

"Bitter Fragments"

by

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(A Stage Play with Multi-Media)

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SCENE ONE

HOUSE LIGHTS.

CENTER STAGE is an empty pedestal, approximately two feet high. Nearby are two, wooden ladders of different heights.

STAGE LEFT is a work table with sketches, a leather bag with sculptor's tools, and a large sketch pad.

STAGE RIGHT is a short bench with other tools and sketches.

ABOVE is a skylight, through which sunlight and occasionally rain fall.

Bach Solo #1 for cello plays, and now the lights FADE DOWN.

Cello plays briefly in the dark, now the lights FADE UP.

ROBERTO is now on the pedestal, contained in what appears to be a block of raw, grayish marble.

A statue under construction, Roberto is visible only from the neck up at this point. The rest is hidden within the marble.

His eyes closed, Roberto appears to be sleeping.

Michelangelo stands nearby, sketching Roberto furiously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michel wears work clothes and a leather apron with pockets.
 ABOVE HIM IS A VIDEO SCREEN ON WHICH VARIOUS IMAGES APPEAR.
 ON THE SCREEN a charcoal image of Roberto begins to appear.
 The charcoal image unpacks and develops furiously now.
 WE REALIZE that this is what Michelangelo is sketching.

MICHELANGELO

You have to study the stone,
 you have to see it present and
 past, in part and whole, in hair,
 skin, lips, bone. Imagine the lure
 of life new-found, in hands, feet,
 taste, sound. Something to do with
 tension and size, human heart and
 stifled cries. You have to listen
 for the sound, starts so small but
 mighty it grows. For in the
 beginning love's a thing that
 barely whispers fair, yet unfolds
 vast and uncontained, a blessed,
 fiery, damning prayer. Kissing and
 burning all with its' stain. Till
 all are burned and all are kissed
 and nothing pure remains.

Putting down the sketch, Michel pockets a hammer and chisel.
 He drags the taller ladder over to Roberto, then looks up.
 Michel scampers up the ladder, surprising agile for his age.
 The Bach cello piece fades out now quietly and is gone.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Creation is an intimate act. It
 doesn't take place between
 strangers.

Drawing close, the old man studies Roberto's face carefully.
 Alone, Michel makes no attempt to hide his own eccentricity.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

There it is, character. Can't hide
 it. Oh, no. You're going to be a
 real heart-breaker, I can see it
 already. This really is the best
 part. Seeing it, seeing you, now,
 at the start.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michelangelo blows a little dust from Roberto's face.

Taking up the chisel and mallet, he prepares to work.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Look at us. Human beings. Men.
What are we? A myriad of
imperfections, lusting for a
moment, one moment of true beauty.
Longing. Look at you.

Roberto starts, opens his eyes, childlike and innocent.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What?

ROBERTO

Be careful.

MICHELANGELO

Since when?

ROBERTO

Since when what?

MICHELANGELO

Since when this sudden concern for
my being careful?

ROBERTO

Well, it is my face.

MICHELANGELO

No one's disputing that.

ROBERTO

I just want you to be careful.

Michelangelo begins to work around Roberto's neck area.

MICHELANGELO

Shines through.

ROBERTO

What?

MICHELANGELO

Character. It shines through.

ROBERTO

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO
Nothing. I'm reminding myself to
be careful.

ROBERTO
Don't make fun.

MICHELANGELO
I'm not.

ROBERTO
You talk like I'm slow. It's not
nice.

Michel sees something in Roberto's eyes that strikes him.

MICHELANGELO
"Mea Culpa". That wasn't my
intention. You have great
potential, you know that?

ROBERTO
Really?

MICHELANGELO
Oh, yes. I can see it already.

ROBERTO
What can you see?

MICHELANGELO
I'll tell you later.

ROBERTO
Tell me now.

MICHELANGELO
No, you'll get spoiled.

ROBERTO
Please, what do you see?

MICHELANGELO
Talent. The single, greatest gift
a man can have.

(Beat)
Do this with your mouth.

Michel does something with his lips that Roberto imitates.

ROBERTO
What's that for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO

Nothing. I just wanted to see you do it.

ROBERTO

You're silly.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, I am but don't tell anyone. I have this awful reputation to live up to. Lift your chin. Hold still.

Michelangelo works on Roberto's throat now, carefully.

ROBERTO

I don't believe you.

MICHELANGELO

It's true. People have been hearing about this terrible ogre named Michelangelo for so many years that they're expecting something really spectacular and when it's just me that shows up they all look a little disappointed.

ROBERTO

They don't know you.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, I think they know me pretty well.

ROBERTO

Not like I do.

MICHELANGELO

"Touchè"

ROBERTO

What's "touchè"?

MICHELANGELO

It means you scored a point. Now hold still and I *mean* hold still.

Roberto tries to hold still, it isn't easy for him.

ROBERTO

Oh. And what do you do with points?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO

Add them up. When you get enough,
you can trade them in for something
special.

ROBERTO

Like what?

MICHELANGELO

I don't know. Whatever you want.

The statue makes a sound, exasperated, he doesn't understand.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Don't worry, you'll figure it out.
You're smart.

ROBERTO

"Thank you."

(Beat)

Are we almost done?

MICHELANGELO

No, not yet. We still have a long
ways to go.

ROBERTO

Oh.

MICHELANGELO

Hold still.

Michelangelo works, Roberto says nothing, trying to be still.

ROBERTO

Father?

MICHELANGELO

Mmmm?

ROBERTO

How old are you?

MICHELANGELO

Older than you.

ROBERTO

And how old am I?

MICHELANGELO

Younger than me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTO
How much younger?

MICHELANGELO
Keep asking these questions and
we're never going to get anything
done.

ROBERTO
Sorry.

Michel works, this "being still" stuff is killing Roberto.

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
It's just that you said you were a
big, fat ogre for a long time and I
was wondering just HOW long?

MICHELANGELO
I didn't say "big" and "fat".

ROBERTO
You did.

MICHELANGELO
I did not, don't exaggerate.

ROBERTO
That is what you said.

MICHELANGELO
I did NOT! Don't be tiny-minded.
Little people ALWAYS exaggerate, it
gives them an inflated sense of
importance.

Roberto gets upset, starts moving his head around wildly.

ROBERTO
I am not "little"!

MICHELANGELO
I didn't mean it like that-

ROBERTO
-I am not "tiny-minded"!-

MICHELANGELO
-That's not what I-

ROBERTO
-I'm not stupid! I know what that
means-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michel takes a breath, tries to stay calm, Roberto fumes.

MICHELANGELO

I would never call you stupid.

Turning away, Roberto gets embarrassed by his own behavior.

ROBERTO

I just wanted to know how old you are.

MICHELANGELO

Why?

ROBERTO

I don't know, is it a secret?
Because you said we should never
have secrets from each other.

Softening, Michelangelo whispers in Roberto's ear.

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

No!

MICHELANGELO

Yes. Can we go back to work now?

Michelangelo continues on the neck, Roberto thinks about it.

ROBERTO

That's old.

Michel really loses his cool AND his balance on the ladder.

Flailing a little, he manages NOT to topple off his perch.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, I know!

ROBERTO

Sorry. I'll be good.

MICHELANGELO

Promise?

ROBERTO

Cross my heart.

Roberto looks at his heart, unable to cross it himself.

Looking up at Michel, Roberto smiles, all doe eyed and sorry.

Melting a little, Michel crosses Roberto's heart for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO
Now hold still. *Please.*

Winning a point, Roberto decides to hold still now.
Sighing, finally, Michelangelo goes back to his work.

FADE OUT.

SCENE TWO

Darkness, the sounds of chiseling grow a little stronger.
Lights grow, chiseling fades, we see the two figures working.
Michelangelo has removed his vest and rolled up his sleeves.
Roberto's left arm is now free from the stone and defined.
The two quarrel, Roberto averting his face back and forth.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Hold still.

ROBERTO
No.

Roberto's command of language is now greater than before.
His ego is also greater, as evidenced by his behavior.
Michel struggles to work on Roberto's face but with no luck.

MICHELANGELO
Hold still.

ROBERTO
I won't.

MICHELANGELO
Stop it!

Roberto covers his face, an enfante terrible for sure now.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Take your hand away.

ROBERTO
No! Not until you apologize.

MICHELANGELO
I have nothing to apologize for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTO

You do. You called me stupid.

Michel tries to remove Robert's hand but it's fruitless.

MICHELANGELO

I did *not*. I said you were "naive", it's not the same thing.

ROBERTO

Yes, it is.

MICHELANGELO

No, stupid means "lacking in intelligence" and naive means "childlike".

ROBERTO

I am not a child.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, yes you are.

ROBERTO

I don't like being criticized all the time.

MICHELANGELO

It is not "all the time". Look, if you're going to be in this line of work, you have to expect a little close examination, it comes with the territory.

ROBERTO

It didn't *feel* like criticism.

MICHELANGELO

That's all it was.

ROBERTO

It felt *personal*.

MICHELANGELO

I was not getting personal. Will you take your hand away?

ROBERTO

No!

MICHELANGELO

You are such a child! A Goddamned child!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Roberto points his finger at Michelangelo with impunity.

ROBERTO

There, you just said it! That's personal!

MICHELANGELO

So what? It happens to be true, even if it's inconvenient. And don't you point that finger at ME!

Knowing he's crossed the line, Roberto stops pointing.

Turning away, Roberto retreats, but only for the moment.

ROBERTO

I'm not. What gives you the right to be so mean?

MICHELANGELO

Artistic license.

ROBERTO

Big words don't give you the right to be mean.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, they do.

(Beat.)

No, you're right, they don't.

ROBERTO

Is that an apology?

MICHELANGELO

No.

ROBERTO

I don't understand you.

MICHELANGELO

Nobody does. Get in line.

ROBERTO

You make things and then you resent them. Why is that?

Michel is caught off guard by this brilliant counter attack.

Now it is *his* turn to retreat. Mouth twitching, Michel says nothing in response, wipes dust from his hands.

Roberto senses the change, smiling, presses the attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Why?
(Beat.)
WHY?

MICHELANGELO

Because you're beautiful and I'm not.

ROBERTO

I don't understand.

MICHELANGELO

Please. Anyone with eyes can see that I'm ugly.

Michel and Roberto examine each other now in a new way.

Roberto understands more than he'd like to admit here.

ROBERTO

Explain "ugly".

MICHELANGELO

The opposite of beautiful.

ROBERTO

Explain "beautiful".

MICHELANGELO

The opposite of me.

ROBERTO

That's too, confusing. Can you..?

MICHELANGELO

Beauty is, it's denial of the commonplace, it's a love of aesthetic values, it's what you work for, the angelic, the ideal, it's a..

Roberto looks at Michel helplessly, not grasping his words.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Oh, shit. *Wait.*

Michel clammers down the ladder, not so agile as before.

Finding his leather bag, Michel searches for something.

He finds a handled, vanity mirror with no lens in the frame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Climbing back up the ladder, Michel gives Roberto the mirror.

NOTE: The actors face should read through the empty frame.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Look at yourself, in the glass.
 You can see your reflection. Look!

Roberto looks at himself in the mirror, becomes transfixed.

This is a formative experience, this sight of himself.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 That is you, that is beautiful.
 See the lines? The inherent
 tension in the composition? How it
 all ties perfectly together? Now
 look on me.

Michel has to almost tear the mirror away from Roberto.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Look! See what's different? The
 lack of harmony? Of balance? The
 apparent lack of *any* planning
 whatsoever in *any* part of my face?
 My nose? I am the night to your
 day.

ROBERTO
 I see that you are, different.

MICHELANGELO
 Very different. By almost *any*
 standard I'm an ugly man, who's
 only connection with beauty, is his
 lifelong obsession with it.

ROBERTO
 You shouldn't say that.

MICHELANGELO
 Don't spare my feelings, I know the
 truth, convenient or otherwise.
 And, *yes*, I do resent my creations,
 or at least some of them. It's
 very perceptive of you to see that.

ROBERTO
 But how can you resent what you
 create? What you love?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO

Who said anything about love?

ROBERTO

You did. It is in your eyes.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, yes. I suppose.

(Beat)

Where have all my green days gone?

ROBERTO

I don't know.

MICHELANGELO

Shh. That was a rhetorical question.

ROBERTO

"Reetoorical".

MICHELANGELO

Means I don't really want an answer.

ROBERTO

"Rhetorical". You really don't?

MICHELANGELO

Not at this stage in my life. Let's do a little work.

ROBERTO

If you want.

MICHELANGELO

If I want? What about you?

ROBERTO

I was enjoying our conversation.

Michelangelo begins to work on Roberto's right shoulder.

Turning away, Roberto examines himself in the mirror.

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Explain to me about feelings.

MICHELANGELO

What are you going to do with feelings?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERTO

How does it work with love and
resentment? Is it like beauty and
being vain?

MICHELANGELO

I don't understand your question.

ROBERTO

Well, I might be missing something
but it seems to me that what you,
meaning the world, what you call
"emotions" are really nothing but a
series of contradictory impulses
and reactions, to *other* impulses
and reactions, that sooner or
later, land you in a place that
causes you pain. Sometimes a lot.

MICHELANGELO

You think of this all by yourself?

ROBERTO

Mostly, yes.

MICHELANGELO

And what's your point?

ROBERTO

I'm not sure, I'm still trying to
work it out.

MICHELANGELO

Your point?-

ROBERTO

-I'm just trying to understand-

MICHELANGELO

- *Is what?*

ROBERTO

How can something bad come out of
something good?

MICHELANGELO

Oh, baby. Like the seasons change.

Blinking, Roberto struggles with the concept of "seasons".

Michel realizes this word is not in Roberto's lexicon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 It's like the seasons, the trees,
 the leaves, you remember trees?

Holding up his hand, Roberto is equally mystified by "tree".

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Of course not. Shit. Wait a minute.

Michel begins yet another journey down to the floor.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Fucking ladders, spent half my life
 going up and down them.

Down on the floor, he finds his bag, digs around in it.

Taking his sketch pad and charcoal, he climbs back up.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Too damned old for this.

Michel draws, holding the pad so Roberto can see the sketch.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 "Tree?" Remember?

ROBERTO
 Yes!

MICHELANGELO
 The trunk, branches, the leaves.
 There's a bird. Now it's spring
 and there are buds that turn into
 leaves, it's the season of love.
 Everything is new. You hold
 someone's hand and anything is
 possible. Anything. Summer comes,
 it gets hotter, you stay under the
 branches for shelter, from the sun,
 the rain. The tree is a wonderful
 place you share with someone. At
 night, under the tree, you make
 love. Nothing could be better.
 Slowly, autumn comes, the world
 changes, grows colder, the person
 you love starts looking around for
 someplace else to be, someone else
 to be with. This never makes any
 sense. You quarrel, your person
 leaves, it gets colder still.
 Inside, you start to die, like the
 leaves. You miss your person.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

They don't return. As you look at the tree, you think about the times you spent together, you think about their smile, their hands, their eyes and suddenly the tree is no longer a wonderful place but a torment. The winter comes and it is very cold and there is no one to keep you warm. One night, when it's so cold and you're so alone, you get angry and chop the tree down and burn it. You do it to stay alive. Eventually, the spring comes but it's not the same. The tree is gone, the birds pass you by. All that's left are memories. Fragments, of what might have been. Does this answer your question?

ROBERTO

Yes.

MICHELANGELO

Good.

ROBERTO

Are you all right?

MICHELANGELO

Yes, of course. I'm just old and tired of explaining myself. Give me that damned thing.

He snatches the mirror away from Roberto, enough already!

Michel climbs down wearily now, eases himself onto the bench.

He looks at himself in the mirror, not a comforting sight.

ROBERTO

You're not old.

MICHELANGELO

I thought you said I was?

ROBERTO

I was just teasing.

MICHELANGELO

Christ, are you a bad liar.

ROBERTO

Sorry, I'll get better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO

I'm sure you will. You'll have lots of practice. Tell me I'm not old again.

ROBERTO

You're not old again.

MICHELANGELO

You're not developing a sense of humor are you?

ROBERTO

Am I funny?

MICHELANGELO

Not at all. I like it better when you're sincere.

ROBERTO

Why?

MICHELANGELO

Oh God, don't ask me to explain *that!* Sincerity is just better, trust me.

ROBERTO

All right.

Getting a pain in his arm, Michel puts down the mirror.

Michel gets up and stretches his arms back and forth.

Making a face, he continues to stretch his back and legs.

MICHELANGELO

I'm so much older than I ever intended to be. So much for my intentions.

ROBERTO

"The road to Hades is fraught with wood intentions".

MICHELANGELO

Good intentions. Where did you hear that?

ROBERTO

Your friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHELANGELO

Oh. Well, don't start quoting him.

ROBERTO

Why not? He seems very bright.

MICHELANGELO

He's more than bright, he's a genius if I ever met one. He just gets a little pious for me sometimes.

ROBERTO

I think he's interesting.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, that's one word for it.

ROBERTO

Don't you like him? I thought you were friends?

While the old man talks, Roberto gets an itch on his nose.

Like a child, he begins to explore the source of the itch.

MICHELANGELO

We are friends. He just gets on my nerves sometimes. He's a fabulous painter, a great artist.

Roberto discovers the itch is, in fact, *inside* his nose.

With his finger, he begins to pursue his nostril's interior.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Like I said, he's a genius in every sense of the word. But he spends so much of his time on these inventions, these complex machines. He's got this obsession with conquering the elements or something, it really is *quite odd*. Machines! He's got this one machine that he claims will fly through the air, if you can imagine such a thing? Seriously, he says this contraption can fly through the air with a man inside it. Go figure that!

Now Roberto begins to pick his nose, with full determination!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And he's got another one he claims will go under the water, with people inside. Breathing! Really, what's the point? What are you going to do? Look at the fish? Now I can appreciate all the work involved, from an engineering point of view but where's he going with it? Even if these things do work, you KNOW, just know, some bastards are going to take his ideas and turn them into weapons. That's what always happens. Somebody with vision comes up with something fantastic and all they can think about is how to KILL PEOPLE with it! That's what's wrong with the world. Entirely too much killing.

Michel looks at himself again in the mirror, sees something.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

That's why I make art. To change the world.

Catching Roberto in the mirror, Michel becomes incensed.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Guilty and embarrassed, Roberto turns away, hides his finger.

ROBERTO

Nothing.

MICHELANGELO

You were picking your nose. That's not what I gave you an arm for!

ROBERTO

I had an itch. I was just scratching.

MICHELANGELO

You had your finger up your nose to the knuckle!

ROBERTO

I was not!

MICHELANGELO

Don't you look at me and lie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROBERTO

I'm not. I, I've seen other people do it.

MICHELANGELO

What other people?

ROBERTO

One of your assistants.

MICHELANGELO

Which one?

ROBERTO

I, I don't know their names.

MICHELANGELO

Liar, you do! Anyway, it doesn't matter, we're talking about you. I don't want you doing it because it's vulgar and ugly and you're *not like everybody else!* I'll be *damned* if I am going to give you the benefit of a life's work, a life's understanding of beauty and form and watch you do something like that!

Michelangelo stumbles momentarily, something's not right.

ROBERTO

Why do you have to be *so superior all the time?! I just did it once!*

MICHELANGELO

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME! I have not reached this point in my life, to have to argue, to have another *ingrate*, taking *everything* from me and then telling me, arguing with ME about what the rules are! If you think that I am going to live through and put up with ANOTHER ONE LIKE HIM -

Running out of breath, Michel stops, bends over in pain.

ROBERTO

What is it? Michel? *Father?*

Now touching his left arm, Michel slowly moves to the bench.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
What's the matter? Are you all
right?

The old man sits, hunched over, calms himself, breathes.

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

MICHELANGELO
Just a pain, it will pass. I can't
let myself get upset like this, I
should know better. Just brings the
thing on.

ROBERTO
What is this thing?

MICHELANGELO
Pain.

ROBERTO
What causes this?

MICHELANGELO
My heart. Pieces of something, in
my heart.

ROBERTO
What is wrong with your heart?

MICHELANGELO
It's not just *my* heart, it's
everyone's. Never trust it. The
human heart is a fanatical beast,
it's capable of anything.

The sound of Michel's pain hangs heavy in the room.

Thinking this weakness, Roberto continues the chess game.

ROBERTO
It is the one called David. *He*
causes this.

MICHELANGELO
My God, don't I have any privacy?

ROBERTO
Sometimes you look at me and say
his name. Sometimes you speak to
him when you nap. I don't mean to
listen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MICHELANGELO

Please don't ask me about *this*. I can't talk about *this*.

ROBERTO

I am sorry, Father. Can I help you?

MICHELANGELO

No, nobody can. Don't pick your nose.

ROBERTO

I won't.

MICHELANGELO

Good. Maybe it sounds petty but it brings things up. Things I'd rather not think about.

ROBERTO

I won't, I promise.

MICHELANGELO

Please don't promise. Just don't do it.

Sitting up now, Michel stretches his left arm, rubs it.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Let this be a lesson to you. Never grow old, never fall in love, never have regrets.

ROBERTO

You have regrets?

MICHELANGELO

Like the stars, I can't count them all.

ROBERTO

Those are a lot of regrets.

MICHELANGELO

I don't regret my work. Any of it.

ROBERTO

You loved him, didn't you?

MICHELANGELO

Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

ROBERTO
 Didn't you?

MICHELANGELO
 Yes.

ROBERTO
 I can hear it. I can hear you
 loving him in your voice.

Michel starts to stand up, back to work, it takes an effort.

ROBERTO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Where is he now?

MICHELANGELO
 Gone. Some distant place.

ROBERTO
 Things were left unsaid?

MICHELANGELO
 A lifetime was left unsaid.

ROBERTO
 I will never leave you like that.

Taking tools from his apron pocket, Michel pushes forward.

MICHELANGELO
 You all leave. What does it matter
 how?

ROBERTO
 (Beat)
 I love you.

This stops Michel for a moment, it's such a loaded statement.

MICHELANGELO
 (Beat)
 I know. I love you too.

BLACK OUT, END
 OF SCENE.

SCENE THREE

The SOUND of chiseling grows faster, more insistent.

A second SOUND, one of human cries mingles with the first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON SCREEN, a series of images dance with the rhythmic sounds. Human images simultaneously terrible and divine in form! Their faces are dark with emotion, their eyes huge and wild! The figures are clearly in peril, high emotion, and ecstasy. A giant serpent now enters the frames, it's coils enormous. The serpent attacks, catching the figures in it giant coils. Red mouths gape, teeth gnash, toes, fingers clutch for air! Their bodies ripe with sin, the serpent takes them all! Ecstasy now turns to despair, agony and is all consuming. The images and sounds come to a jarring collision on screen. The screen GOES BLACK. On stage, LIGHTS GO UP in real time. Roberto is now free of the stone, all the way to his waist. Sketching in his pad, Michel considers Roberto with new eyes. The evolving statue studies himself in the vanity mirror.

ROBERTO

This is an *obsession* with you.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, here we go again with the big words.

ROBERTO

I know what it means.

MICHELANGELO

Do you?

ROBERTO

Of course I do. I'm not a dummy.

MICHELANGELO

No one called you a dummy.

ROBERTO

You think everyone is a dummy, compared to you.

