

song-writer yet. (*Jiggles the ice in her glass.*) CLINK! (*Does it again.*)  
CLINK! (*Giggles, repeats it several times.*) CLINK!... CLINK!...  
CLINK!... CLINK! (*Nick enters while Martha is clinking; he stands  
in the hall entrance and watches her; finally he comes in.*)

NICK. My God, you've gone crazy too.

MARTHA. Clink?

NICK. I said, you've gone crazy too.

MARTHA. (*Considers it.*) Probably ... probably.

NICK. You've all gone crazy: I come back downstairs, and what happens ...

MARTHA. What happens?

NICK. ... my wife's gone into the can with a liquor bottle, and she winks at me ... winks at me!...

MARTHA. (*Sadly.*) She's never wunk at you; what a shame ...

NICK. She is lying down on the floor again, the tiles, all curled up and she starts peeling the label off the liquor bottle, the brandy bottle ...

MARTHA. ... we'll never get the deposit back that way ...

NICK. ... and I ask her what she's doing, and she goes: shhhhhh! nobody knows I'm here; and I come back in here, and you're sitting there going Clink!, for God's sake. Clink!

MARTHA. CLINK!

NICK. You've all gone crazy.

MARTHA. Yes. Sad but true.

NICK. Where is your husband?

MARTHA. He is vanish-ed. Pouf!

NICK. You're all crazy: nuts.

MARTHA. (*Affects a brogue.*) Awww, 'tis the refuge we take when the unreality of the world weighs too heavy on our tiny heads. (*Normal voice again.*) Relax; sink into it; you're no better than anybody else.

NICK. (*Wearily.*) I think I am.

MARTHA. (*Her glass to her mouth.*) You're certainly a flop in some departments.

NICK. (*Wincing.*) I beg your pardon...?

MARTHA. (*Unnecessarily loud.*) I said, you're certainly a flop in some ...

NICK. (*He, too, too loud.*) I'm sorry you're disappointed.

MARTHA. (*Braying.*) I didn't say I was disappointed! Stupid!

NICK. You should try me some time when we haven't been drinking for ten hours, and maybe ...

MARTHA. (*Still braying.*) I wasn't talking about your potential; I was talking about your goddamn performance.

NICK. (*Safely.*) Oh.

MARTHA. (*She softer, too.*) Your potential's fine. It's dandy. (*Wiggles her eyebrows.*) Absolutely dandy. I haven't seen such a dandy potential in a long time. Oh, but baby, you sure are a flop.

NICK. (*Snapping it out.*) Everybody's a flop to you! Your husband's a flop, I'm a flop ...

MARTHA. (*Dismissing him.*) You're all flops. I am the Earth Mother, and you're all flops. (*More or less to herself.*) I disgust me. I pass my life in crummy, totally pointless infidelities ... (*Laughs ruefully.*) *would-be* infidelities. Hump the Hostess? That's a laugh. A bunch of boozed-up ... impotent lunk-heads. Martha makes goo-goo eyes and the lunk-heads grin, and roll their beautiful, beautiful eyes back, and grin some more, and Martha licks her chops, and the lunk-heads slap over to the bar to pick up a little courage, *and* they pick up a little courage, and they bounce back over to old Martha, who does a little dance for them, which heats them all up ... mentally ... and so they slap over to the bar again, and pick up a little more courage, and their wives and sweethearts stick their noses up in the air ... right through the ceiling, sometimes ... which sends the lunk-heads back to the soda fountain again where they fuel up some more while Martha-poo sits there with her dress up over her head ... suffocating — you don't know how *stuffy* it is with your dress up over your head — suffocating! waiting for the lunk-heads; so, *finally* they get their courage up ... but that's all, baby! Oh my, there is sometimes some very nice potential, but, oh my! My, my, my. (*Brightly.*) But that's how it is in civilized society. (*To herself again.*) All the gorgeous lunk-heads. Poor babies. (*To Nick, now; earnestly.*) There is only one man in my life who has ever ... made me happy. Do you know that? One!

NICK. The ... the what-do-you-call-it? ... uh ... the lawn mower, or something?

MARTHA. No; I'd forgotten him. But when I think about him and me it's almost like being a voyeur. Hunh. No; I didn't mean him; I meant George, of course. (*No response from Nick.*) Uh ... George; my husband.

NICK. (*Disbelieving.*) You're kidding.

MARTHA. Am I?

NICK. You must be. Him?

MARTHA. Him.

NICK. (*As if in on a joke.*) Sure; sure.

MARTHA. You don't believe it.

NICK. (*Mocking.*) Why, of course I do.

MARTHA. You always deal in appearances?

NICK. (*Derisively.*) Oh, for God's sake ...

MARTHA. ... George who is out somewhere there in the dark ... George who is good to me, and whom I revile; who understands me, and whom I push off; who can make me laugh, and I choke it back in my throat; who can hold me, at night, so that it's warm, and whom I will bite so there's blood; who keeps learning the games we play as quickly as I can change the rules; who can make me happy and I do not wish to be happy, and yes I do wish to be happy. George and Martha: sad, sad, sad.

NICK. (*Echoing, still not believing.*) Sad.

MARTHA. ... whom I will not forgive for having come to rest; for having seen me and having said: Yes, this will do; who has made the hideous, the hurting, the insulting mistake of loving me and must be punished for it. George and Martha: sad, sad, sad.

NICK. (*Puzzled.*) Sad.

MARTHA. ... who tolerates, which is intolerable; who is kind, which is cruel; who understands, which is beyond comprehension ...

NICK. George and Martha: sad, sad, sad.

MARTHA. Some day ... hah! some *night* ... some stupid, liquor-ridden night ... I will go too far ... and I'll either break the man's back ... or push him off for good ... which is what I deserve.

NICK. I don't think he's got a vertebra intact.

MARTHA. (*Laughing at him.*) You don't, huh? You don't think so. Oh, little boy, you got yourself hunched over that microphone of yours ...

NICK. Microscope ...

MARTHA. ... yes ... and you don't see anything, do you? You see everything but the goddamn mind; you see all the little specks and crap, but you don't see what goes on, do you?

NICK. I know when a man's had his back broken; I can see that.

MARTHA. Can you!

NICK. You're damn right.

MARTHA. Oh ... you know so little. And you're going to take over the world, hunh?

NICK. All right, now ...

MARTHA. You think a man's got his back broken 'cause he makes like a clown and walks bent, hunh? Is that *really* all you know?

NICK. I said, all *right!*

MARTHA. Ohhhh! The stallion's mad, hunh. The gelding's all upset. Ha, ha, ha, HA!

NICK. (*Softly, wounded.*) You ... you swing wild, don't you.

MARTHA. (*Triumphant.*) HAH!

NICK. Just ... anywhere.

MARTHA. HAH! I'm a Gatling gun. Hahahahahahahahaha!

NICK. (*In wonder.*) Aimless ... butchery. Pointless.

MARTHA. Aw! You poor little bastard.

NICK. