just like he s having a dream

ARVIN

(Checking another read out) But the EEG is off the charts —

SUSAN

(Checking readout herself) Human babies have huge quantities of REM with high EEG. Looks like the pattern for a human infant s sleep --

ARVIN

You re right.

SUSAN

(Further observation of PLATYPUS.) Our platypus is sleeping like a baby . . .

ARVIN

(A big ah-ha) No . . . no . . . no! Check this out - isn t evolution beautiful? Right? Right? A baby is sleeping like a platypus.

PLATYPUS starts crooning in his sleep: Strangers in the night Scooby dooby doo, da da de da daaa... etc

SUSAN

we pass through each stage each animal in our sleep

ARVIN

Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny... even in our sleep *(Watching PLATYPUS)* For some reason early in our development both as individuals and as a species, we need a huge quantity of REM with high EEG dreams no pictures, no meaning no stories, no memory we re just swimming in it like a platypus

SUSAN

Does he have a name? *(SUSAN points to PLATYPUS on screen.)*

ARVIN

You name your rats?

SUSAN

No. *(She shakes her head. Steps away from monitors and workstation, crosses to tank. Leans her ear to the tank.)* Frank, Frankie I think he said *(ARVIN chuckles.)*

ARVIN

Most platypuses die in captivity. That s why you never see them in zoos. For a long time I wouldn t work with them, too risky. But then I figured it out. The platypus has an array of highly sensitive electro-receptors on its bill — uses them to navigate underwater. He swims blind, and locates his pray by sensing the tiny pulse of their heartbeats. If any outside electrical currents interfere — filtration pumps, lighting -- he becomes disoriented, starves to death. *(Pointing)* So I moved all the electrics — into another room. Put up a Faraday shield and viola a healthy platypus

SUSAN

Elegant. *(Admiring)* A simple solution.

ARVIN

Took me a long time to come up with.

SUSAN

They do. To develop my fMRI technique — I had to think like a rat — think I am a rat — what would comfort, what would scare me — then design the equipment to hold them. You see, when I was a little I had hypersensitive hearing — the scratch of a ballpoint pen could make me cry — and the kids at school used to tease me — yell, make noise, laugh -- until I curled up in a ball like a hedgehog. So I know what he hears like. I know what it s like to be a small animal -- *(Catches him looking at her. Stops short. Dry.)* If you d like me to do an FMRI, we ll have to sedate him with ketamine.

PLATYPUS right up against the glass angry and betrayed.

ARVIN

Excellent, Susan ah let me buy you ah ah — coffee — ah latte at the canteen to celebrate we got us a REM Platy. *(They exit.)*

SCENE 8: THE FIGHT

PLATYPUS left alone in tank. Deflated. Sliding down the glass.

PLATYPUS

Prozak? *(Silence)* You there? *(More silence)* I m all alone in here. Don t care anymore I feel this darkness inside me doesn t smell like sleep doesn t smell like mud and it s gettin larger please you gotta help

PROZAK sits near tank, staring into space, depressed. Glass of water. Bottle of pills next to her. PLATYPUS and PROZAK in their own worlds, staring numbly, they think and speak slowly, monosyllabic.

PROZAK

(Shaking pill bottle like a death rattle.) Want some of these?

PLATYPUS

(Slow) What s they taste like?

PROZAK

Swallow them.

PLATYPUS

Make me dream?

PROZAK

No.

PLATYPUS

Then why give em to me?

PROZAK

Don t do me any good. Make my tongue fuzzy. Can t sing.

PROZAK and PLATYPUS both staring at pills and glass of water.

PLATYPUS

Why don t we feed em to the fish?

(Pause both staring)

See if ey like em.

(Pause, staring)

PROZAK

Why not?

PLATYPUS

Then I ingest the fish.

PROZAK

Recycled pharmaceuticals

PLATYPUS

If they s dead fishies, I won t eat them.

PROZAK crosses to the tank of fish, the PLATYPUS food. Opens bottle of pills, about to dump them.

PROZAK

I m trying to remember a time when I was okay — before Mom died — like I used to go to the cleaners to drop of Dad s shirts, pick up Mom s lab coat parking the car and it was like normal Then she died. Started taking these.

Dumps bottle of pills in fish tank. Holding her hand steady.

PROZAK

What if it s all that s keeping me on the A-side of normal? They make me feel like I can still go to the cleaners but I can t really What if I can t play my guitar?

PLATYPUS

What s the matter, girlie?

She crosses to PLATYPUS tank, holds her hands up, with empty pill bottle. Quiet tremor. Panic attack. He examines.

PLATYPUS

Need webs.

PROZAK

You think?

PLATYPUS

C mon, girlie, you re a fighter. Ain t ya?

PROZAK

I guess.

PLATYPUS

(He begins working on her hands like a coach.) You need fists. (Demonstrates) Not digits. Webs. Solid. Like rock. Tape you up. Vop-vop. (As he works with her they both gain strength.) Gotta know your enemy — ats depression, right? Strikes fast, when you re least aware. Gotta respond to a shadow of movement, a change in temperature Vop, you jab im with your left as hard as you can. Before e expects it. Vop. Lightening. Ats right. Then a vop-vop. Thunder. Vop-vop-vop. (Working with PROZAK shadow boxing:) Atta girl. Tuck you head -- in your armpit. Smell your animal — ats who you are. Breathe it in — love that smell. (Bell rings. From the tank to audience:) Ladies and gentleman.

Tonight's fight between the favorite Prozac in the green and white silks, weighing in at 25mgs and the dark horse Depression -- knocked out Zoloft and Luvox in the first and second rounds of this SSRI classic. And it's Prozac with a hard left ... let the fighting begin...

PROZAK shadow boxing. Tucking her head looking sharp, fists jabbing. Vop. Vop-vop. Vop. ARVIN enters lab with tired bunch of blue flowers.

ARVIN
What are you doing here?

PROZAK
In training. Come down to the tanks like Rocky with the meat. Vop-vop-vop.

ARVIN
Sara!? —

PROZAK
Prozak — *(Raising her arm above her head, dancing around.)* I m de champ.

ARVIN
(While she punches air) You seem a little emotional lately — we may need to adjust your medication. I found a good psychiatrist here for you to work with.

PROZAK
Vop-vop-vop.

ARVIN
It's best to nip this in the bud.

PROZAK
Vop-vop-vop.

ARVIN
Are you listening to me?

PROZAK
No, you're listening to Prozac *(This cracks her up)*

ARVIN
C mon Sara, this is nothing to fool around with. Are you taking your medication?

PROZAK
(Shadow boxing) I am my own Prozac.

ARVIN
Answer me.

PROZAK
Check it out! Fish food! *(Boxing with her reflection in the fish tank)* Vop-vop-vop! Vop!

ARVIN
(ARVIN looks in tank) What are those? Capsules?

PROZAK

Chalk one up for scientific observation.

ARVIN

You can't just stop cold —

PROZAK

Vop-vop.

ARVIN

That's dangerous! You do it gradually under the supervision of a psychiatrist —

PROZAK

(Back to the boxing match a huge punch.) And it's Prozak with a left — Ooo, Welbutrin's not lookin' so well

ARVIN

(Grabbing her) You think this is some kind of joke?

PROZAK

Some fuckin' teenager dies in London, who cares?

ARVIN

I'm not going to let you —

PROZAK

Oh yeah? *(Silence)*. Her medicine cabinet was full of pills. Days she was too depressed, she'd stay in her room. Say she was conducting research at home. *(Beat.)* Didn't do any good, I guess

ARVIN

Your mother was an exceptional case. Anti-depressants are highly effective they save lives --

PROZAK

Found her journal when I was unpacking. *(For memory, slow, almost entering her mother's voice)* Medications not working. Chemicals I studied, yet in my body they are inert. Take more? Dream last night — the color blue. Nothing else. *(Pause. Hard to say and hear.)* Last entry.

Stupefying silence. ARVIN sucked into it as well.

ARVIN

(Nervous, trying to steady himself as well) Don't blow this out of proportion. You've got a disease.

PROZAK

A diagnosis.

ARVIN

A treatable condition --

PROZAK

A comorbidity of disorders — sweet.

ARVIN

Something you share with millions of people who are finding medical help —

PROZAK

(Quoting from the air:) Risk factors for depression in adolescence: having a parent who has depression; having an anxiety disorder, being female, having a serious negative life event - like the loss of a parent. You leave this shit lying around—

ARVIN

Your intellect is keen -- use it to get help. Medicine and time are both on your side.

PROZAK

(A rant) Who prescribed the cocktail today? What pharmaceutical is funding this joint? They know you're wife died on the job? If I was a scientist, I'd try sniffing the air testing the water more people sick with a disease that's spreading I'd discover what's polluting the well before pouring in more chemicals. A war with no dead bodies guzzling gas gutting the land puncturing the ozone we're supposed to be happy figuring out who did who on AOL buying a lot of shit like we're not the ones doing any damage How do you do that? Drugs.

ARVIN

Don't give me some lowbrow hippie rhetoric to avoid your problem —

PROZAK

Fuck you!

ARVIN

You want everyone to sit around miserable in a cave?

PROZAK

I'm not a bunch of chemicals.

ARVIN

You are. That's a fact, no worse than the Fates, the Furies who chased Oedipus into the wilderness because he could not escape his genes, except we can do something with chemistry. Everyday people escape inevitable death because we know more than the disease.

(Silence)

ARVIN

I know how hard it was to live with her.

PROZAK

You were always at the lab.

ARVIN

It's where she wanted me.

PROZAK

Load her up.

ARVIN

It's what gave her hope.

PROZAK

Keep her quiet until she's screaming fish.

ARVIN

Don't say that to me

Trying to adjust monitor screen and get back to work.

PROZAK

Finding neural pathways in a platypus is not going to change anything —

ARVIN drops papers. They go every which way.

ARVIN

You do this weird stuff in clubs! Recreational drugs. Come in all hours and I'm supposed just take it --?!

PROZAK

Just working in a different lab. Isn't that right, Frankie? *(Shows him a high five. He returns a high web. Band revs.)*

ARVIN

(Calling after. Anguished:) [What am I supposed to do? Find a cure before you destroy yourself? Help me out here — don't just drive into the night — it's too easy — *(She's gone, this to himself:)* [I need to think clearly, dispassionately — to understand how things work — you trusted me — but there's not enough time.] *(Putting hands on either side of head)* Stop. *(He does, and calmly sets about working very methodically.)*

SCENE 9: LOOKING FOR BLUE

PROZAK counts band in sings LOOKING FOR BLUE. During BLUE, seriously pierced, comes up on stage with PROZAK starts singing back up.

I M LOOKING FOR A WAY TO FEEL SOME PAIN
I M LOOKING FOR A LOVE THAT HAS NO NAME
I M LOOKING FOR A GIRL, WHOSE HAIR IS BLUE
I M LOOKING FOR YOU

I HEARD THERE S A SWITCH TO MAKE NIGHT DAY
I HEARD THERE S A CLUB WHERE I CAN PLAY
I HEARD THERE S AN ANGEL, WHOSE HAIR IS BLUE
I HEARD ABOUT YOU

NEED YOUR HANDS IN MY HEAD
NEED YOUR WINGS IN MY BED
NEED YOUR VOICE TO MAKE ME BLUE
I NEED TO FIND YOU

BLUE next to PROZAK, sings back up.

I M LOOKING FOR A RIVER TO HOLD IN MY HAND
I M LOOKING FOR AN ANGEL TO SING IN MY BAND
I M LOOKING FOR A GIRL, WHOSE HAIR IS BLUE
I M LOOKING FOR LOOKING FOR YOU...

THERE S A HOLE IN THE SKY WHERE I DISAPPEAR
A DEEP BLUE HOLE WHERE I FEEL NO FEAR
THE BURNING HOLE OF MY DESIRE
MY FINGERS ITCH, MY MOUTH S ON FIRE (2X)

BLUE takes over at the microphone. Blue light and voice plays on PROZAK, who sets down her guitar and raises her arms absorbing light and voice with every pore. She dances, wild, hot. BLUE sings. PLATYPUS in tank accompanies with a deep drone. Band plays out.

BLUE

(Singing out) OOOOOOOO etc. (Band plays out.)

PROZAK

I can taste your voice.

BLUE

(Kissing her on the lips.)

PROZAK

Tastes like sky.

BLUE

(Holding her in arms.)

PROZAK

I saw you hooking. Suspended up there You look still, real focused inside

BLUE

(Touching a fishhook in PROZAK S ear.)

PROZAK

Used to think it s fucked up.

BLUE

(Touching her back, her shoulders, her neck: seduction.)

PROZAK

No drugs. No alcohol. Exhale when they insert the hooks. Once you re up, your molecules dissolve like blue light *(BLUE laughs)* Lakota do it with pegs in their chest, call it a Sun Dance Because it burns like a blow torch? *(Kissing her long and hard.)* What am I afraid of? *(Blue shrugs her shoulders.)* Nothing, if you sing the next song with me.

PROZAK crosses down to mic, signals band. Late night. A bit fucked up. PROZAK sings WATCH ME SLEEP with BLUE. During the song ARVIN appears at the edge of stage with PROZAK S leather jacket watching. She does not notice.

PROZAK

(To audience) Thanks for having us back. Got a little drink -- of water -- no fairies — as you say down here [Come down to Oz and they tell you stars are upside down — to who? What they don t tell you is your dreams are upside down too. My Mom s upside down underwater -- and all this shit that s too heavy to float like rusty anchors and chains are rising and I m below just thinking if I can just get a hook and a line pull myself up there s sunlight above then it all goes black.] But this next song s for my Dad, the neuron-scientist —

WATCH ME SLEEP

BEHIND MY EYES

WHAT YOU SEE IS NO SURPRISE

COOL GREY MATTER

COOL GREY AIR

IT S ALL THERE
THERE S NOTHING THERE
WATCH ME DREAM
WHAT CAN YOU SEE?
THE CHEMICALS IN ME

WATCH MY HANDS
OBSERVE MY FALL
EMPTY HANDS
HANDS THAT CRAWL
OVER SKIN, PULLING AIR
THERE S NOTHING THERE
THERE S NOTHING THERE
WATCH MY HEAD
SO FILLED WITH PAIN
I M LOOKING FOR A DRAIN
LOOKING FOR A DRAIN

PULL A STOPPER
SET ME FREE
ALL THE NOTHING
YOU CAN T SEE
A SPOT THAT S BARE
BARELY THERE
I CAN T EXPLAIN
I CAN T EXPLAIN

WATCH ME DREAM
WHAT CAN YOU SEE?
THE CHEMICALS AND ME
THERE S A NEURON
BLUE AS SKY
AND IT WON T DIE
NO IT WON T DIE

PROZAK exits stage. ARVIN tries to put jacket over her shoulders, she shrugs it off, but he takes her under his arm and they exit together.

SCENE 10: DISCOVERY

During the song SUSAN is at the workstation watching the PLATYPUS asleep on the monitor. BLUE continues singing under the scene: WATCH ME SLEEP. PLATYPUS opens one eye, observing SUSAN, who is getting sleepy herself. Head on her arms, she s dozing off. PLATYPUS watching her, quietly from the tank.

PLATYPUS

Must be tired after all that travel yeah, at s right let those peepers shut Atta way let em drop, Suzie Q Now tell me what you see in that sleeping brain of yours

SUSAN
(Very sleepy) Cockatoos birds with long tails like sparklers don t dream much any more *(Shaking herself awake:)*
Coffee I need coffee now *(Finds a mug with SUSAN on it. Touched.)* Oh look at this, there s even a mug
a mug saying Susan

PLATYPUS

(Frustrated) Hey Suzie, Susan of the mug Watch this

PLATYPUS in defiant tour de force gesture, rips an implant out from behind his ear. Small wire dangles. Tries to show it to camera. SUSAN does not talk directly to PLATYPUS, but peers at the monitor again.

SUSAN

Oh my goodness! Looks like you lost an electrode.

PLATYPUS

(Calling from tank) Psst. Over here. Hard to talk with a one-way video camera. *(SUSAN cautiously approaches the tank. We should not be sure she actually hears the PLATYPUS or whether she is just drawn to observe him.)* Won't kill you to have a chat. *(Pause)* You got nice eyes.

SUSAN

I hear you have a very sensitive bill.

PLATYPUS

Farthest thing from a duck. Susan, at's your name isn't it?

SUSAN

Must be awfully bright for you with the fluorescents. *(She turns them off.)*

PLATYPUS

Ahhh! At's right. Dim the lights, sweetheart I'm nocturnal — *(Preens a little)* You know, you are the sweetest dream a platypus could have. A wondrous package just waiting for someone to untie the bow

SUSAN

(About implant) Careful it's dangling loose don't scratch

PLATYPUS

Ahhh a little scratch behind the ears and a wee lullaby

SUSAN

(Singing under her breath) Go to sleep platypus *[POSSIBLE SALACIOUS SUSAN SONG]*

PLATYPUS

Didn't know you could sing.

SUSAN

Nobody does

ARVIN

(ARVIN enters, exhausted, testy, surprised to see her right at the tank:) Something wrong?

PLATYPUS

(To ARVIN about the interruption) Eh — mate

SUSAN

I was just checking on him.

ARVIN

Use the monitor. Don't want any infections.

PLATYPUS

You're breaking up a beautiful thing here

SUSAN

Sometimes you need the naked eye.

ARVIN

Not in my lab — no accidents. His immune system is weak.

SUSAN

Engage all the senses in observation, Jane Goodall.

ARVIN

We're not in the jungle — *(Overreacting)* I don't want to lose him --

SUSAN

He's lost an implant!!

ARVIN

(Peering at monitor, then approaching tank.) Oh. So he did. Apologies. Bit keyed up. *(Beat.)* Got a call from a club; I had to pick Sara up. She fell asleep of all things. They said it wasn't narcotics. When we got home she was fine, won't go to a doctor. If I push her she's destructive. If I don't

(Awkward pause. SUSAN not knowing what to say.)

SUSAN

Shouldn't she be under constant and minute observation?

ARVIN

(Hard) She left again. *(Silence.)* Imagine the brain idling, in neutral like in a car: necessary, but uninteresting, you don't go anywhere. It's un-newsworthy, but perhaps nothing happens when we sleep, except that parts of the brain get to go off-line to rest to inhabit a primordial space as old as amoebas before memory before humans even got the idea of memory into their restless minds. There are things it is better to forget. Why can't she understand that?!

PROZAK about to go on stage, reading a print out of an e-mail, which she's already crumpled many times. PROZAK: Mother fucker. Crumples it again, puts it in her pocket.

SUSAN

Without memory there is no capacity to learn, even my rats learn where food is in a maze. Their hippocampus is active during REM sleep, recalling where they've been the day before rehearsing the path for the next day

ARVIN

We better put in a new implant before the site gets infected. While he's out you can do your first fMRI. *(PLATYPUS shudders, curls into a tight ball.)*

SUSAN

Bet we'll see a rainbow of activity in his hippocampus during REM — *(Looking at monitor:)* A quick injection of ketamine -- *(PLATYPUS sits bolt upright when he hears his fate, snarls.)* We'll pop it back in. He won't feel a thing. *(ARVIN exits. PLATYPUS glares at SUSAN from the tank.)*

PROZAK S guitar revving up for next song under following. She and BLUE are getting ready to perform TELL ME I VE WON at club. PLATYPUS trying to keep panic attack at bay, with his own dramatic monologue appealing straight to audience.

PLATYPUS

(To audience, tragic monologue, anxious patter, trying to calm his own nerves.) Now as it concerns me life and death and all, I better interject ere that I ve never seen meself in the tragic genre. By that I mean ending up like em fellows Atillo or Omlette, or that Scottish one or Edipald the Blind I mean it's not for me. Know what I m saying? Probably not for you either eh? I mean we live our lives, go in and out of our burrows, sniff the air, eat some yabbies, and call it a night So I see no reason at all why this ere has to end badly. Do you?

PROZAK with BLUE. TELL ME I VE WON. It s wild. It s fierce.

GIVE ME A NAME
GIVE ME A PLACE
GIVE ME AN IDENTITY
A STRONG FEATURED FACE
GIVE ME A TRENCH COAT
GIVE ME A GUN
JUST TELL ME I VE WON
JUST TELL ME I VE WON

WANNA BE A METEOR
A BLAZE OF BRILL ANT LIGHT
WANNA BE A GUNSHOT
EXPLODING IN THE NIGHT
DROWNING IN DARKNESS
SHOOT OUT HOLES FOR STARS
RAPID FIRE FOR MERCURY
I LL BLAST A MOON FOR MARS

GIVE ME AN ANSWER
GIVE ME A CAUSE
GIVE ME A COMPUTER
TO SHARPEN MY CLAWS
GIVE ME AN INSTINCT
GIVE ME A GUN
JUST TELL ME I VE WON
TELL ME I VE WON

WANNA BE A METEOR
A BLAZE OF BRILL ANT LIGHT
WANNA BE A GUNSHOT
EXPLODING IN THE NIGHT
DROWNING IN DARKNESS
SHOOT OUT HOLES FOR STARS
RAPID FIRE FOR MERCURY
I LL BLAST A MOON FOR MARS

TEACH ME TO AIM
SELL ME A GUN—
TELL ME I VE WON

TELL ME I VE WON
I VE WON
I VE WON
I VE WON
I AM THE GUN
I AM THE GUN
I M GOING OFF —

SCENE 11: FLYING LESSON

BLUE at work behind PROZAK measuring the lengths of wires descending from a trapeze like structure above.

PROZAK

(Trying it on.) You ready to help this girl grow wings?

Holding out her arms, BLUE pulls a wire down to her shoulder, measures rigging. PROZAK looking out to audience.

PROZAK

(To audience) You all here to catch me?

PLATYPUS on edge in his tank, scuttling about, trying to figure it out. PROZAK crosses to PLATYPUS tank.

PLATYPUS

(High anxiety. Lost in the labyrinth of racing thought.) If I have me dreams, yet I can t see them, is that worse than not having me dreams at all, or is better to have dreams, even if I don t see them cause maybe I might see them, but then I always think I might see them and I never do which is much worse than not seeing them *(Etc.)*

PROZAK

Hey, Frankie. Chill. I m goin fishin .

PLATYPUS

Where?

PROZAK

The deep blue sky -

PLATYPUS

I got webs an a bill. No wings. But I dive underwater that s like flying What you do up there?

PROZAK

Catch us a dream. *(Pause)* You think I ll come back?

PLATYPUS

(Considering) I got you tied to my pinkie. Like a balloon.

PLATYPUS trying to figure out with webs which is the pinkie.

PROZAK

(To PLATYPUS) Don t let go.

PLATYPUS

Never ever, you my girl.

She touches his tank. He reaches his webbed paw up to her.

PROZAK

[Thanks.]

SCENE 12: BREAKING GLASS

SUSAN enters lab with small vial of ketamine. PROZAK hides behind the tank. PLATYPUS cowers in corner of tank. SUSAN then exits picking up some papers.

SUSAN

(Explaining to the PLATYPUS) It s not going to be bad. Just a tunnel you ll go through like a burrow. After the injection, you ll be relaxed, a little sleepy. The machine makes a noise, but it won t touch you. And your brain s activity will appear as a rainbow of colors on our screen. We ll learn a lot, Frankie. *(Exits.)*

When the coast is clear, PROZAK emerges.

PROZAK

(Picking up bottle examining) Ketamine — Special K - Kit-kat --

PLATYPUS

They re gonna jab me — knock me out with that stuff

PROZAK

(Sets the bottle back down) Sweet dreams *(Exits.)*

PLATYPUS

I DON T HAVE ANY *(To exiting PROZAK desperate)* Take me with you! *(She stops.)* Please, don t - don t leave me here! Break the glass! Break the glass! Let me out!

PROZAK picks up a heavy metal chair approaches tank. ARVIN and SUSAN enter with gloves and other implements. ARVIN grabs chair from PROZAK. SUSAN stands frozen in doorway, watching.

ARVIN

What are you doing?

PROZAK

Freeing the inmates.

ARVIN

Are you crazy?

PLATYPUS

Animal rights! Animal rights!

SUSAN

Security shall I call security?

PLATYPUS

Set me free, girlie! Break the glass!

PROZAK

I can t. *(Lowering chair guided by ARVIN)*

PLATYPUS
Break the glass!

ARVIN
Sara — stop this!

PROZAK
Fish in my throat. (*Choking*) No air. No sound.

ARVIN
(*Trying to embrace her, hold her*) Sara. What's wrong?

PROZAK
(*Pushing him away:*) Get away from me!

SUSAN
(*Steady eyes focused on PROZAK, but also for herself.*) Just try to breathe take a long deep breath let it go another

PROZAK
(*Barely able to choke out words to SUSAN*) He - he's trying to sell our house

ARVIN
Oh my God, Sara, just a preliminary e-mail of course we would have talked about it.

PROZAK
The chair where she sat staring by the window...

ARVIN
You can't live in that chair.

PROZAK
I used to put my head in her lap like a dog So the sadness would soak into me and she could get up smiling

ARVIN
Research moves forward, even when life stands still.

PROZAK
What about her garden?

ARVIN
(*Pointing to SUSAN by monitor.*) Susan is about to do an fMRI on a platypus —

PROZAK
We made mud pies

ARVIN
From there we can investigate Serotonin levels —

PROZAK
Counted mung beans

ARVIN

Isolate a cure for what destroyed her —

PROZAK

Cut down the pinyon, put in a pool, fund two fuckin labs.

ARVIN

This is what your mother wanted, Sara. Tell her Susan. Ruth was tough. Determined.

PROZAK

Didn t keep her alive.

ARVIN

She is alive in people — in ideas, experiments --

PROZAK

Bullshit.

ARVIN

Her colleagues, post-docs, students, you.

PROZAK

Where are her reading glasses? Her wedding ring? Her pink socks? You emptied her closet before she died.

ARVIN

Her memory is all I have and you.

PROZAK

You killed her, didn t you?

ARVIN

No — loved, Sara — loved so much — respected -- did whatever, whatever she asked — don t -- don t blame me —

PROZAK

Reptile.

PROZAK grabs a glass beaker smashes it. Takes a shard and makes a small incision in her wrist. ARVIN tries to stop her.

ARVIN

Don t don t do that

PROZAK

(Pushing him away) My blood is warm — (Smears a P with her wrist on the PLATYPUS tank.)

ARVIN runs after her, holds her. PROZAK struggles free with the full power of her rage.

ARVIN

(Running after her) Come back! Sara! Sara!

PROZAK pushes him hard back into the lab with all her force.

PROZAK
I want to live!

She exits. ARVIN collapses, hand over his mouth his eyes, trying to compose himself. SUSAN emerges from behind the monitor where she has been hiding. PLATYPUS is huddled in the corner of the tank. BLUE S voice. BLUE# 4: BLUESY BLUE. ARVIN with lab tweezers begins picking up the shards of glass putting them into an envelope. He is at a complete loss.

SCENE 13: FIELD WORK

SUSAN
I don t have people I engage with like that. *(Pause)* I don t know what to say.

ARVIN
Nothing, Susan.

BLUE S voice. During the following scene, BLUE is preparing PROZAK for concert and hooking. Dressing her, preparing her hair, putting in her hook piercings etc. Should have highly ritualistic, beautiful feeling. ARVIN continues picking up shards of glass with tweezers, puts them into an interdepartmental envelope.

SUSAN
Look at this data — a different electrical pattern — what do you make of it?

ARVIN staggering tries to engages with the read outs.

ARVIN
We have to put the electrode back in. Where s the ketamine?

ARVIN fumbling with bottle of ketamine mechanically preparing injection. SUSAN sits at monitor watching him. PLATYPUS huddled in corner of tank scowling at her. SUSAN trying to ignore.

ARVIN
(Hands fumbling, dropping syringe) Can you give the injection?

SUSAN
Of course.

ARVIN
(Hands her the syringe) Thick skin on the back of the neck.

PLATYPUS
(Snarling at SUSAN)

ARVIN
Careful, he has a poisonous spur on his back legs. *(He stops. Looks up, a strong memory, his face softens, whole demeanor changes.)* Sara was a beautiful child -- you wouldn t know it to look at her now. Sparkly little face. Her mother s intellect. Five years old: Daddy, are there starfish in the sky? There are stars in the ocean, I ve seen them: phosphorus. Standing in an empty parking lot next to the beach, teeth chattering — Phosphorus. *(Pause)* I don t know what to do

ARVIN S gaze fixes on SUSAN, asking for help. Its the first time he really takes her in. SUSAN does not turn away.

SUSAN

(A torrent) I don't know what to say I don't have children just animals I don't mean that your daughter's and I don't speak right words keep coming out of mouth and I observe myself floating in words like alphabet soup and I know I'm doing it how embarrassing I know I'm doing it but I can't I can't stop they just keep coming babble, babble, babble

ARVIN kisses her on the lips. Words stop.

ARVIN

I used to work in the field. I like brooks.

He steps away, silent.

SUSAN

Shut me up. Good. *(Touching her lips with her finger — she may not have kissed before.)*

ARVIN

I better go find her *(ARVIN exits lab.)*

SUSAN

I'll go prepare the equipment then. *(Exits.) [ARVIN returns stares at PLATYPUS.]*

ARVIN

[You're my only hope. Let there be a huge amount of REM in your ancient brain, enough for our species too.]

SCENE 14: SKYHOOK

PROZAK emerges at microphone with hooks in her upper back and shoulders. She is pierced, painted. PROZAK alone at microphone sings EVOLUTION with band. It's only her. She's in a powerful, vulnerably raw place.

PROZAK

ONCE I WAS A BIRD
I USED TO FLY
HAD WINGS IN MY BACK
TO HOLD ME IN THE SKY
FLEW TO THE SUN
AND LEARNED TO DIE
I USED TO FLY

ONCE I WAS A FISH
I USED TO SWIM
CUT THROUGH WAVES
WITH MY DORSAL FIN
DOVE TOO DEEP
ON A SILLY WHIM
I USED TO SWIM

THEN I WAS A BEAST
I USED TO CRAWL
CLOSE TO THE GROUND
SO I WOULDN'T FALL
CATCHING GRUBS
TIL I ATE THEM ALL

I USED TO CRAWL

NOW I M A DRUG
THAT KNOWS NO WRONG
NOW I M THE LYRIC
TO AN ANGRY SONG
NOW I M A GIRL WITH
A SCALP THAT BLEEDS
ONLY MY FINGERS
KNOW WHAT SHE NEEDS

NOW I M A GIRL
I USED TO FLY
NOW I M A GIRL
I USED TO SWIM
NOW I M A GIRL
I USED TO CRAWL
NOW I M A GIRL etc.