MICHELANGELO

Not "everyone."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBERTO

It puts people off, this attitude of yours. That is why you're not liked.

MICHELANGELO

I'm not liked because I'm better than they are. It's called *jealousy*.

ROBERTO

It's called *being a snob*.

MICHELANGELO

Boy, *somebody* has got a bug up their ass today.

ROBERTO

No, they don't.

(Beat)

And what if they do?

MICHELANGELO

Jesus Christ! When did you start being so fucking critical?!

ROBERTO

I'm not being "critical", you're being "touchy". You're the one who says you've got to be thick-skinned in this business.

MICHELANGELO

Just my point. Art is not a business, it's a pursuit.

ROBERTO

If it's not a business, then it's a hobby.

MICHELANGELO

Are you trying to imply that what I do is a -

ROBERTO

- I'm only saying that you alienate members of your own community and it doesn't help you in your work! They make trouble for you.

Irritated by the conversation, Michel snaps his charcoal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHELANGELO

Shit! Why do these goddamn
charcoals keep breaking?! Why do
they have to make everything so
cheap?!

Flinging down the charcoal and pad, Michelangelo fumes.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Fuck them anyway! Fucking art
community! They stick up for their
friends and badmouth everybody
else! What kind of community is
that?

ROBERTO

That's what I'm saying! You cut
off your nose to spite your face.

MICHELANGELO

Leave my nose out of it!

Michel heads to the work table, hunts for another charcoal.

ROBERTO

You *always* have to be right and
people can't *stand* that about you!
You never give in, you never give
up and you never put out! You know
it wouldn't *kill* you to flatter
somebody, anybody, just once in a
while, as a good will gesture.

His back turned, Michel makes faces at Roberto like a child.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

And every now and then you might
actually consider being *wrong* about
something! Just for a little
variety! Leonardo manages to be a
little humble and he doesn't have
the troubles you do.

Michel tries to hide how much this comparison galls him.

He continues hunting for a new charcoal, making more faces.

For emphasis, Roberto drops the mirror, just for a moment.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

You know I'm right.

Testily, Michel starts to sharpen a charcoal with his knife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MICHELANGELO

Leonardo's a better politician than I am, what of it? *Not everything discipline of man should serve the political aim.* Just because Aristotle says something doesn't necessarily make it so.

ROBERTO

He's *Aristotle*.

MICHELANGELO

I know who he is, that's not my point.

ROBERTO

What's your point?

MICHELANGELO

He lived over a thousand years ago, how do we know *what* he said?

ROBERTO

It's *written down*.

MICHELANGELO

Sure, it's written down, *by somebody*. And then written down by somebody else, and copied by somebody else and then translated by somebody else. A thousand years later how do we know *what* Aristotle said? Maybe he didn't say anything at all. Maybe all these somebodies just put a lot of words in his mouth and because he's "Aristotle" the rest of us just assume it's all true.

ROBERTO

That's, a disturbing idea.

MICHELANGELO

Of course it is. And one that could be applied to almost any writing. Even the gospels.

The mirror forgotten, Roberto is now borderline speechless.

ROBERTO

That might be the most awful thing anyone has ever said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MICHELANGELO

That's why I'm not a very good politician. But if you're really that fond of Leonardo and *his* way doing things, I suggest you walk over to *his* studio and let HIM finish you!

ROBERTO

I didn't mean it like that. What I said, I said out of concern for you.

MICHELANGELO

Thanks for your concern.

ROBERTO

How did you ever get like this?

MICHELANGELO

Like what?

ROBERTO

So jaded, *and bitter*.

Turning on his prodigy, Michel's voice becomes AMPLIFIED.

If it wasn't clear before, this is no ordinary human being.

The power of Michel's voice should rival that of Prometheus.

MICHELANGELO

I am not BITTER! I am ALIVE! How dare you say that? Look at me. I have survived the Medici family, Popes, Catholicism, sexism, old age, civil wars, a broken heart, the Sistine Chapel and the skyrocketing price of marble! YOU LOOK AT ME! You stand there on your pedestal that I put you on, making faces and you have the audacity, the gall, to call me bitter? *I am not bitter, I am a survivor! What the hell are you?!*

ROBERTO

(Pause)

An unfinished piece of work.

His point made, Michel's voice goes back to human size.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

MICHELANGELO

In more ways than one.

Michel returns to sharpening his charcoal, Roberto considers.

ROBERTO

It must be difficult.

MICHELANGELO

(Pause)

What's that?

ROBERTO

To be so brilliant.

MICHELANGELO

More than you'll ever know.

ROBERTO

I might find out. If we ever finish.

MICHELANGELO

We'll finish.

Pausing, Michel stares at some spot in the distance.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I'm not there yet.

ROBERTO

Where is that?

MICHELANGELO

The end of the road.

ROBERTO

You can be so morbid sometimes.

MICHELANGELO

At least I'm not bitter.

Momentarily disgusted, Michel throws down the charcoal.

Looking around, he finds his leather bag and digs in it.

Michel finds a bottle of wine, along with bread and cheese.

Softly, in the BG, begins the SOUND of RAIN, slowly building.

ROBERTO

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

MICHELANGELO

Taking a break, I'm hungry.

ROBERTO

Well, don't get drunk.

MICHELANGELO

I'm not going to get drunk, I'm hungry, I want something to eat. That's all right with you, I take it?

Conspicuous silence from Roberto here, he merely waits.

In vain, the old man pulls on the cork with his bad teeth.

Annoyed, Michel pulls the cork with his dusty, tired hands.

ROBERTO

Tight cork?

Not turning, Michel mouths a sarcastic response silently.

Michel sits on the bench, eats, drinks from the bottle.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Tell me a story.

MICHELANGELO

Don't know any stories.

Michelangelo takes a bite of cheese, drinks a little more.

ROBERTO

A short one?

MICHELANGELO

I'm eating.

ROBERTO

Please.

MICHELANGELO

No.

Roberto listens.

ROBERTO

What's that sound?

MICHELANGELO

It's raining. Just the rain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

Michelangelo crosses to the skylight, opens it. A little rain falls in. Roberto and Michelangelo listen to the sound of the rain.

ROBERTO
Tell me about him.

MICHELANGELO
No. I've told you not to ask.

Michelangelo crosses back to the bench, sits, eats a little more, puts the food down, drinks, listening to the rain.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
I wish Leonardo would invent a machine that could travel through time. So I could start over. Change all the stupid things I've said and done. See him again, at the beginning, when we were both young and new. I could take back my mistakes, change the past. Wash it all clean like the rain.

Michelangelo drinks.

ROBERTO
Would you really live your life, all over again?

MICHELANGELO
Not all of it. Just parts. Some philosophers think that your whole life is equally important, but I think it's only certain parts. Things you said or didn't say. Moments of weakness or pride. The silence. The worst thing that can ever come between you and someone you love, isn't distance or other people or even time. It's the silence, that takes over your life, day by day and week by week. Till it becomes your life. I look back on all the things I've done, accomplished, and it's not enough. Nothing I can do or say in any language can fill up that silence between he and I. And it deafens me. All around me is a world, I see it everyday but cannot hear it. Because of that awful, screaming, silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

ROBERTO

Let's work, Michel. You'll feel better if we work.

MICHELANGELO

In a little while.

ROBERTO

Come on, you never drink this early.

Michelangelo stands.

MICHELANGELO

Stop pushing me. I know what's on your mind. You're like all the rest, you can't wait to get rid of me.

ROBERTO

That's not true.

MICHELANGELO

You'll take everything I've got to offer and then you'll be out that door like a shot. You're all like that, selfish.

ROBERTO

Stop it.

Michelangelo picks up a piece of charcoal, gestures wildly with it, drawing in the air.

MICHELANGELO

Why should I? You never stop, you never let up! "Work, Michel, work! Do for me, do for me!" Egomaniacs, all of you! You think I'm a fool?! You think I haven't played this game before? You think you're so unique?

ROBERTO

Why are you being so cruel? I'm not the one who hurt you.

MICHELANGELO

Really? You're sure about that?

ROBERTO

You're a great man, a great artist!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

MICHELANGELO

Oh, yes, flatter me now. That's a good idea.

ROBERTO

I know you've been hurt. That's why you're like this.

MICHELANGELO

You don't know anything.

Michelangelo hurls the charcoal at Roberto, misses.

ROBERTO

But it wasn't me! I love you. It wasn't me that hurt you, it was the others. It was David.

MICHELANGELO

Don't you bandy that name around, you don't have the right!

Michelangelo grabs a sketch from the table, destroys it violently. Michelangelo finally heads back to the bench and the bottle.

ROBERTO

And you don't have the right to make me pay for what others have done to you. It's not fair. I didn't start this, you did. It is not my fault. And I'm sick of you pulling the cloth out from under me, every time I say the wrong thing.

(Beat)

I'm sorry for your pain, I truly am. I just thought you'd feel better if you worked.

Michel drinks.

MICHELANGELO

Think again.

ROBERTO

Please don't drink anymore.

MICHELANGELO

Why? What's it to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

ROBERTO

It's not even lunch time. And I hate it when you're drunk. You get mean.

MICHELANGELO

No arguing that.

ROBERTO

You should have more respect for yourself.

MICHELANGELO

Are you my mother now?

ROBERTO

They laugh at you.

MICHELANGELO

What?

ROBERTO

The others, the ones you don't respect. When you're drunk, they laugh and mock you behind your back.

MICHELANGELO

Nobody laughs at me!

ROBERTO

"The great artist, feeling sorry for himself." That's what they say.

MICHELANGELO

You're the one who's getting nasty now.

ROBERTO

Not nasty, honest. Your best friend says the same thing.

MICHELANGELO

He never said, anything of the kind.

ROBERTO

Yes he did.

MICHELANGELO

When?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

ROBERTO

Two nights ago. It was late. You were very drunk. I'm not surprised you don't remember.

MICHELANGELO

Remember what I said about lecturing me?

ROBERTO

I remember everything. I don't drink.

Michelangelo rises momentarily.

MICHELANGELO

Well now, you can take your sober ASS right over there, you righteous bastard and stand in line, in that unending line of projects and see how quick you get finished!

ROBERTO

I don't want to go over there, I want to stay here. And anyway, I couldn't if I wanted to.

MICHELANGELO

Damned right about that.

ROBERTO

I want you to finish what you started.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, do you think I can?

ROBERTO

I know you can.

Michelangelo looks away, sits back down on the bench. Drinks from the bottle. Michelangelo begins to drift, the alcohol accessing a hidden cabinet in his mind.

MICHELANGELO

It shines through.

ROBERTO

What?

MICHELANGELO

Character. It shines through. Through stone and flesh.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

It's the one common denominator uniting all forms. It cannot be disguised or avoided, it cannot be denied. In it's expression all singular aspects of humanity are found and released, it is the only true definition of man and his creations. It is the one clean cut that reveals us all. Without it, we are nothing but bitter fragments.

ROBERTO

Why don't you take a nap?

MICHELANGELO

Oh, fuck you.

ROBERTO

We can work later. Just take your shoes off and..

MICHELANGELO

..FUCK YOU! "My friend." What friends? Nothing but a bunch of admirers, detractors, sycophants, employees, masquerading as friends. They're not the same thing. Friends in this world, far and few between.

Michelangelo lies down on the bench, faces out.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Let them laugh. We'll see who laughs last. We'll see who remembers THEM in a hundred years. Five hundred. You think it's easy being me? Always explaining myself to fools. So much of my life, wasted, on people, by people, who don't understand, don't want to understand, don't give a damn! Goddamned Medicis, Goddamned POPES! Stupid people with too much money, that's what's wrong with the world. Years of my life, gone. Where the hell has it all gone?

ROBERTO

Shhh...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

MICHELANGELO

...I want it all back. Days,
trees, the rain. It used to be
mine. I want to be young again. I
want to dance in the rain again. I
want, I want...

Michelangelo sleeps and Roberto watches. The sound of rain
falling softly. LIGHTS FADE.

LIGHTS FADE,
BLACK OUT.

SCENE FOUR

It is night and a storm is fast approaching.

Roberto still on his pedestal, now released from the stone to
knee level.

There are flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder.

ON SCREEN, we see Roberto's form in close up, illuminated in
the lightning flashes - his thighs, his abdomen, his chest,
his handsome face and finally his burning eyes.

Roberto studies himself intently in the vanity mirror.

The storm grows closer, rain starts to fall through the
skylight now, lightly at first but then heavier.

As developed as he is, Roberto is still unable to move from
the pedestal and his desire to be free is now all consuming.

Roberto considers the rain falling into Michel's studio.

Impatience gives way to scheming and now Roberto cries out.

ROBERTO

Help!

Another flash of lightning and then thunder, a little closer.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Help! Michel!

Another flash, followed by a clap, the storm moving in now.

FATHER!

Finally candlelight flickers in the dark - someone's coming!

MICHELANGELO (O.S.)

What? What is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

Michel ENTERS, dressed in a robe with a lit candelabrum.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Who is it?! What's going on?

ROBERTO
The storm!

The old man sees the rain pouring in and finally wakes up.

Michel puts down his torch and hurries to close the skylight.

MICHELANGELO
My God, it's pouring in here!

ROBERTO
Make it stop!

MICHELANGELO
We're going to have a flood!

ROBERTO
Make it stop!

MICHELANGELO
Stop shouting!

ROBERTO
Stop it!

MICHELANGELO
Wait, I have to close the skylight.

ROBERTO
Father, the storm!

MICHELANGELO
I know there's a storm, I'm not
deaf!

Michel finally closes the skylight, cutting off the rain.

ROBERTO
Father!

MICHELANGELO
Will you calm down? It's just a
storm.

ROBERTO
I know. Can't you make it go away?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

MICHELANGELO

It'll go away by itself. I've told you, it's just thunder, it can't hurt you.

ROBERTO

I hate it. Sounds like giants.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, it does sound like giants but it's just a storm. We're safe in here.

ROBERTO

You're sure?

MICHELANGELO

Absolutely. Go back to sleep.

ROBERTO

I can't.

MICHELANGELO

Of course you can. Good night.

Michel retrieves his candle and heads back to his bed.

ROBERTO

Don't leave me!

MICHELANGELO

It's the middle of the night.

ROBERTO

Just for a little while. Stay.

MICHELANGELO

I'm tired.

ROBERTO

Please.

MICHELANGELO

I was sleeping.

ROBERTO

How can you sleep through that?

MICHELANGELO

Practice!

ROBERTO

Just stay. *Please.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

MICHELANGELO

(Beat)

A little while, that's all.

Michel places the candle on the table, he turns, listening.

He hears a drip, then another, finally a third one, *great*.

Michel looks around for things to capture the drips, a bowl.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I keep telling this cheap bastard
of a building manager to fix this
ceiling and he never does! I should
stop paying the rent, that's what I
should do, he'll figure out how to
use a hammer then, won't he?

Armed with bowls, Michel finally captures all the drips.

ROBERTO

You and your rhetorical questions.

Michel makes a mock gesture of triumph over the drips.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Come up here and sit. Please.

Sighing deeply, Michel climbs the ladder and complies.

MICHELANGELO

This really is too much.

ROBERTO

Thank you.

MICHELANGELO

Just for a moment, you understand?
If anyone needs beauty rest around
here, it's me.

ROBERTO

Why do we have to have them? These
storms.

MICHELANGELO

I don't know, ask Leonardo, he's
the scientist. Something to do
with the earth turning and the seas
moving and the wind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (18)

ROBERTO

(Alarmed)

What's the earth turning for?

MICHELANGELO

Don't ask me, I have a tough enough time painting upside down in the dark.

ROBERTO

Sounds dangerous.

MICHELANGELO

You better believe it is! Almost broke my neck on more than one occasion.

ROBERTO

No, I meant turning the earth.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, yes, well, luckily it does so by itself.

ROBERTO

Really? How?

MICHELANGELO

I told you, I don't know, it's a mystery. It's one of God's little secrets, go figure, he has a lot of them.

ROBERTO

Like what?

MICHELANGELO

I can't tell you God's secrets, only God can. You want to know so bad, ask him yourself.

ROBERTO

How do you ask God?

MICHELANGELO

You pray.

ROBERTO

Oh.

MICHELANGELO

And don't ask me how to do that!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

ROBERTO
I wasn't going to.

MICHELANGELO
Yes, you were. I could feel it
coming.

Roberto doesn't say anything for a moment, thinks.

ROBERTO
Were you really sleeping?

MICHELANGELO
Yes!

A flash and thunder clap, farther away, Roberto jumps.

ROBERTO
Michel!

MICHELANGELO
It's alright, shh, it's going away.
Try and think of something happy.

ROBERTO
I can't think of anything happy.

MICHELANGELO
Well, that makes two of us.

ROBERTO
Tell me a story.

MICHELANGELO
It's too late to tell stories.

ROBERTO
Tell me about the ceiling again.
The one you did in the church.

MICHELANGELO
The chapel. No, I hate that story,
it takes forever.

ROBERTO
Tell me about fighting with the
pope.

MICHELANGELO
Mmm, there's only about a dozen of
those, don't get me started on
that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (20)

ROBERTO
Tell me about him.

MICHELANGELO
Oh, that was a long time ago.

A flash and thunder clap, it really does sound like giants.

ROBERTO
Please. Just until the storm
passes.

Exhaling deeply, Michel considers, starts remembering.

MICHELANGELO
What's there to tell? He came into
my life, I loved him and he went
away. That's the whole story.

ROBERTO
There must be more.

MICHELANGELO
Not really. The mind has a way of
blurring the details of painful
things gone past. Survival
mechanism, I suppose.

ROBERTO
What was he like?

MICHELANGELO
Beautiful. Everybody knows that.

ROBERTO
Not what he looked like. *Him.*

Michelangelo hesitates, his hand moving to the cross he wears
around his neck.

MICHELANGELO
He used to play with this.

ROBERTO
Your cross?

MICHELANGELO
Yes. Just hold it, idly, when he
was close. Like a child.

ROBERTO
It's hard to imagine him like that.
He seems so, strong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (21)

MICHELANGELO

Oh, he is. Mighty, colossus. But not his eyes. Something about his eyes, defied everything else about him. Almost as if he were two different creatures. One that the world saw. And the other that was mine. My, David. Of course, he didn't stay mine. He became celebrated and everything that goes along with that. Recognized, loved, everywhere. By strangers. Piece by piece, they took him away from me. So adored, he had no need of love or me. And then, I didn't handle it well. I became insecure and did, stupid things. One day, he just cast me off. Like a small, smooth stone.

Michel struggles with the memory and his pain silently.

Recognizing this as a sharing, Roberto says nothing, waits.

Overcoming his grief yet again, Michel pulls it together.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, you wanted me to tell you something happy.

ROBERTO

It's all right.

A distant flash, a clap, the storm itself is almost a memory.

MICHELANGELO

At least the storm's going away.

ROBERTO

Yes, it's almost gone.

MICHELANGELO

Let's play a game, shall we?

ROBERTO

I like games, what kind?

MICHELANGELO

You'll see.

Michel makes a shadow puppet on the wall with his hands.

The shadow puppets appear on the screen for the audience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (22)

Michel's shadow puppet is quite the animated character.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
All right, who's this?

ROBERTO
I don't know.

MICHELANGELO
Come on, guess.

ROBERTO
Is it a monkey?

MICHELANGELO
No.

ROBERTO
Is it a man?

MICHELANGELO
Yes.

ROBERTO
Is it a vendor?

MICHELANGELO
In a manner of speaking, he *does*
sell something.

ROBERTO
Is it sweet?

MICHELANGELO
What he sells? No, well, maybe for
him but not so much for everybody
else.

ROBERTO
Then it's not the cheese man?

MICHELANGELO
No.

ROBERTO
Or the man who brings the wine?

MICHELANGELO
No, not him either.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (23)

ROBERTO

Oh, I know! It's the funny little man who brings, you know, the things you take with your tea, the drugs.

MICHELANGELO

The apothecary? No, but that's a very good guess.

ROBERTO

I give up then.

MICHELANGELO

It's the Pope.

ROBERTO

The pope? I don't know the pope, how would I recognize him?

MICHELANGELO

Everybody knows the pope!

ROBERTO

Well not personally!

MICHELANGELO

That's why you have to use your imagination!

ROBERTO

He looks like a very agitated pope to me.

MICHELANGELO

Of course he's agitated, he wants to know when the Sistine Chapel is going to be finished!

Michel does another shadow puppet that soars in the air.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Let's try another one. Who's this?

ROBERTO

Is it a bird?

MICHELANGELO

Partly.

ROBERTO

It can fly?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (24)

MICHELANGELO

Yes.

ROBERTO

Is it a man?

MICHELANGELO

Partly.

ROBERTO

And it has wings?

MICHELANGELO

Yes, after a fashion.

ROBERTO

Oh, that's easy. It's Daudalus, the
one who flew away from Crete!

MICHELANGELO

The Athenian? No, but that's an
excellent guess.

ROBERTO

Then it's the son, Icarus!

MICHELANGELO

No, he's in the underworld, he
can't fly anywhere now.

ROBERTO

Who else has got wings?

MICHELANGELO

Think.

Roberto wracks his brain but he can't put it together.

ROBERTO

I give up.

MICHELANGELO

You give up too easily.

ROBERTO

Who?

MICHELANGELO

It's Leonardo, flying through the
stormy night in one of his
machines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (25)

ROBERTO

I should have known.

Michel does another shadow puppet that jumps around like mad.

MICHELANGELO

And what about this one?

ROBERTO

I don't know, a kangaroo?

MICHELANGELO

It's not an animal, no.

ROBERTO

Is it a man?

MICHELANGELO

A man with a problem, yes.

ROBERTO

It's a man with evil spirits.

MICHELANGELO

No.

ROBERTO

A man with Saint Vitus' dance!

MICHELANGELO

Good one but no.

ROBERTO

A man with ants in his pants!

MICHELANGELO

Funny but still no!

ROBERTO

Just tell me, I can't guess.

MICHELANGELO

It's the Duke of Medici, *hopping mad*, he wants to know where all his money's gone!

ROBERTO

You and your Medici.

MICHELANGELO

All right, what about this one?

This shadow puppet is large and lumbering, it growls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (26)

ROBERTO
Oh, no! Who's this?

MICHELANGELO
It's one of the thunder giants,
coming to get you!

Michel and Roberto laugh, the moments is parental and more.

ROBERTO
Let me do one.

Roberto makes a shadow puppet that has wings.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
Who's this?

MICHELANGELO
I don't know.

ROBERTO
I'll give you a clue, it's a man.

MICHELANGELO
Great, that narrows it down. High
born or low?

ROBERTO
Born low but he has climbed the
highest peaks.

MICHELANGELO
Is he fair? Or course?

ROBERTO
The fairest of them all.

MICHELANGELO
Living or dead?

ROBERTO
He cannot die, he is immortal.

Michel suddenly gets agitated again, moves to go.

MICHELANGELO
I grow tired of this game, good
night.

ROBERTO
Wait! You haven't guessed who it
is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (27)

MICHELANGELO

I know who you mean.

ROBERTO

No, you're wrong. Stop.

Roberto grabs Michel's arm, stopping his descent.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

It's you, the angel Michael.
Flying high among the stars.
Living forever.

The statue reaches out, touching Michel's cross.

