

In the Cool Cool Cool

by

Peter Papadopoulos

© 2006 Peter Papadopoulos
Peter@PeterPop.com
(860) 655-0290

In the Cool Cool Cool

CHARACTERS:

DR HOPPER - male
NURSE - female
NARRATOR - female
PATIENT - male

SETTING:

Hospital operating room/Billy Hopper's bedroom.

TIME:

The present.

(IN THE DARK we hear the sound of ocean waves against a rocky shore. After several moments, the lights rise on a hospital operating room and the sound of the ocean fades. A DOCTOR, NURSE, and NARRATOR, wearing surgical gowns, masks, and rubber gloves, are gathered around the operating room table where they are performing surgery on a bloody PATIENT, who lies with an open stomach wound.)

NARRATOR

In the cool cool cool of the operating room circled three disappointed doctors and a pair of muffled nurses. all in white and all in blue. someone said something the others considered impromptu.

DR HOPPER

why, nurse, perhaps you'd like to go for a cup of coffee afterwards?

NURSE

coffee. java. the java hut. java the hut. star wars. drinking coffee when I was five. I wasn't old. enough. ought not to have been drinking. all that coffee. all that vodka. all that dewars. I'm in recovery. jesus cover over me. I know not what I do.

DR HOPPER

perhaps you'd like to go out for a drink? afterward? soon I think. the patient is dying.

NURSE

I nursed my baby back to health. she was sick. no one to help. all alone. the apartment floor. condemned. no more. no mas. rumble in the jungle. new york city. a woman and her child. I became a nurse.

DR HOPPER

nurse. perhaps you'd do me the favor. the linen closet. half an hour. if you are able. the patient. is nearly dead. the anesthesiologist. yawning. I am tired of fucking my wife. underneath the awning. of our very first time. mexico city. spinning on a dime. a long long time. ago. now we yawn. she cleans up the mess. this patient is a mess. nurse. clamp him. clean him up.

NARRATOR

In the cool cool cool of the operating room, they all breathed deep the fearful lies they weren't afraid to keep.

(ALL breathe in together. ALL exhale together.)

PATIENT

(rising from the table, addressing the audience, upbeat)

I am patient. the patient. must. be. patient. next time. I will not lie. a sunny sunday spent indoors. a christian bookstore. I'll be the manager.

(a moment of reverie, then somberly)

I'll learn how to manage. to get by. without lying.

(Remembering the gaping hole in his stomach, he makes his way back to the table.)

lying with a bullet in my belly.

(The PATIENT lies back down on the operating table.)

NURSE

doctor. we're losing him.

DR HOPPER

I fear you are right. I fear we will lose. him. I fear fear.

NURSE

doctor. hopper. that is your name. and the name of your popper. and your mother. who popped. you came out of the bubble. always troubled. she loved you double. now she's on zoloft.

DR HOPPER

I'm leaving my wife. strife. the death of a lovesong. no more good night sleep tight everything's all right. the kids are home crying. billy is smart. his heart. like a dart.

PATIENT

(looking up at NARRATOR)

"mommy, daddy don't want you? don't want you no more?"

(Pause.)

NARRATOR

in the linen closet the doctor deposits a lifetime of absentee fatherhood dreaming. the linen needs cleaning after all of that creaming. but the linens of the next lingering losing love love-affair line the next shelf.

DR HOPPER

the patient! the patient! clear! baboom. clear! baboom. a tree falls in the forest. baboom. no one to hear.

he's dead. he bled. too much. he's messy. too messy. too dirty. to go home to that house tonight. to move. in the morning.

(An organ quietly begins to wail.)

NARRATOR

(clasps her hands together)

in the mourning.

NURSE

time of death?

(checking her watch)

time of death.

he'll live again. wear nicer sweaters. acrylic.

(DR. HOPPER and NURSE look at each other. They drop their bloody gowns, gloves, and masks to the floor. They take hands. The organ cuts out. They make their way offstage together. The NARRATOR is left bloody beside the dead PATIENT.)

NARRATOR

(watching their exit)

In the cool cool cool of the operating room the doctor walked away when he wanted to run. the patient is dead western medicine lead in the poisonous stream that he drank from his sterile white bubble-boy dream. the families are weeping for what they have lost. they all thought they knew better. but who can know thoughts?

and driving through darkness
on the way home
for the last time
from surgery-sex that day
a crow grazed his saturn
the stars looked away.

the roadkill eat roadkill
the doctors get paid

somebody got eaten
somebody got shot
and somebody got laid.

and somebody's wife
ex-wife to be
read a DR SEUSS book
in a voice sad and sweet
in a small room by the shore.

(The sound of the ocean returns. The lights fade leaving only a small pool of light encircling the NARRATOR and PATIENT. The NARRATOR pulls the sheet up over the dead PATIENT, tucking him into bed.)

to little billy hopper
who awoke from his sleep
crying over and over
“mommy, daddy don’t want you? don’t want you no more?”

(Lights slowly fade on the NARRATOR and PATIENT as the sound of the ocean waves crashing against the shore rises thunderously in the dark. The sound of the ocean slowly fades.)

END OF PLAY.