PLATYPUS

(Hearing it in tank and making the guitar chords come) C mon, girlie, pull on steel and make it rain. Make me a river a streambed Listen to those fingers fly (PLATYPUS starts with his air guitar. Band picks up. Bass. Drums. SKY-HOOK. PROZAK plays wild guitar riff. PLATYPUS is playing his air guitar with difficulty, on account of his webs.) Baarbabarbapa. Bowng bowng (He's jamming to the amazing riff.) Flowing like a current. Electric as an eel. Let the lightening go through you leave the door a jar (Stops, listens to outrageous playing.) You go girl, you go.

ARVIN grabs the platypus from behind. SUSAN has the syringe with the ketamine. Titanic struggle as ARVIN holds our friend down and SUSAN finds the fold of skin in the neck. Guitar continues soaring. Band picks up. Injection goes in. PLATYPUS slowly goes limp as lights fade on him and ARVIN and SUSAN. Door opens. In a long slit of blue light, BLUE emerges, long blue hair. Back lit in intense light, walks toward PROZAK. Hooks descend. PROZAK sets down her guitar. Sings.

PROZAK

GOIN FISHIN IN THE SKY
CLAP OF THUNDER I CAN FLY
LIGHTENING BOLT
AND SHOCK OF PAIN
TIL I SEE THE SUN AGAIN

REEL ME IN ON LINE OF STEEL
THIS IS HOW A FISH MIGHT FEEL
RISING IN A SPINE OF LIGHT
TO THE RAINBOW SERPENT S HEIGHT

Band keeps a beat. BLUE wails. PROZAK walks up to eyehooks. Thrusts open her arms like a bird. Crowd screams. Lights darken. BLUE helps PROZAK attach hooks in her back into the ones on the wires. PROZAK breathes, exhaling sound. Slowly she rises. Her feet lift off the ground. Her voice is thrown to the sky. Ecstatic. She is rising. As lights fade to black — she passes through the glowing rainbow colors of the fMRI of the PLATYPUS brain projected on the club screen. Blackout.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

PROLOGUE: DEEP BLUE

Images flash on club screen. Shaft of blue light, with BLUE at the microphone singing with the band. DEEP BLUE. PROZAK lies in a hospital bed. White sheets. A tangle of tubes and monitors. Glowing red light on the tip of her finger.

BLUE
BLUE DREAMS BLUE SLEEP
BLUE TRAINS, BLUE SHEEP
BLUE LIGHTS, BLUE CARS
RUNNING DOWN THE HIGHWAY

BLUE ROOM, BLUE BIRD
BLUE BOX, BLUE WORDS
RUNNING DOWN THE PAGE
AND I CAN T READ WHAT THEY SAY
EVERYTHING IS

BLUE DOG, BLUE NOISE
BLUE WAR, BLUE BOYS
BLUE FILM, BLUE RAIN
RUNNING DOWN MY WINDOW

BLUE SCREENS, BLUE CHEER
BLUE LIES, BLUE TEARS
RUNNING DOWN MY FACE
I CAN T FIGURE OUT THIS PLACE
EVERYTHING IS BLUE
EVERYTHING IS BLUE

A CRACK OF LIGHT COMES THROUGH THE BLINDS
A RAY OF HOPE THE WHOLE WORLD SHINES
AND THEN I M BACK TO YOU
AND EVERYTHING IS...

BLUE DREAMS BLUE SLEEP
BLUE TRAINS, BLUE SHEEP
BLUE LIGHTS, BLUE CARS
RUNNING DOWN THE HIGHWAY

BLUE GIRL, BLUE TRAINS, BLUE TONGUE, BLUE STAINS,
BLUE VIENS, BLUE BLUE
EVERYTHING IS BLUE
EVERYTHING IS BLUE

SCENE 15: COMA

PROZAK in hospital bed. Steady electronic beep of her heart, compression of ventilator. Alarm when blood pressure rises. ARVIN sits in the dark lab, motionless, staring straight into the luminous tank, water light on his face. PLATYPUS is swimming in circles, banging into the walls of the tank. Silence except for the beep of PROZAK S heart, oxy-

gen, and the thump of PLATYPUS body on thick glass. SUSAN enters hospital room quietly, stands next to PROZAK S bed observing. She leaves time for answers.

SUSAN

Susan. Susan, from the lab.

Your father told me you were here
Asleep. So I thought I'd come watch you.
What I do best.

I've never watched a person before. Mostly rats.

Can you hear me?

Your brain is working: neurons firing, new synapses forming, peptides binding on receptors, traveling through your whole body. So much activity!
No wonder you're tired

Wonder if you're dreaming.

I'm not a parent. Never knew mine. So I don't know how to speak affectionately to a child. But if I were, I'd tell you that there's a crowd of young people outside the hospital, they brought candles and flowers.

Your Dad's alone with the platypus.

My grandmother raised me. It took a lot of patience. I was not an easy child. Or adult. She just died. *(Tears)*

PROZAK S eyes open, but she remains unconscious, staring at SUSAN, who stares back.

You're listening.
Your body's breathing. Live.

SUSAN touches PROZAK S forehead. Leaves hospital and crosses to lab, where she watches ARVIN at tank, taking notes.

SCENE 16: CONTROL

Turns on overhead lights.

SUSAN

You're still here.

ARVIN

It's unprecedented — he barely sleeps

SUSAN

I visited the hospital.

ARVIN

He wants out. Why?

SUSAN

Your daughter knows when someone is in the room.

ARVIN

No REM - 72 hours — it's impossible — *(Holding out readouts to SUSAN)* He throws himself against the walls of the tank

SUSAN

(Pushing aside readouts) She opened her eyes.

ARVIN

Eyes open, close, flutter, but don't focus. She does not see a thing. *(He stares up blankly.)* It may be weeks, months before they know anything. The damage to the brain, whether she'll ever — the skull hit a lighting pipe when she fell — contusion to left frontal lobe

(Watches the desperate PLATYPUS)

SUSAN

Go watch her.

ARVIN

(Whispers) I can't.

SUSAN

Talk to her.

ARVIN

(Shakes his head.)

SUSAN

I think she's listening to every word

ARVIN

(Words barely form) I couldn't keep them alive.

SUSAN

(Pushing him) She is alive. Go. Go watch her. I'll — stay here I'll watch the platypus. You go. *(Pause. Urging.)* I'll watch him. Go. Go.

SUSAN nods. ARVIN slowly, mechanically takes off lab coat, puts on his hat, SUSAN follows him to the door. PLATYPUS starts pulling his fur out in tufts. She watches the monitor, tries to record behavior. ARVIN returns to get a small tape recorder, exits. PLATYPUS bangs on walls of tank: Argh! Let me out!

SUSAN

(Angry, lashing out, releasing all her tension to PLATYPUS) Stop it! Right now! What you're doing isn't helping!

PLATYPUS

You spoke to me!!!!

SUSAN

You're hurting yourself!

PLATYPUS

Susan, sweet, Susan speaks!

SUSAN
I can't stand it!

PLATYPUS
You can hear me!!

SUSAN
No!

PLATYPUS
Then read my lips. Look at the monitor. *(Moving into camera, no voice:)* LET ME OUT!

SUSAN
(Stares at the animal)

PLATYPUS
(No response.) I know you're listening, Susan, deep in that human brain of yours. LET ME OUT! Gotta go wake up me girl. She needs me. She's waiting for me at the hospital. Gotta go

SUSAN
(Recording on DAT log book) Subject is highly agitated.

PLATYPUS
Gotta be with her!

SUSAN
Unusually aggressive —

PLATYPUS
She's me sister! I love her!

SUSAN
(Over PLATYPUS outburst) Shorten the term of the experiment if abnormal behavior continues

PLATYPUS
That's normal!! Isn't it?

SUSAN
And return immediately to natural habitat if condition does not improve.

SUSAN crosses to monitors and logs out. Shuts down lab, turns off lights. Exits. PLATYPUS, devastated, sits at bottom of tank, considering his options.

