

Day 7  
Apoplexy

by  
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*A bare stage, except for a small bench.*

*A man enters. He wears a suit, just off from work and no longer put together, the day has been rough. He carries a briefcase and a lunch box. He is silent, walks a bit, stops, looks around. From above, we hear an omnipresent voice who speaks offstage with authority and deepness.*

VOICE

I left work that day with a new found determination and energy.

*The man yawns.*

VOICE

A vigor and energy much like my youth. So many new ideas, I could hardly stand it.

*The man collapses onto the bench in exhaustion.*

VOICE

I looked forward to the bus ride home. Home such a wonderful thought. I couldn't wait!  
Then there was a sound that gave me a slight start.

*A loud BANG! The man absolutely panics, claws his way to the ground, ducks and covers.*

VOICE

"Oh my," I thought. What was that? I should investigate.

*The man hears the voice and shakes his head "No."*

VOICE

I should investigate.

*The man cowers under the bench.*

VOICE

INVESTIGATE!

*The man stumbles out from under the bench, gives a dirty look to the sky, mutters something under his breath in silence. He looks at the audience and points at the sky in disgust. He goes to investigate downstage.*

VOICE

I approached the source of the strange sound. And found a bird on the ground.

*The man looks at the ground. There's nothing there. He looks up to the sky for guidance, pointing and shrugging.*

VOICE

The bird on the ground.

*The man points and gestures as if to say, "Have a look for yourself, there's nothing there!"*

VOICE

Oh, for crying out loud.

*A solid, stiff bird falls from above, or from behind the audience given the theatre space. The man gives a thumbs up.*

VOICE

The poor bird. Surely not the source of the sound. But something must have killed him. Was it shot? I picked up the bird to have a better look.

*The man hesitates, then has an idea. He goes to his briefcase and pulls out a box of latex gloves and puts on a pair.*

VOICE

*(Clears his throat)*

Luckily, I'd taken a box of latex gloves from the hospital's supply closet.

*The man picks up the bird, examines it.*

VOICE

It had, I realized upon close inspection, not been shot. And if not shot, then what had befallen this poor bird? Perhaps it was apoplexy.

*The man reacts to the word "apoplexy," not understanding it. He looks confused.*

VOICE

*(Addressing the confused look)*

Apoplexy. You know. From the Latin apoplexia, derived from the Greek... It means a stroke. The bird had a stroke.

*A moment. The man gets it. He tosses the bird behind him.*

VOICE

I gingerly placed the poor thing on the ground and said a silent prayer.

*The man sneezes and sits on the bench.*

VOICE

Something about the bird concerned me. If the bird had indeed died of apoplexy and was not shot. What had made that terrible sound?

*The man nods and becomes concerned with that thought, looking around him. He sits.*

*A long pause.*

*He slowly, very slowly looks up toward the heavens. He gestures in expectation of the voice saying something. It doesn't. The man looks at the audience. He looks back to the heavens.*

*He gestures for the voice to speak. It doesn't. A moment. The man realizes he's still wearing the latex gloves. He hurriedly takes them off and shoves them into his pocket. He waits for the voice to speak. He waits. He waits longer.*

*The lights slowly fade as he continues to wait.*