

PLAY

STILL LIFE WITH NEWSPAPER AND PIPE

BY

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CHARACTERS

RAMON      artist 30

ANIS        singer 25

PHILLIPE    writer 32

/ overlapped speech

A Café-Tabac in Montmartre, Paris circa 1910. Square wooden table, with 3 cane chairs, a newspaper, a bottle of red wine, 3 wine glasses, a pipe, tobacco-pouch, box of matches. Still life. Two men and a woman in period costume sit at the table in a window with a view out to the street. ANIS is reading the newspaper.

PHILLIPE            Words. A sea of words!

RAMON                Where?

PHILLIPE            Everywhere, all about us!

RAMON                Written or spoken?

PHILLIPE            Both, the café chatter. Newspapers, journals, books, signs, posters, leaflets, tickets... menus...

RAMON                Visual, they're all visual!

PHILLIPE            Until you read them aloud.

RAMON                The trick then is how to capture the sound in our art.

PHILLIPE            Impossible.

RAMON                No. We just have to find a new language in paint!

PHILLIPE            We have a perfectly good one, if only you learnt how to use it!

RAMON                My dear friend, how can we possibly hope to change the world if you are satisfied with the way it is?

PHILLIPE            Art is the better medium for revolution! Words have to be too carefully ordered...

ANIS                  Printed words give me indigestion! (*Putting down the paper*)

RAMON                You should stop eating them.

PHILLIPE            Words are for writing

RAMON                Words are for reading.

ANIS                  Words are for singing! You have to taste a word in your mouth and shape your vocal chords around it.

PHILLIPE            You bring words more alive... when you sing their notes out loud...

ANIS                  (*Sings*) It's true, I do, I do, I do...

RAMON                    You read a /painting...

PHILLIPE                Read a person, an angle, a view

RAMON                    Who asked you?

ANIS                      Wine?

RAMON                    Yes, please.

PHILLIPE                Let him pour his own.

ANIS                      I don't mind.

PHILLIPE                I'm sure he doesn't either.

RAMON                    Just because he has to pour his own.

ANIS LAUGHS

ANIS                      He can reach.

PHILLIPE                As can he.

RAMON                    Let me propose a toast to us three...

ANIS                      To music!

PHILLIPE                To literature!

RAMON                    To art!

ANIS                      Enough. Drink!

RAMON                    But here's to us and each our strong held view!

PHILLIPE                It's how you see the world.

RAMON                    It's how we communicate it.

ANIS                      Our interpretation.

PHILLIPE                Everything is the same. Everything is different.

RAMON                    We will change the way people see the world!

ANIS                      Let them see it through our eyes and voice.

PHILLIPE                It starts right here around this table, it starts now.

RAMON                    Look here, we have a ready-made still life in front of us.

ANIS                    So we do. But such humdrum objects. Where are the flowers?  
The fruit?

RAMON                 No. This is new.

PHILLIPE             But an arrangement in a café?

ANIS                    They are lacking in any sense of colour...

RAMON                 What have need have we for colour when browns and greys  
predominate?

PHILLIPE             So a newspaper, a pipe, a bottle and glasses.

ANIS                    Not very promising. How do we make it sing?

RAMON                 Look, we each have a unique view point. What you see is the  
opposite of me. And if I stand (*he stands*) and look down from  
above I get a different view to both of you.

ANIS                    Let me see! (*She stands*)

PHILLIPE             What's all the fuss about? It's a tabletop for God's sake!  
(*Stands*)

RAMON                 Ah, yes but that's just it. A table top with a three-way point of  
view. If we can show it from all our sides and at once, we are  
speaking a whole new language.

ANIS                    Oh, I love it. Yes. A multi- fractured viewpoint.

PHILLIPE             I could try and write that.

RAMON                 So we sketch it from this side, then move around and sketch it  
on top from the other, then do it from above. So we have a  
three-way point of view still life with newspaper and pipe!

ANIS                    We need to start...

RAMON                 To break it...

PHILLIPE             Break it into start

ANIS                    Look here, and here,

RAMON                 The pictorial plane shat-ters...

PHILLIPE             Fractures,

ANIS                    Collapses into a heap.

RAMON                 But still we recognise.

ANIS	Bottle, glasses,
PHILLIPE	Pipe!
RAMON	Newspaper, torn collage/ stuck on.
PHILLIPE	Wood grain of table...
ANIS	Glass bottle prism.
RAMON	Overlapped /goblet glass...
PHILLIPE	Box of matches.
ANIS	Tumbling blocks /of shaded voids...
RAMON	Vortex, caves, / lozenges,
PHILLIPE	Ice-like see through blocks.
ANIS	Shock of lines. Not knowing/ where to look.
RAMON	A moving cacophony of /shapes, reinventing.
ANIS	A concerto of sound crashing /through solid matter.
PHILLIPE	Drum roll, saxophone, /cymbal clash.
RAMON	Doors and windows /opening, closing.
ANIS	The pure unaccompanied wail of a solo voice.
PHILLIPE	The calm contemplative nature /of repeated motifs.
RAMON	Low key monotone browns, /greys and greens.
ANIS	Music notations and collage/ of torn scores.
PHILLIPE	Painting texture.
RAMON	The nicotine stained tables of /café tabacs.
ANIS	The all night music clubs playing/ live till 2am.
PHILLIPE	Clash of glass as /cheers is said.
RAMON	Another bottle emptied.
ANIS	Cigarette rolled and lit.
PHILLIPE	A struck match /burning sulphur.
RAMON	Hiss of gas lamps flaming/ from the walls.

ANIS                   The shrieks of prostitutes /from the Bordellos.

PHILLIPE             A glass is dropped.

RAMON                 The green fairy glow of Absinthe!

ANIS                   The stringing of a fiddle.

PHILLIPE             The singing of the regulars.

RAMON                 Air fills with smoke and laughter.

ANIS                   We kiss and you have a fumble.

PHILLIPE             Bits of paper ephemera torn and stuck on.

RAMON                 Thick textured paint applied with relish.

ANIS                   A song at closing time on the table.

PHILLIPE             So much to drink I forget who I am.

RAMON                 I look and look again and can't stop.

ANIS                   Going dizzy with the busy /overlapping lines!

PHILLIPE             I get to let my head have a little /table sleep.

RAMON                 Time to leave when we've squeezed /as much as we dare.

ANIS                   I sing till my voice is hoarse or I forget the words/ whichever comes first.

RAMON                 I fall to sleep on the floor. But am woken/ once more.

ANIS                   We make our merry way home and crash en masse our three viewpoints suddenly becoming one.

RAMON                 Goodnight.

ANIS                   Turn out the light! Can't a lady undress in peace!

RAMON                 I should certainly hope so!

BLACKOUT