SCENE 17: CHOICES

Bed and monitor are cool and still, except for the beep of PROZAK'S heart. NURSE BLUE sits by the patient. ARVIN approaches slowly. It's hard for him to be near PROZAK, he hangs at the edges of the room. NURSE returns with a glass of water, which she gives to him. ARVIN drinks. He has the little tape player in his hand. Silence. It takes a long time for ARVIN to speak. Begins almost as a whisper in his throat, at a distance from himself.

ARVIN
Ah, I Sara, if you can hear me There is a choice. We all have a choice. She made a decision. A scientist decided a life without reason was not worth living not what she wanted. She did not know how to tell you. Death would be a

clean absence, not the suffocation of her mind. She was lucid then. But pain like I have never witnessed. She considered it carefully, without emotion. Her depression responded to no treatment, no drugs, no electrical currents; each day she lived destroyed her memory of the light. She wanted to die while she still knew herself. She asked for my help. It isn't what you think. I brought her a glass of water. With an injection she brought herself peace. I loved her beyond measure. I am no reptile. My blood is warm. You were made from our heat. Our love. Our Sara. A miracle neither of us could explain for all our biology. We imagined your stages in her belly: you as a fish, as an amphibian crawling onto land, your tail twitching. We laughed. Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, we said, in her tummy. And then you emerged: a perfect whole, screaming life into the world. Why do some genes express themselves veering towards death not life? Where are you? *(tears)* Never cried. Never cried for her. Never. Not what she wanted. *(Pause.)* I brought you something... *(Fumbling he turns on tape recorder, presses play.)*

PROZAK and SSRIs playing on the tape recorder. The beat is tinny, PROZAK'S voice distant, but it's there. Band takes over: TELL ME I'VE WON (reprise). ARVIN, listening, starts crying for the first time, buries his head in the sheets. Sobs. As music plays PROZAK's arm moves, reaching for him. He doesn't see. Lights fade as band picks up the tune. SSRIs playing. BLUE singing like an angel, fronting the band. BLUE # 2: BLUE IN A. PLATYPUS sitting quietly at the bottom of his tank, deeply thoughtful.

PLATYPUS

Guess it's now or never No one to get me outta here, but myself To dream or not to dream that is the question, ain't it? Take that big ole eevoluutionary leap go save me sleeping beauty or stay here alone in me tank? Swim in the big open sea... leave these walls behind. To sleep, perchance to dream Yeah, yeah, yeah but how? Close me eyes? Sprout wings? Flap me webs? *(Quiet, he hears BLUE singing to him.)* I'm standing at the edge of a big ole pool the water's still bugs zipping back and forth on the surface... I can see me reflection *(To himself)* Steady there wonder if I can dive right through it to the other side. *(He sits very quiet in the tank, concentrating. BLUE sings to him. PROZAK mutters in her sleep.)* I can hear her there *(PLATYPUS going into a trance.)* deep, deep in the mud, callin' to me

Slowly during the course of the following scene the walls of the PLATYPUS tank disappear, or, if there are no physical walls, the PLATYPUS internal sense of them softens, changes. He becomes free. ARVIN sits under reading light, book open in his lap. His eyes are red. But he is trying to read. SUSAN stands behind with a mug of tea.

SUSAN

I brought you a mug of tea.

ARVIN

(Holding up book) You gave me this book for the hospital. I never read it. Never could focus. About Song Lines crossing the land here following an animal's tracks Songs like maps Sara would have loved this book

SUSAN

It seems like a good metaphor for memory consolidation — over many generations Aborigines sing and walk in an animal's tracks, all participating in the same dream. Dreaming they are remembering the path through the maze, by recalling how the maze was constructed. Singing they are never lost

ARVIN

I can't lose her.

SUSAN

Hold her in your thoughts. That may sound odd. I mean I have no empirical evidence for it but I believe in prayer... positive energy or... webs of synapses if that sounds more... more...

ARVIN

Scientific?

SUSAN

Familiar. *(Pause)*

ARVIN

(ARVIN holds the mug in his hand, fingers it. Slowly:) Thank you, Susan. I appreciate the mug of tea.

SUSAN places her hand on his shoulder from behind his chair. ARVIN holds the mug close to his face, breathes in the steam. BLUE appears with a big ole ticking alarm clock, which she holds next to the PLATYPUS, still deep in a trance. Alarm rings furiously, PLATYPUS jumps up, late for his new reality. Sings GOTTA GOTTA. The walls no longer exist for him. By the end of his song, he is beside PROZAK in hospital bed.

PLATYPUS

(Shaking alarm clock) BRRRRRRRRRRRRRING . ats right BRINNNG-ALING-ALING-ALINGA Havin a nice sleep, are we? Thinkin about hittin the ole snooooooze button? Think again, girlie

GOTTA GET UP, GOTTA GABBA GABBA GOO
GOTTA GIVE THE GAB, LIKE OTHER GUPPIES DO
GOTTA TALK MUD, GOTTA, GOTTA, GOTTA TA L K
GOTTA DIAL IN, GOTTA KNOW YOUR FUCKIN PIN
GOTTA GIVE IT SOME SPIN

GOTTA TASTE MUD, GOTTA, GOTTA, GOTTA TA S T E
GOTTA BITE PAIN, GOTTA GET ON THE TRAIN
GOTTA SNIFF AROUND, KEEP YOUR SNOUT TO THE GROUND
AND WHAT I FOUND, IS YOU GOTTA GOTTA
WHAT I FOUND, IS YOU GOTTA GOTTA

GOTTA WALK OUT, GOTTA WADDLE FAR
GOTTA TRACK A SONG, REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE
GOTTA TRACK MUD, GOTTA GIVE IT A CHANCE
GOTTA WAKE UP, WEAR THE MONKEY PANTS
GOTTA GOTTA, GOTTA GOTTA

GOTTA GIVE UP, GOTTA FORGIVE
GOTTA GIVE THE GIRL A KISS, GOTTA MAKE HER LIVE
GOTTA LOVE MUD, GOTTA GOTTA L O V E
GOTTA, GOTTA, GOTTA, GOTTA

SCENE 18: THE PRESENT

PROZAK asleep in hospital bed, PLATYPUS behind her. PROZAK's hair has grown, lost its abrupt shock of color and spike. Her piercings have been removed. She looks young, a bit like a child. PLATYPUS with little grunts and nudges of his bill, tries to awaken her. PROZAK opens her eyes.

PLATYPUS

Had a good sleep?

PROZAK

Where am I?

PLATYPUS

Here.

PROZAK
Where s here?

PLATYPUS
Where you are.

PROZAK
Oh. That s simple. And you?

PLATYPUS
I m here too.

PROZAK
A dream?

PLATYPUS
Wouldn t know.

PROZAK
Oh. It s a little cold. Like a spring day.

PLATYPUS
Yeah. It s nice.

PROZAK
I have a present for you.

PLATYPUS
What?

PROZAK
What you wanted.

PLATYPUS
A dream? (*PROZAK nods.*) Is it wrapped?

PROZAK
Yeah.

PLATYPUS
I m opening it right now. Ripping off the paper — (*beat*)

PROZAK
See all the colors

PLATYPUS
Ye a h

PROZAK
Swirling around

PLATYPUS

Hey it smells good.

PROZAK

Now open your mouth

PLATYPUS does. He starts to laugh — huge, wonderful outrageous laughter. Big whoops. PROZAK laughs too. Music in with them: LITTLE FISHES BLUE's singing voice joins. Feels great. He is swimming in the ocean of his dream.

PLATYPUS

Mmmm. Fishies, fishies, fishies so many tasty fishies *(Etc.)*

PROZAK

I m little again at the beach

I m standing in the parking lot,

All the cars have gone home.

And it s just Mom and Dad

I beg to go back for one more swim

And they say yes

And I go running, running down into the sea

And it s dark, but there s all this light in the water

And I dig in the sand and find tiny stars phosphorus.

(Singing) Little me is quite aware of little me standing there,

Holding a fist full of sand,

Holding the sky in my hand

PLATYPUS

You see your Mum?