Michel turns away, a mixture of pain and something else.

MICHELANGELO

It's late. I have to go to sleep.

ROBERTO

Did I say something wrong?

MICHELANGELO

No, you said nothing wrong. It's
just late. Good-night.

Michel descends the ladder and retrieves the candelabrum.

ROBERTO

Good-night. Thank you for the
story.

MICHELANGELO

You're welcome.

ROBERTO

Michelangelo?

MICHELANGELO

Yes?

ROBERTO

They named you well.

The old man looks up at Roberto, holds his eyes, a sad smile.

Something passes between them, gratitude, trust, *something*.

Cupping his hand, Michel blows out his candles, 1, 2, 3.

BLACK OUT. END
OF SCENE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (28)

SCENE FIVE

In the darkness, we hear the sound of cello and Bach again. The sound is dark, dreamlike, a somber lullaby of sorts. A bed glides out from the shadows, a sleeping figure on it. LIGHTS GROW to reveal Michel, nude, wrapped in a blanket. An INTRUDER appears from the shadows, wearing a hooded cloak. The Intruder steals around the bed, silent and mysterious. Michel tosses and turns in his bed, sensing something wrong. The Intruder sits on the edge of the bed, studies Michel. Leaning over Michel, Intruder whispers something in his ear. The old man starts, rolls over, sits up, opens his eyes. Michel sees the hooded man sitting by him, becomes alarmed.

MICHELANGELO

What? Who are you? Why are you here?

The intruder rises, Michel moves away, sensing danger now.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Have you come for mischief?

Roused, Michel feels around under his pillows for something. Finds a dagger, he brandishes it, but not too convincingly.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I have nothing of value here, no money, nothing you can steal.

Toying with Michel, the Intruder circles the bed slowly.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I know how to defend myself!

Now stopping, the Intruder raises an open hand to Michel.

DAVID

Pax.

Michelangelo half rises, wrapping the sheet around himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (29)

MICHELANGELO

How did you get in?

DAVID

Peace, Michelangelo. Do not be afraid.

MICHELANGELO

Your voice. I know you.

DAVID

"Ararum verumque."

MICHELANGELO

Are you a priest? From the Vatican?

DAVID

"I sing of arms and of a man."

Michel flashes the dagger again, a little more convincing.

MICHELANGELO

Or perhaps one of Medici's soldiers? Or should I say *assassin*?

DAVID

The arms I sing of are yours. The man in question is you.

MICHELANGELO

You bore me with your prattle, state your business! Who are you?!

DAVID

So speaks the Creator.

Intruder removes his cloak in a sweeping dramatic gesture.

Revealed, the "Intruder" is none other than David, *THE DAVID*.

In appearance, David is stunning, flawless in every respect.

He wears a tunic of shimmering gold, with golden laurel leaves in his hair.

David is the ultimate male icon, this can't be underplayed.

Momentarily speechless, Michel can only stare at his love.

The dagger slips from the old man's fingers onto the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (30)

MICHELANGELO

David?

DAVID

The very same.

MICHELANGELO

How?

DAVID

All things are possible with the Creator.

MICHELANGELO

Why, now?

DAVID

Because I have missed you so.

All this is too much for Michel and he breaks down, weeping.

Michel sinks back onto the bed, David moves closer.

MICHELANGELO

It's been so long.

DAVID

Not that long.

MICHELANGELO

Yes.

DAVID

No.

MICHELANGELO

Why must you always contradict me?

DAVID

Why must you always play the saint?

The old man catches his breath, gets control of his emotions.

MICHELANGELO

Is that how you see me?

DAVID

That is how you see yourself.

MICHELANGELO

And here I thought I was an angel. Being a saint, well, it's kind of a demotion when you think about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (31)

DAVID

The saints are all martyrs and
angels have wings. I don't see any
on you.

MICHELANGELO

Flattery will get you nowhere.

DAVID

That's not what you used to say.

MICHELANGELO

Oh, who can remember anymore?

Michelangelo finally pulls himself together, smiles now.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Stand back, let me look at you.

David stands back, smiling, resplendent, everything and more.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

There's something different here.

DAVID

Yes. Nice of you to notice.

Michel reaches out a hand to David, who returns the gesture.

This is not unlike Adam/God the Father from the ceiling.

Touching David lightly with a finger, Michel draws back.

MICHELANGELO

You're flesh. And something more.

DAVID

The word you seek is "divine".

MICHELANGELO

Divine? How is this possible?

DAVID

I've been embraced by the Gods, or
at least one of them. I've become a
member of Apollo's household. What
the Gods take into their hands
becomes like them.

MICHELANGELO

I've heard that said but I never
thought of it like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (32)

The old man wraps his brain around this information.

DAVID

Don't you believe me?

MICHELANGELO

I must, I see the proof of it. So you're part of Apollo's stable now? Do you enjoy that sort of thing?

DAVID

I can think of nicer ways to put that and yes, I do.

MICHELANGELO

I've wondered what had become of you, I could only listen to rumors, what with no letter, no word, no visit, all these years.

DAVID

You have to understand that time moves differently for you and I now. A night in the garden of Apollo passes for a year on the mortal plain. By my reckoning I've only been gone a matter of weeks.

MICHELANGELO

But why did you have to get involved with a bunch of Greeks?! I mean, I always knew you had a taste for decadence but *Greeks*?

DAVID

Michel, you can't imagine how the Gods live, it's a world in the sky! Everything is musical inside, the earth doesn't grip you the way it does here *and the light, Michel, you wouldn't know what to do with the light! It's like nothing you know here.* Michel, we play in a forest where Apollo has a herd of magical, white deer that sing under a gossamer moon and in the Garden of Apollo are trees of gold that whisper when you draw near and their fruit is golden and something more. The fruit is grown by divine hands, if a mortal man ate of it, he would live 500 years.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (33)

MICHELANGELO

All right, fine, *fine*, you've convinced me, I want to see this paradise of yours. Take me there, I can use the inspiration, I'm bored with this Florentine life.

David turns away, a little ashamed and something else.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

DAVID

Alas, that I cannot do.

MICHELANGELO

Can't? Or won't? Don't lie to me, I always know the difference.

DAVID

Apollo won't permit it, it's that simple. Of course he knows of you, all of Olympus knows about Michelangelo, they have watched you from a distance and many of them admire your work. But the Gods are funny, they're very particular and they like things *just so*.

David makes a funny gesture with his hand on "just so."

DAVID (CONT'D)

They wish to be surrounded only by beautiful things.

MICHELANGELO

But my whole life has been devoted to beauty.

DAVID

True, but your hands are rough.

MICHELANGELO

I created YOU. You, who have become divine, are the work of these "rough hands". I, a mortal man, have given birth to a God! What more must I do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (34)

DAVID

These are unfortunate technicalities, I'm afraid.

MICHELANGELO

It's because of my nose, isn't it? It's always that at the end of the day! All you posers talk about is beauty but all you're really interested in is *body parts!* Who's got the *littlest nose*, who's got the *biggest tits*, who's got the *FATTEST PRICK!* *What you call beauty is nothing more than cheap eroticism and any whore in Rome can give you that!*

DAVID

I did not come to quarrel. I've brought you a gift.

Michelangelo turns away, rejected, sits on the bed.

MICHELANGELO

Let me have it, by and by.

DAVID

As you wish.

The old man rubs his feet together, looks under the bed.

DAVID (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

MICHELANGELO

Nothing.

DAVID

What are you looking for?

MICHELANGELO

Slippers. My feet are cold.

DAVID

Let me.

MICHELANGELO

No.

DAVID

Please. Don't be silly.

David finds the slippers, kneels down, puts them on Michel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (35)

MICHELANGELO
You Gods are cruel.

DAVID
As are you men.

Taking a good look at Michel now, David sees the obvious.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You've aged.

MICHELANGELO
Yes, all those nights in the Garden
of Apollo have taken their toll.

DAVID
Do you really think I went out and
had a life, *my life*, just to spite
you?

MICHELANGELO
Yes.

DAVID
Did it ever occur to you that this
was just *my time? My destiny? My
life is in fact my own and I'm more
than just an extension of you?* Did
that never occur?

MICHELANGELO
No!

Angry for real, David bolts away from Michel, fuming.

DAVID
You really are impossible you know
that? And you also happen to be
wrong!

Standing, Michel points his finger for all he's worth.

MICHELANGELO
I created you!

DAVID
Yes, you did. After a fashion.

MICHELANGELO
What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (36)

DAVID

But I could easily make the same argument about you, if you think about it. *After a fashion.*

MICHELANGELO

What is this "fashion" shit you're going on about?

DAVID

It's a new word.

MICHELANGELO

I don't *like* "new words".

DAVID

I could make the same argument and people would believe it. That *actually* the creator is me and not you at all.

MICHELANGELO

That's absurd! No one would believe that.

DAVID

I think they would.

MICHELANGELO

No one with any brains!

DAVID

And how many men do you know with brains?

MICHELANGELO

I was here *first!*

DAVID

And that proves?

MICHELANGELO

No chicken, *no eggs!*

DAVID

Oh, is that your intellectual rigor impressing me now?

MICHELANGELO

I think it illustrates my point quite nicely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (37)

DAVID

You know, I think you have to be the most self involved person I've ever met and that's *something* coming from *me*.

MICHELANGELO

You can say that again.

DAVID

Flattery will get you nowhere.

MICHELANGELO

Don't I know it.

DAVID

I think I should go.

MICHELANGELO

I think you should.

David glares at Michel, who does the same. Mexican standoff.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

No, I don't mean that. Stay.

Softening, David sits on the bed, Michel does the same.

DAVID

These are all old quarrels, we should leave them in the past. Come, let's speak of something pleasant.

Shuffling his feet, Michel tries to come up with something.

MICHELANGELO

Well, let's see, the current Pope's health is bad, we may be having a new one soon. Of course he won't be any better than the present one, they're all the same, long-nosed, conservative, money-grubbing bastards from the South. And the Medici's have got their backs against the wall again, surrounded by enemies of their own making. That's always good for a laugh if you can stay out of the way when the stabbing starts.

Leaping up, David is obviously repelled by the small talk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (38)

DAVID

Aggh, the affairs of men seem so petty to me now! Tiny, hollow and always covered in blood. How can you stand them?

MICHELANGELO

I can't. That's my problem.

Turning, David holds out something in his hand, a pear.

DAVID

Michel, I've brought you something.

Michel looks at the gift, curious but not entirely surprised.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I stole it from Apollo's Garden. I stole it for you.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, I see that you have.

DAVID

One of Apollo's golden pears. If a mortal man eats of it, he will live 500 years.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, very likely from what you say.

Michelangelo takes the pear from David, studies it.

DAVID

Apollo would be angry if he knew.

MICHELANGELO

Won't he find out? He *is* a God.

DAVID

Perhaps, perhaps not. Not to worry, I will answer for it if he does.

MICHELANGELO

Aren't you afraid of him?

DAVID

No, I am his favorite now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (39)

MICHELANGELO

Of course you are, that doesn't surprise me in the least. It hums in my hand, as if it were alive.

DAVID

Divine life. Eat and it will be yours.

MICHELANGELO

But not forever. Not really. Not like you.

DAVID

No, not like me. I'm sorry, it's the best that I could do.

MICHELANGELO

David, stay with me. My time is almost through, it won't take long and *you have eternity now.*

DAVID

I can't. I must meet Apollo soon.

MICHELANGELO

"Soon". Are you so eager to return to him?

DAVID

To the love and pleasures of a God? Yes! Forgive me but you can't imagine what it's like.

Turning away, Michel considers David's gift, it's tempting.

MICHELANGELO

Don't be so sure of that.

Breathes on the pear, Michel shines it with his blanket.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Have you really missed me?

DAVID

Yes, I shall miss you always.

MICHELANGELO

Then let that be my gift. And take this back with you before it's missed.

Michel gently tosses the pear to David, who catches it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (40)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
500 years of solitude is more than
I could bear.

DAVID
As you wish.

David dons his cloak, concealing the pear within its folds.

DAVID (CONT'D)
My time draws near.

MICHELANGELO
Not yet! You mustn't go yet! Let me
sketch you first!

DAVID
I must away. The ship I take waits
for no man or even Gods.

Rising from the bed, Michel goes to David, his arms open.

MICHELANGELO
Kiss me.

David places his hands on Michel's face and kisses his crown.
This is not the kiss Michel seeks but he does not resist it.
The kiss has an immediate anesthetic effect on the old man.
Michel begins to drift off and David guides him to the bed.

DAVID
Pax.

MICHELANGELO
No! That's the kiss of good-bye,
the kiss of only friends.

DAVID
Look for me in your dreams.

MICHELANGELO
Stay!

DAVID
Rest.

MICHELANGELO
A dream! Not, real.

Michel lies on the bed, falling deeper and deeper into sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (41)

Stroking the old man's hair, David now seems the parent here.

DAVID
 Never doubt the Gods are real.
 They are vigilant and they are
 watching you now.

MICHELANGELO
 Cruel!

DAVID
 Farewell, my father.

The bed glides off into the shadows leaving David alone.
 David pulls the pear from his cloak, he considers it.
 Darkness falls all around him as David bites into the pear.

BLACK OUT. END
 SCENE FIVE.

SCENE SIX

DARKNESS, now ON SCREEN, we are in a different location.
 CAMERA REVEALS trees, branches, an orchard, but *not ordinary*.
 Through the trees, we hear voices, calls, excited, hushed.
 WE SEE glimpses of a cloaked man stealing thru the moonlight.
 The man starts and a blurred white animal *bursts* past him.
 Now another and another, fast, *they almost look like deer*.
 The man turns and moonlight plays across his face - *David!*
 He keeps moving now, voices growing, calling out, huntsmen.
 Figures in the trees, not deer but not entirely human either!
 CAMERA REVEALS A SECOND POV, someone following David.
 Sounds of these pursuers breathing, a little labored, hard.
 A pair of familiar, worn hands struggle with tree branches.
 CAMERA REVERSES, we SEE it's Michel, of course it is.
 His eyes a little wild, Michel knows he shouldn't be here.
 CAMERA back on David, he's moving into a clearing, torches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (42)

The figures move in on David, from either side - *satyrs!*
 David heads into the clearing, satyrs close to him now.
 Framed by torches is a throne in the shape of a giant hand.
 Seated is the god Apollo, dressed like an Italian fascist.
 Apollo's voice is amplified, powerful, *more than human.*

APOLLO

Where have you been my lovely? I've
 been missing you now and that's not
 nice of you to keep me waiting.

DAVID

My lord knows everything I do,
 either before or after I do it.

APOLLO

The before isn't what worries me,
 it's the *after* I don't like.

DAVID

My lord doesn't want me in a cage
 does he? Put the most beautiful cat
 in a box and he loses his shine
 after a time.

David approaches Apollo, bending his knee to him.
 Apollo extends his hand and a dazzling ring to David.
 Looking up, smiling, David kisses Apollo's ring.

APOLLO

You think I'm running a zoo here?

DAVID

Sometimes I wonder, my Lord.

APOLLO

Don't be so curious, kitty, that's
 not your job. Just give me what I
 want.

DAVID

Don't I always? My Lord.

APOLLO

That's what I like to hear. I seem
 to missing something else though.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (43)

David rises, his tunic and laurel leaves shimmering.

DAVID

I don't know what you're referring
to, my Lord.

APOLLO

I think you do. I think you ought
to be more careful. In the future.

DAVID

That's my middle name. Careful.

Michel's POV of the scene, from the safety of the trees.

APOLLO

My Lord.

DAVID

My Lord.

Back on David and Apollo now, OVER THE SHOULDER SHOTS.

APOLLO

I know your real name and it's much
interesting than careful.

Apollo speaks to the satyrs, gestures to them sharply.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

Strip him.

DAVID

No foreplay my Lord?

APOLLO

You missed the foreplay, that was
earlier.

Satyrs move in on David, strip him of cloak, tunic, all.

DAVID

You're beautiful when you're angry,
my Lord.

Apollo rises, unbuckles his large belt, wields it.

APOLLO

Let's see how beautiful I get.

DAVID

Let's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (44)

Satyrs chortle in the BG, they know what's coming.

Apollo circles David, now nude, inspecting his body.

Running his hand across David, here and there, lingeringly.

APOLLO

It really is a miracle, you know?

DAVID

What, my Lord?

APOLLO

How that ugly little mortal made something exquisite like you.

DAVID

It's true.

APOLLO

And your middle name isn't careful, it's "bad". You've been a very bad boy my friend and there's only one thing for that.

Apollo lays his belt across David's ass like a whip!

David manages a smile, with effort but this is going to hurt.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

How beautiful am I now?

DAVID

Very beautiful, my Lord.

Another shot of the belt, we don't see it but hear it.

APOLLO

And now? How beautiful?

DAVID

Very, very beautiful my Lord.

The God lands another one on David, his back this time.

APOLLO

And now?

DAVID

Yes, beautiful.

APOLLO

And now?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (45)

DAVID
Yes! Beautiful, yes!

Apollo begins to beat David with relish and lust.

CAMERA CUTS TO Michel, still hiding in the trees, watching.
Michel's face is a curious mix of disgust, fear and desire.

APOLLO
How beautiful am I now?

DAVID
You, are the most beautiful, one of
all!

APOLLO
Tell me! Tell me again!

As Apollo starts undoing his trousers, he realizes something.
Someone is *watching*, someone who *shouldn't be there* at all.
He turns sharply as looks *right at Michelangelo in the trees*.
Apollo looks at Michel and it's not friendly at all, AT ALL!
Michel turns and starts running back into the forest, scared.
As Michel runs, *we hear but don't see David getting beaten*.
Running for his life, Michel can't escape what he's seen.
Heart hammering, he hears David getting beaten and fucked!
David's pain/ecstasy in his ears, Michel runs and runs!
CAMERA LOSES Michel in the trees, climbing higher and higher.
The CAMERA FINDS the clear night sky and a gossamer moon.

BLACK OUT, END
OF SCENE SIX.

SCENE SEVEN

LIGHTS UP, dusk. Roberto on his pedestal, almost complete.
Michelangelo is hunched over, working on Roberto's feet.

ROBERTO
You look like hell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHELANGELO

Do I?

ROBERTO

I really wish you'd eat something.

MICHELANGELO

Why?

ROBERTO

You haven't had a thing all day.

MICHELANGELO

I'm not hungry.

ROBERTO

You have to eat *something*.

MICHELANGELO

I'm working, leave me alone.

ROBERTO

You'll have another attack.

Michelangelo continues working, tries to ignore Roberto.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Michel? Michel. Michel!

MICHELANGELO

Leave me alone, will you?

ROBERTO

How can you see in this light?

MICHELANGELO

I can see just fine, I'm not blind.

Michelangelo suddenly gets a spasm in his shoulder.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Ah, shit!

Throwing down his hammer, Michel struggles to the bench.

Sitting down wearily, Michel rubs his sore shoulder in pain.

ROBERTO

Cramp?

MICHELANGELO

No, women get cramps. Men get spasms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBERTO

Really? I never heard that.

MICHELANGELO

Well, that's refreshing, something you don't know.

ROBERTO

There's a lot I don't know.

MICHELANGELO

Don't play modest, you won't get any points with that game.

ROBERTO

You know me better than that.

MICHELANGELO

Yes, I suppose I do.

(Beat.)

You must have quite a few by now.

ROBERTO

What do you mean?

Michelangelo gets up, stretches his shoulder, walks a bit.

MICHELANGELO

All those points you've saving up.
What are you going to trade them in for?

Roberto picks up the mirror, examines himself in it.

ROBERTO

I don't know, something special.

MICHELANGELO

Such as?

ROBERTO

I'm not sure just yet.

MICHELANGELO

Everybody knows what they want.

ROBERTO

I suppose.

MICHELANGELO

Then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROBERTO
I want to be like you.

Michelangelo laughs derisively, Roberto lowers the mirror.

MICHELANGELO
You are improving. As a liar, I mean. For a moment I almost believed that.

ROBERTO
It isn't nice to presume I'm always lying.

MICHELANGELO
Why not? You always assume that I'll believe you.
(beat.)
So tell the truth. What is it you really want?

Smirking, Roberto looks into the mirror, smitten.

ROBERTO
I want to be like *him*.

MICHELANGELO
That is presuming a great deal.

ROBERTO
Perhaps. And perhaps not.

MICHELANGELO
That was a long time ago, when I made him. What makes you think you can compete?

ROBERTO
You think I can't?

MICHELANGELO
No.

ROBERTO
I can't or you can't?

Ignoring the question, Michel picks up a drawing, examines.

MICHELANGELO
"For everything there is a season.."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROBERTO

"Modesty is for little people."

Michelangelo throws down the drawing in a crumpled heap.

MICHELANGELO

Don't you quote ME!

ROBERTO

You really think I can't compete with a work like that? With *him*?

MICHELANGELO

I'm not going to have this conversation. I'm not a critic, I'm just an artist.

ROBERTO

Who are you trying to jest? You're not just ANY artist, you're Michelangelo! People in a dozen countries know who you are and they don't even know your last name, they don't need to know! You've defined an age, everything turns on you! What you will, the world wants.

Michel picks up his mallet and chisel but the spasm persists.

MICHELANGELO

I don't care what the world wants anymore, don't you understand? I'm tired of all that supposed glory. At the end of the day it doesn't feel like glory at all. Feels more like prostitution and I'm the prostitute.

Dropping the tools, the old man moves about restlessly.

He wants to work, he wants to shut up Roberto but can't.

ROBERTO

I don't believe you.

MICHELANGELO

Believe it.

ROBERTO

No, I'm serious -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MICHELANGELO

- so am I!

ROBERTO

If you produce a masterwork,
especially now, at your age -

Michelangelo turns at this, smelling an opening and blood.

MICHELANGELO

- What?!

Hesitating, Roberto gives himself away, not a good move.

ROBERTO

-Umm-

MICHELANGELO

What do you mean "at my age"?

ROBERTO

I meant, at this point in your
career. At, at the height of your
abilities-

MICHELANGELO

-No, that's not what you meant.
What you said was "at your age",
meaning a point in which I'm
practically DEAD! That's what you
meant.

ROBERTO

I didn't say that.

MICHELANGELO

You think you'll have some special
value if you're the last thing I
do, don't you? *Don't you?!*

Roberto says nothing, his guilt is obvious on this one.

He fidgets with the mirror, tries to regain his footing.

Rolling his shoulder Michel tries to work loose the spasm.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

You're really something, you know
that? You're not even finished and
you're already trying to capitalize
on your position with my enemies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ROBERTO

Michel, I'm not your -

MICHELANGELO

- my enemies are everywhere! With their money, their opinions and their smiles! How can you, YOU of all people not understand that?

ROBERTO

This is boring, I want to go back to work.

MICHELANGELO

Are you calling me a bore?

ROBERTO

Is that a rhetorical question?

Picking up a chisel, Michel turns sharply towards him.

Holding it like a knife, Michel moves in, growling.

Startled, Roberto drops the mirror in fear, it breaks.

The mirror breaks with an EXAGGERATED SOUND, Michel stops.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Shit!

MICHELANGELO

Bad luck for you. Seven years worth.

ROBERTO

Did you mean that? What you just did?

MICHELANGELO

Who knows? Does it change things?

Pleased with himself, Michel drops chisel on pedestal.

Kneeling down, Michel picks up the mirror and the pieces.

ROBERTO

I don't know. It doesn't change the fact that we have to finish.

MICHELANGELO

"We" don't have to do anything. You need to, not me. I'm not in competition with anybody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

ROBERTO
Except yourself.

Michelangelo cuts himself on a piece of the broken mirror.

MICHELANGELO
Ahh!

ROBERTO
Michel, what did you do?

MICHELANGELO
Fuck!

ROBERTO
What did you do?

MICHELANGELO
Cut myself, damnit.

ROBERTO
Does it hurt?

MICHELANGELO
Of course it hurts, I cut myself!

ROBERTO
Is it deep?

MICHELANGELO
Of course it's deep, I'm bleeding!

ROBERTO
Let me see it. Let me see it!

Michelangelo goes to Roberto and shows his hand.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
It's not that bad.

MICHELANGELO
You did this.

ROBERTO
You should be more careful, you're
not made of stone.

Roberto tears the sleeve off Michelangelo's shirt.

MICHELANGELO
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

ROBERTO
Don't be a baby.

MICHELANGELO
That's my favorite shirt!

ROBERTO
Not anymore.

Roberto bandages Michelangelo's hand with the shirt sleeve.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
It's only a little cut.

MICHELANGELO
It's deep enough.

ROBERTO
Not that bad, you'll live.

Michelangelo looks at his hand, the front and the back.

MICHELANGELO
It shines through.

ROBERTO
What?

Michelangelo holds up his hand, knows Roberto won't get it.

MICHELANGELO
Character, it shines through.

ON SCREEN, we see an image of a wounded hand, Michel's hand.

Now a second image bleeds in, one of a fractured mirror.

Bleeding through the mirror is a fractured image of Roberto.

ROBERTO
You're not making sense, I wish
you'd eat something.

Michelangelo crosses to his bag, rifles through it.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
What are you looking for?

MICHELANGELO
Something to kill the pain.

ROBERTO
There isn't any.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

MICHELANGELO

Where is it?

ROBERTO

I told you-

MICHELANGELO

-it's gone, I'm sorry-

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

-Who told you to do this-

ROBERTO

-really it's for your own-

Suddenly furious, Michelangelo empties the bad violently.

MICHELANGELO

I had some wine in here!

ROBERTO

It's gone. One of your assistants took it, I told him to.

MICHELANGELO

God damn it! Which one was it?

ROBERTO

I can't remember their names, they all look the same to me.

MICHELANGELO

Meddling little bastards, I'll fire them all! ALL OF THEM!

ROBERTO

I don't want you incapacitated, we're too close. Why don't you eat something?

MICHELANGELO

Why don't you go fuck yourself?!

ROBERTO

I'm doing it for your own good.

MICHELANGELO

All my life, if art meant anything at all, it meant NOT having to KISS SOMEBODIES ASS! It's having my own vision, my own mind, doing what I want!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I offer up the contents of my heart
and soul, and you would put it on
a scale and measure it for gold.

(Beat)

I gave you everything.

ROBERTO

Not yet, Michel. We're still not
done yet.

Michel drops his head, suddenly weary, it's all too much.

MICHELANGELO

I can't do this anymore.

ROBERTO

Sit.

MICHELANGELO

Why?

ROBERTO

So you can rest. Sit here, by me.

Michelangelo sits begrudgingly on the pedestal, at his feet.

MICHELANGELO

I'm not speaking to you.

Roberto begins to massage Michel's shoulders, his neck.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Oww!

ROBERTO

You're so tense.

MICHELANGELO

Like you don't know why.

ROBERTO

Relax, relax.

Bit by bit, Roberto works on Michel's tension.

MICHELANGELO

I hate you. Like nobody else in my
life, I hate you.

ROBERTO

Well, I'll take that as a
compliment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

MICHELANGELO

It's no compliment, trust me.

ROBERTO

You sure about that?

MICHELANGELO

I think I know what I mean by "I hate you.". Oww!

ROBERTO

Then I'm flattered.

MICHELANGELO

Compliments and flattery are the same thing. Go easy will you?

ROBERTO

My mistake, no point for me.

MICHELANGELO

I should never have started this project. I should have quit while I was ahead. Rested on my laurels, that's what everyone else does.

ROBERTO

You're not that kind of man.

MICHELANGELO

You sure about that?

ROBERTO

(A sudden conclusion.)
Wait a minute, compliments and flattery are NOT the same thing.

MICHELANGELO

They are in my experience.

Letting this one pass, Roberto keeps massaging Michel.

ROBERTO

I only want your blessing.

MICHELANGELO

You got what you got, be grateful for that.

ROBERTO

Is it so much, what I'm asking?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

MICHELANGELO

Since it's no longer mine to give,
yes!

ROBERTO

Please?

Michelangelo makes a face, Roberto tries a new tact.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

You're the one who's being selfish.

MICHELANGELO

Call it what you like.

ROBERTO

You always speak of what you've
done, what you've given, like
you're the only one who does and
gives.

MICHELANGELO

What have you ever done for me?

ROBERTO

I've been your friend, loved you.

MICHELANGELO

"Blah, blah, blah!" Talk is cheap.

ROBERTO

I can do more than talk. Let me
see your hand.

MICHELANGELO

Why?

ROBERTO

Let me see it.

Taking Michel's wounded hand, Roberto kisses it tenderly.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Better?

MICHELANGELO

No.

ROBERTO

I'm not finished yet.

Roberto kisses his hand again, not so tenderly now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

Michel tries to pull away but Roberto holds onto him.

MICHELANGELO
All right, that's enough now.

ROBERTO
Oh, I don't think so.

MICHELANGELO
Stop it, let go of me!

ROBERTO
Kiss me.

The old man struggles but he can't break Roberto's grip.

MICHELANGELO
No! What do you think you're doing?

ROBERTO
I want to kiss my creator.

MICHELANGELO
You can't, I won't let you!

ROBERTO
I can and you can't stop me!

Grabbing the chisel, Roberto begins to stab at this feet.
Crying out, he manages to free his feet from stones base.
Finally free, Roberto leaps down to the floor with a crash.

MICHELANGELO
My God, what are you doing?

ROBERTO
You were taking too long, Father. I
have to force your hand.

Roberto walks towards Michel, his stone feet thudding heavy.
The statue grabs the old man by the wrist, pulls him in.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
Kiss me.

MICHELANGELO
No! Let go of me! It's not
natural!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

ROBERTO

That's right, it's not, it's exceptional. Like I am, like you are.

MICHELANGELO

I see through you, what you are! You think I don't know what I've created?

ROBERTO

A masterpiece.

MICHELANGELO

No, you're a monster!

ROBERTO

"Sticks and stones".

MICHELANGELO

Let me go!

ROBERTO

Kiss me. I know you want to.

MICHELANGELO

Stop it! I'm old, you don't want me!

ROBERTO

You and David were together like this.

MICHELANGELO

You're not like him!

ROBERTO

But I'm going to be.

MICHELANGELO

You can't buy me like this!

ROBERTO

Everyone has their price.

MICHELANGELO

Not me.

ROBERTO

Stop fighting, you know you want this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

MICHELANGELO

Don't.

Roberto kisses his creator like a lover, still struggling. Michel fights the kiss but is eventually taken over by it. Beaten, torn, Michel returns the kiss, the struggle ends.

BLACK OUT, END
SCENE SEVEN.

SCENE

Lights grow to reveal an empty studio, no Michel or Roberto. We hear footfalls, heavy ones, Roberto enters, yawning. Crossing the room, Roberto opens the skylight, now sunshine. There's the sound of birds singing, Roberto smiles a little. Seeing Michel's hammer on the floor, he picks it up. Now taking a chisel, Roberto considers his unfinished feet. Putting a foot up on a bench, he starts to work on his ankle. A couple of strikes, he cries out, it's incredibly painful.

ROBERTO

Ah, God! Ah!

Obviously Roberto doesn't have the magic touch of Michel. Roberto drops the tools, reeling in pain, staggers a bit. Suddenly awakened by the yelling, Michel calls out from O.S.

MICHELANGELO

What's that?! Who's out there?!

Suddenly panicked, Roberto looks around, not sure what to do.

ROBERTO

Shit!

MICHELANGELO

What's going on out there?!

Roberto hobbles to pedestal, climbs up, pretends innocence. His hand bandaged, armed with dagger, Michel appears, wary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
What the hell is happening?

ROBERTO
Excuse me?

MICHELANGELO
I heard a commotion out here-

ROBERTO
-I didn't hear a thing-

MICHELANGELO
-How's that possible-

ROBERTO
-just told you I didn't-

MICHELANGELO
-Sounded like someone breaking in-

ROBERTO
-well I don't see anybody. Look for
yourself.

Nose twitching, Michel isn't too happy with lots of things.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)
Maybe it was one of the assistants.

MICHELANGELO
No. Lazy bastards never get here
this early. Probably some snooper.
I used to get them all the time.

ROBERTO
Maybe you dreamt it.

MICHELANGELO
I don't imagine noises.

ROBERTO
I didn't say "imagined".

MICHELANGELO
No, but that's what you meant.
(Taking in Roberto on the
pedestal.)
Up there again, are you?

ROBERTO
It's where I belong.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

MICHELANGELO

In theory.

ROBERTO

Sleep well?

MICHELANGELO

So so. You?

ROBERTO

Like a rock.

MICHELANGELO

I take it back, I won't miss you at all.

ROBERTO

Don't you like me anymore?

MICHELANGELO

I never claimed to.

ROBERTO

That's not so, you used to love me.

MICHELANGELO

You must be thinking of somebody else.

ROBERTO

Are you like this, with all your fucks?

MICHELANGELO

It's been so long, I can't remember.

Dropping the dagger on the table, Michel goes to skylight.

Rubbing his hand, Michel looks up, waiting for something.

ROBERTO

How's your hand?

MICHELANGELO

I've had worse.

ROBERTO

What are you looking at?

MICHELANGELO

Spring. It's coming again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (18)

ROBERTO
How can you tell?

MICHELANGELO
Birds.

ROBERTO
Was it really bad?

MICHELANGELO
Was what bad?

ROBERTO
You know.

MICHELANGELO
Oh, please. You aren't going to pretend to have feelings too.

Roberto is momentarily stung speechless, sputters.

ROBERTO
I have *feelings!* Everyone has *feelings!* I don't have to "pretend!"

MICHELANGELO
I wonder how they know?

ROBERTO
What?

MICHELANGELO
When they leave and return. How do they know the time?

ROBERTO
Excuse me, I'm speaking to you!

MICHELANGELO
Is that what you call it?

ROBERTO
Don't you IGNORE me!

MICHELANGELO
What are you going on about?

ROBERTO
Last night was not *bad!*

MICHELANGELO
As compared to what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (19)

Roberto thinks about this, doesn't really have an answer.

ROBERTO
I, well, I, don't have anything to
compare it to.

MICHELANGELO
Yes, well, *I do*. I'm going out.

ROBERTO
Please don't leave.

MICHELANGELO
Think I'll get something to eat,
I'm starving.

ROBERTO
You're hungry?

MICHELANGELO
Like I haven't eaten in *days*.

Retrieving his cloak, Michel dons it with a worn flourish.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry, I'm talking about
food, something else you can't
relate to, that's awkward of me.
See you later.

Michelangelo heads for the door, he's really hungry now.

ROBERTO
You don't fool me, you don't have
anywhere to go.

His hand on the door knob, Michel turns, tired, smiles.

MICHELANGELO
Don't be so sure. There's only all
of Florence out there. And they
know how to cook.

And with that, he's out the door and Roberto's seething!

Roberto calls out after him, nasty, bitter and truthful.

