

TOCK, TALK, TOCK

by Tami Canaday

At rise: *HOWARD is standing at a bus stop.
HE is slightly drunk.*

HOWARD

The bus is always late. My star is shining and what do I have to do? Wait for a bus. *(Lurches around the bus stop. Pulls out a notebook and pencil from bag . Looks at his watch)* Ten after two. *(Writes. Looks around)* Bus stop. *(Looks around)* Dirt is settling into my nose, into my ears. *(Looks at the red plastic cup on the bench)* Into my cup.

*(He takes a drink from the red plastic cup.
Puts the cup down and writes. ROBIN enters. SHE stands at the bus stop and watches HOWARD with interest. HOWARD furiously writes. He looks up)*

HOWARD

You again? Think I should say more?

ROBIN

I don't think there's any more to say.

HOWARD

How do you know?

ROBIN

Then why did you ask?

HOWARD

Forgive me. Piss ass! Where's the bus? The god-damned forty-four. Feels like I've been waiting for hours. *(Puts away the pencil and notebook)* You don't have to stand here.

ROBIN

I don't have a choice.

HOWARD

Please, I didn't plan any of this. I'm not a man who can pull out my phone and know what my day is gonna be like. Each little hour marked like a command. But, my days start with a prayer, did I tell you? "Please God, make sure I have enough to drink and that I never give my life away as blueprint for someone else." I can't help you.

ROBIN

Howard, I'm catching the fifty-six to Denver.

HOWARD

That's it?

ROBIN

Yeah.

HOWARD

Then it's all settled. *(Slurps a drink from his cup, pulls out the pen and notebook, and starts writing again. ROBIN pulls out a paperback from her backpack and starts reading. A beat)* All right! You can come with me. Just remember, I am what I am.

ROBIN

I know.

(SHE puts the book away and eagerly stands next to HOWARD)

HOWARD

This is too confining. I'd rather walk.

ROBIN

Easier to ride.

HOWARD

Sst! I may not be the best tutor, a best example of what is, but if you agree to go with me, Robin . . . then we're walking.

ROBIN

Listen, I only agree to this 'cause I don't have anywhere else to go right now, and I'm hungry.

HOWARD

Oh? Then go back up East Colfax and sell your hand-me-downs with those . . . those . . . those women. *(Imitates in his best female Asian-American voice)* "Mister, we got men's shirts. One buck. Girl sun dresses. Pretty. Fifty cent for you." *(Normal voice)* Geez, what would I want with a sun dress? **(continued . . .)**