PROZAK

Yeah, she s waiting for me on the beach with a big pink beach towel. Says she ll wait, for as long as I want to swim.

PLATYPUS

Well, what you waitin for? Go back in. Take another plunge —

PROZAK

I guess

PLATYPUS

(Forceful) Go back n open your eyes.

ARVIN enters. He does not see/hear the PLATYPUS, only his daughter in the bed. If PROZAK S speaking to the PLATYPUS is easy, waking into the world of ARVIN is an intense struggle she may not have the strength to make. PROZAK's eyes are open trying to focus.

ARVIN

Can you see me? Sara? *(PROZAK turns head towards him, eyes still open.)* Do you know where you are? *(Blank.)* A hospital. *(PROZAK makes a slight face.)* You ve been here for several weeks. You had a fall. At your concert. *(PROZAK closes eyes.)* Don t go. Please. I haven t seen you so long

PLATYPUS

(To PROZAK) At s your Dad. Been drivin all the doctor s crazy with his hypotheses.

Eyes open again.

ARVIN
Do you know your name?

Eyes close.

PLATYPUS
Aw, better tell im who you are so he doesn t get confused — eh?

Long struggle for her to mouth the word: PROZAK.

ARVIN
That s right. Prozak. Where do you live? *(Dead blank stare, panic, confusion.)*

PLATYPUS
(To PROZAK) Atta d be Brisbin — for the grand prize, home run hit it outta the park, collect the Winnebago. Brisbin, Australia. Can you say that? Brrr-iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiisssssssssss — bin

PROZAK
(Mouthing without voice:) Penal colony *(Closes her eyes.)*

ARVIN
What? I m sorry, I don t understand. *(She opens eyes, struggles to repeat.)* Penal colony? Yes. *(laughing)* Yes. It was once. *(She s back asleep. He watches.)* I ll let you rest.

PROZAK
(TO PLATYPUS thrashing.) He hates me. I m stupid. I can t go back. Fuckin chords. *(Pulling at tube at her neck.)*
What?--

ARVIN
(Overlapping. Calling to Nurse BLUE:) Wait a minute - she s choking!

PROZAK
-- what are these? I can t hear them.

ARVIN
She s trying to pull out the trach! She can t breathe! Nurse! Help!

PROZAK
Where the fuck am I? Where have I been? *(Trouble getting air)* I can t- can t -

ARVIN
(NURSE BLUE comes running.) Please, I don t want her restrained. She would not like that.

NURSE BLUE takes both of ARVIN S hands firmly, but gently places them on PROZAK S wrists. Watches as PROZAK calms down.

PLATYPUS
(To PROZAK) You ve been out in the wilderness, girlie. Asleep in the mud an there s nothing to be afraid of it s where we re all from. *(Heading off)* I m headin back *(WALKABOUT music begins softly.)*

PROZAK

(Screaming to PLATYPUS:) Don't leave me!

ARVIN

(Holding her hands) I'm here. Sara. I'm right here.

PLATYPUS

(Saying good-bye) Sing me a song sometime make it about me

PROZAK looks up at her father.

SCENE 19: WALKABOUT

PLATYPUS slowly turning into animal form: no words on his lips, only platypus sounds. He's being sucked back into the mud until he disappears. Drums play WALKABOUT. The PLATYPUS is in the air. Sound of didgeridoo, animal voices. Dream images of the earth on the club screen; all around us the walls come alive with our dreams. PROZAK on her back in hospital bed, with bare feet walking in the air. BLUE sings. With Arvin's help, PROZAK slowly rises from hospital bed and takes her first steps on the ground. Leaning on his arms she reaches a chair. Music fades. Light remains on PROZAK in chair during the next scene, exercising with a flex ball, folding and unfolding her fist, to strengthen her fingers. BLUE brings her guitar; sets it next to her.

SCENE 20: CONCLUSIONS

SUSAN, frantically tearing up lab, searching under desks, staring at empty tank, shaking her head. She has searched everywhere for the PLATYPUS and can find no clues. ARVIN enters lab with a different energy.

ARVIN

(Entering) I've got good news, Susan!

SUSAN

(Frantic grabbing him) When I left he was in the tank --

ARVIN

Who?

SUSAN

The platypus!

ARVIN

He's not here?

SUSAN

I've looked everywhere. He's gone. .

ARVIN

Impossible.

SUSAN

The gate was shut - all monitoring systems normal. He vanished.

ARVIN

He's not Houdini —

SUSAN

I've searched everywhere — called security — other labs. *(upset)* I've never I I

ARVIN

(Trying to stop the deluge) It's okay, Susan.

SUSAN

I never lost an animal.

ARVIN

It's all right. *(Ecstatic)* Sara Sara is coming home!

SUSAN

You left me in charge.

ARVIN

And I - we were wondering if you would join us to to celebrate...

SUSAN

(Overlapping) I observed something was wrong, yet I ignored it. I left the lab when I knew something was not right with him. If I had been here, kept him under observation, he would never have escaped. Without proper acclimatization, he won't survive!

ARVIN

Don't worry. We'll conduct a systematic search. He can't have gone far. We'll find him. *(To her, tender, calling:)*
Frankie Frankie

SUSAN

It's my fault!!! Can't you understand that? It was my responsibility to care for the animal. *(ARVIN reaching for her hand.)* I didn't listen!

SUSAN starts packing up her effects, pulling down her post-its, collecting her brightly colored highlighters, mug.

ARVIN

What are you doing?

SUSAN

The subject's gone.

ARVIN

I - I'd like you to stay. Full-time position... your own lab.

(He watches her pack.)

SUSAN

Thank you, Dr. Mandel. The experiment has ended.

ARVIN

We'll design a new one.

SUSAN

Send me an e-mail, tell me what it is. *(Silence. As she packs.)*

ARVIN

Am I that easy to leave?

(Air is still and dry. SUSAN stares at him. Shakes her head.)

SUSAN

No. *(Holding his hand, shaking her head.)* No. *(Both looking at the empty tank.)* My lab is a lonely, but secure place. There is a pattern of inquiry. Each day in its place. I do all my own tech work I like being alone with the animals. The world gets quiet. I can hear beyond the room to the edge of things That s me I miss that. Things got out of control here with the platypus I need to touch base *(As she looks at him she gets more and more confused)* but I am very grateful grateful to you And I believe I may I will stay in touch *(She s red, trying to take deep breaths.)*

ARVIN

Susan, are you okay?

SUSAN

I m taking deep breaths *(She takes one)* It s what I try to do *(Another)* When I start to babble *(Another)* Try to take a moment... *(ARVIN takes one with her. They exhale together.)* To breathe...

ARVIN, holding her hands, takes in another deep breath with SUSAN, they exhale together. She squeezes his hand, picks up her bag and leaves. Rolling her suitcase out through the audience the way she arrived.

ARVIN

Wait! I ll take you to the airport... *(Catapults after her.)*

SCENE 21: EMPTY TANK

PROZAK crosses to lab with her guitar. The tank is empty.

PROZAK

Hey Frankie? My first field trip, how m I doin? Speech therapy, physical therapy, cognitive therapy, therapy therapy... Where you been, man? I work the flex ball everyday -- strengthen my fingers *(Demonstrating, making fist.)* Nice webs, right? Vop-vop. *(Unfurling her hand)* Digits too. Everything takes so much effort now. But it s okay. I m lucky to be able to bend my little pinkie. *(She bends pinkie with effort. Delighted.)* Look at that... You re pretty quiet in there. *(No answer.)* I feel like I have this really thin skin that everyone can see through. Dad says that s okay cause look how much we learn from an amoeba. I m lighter now. I can fly without hooks — got a constellation of scars on my back — *(Getting at the core of what s bothering her.)* But they cut this big hole in my throat so I could breathe I don t know if I can sing. *(Touches the trachea scar at her throat.)* Dad s being stupid nice to me... fixed up my room, painted it yellow with these pouffy white curtains and a tank of angelfish. You could eat them. Frankie? *(Still no answer)* You know, the nurse told me when I was just coming to the first word I said was platypus. I don t remember. But it was weird, when she said that because I knew I knew you were with me

ARVIN

(Entering) Who s there?