ROBERTO
*Walk out on me if you want! You'll
be back! I'm all you've got left
and you know it!*

And then nothing. Michel's gone and Roberto can't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (20)

Roberto looks around, suddenly unsure, childlike again.
His face twitching, he starts to cry, his first real tears.
Michel blows back in, and Roberto gets control of himself.

MICHELANGELO
I have NEVER liked you!

Turning away, Roberto gets his face together, turns back.

ROBERTO
Yes, well, it's a good thing I
don't have feelings, they might get
hurt.

MICHELANGELO
Lucky you.

Michel moves around the studio restlessly, unsure of himself.

ROBERTO
You came all the way back, just to
tell me that?

MICHELANGELO
I don't know why I came back.

ROBERTO
Can we start then? Since you're
here.

MICHELANGELO
No, I told you, I'm hungry, I want
to eat something.

ROBERTO
I thought you were jesting.

MICHELANGELO
Why the fuck would I jest about
being hungry?

ROBERTO
Can't we do a little work first?
There isn't much left, we could be
done by lunch time.

MICHELANGELO
Because I don't want to eat
breakfast in the afternoon, I want
to eat it in the morning.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (21)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

That's why they call it "the morning meal", *because you eat it in the morning!*

ROBERTO

There isn't *time*.

MICHELANGELO

Excuse me?

ROBERTO

I want to finish now!

MICHELANGELO

Isn't time for what? What's going on?

ROBERTO

Nothing's going on, I just want to finish.

MICHELANGELO

There is something, I can *smell it*.

ROBERTO

I can't smell anything.

MICHELANGELO

The unmistakable smell of *bullshit!*

Michel tears off his cape, Roberto turns away, face ticking.

ROBERTO

There are people coming over.

MICHELANGELO

What?

ROBERTO

Important people. People from the art community.

MICHELANGELO

Since when? For what purpose?

ROBERTO

They've been invited for an unveiling. My unveiling.

MICHELANGELO

UN-invite them!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (22)

ROBERTO

It's too late. They'll be here in a few hours. So you see, there isn't time.

MICHELANGELO

I don't perform for those bastards anymore!

ROBERTO

No one's asking you to.

MICHELANGELO

You invite them into MY studio, into MY space?-

ROBERTO

-you don't have to be here-

MICHELANGELO

-it's MY space and anyway-

ROBERTO

-it's MY unveiling do you-

MICHELANGELO

-*who the hell do you think you are?!*

His arms out, no child in sight, pure, unadulterated ego now.

Michel fingers his cross, agitated, hating all of this.

ROBERTO

Your-final-masterpiece. The culmination of your life's work. Everything you have ever made, built upon, has brought you now to this, *to me*. Look at me, look in my eyes. What do you see? "Talent. The single, greatest gift a man can have." Those are your words.

MICHELANGELO

No, that's not what I see in your eyes anymore. It's been replaced by something else.

ROBERTO

Finish me! I'll do anything you want.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (23)

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

I'll love you, fuck you and I'll never leave. Until you tell me to. Just finish me.

MICHELANGELO

Do it then! Leave. Now!

ROBERTO

There isn't time to argue, they're coming!

MICHELANGELO

Let them come then. They can see you as you are. Good luck!

Michel heads for the door, this time for real and for good.

ROBERTO

But I'm not ready!

MICHELANGELO

And whose fault is that?

ROBERTO

YOURS!

Furious, Roberto leaps down to the floor with a crash.

Staggering from the violence of this, Michel stumbles.

Grabbing his creator, Roberto pulls him back from the door.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Finish me, you bastard!

MICHELANGELO

I can't finish you. I wish I'd never started. Don't you see-

The statue kisses his Michel savagely, he doesn't respond.

ROBERTO

Finish me!

MICHELANGELO

Will you betray me with a kiss?

Snarling, Roberto slaps Michel in the face, open handed.

The slap propels Michel DOWN STAGE, falling against a ladder.

Holding onto it, Michel tries to recover as Roberto advances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (24)

ROBERTO

Finish me!

MICHELANGELO

I hate you!

Roberto grabs Michelangelo by his hair, jerks his head back.

ROBERTO

I love you.

MICHELANGELO

Like no one in my life!

ROBERTO

Don't do this to me.

Struggling wildly, unable to break the statues hold on him.

MICHELANGELO

To you? To YOU? You still think
this is all about you, don't you?
Get your hands off of me!

Roberto hurls Michel across the room, falls, tries to rise.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

You think I don't know the nature,
the true nature of your character?
Maybe you can fool the others, fool
the critics, the masses, all of
them! But not me.

Steadying himself against a bench, Michel tries to rise.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Even that goddamned Leonardo! I
know he's behind this! All these
years, pretending to be my friend,
resenting me, jealous of me! I
know you've been talking to him
behind my back. HE'S the one who's
invited all these people, isn't he?
ISN'T HE?

ROBERTO

No. Leonardo can't do anything,
invite anyone anywhere. He's dead.

His mouth moves, no sound, Michel struggles to process this.

MICHELANGELO

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (25)

ROBERTO

You heard me.

MICHELANGELO

Leonardo? Dead? How can he be dead? I just saw him the other day.

ROBERTO

He died a long time ago. Years. You just pretended not to know.

MICHELANGELO

That's, no, not possible.

ROBERTO

They're all dead. Your friends, competitors, you've outlived them all.

Sending victory, Roberto stands him up gently, carefully.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Don't you understand? It's just you and me now, just us.

MICHELANGELO

You're lying.

ROBERTO

Just the two of us. Alone. And we have to finish.

MICHELANGELO

How can I be this old?

Picking up the hammer, Roberto places it in Michel's hand.

ROBERTO

Cast off your infirmity, Michel. Be brave as you have always been.

MICHELANGELO

I'm sorry, I can't.

Crying out, Roberto head butts Michel, who goes flying.

The old man crashes to the floor, tries to rise, can't!

Stunned, Michel feels around blindly for a weapon, anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (26)

ROBERTO

So this is the "Angel Michael"?
The great Michelangelo, on who I
pinned my dreams?

Roberto stands over Michel, arrogant, powerful, the victor.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

You were a great man once, larger
than life, larger than anyone. But
age and self-pity have reduced you,
finally. Now you're just a man. A
tired, little man.

Michel finds the hammer, raises it, Roberto tears it away.

Roberto takes a chisel, puts one foot up on the pedestal.

The creator looks in horror as the statue raises the hammer.

MICHELANGELO

I suppose that makes you larger
than life now?

ROBERTO

Larger than you.

Bringing the hammer down, Roberto begins to finish the work.

With each strike, he cries out in pain, lust and masochism.

As he works, Roberto falls into shadow, his cries fading.

Michel looks out, looks within, alone as he never been.

MICHELANGELO

Cast off, like a small, smooth
stone. Does anyone have a sling?
Because if someone had a sling,
then I would gladly be a stone and
be buried in this awful face I see
before me now. So many things have
gone out of fashion but there must
still be slings around. We all
believe in killing, because killing
means living but is that life? Is
it, David? Is that life?! See, I
know you're out there somewhere,
listening, watching. I can hear
you breathing in the darkness, I
can feel your eyes upon me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (27)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

I can smell the bitter, sweet smell
of your body. You couldn't stay
away, could you?

(Beat)

Somebody help me up. David, help
me up! I helped you! I helped you
every way I knew, even when I knew
the ways were wrong, because I
loved you. Even when our love was
gone and replaced with something
else, I never raised my hand
against you. But I could have. I
could have slung that mighty,
little piece of truth and brought
you down, the way you did that
giant, Goliath. You always feared
that truth. You were always afraid
I'd tell about you. See, I know,
when you brought him down, you were
smiling. You didn't do it for
country or king or even God. You
did it for yourself. Funny, after
all this time, it's not the love or
the art we made that binds us
together. It's that smile.

Michel turns back as Roberto strikes and cries out again.

Roberto stops, and looks up, sensing something. *Something.*

ROBERTO

What are you smiling about?

MICHELANGELO

Excuse me?

ROBERTO

What's so funny?

MICHELANGELO

Oh, I don't know. Just the irony
of the situation.

ROBERTO

Explain, "irony".

MICHELANGELO

Irony? It's the unthinkable made
into song, it's the secret that's
plain as the nose on my face, it's
the hummingbird of God, dancing
here and there and everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (28)

ROBERTO

Birds don't hum, they sing. You have gotten old.

MICHELANGELO

Just goes to show what you know.

ROBERTO

Why are you looking at me like that?

MICHELANGELO

I see you've decided to finish the work yourself.

ROBERTO

Yes, well, I wanted it to be you but since you can't "finish what you started," I guess it's up to me.

MICHELANGELO

Got it all figured out, haven't you?

ROBERTO

Enough of it. Most of the work is yours, in the end those fools won't know the difference. I won't be perfectly perfect, it's true, regrettable, but you've left business unfinished before. It doesn't matter, I'm the work of Michelangelo, the last work, your final statement. *I will be immortal.*

MICHELANGELO

I see that now. I was wrong, what I said before. Of all my work, you will stand unique.

ROBERTO

That's all I ever wanted.

MICHELANGELO

And that's what you shall have. Give me the tools, I want to finish the job myself.

Michel stretches out his hands but Roberto hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (29)

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)
Come on, there isn't much time.
You said so yourself.

ROBERTO
Are you sure? I don't want to play
games.

The old man opens and closes his hands in impatience.

MICHELANGELO
Propriety, propriety. You owe me
that much.

ROBERTO
I suppose I do.

Hands over the tools, Roberto climbs back onto his pedestal.

The old man begins to work on Roberto's ankles and feet.

SOUNDS of chiseling return, softly but then growing in tempo.

MICHELANGELO
How much time do we have exactly?

ROBERTO
A few hours.

MICHELANGELO
More than enough time. I want
everything to be "just so."

Michel makes the same gesture that David did in the dream.

With that, the old man continues working in earnest now.

ROBERTO
Why this drastic change of heart?

MICHELANGELO
I told you once, remember? You can
never trust the human heart.

Michel strikes Roberto in the kneecap, knocking it off!

Staggering from the pain, Roberto falls from the pedestal.

He struggles to rise but the knee is no longer functional.

ROBERTO
My God!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (30)

MICHELANGELO

Are you speaking to me? Go ahead,
I'm listening.

ROBERTO

You struck me, my knee! You meant
to do that!

MICHELANGELO

Really? How can you tell?

Grabbing Roberto by the arm, Michel now destroys his elbow.

Roberto screams out in pain, disbelief and fear, *real fear!*

The sounds of chiseling grow louder and faster in rhythm.

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

Like I said, the human heart is a
fanatical beast, IT'S CAPABLE OF
ANYTHING!

Roberto falters, tries to crawl, tries to escape, *desperate!*

MICHELANGELO (CONT'D)

ANYTHING!

Michel brings the hammer down on Roberto's lower back.

His spine broken, Roberto falls, body jerking grotesquely.

What happens now is murder, justified or not, and terrible.

ROBERTO

Stop! Michel, stop!

The sounds of chiseling are furious, like a deafening storm.

MICHELANGELO

I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE ART COMMUNITY
TO GET HERE! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE
THEIR REACTION!

Michel continues to strike Roberto who begins to come apart.

ROBERTO

FATHER, STOP, PLEASE!

A child again, Roberto raises his one good hand in defense.

MICHELANGELO

YES, OF ALL MY WORK, YOU WILL STAND
UNIQUE! YES, YOU, WILL BE, UNIQUE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (31)

Roberto raises his one good hand in defense.

Michel raises his mallet over his head, for one final strike.

FREEZE ACTION, FREEZE SOUND, ON THIS FINAL TABLEAU.

BLACK OUT.
NOTHING NOW.
THE END.