PROZAK

(Silence)

ARVIN

I heard someone

PROZAK

Just me. Talking to myself.

ARVIN

Sara? I mean — uh Prozak?

PROZAK

Talkin to a platypus. Used to come watch him when you weren t around.

ARVIN

They found him. In someone s pool. Stuck in the filter of all things.

PROZAK

Dead?

ARVIN nods. She takes it hard. Silence.

ARVIN

Guess I m not much at keeping animals or people for that matter.

PROZAK

That s bullshit.

ARVIN

I keep the tank clean, filled -- out of respect I guess. The whole time you were in the hospital he wouldn t sleep. We watched each other. I wanted to release him in the stream where I found him

PROZAK

Do think it matters how you die?

ARVIN

It s more important how you live. I felt that way about your Mom.

(Quiet. The moment passes.)

PROZAK

Don t know if I can sing

ARVIN

Won t know unless you try

PROZAK

Guess I m scared to find out. *(With PLATYPUS voice:)* Give us a few chords, girlie, see what ya got

ARVIN

Yes give it a try...

Takes a deep breath. Tries a couple chords on guitar, starts singing to ARVIN: NOTHING I CAN DO. Her hands are stiff, her voice rusty. As song progresses she gains more vocal power and fluidity, but it is not a performance. Its a moment between the two of them. ARVIN joins towards end on chorus

THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO

THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO
AND WHAT IS WORSE
TO BREAK THIS CURSE
THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO

I COULD WIPE THE SMIRK OFF THE MOON S FACE.
PUNCH A ROCK ITS HEART WOULD BREAK.
BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT REALLY MAKE?
THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO
NOTHING I CAN DO
TO MAKE THIS ALL UNTRUE
THERE S NOTHING
I CAN DO

I COULD HOLD MY BREATH FOR ONE WHOLE YEAR
DROWN A HAMMER HEAD WITH TEARS
SO WHAT IF I DISAPPEAR?
THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO

I COULD STARE DOWN EARTH REVERSE ITS SPIN
FALL BACK ON MY HEAD AGAIN
BUT EVEN THEN I D NEVER WIN
THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO

THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO
TO MAKE IT ALL UNTRUE
THERE S NOTHING I CAN DO
IT LL NEVER BRING BACK YOU
THERE S NOTHING
I CAN DO

PROZAK
Whatch you gonna do, Dad?

ARVIN
(Lights fade on PROZAK strumming chords of next song as ARVIN continues speaking, voice trailing off:) There are two other species of monotremes: echidnas spiny anteaters long and short beaked I want to study them in the field chase after the little devils in the sun for a change then reptiles: spotted salamanders, gutter snakes, emus, lori-keets

Lights rise on SSRIs in concert. PROZAK comes on stage. Little fishhooks in her ears. Hugs BLUE, who s wearing sneakers and a T-shirt, bright blue hair. Two vibrant women. Enjoying making music together. Nothing more, nothing less.

PROZAK
(To audience over intro) I d like to dedicate the last song to a close friend of mine who died recently. For Frankie. Yeah.

PROZAK brings in the band. BLUE sings harmonies, the words and all. No special effects or anything. Just the song. DREAMTIME, or LULLABY FOR A PLATYPUS.

PROZAK
IN THE BEGINNING WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG

THE SONG OF LIFE HAD NOT BEEN SUNG
A PLATYPUS RESTING IN A STREAM
BEGAN TO DREAM
HE SAW THE RIVER, ROCKS, AND THE SKY
HE SAW THE SUN AND BEGAN TO CRY:
I AM—IAM!

HE SWAM DOWN RIVERS FLOWING FREE
HE WANDERED MARSHES BY THE SEA
HE CROSSED A DESERT PARCHED AND DRY
HE FOUND A PATH BEGAN TO CRY:
I AM—IAM!

HE DUG DOWN DEEP INTO THE MUD
HE FLOATED ON THE FULL MOON'S FLOOD
HE DREAMED OF LIFE IN EVERYTHING
HE DREAMED THE ANIMALS COULD SING
I AM—IAM!

LEAVING TRACKS ACROSS THE LAND
LEAVING STORIES IN THE SAND
LEAVING SONGS IN EVERY TREE
ALL THE PLACES HE COULD BE

DREAM IN HOLLOW, DREAM IN DALE
DREAM UNTIL THE NIGHT IS PALE
LIGHT RISING IN THE EASTERN SKY
DREAM AND YOU WILL NEVER DIE
NEVER DIE

Music continues. PROZAK lights her lighter. A few flames begin to appear in the darkness in the house. A new constellation rises amid the applause: The Platypus. Spot rises on the wily fellow, seated in the audience enjoying the show immensely. Nudging his neighboring audience members, getting excited.

PLATYPUS

(Quiet at first) At s my girl. At s my girl. Ain t she a dream. It s been quite an evening. Thank you all for being here. Ain t this something. Ain t this a dream. Hey, I m havin a dream!! This is my dream! I m dreaming!!! I m dreaming!!! *(Yelling up to the stage)* Hey! Thank you! Thank you! *(To the assembled crowd)* Thank you. Thank you all!

Lights fade on PROZAK as she sings the last chorus of the song:

PROZAK

I AM—IAM—IAM—IAM—I A M

THE END

For curtain and bows PROZAK sings her new song: GOTTA GET ME SOME. All join. Company comes on stage. Everyone takes a verse, all do chorus and guitar solo.

PROZAK & COMPANY
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF YOUR LOVE

I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF THAT LOVE
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
I DON T KNOW WHAT
I DON T KNOW WHAT
AND I DON T KNOW WHAT

I GOTTA GET ME SOME
I M ABOUT TO BURST
ENDOCRINES ARE ANGRY
AND IT S GETTING WORSE
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
I GOTTA GET ME SOME

UNDERNEATH ME WINDOW THERE S AN ALLEY CAT
SAYS: THERE S ALWAYS A BETTER PARTY THAN THE YOU RE YOUR AT
GIVES ME A SHOVEL, A PILL, AND A MAP.
SAYS: DIG DEEP, IF YOU WANT IT BAD.
AND I WANT IT BAD
GOTTA GET ME SOME

I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF YOUR LOVE
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF THAT LOVE
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
I DON T KNOW WHAT
I DON T KNOW WHAT
AND I DON T KNOW WHAT

DIGGING DOWN TO CHINATOWN I HIT A VEIN
LITTLE DOOR SLIDES OPEN AND I HEAR MY NAME
HEY GIRLIE, GIRLIE, WE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU!
A DISCO BALL COMES DOWN AND THE ROOM PLAYS BLUE.
LEGS IN THE AIR; SHADOWS ON THE WALL,
RIGHT SIDE UP AND I M STARTIN TO FALL.
LIPS COME CLOSE WHISPER IN MY EAR:
MY NAME IS BLUE, AND I M GLAD YOU RE HERE.
GOTTA GET ME SOME
GOTTA GET ME SOME

GUITAR SOLO everyone does a vocal — PLATYPUS on air guitar.

SLIPPIN DOWN A CRACK INTO A CRYSTAL MINE.
STRAPPING ON A HEADLAMP, GOING BACK IN TIME.
STALACTITES GETTING UP WITH EYELESS FISH.
A PLATYPUS IS SMILIN : DID YOU GET YOUR WISH?
DID YOU GET YOU SOME?
GOTTA GET YOU SOME

I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF YOUR LOVE

I GOTTA GET ME SOME
SOME OF THAT LOVE
I GOTTA GET ME SOME
I DON T KNOW WHAT
I DON T KNOW WHAT
AND I DON T KNOW WHAT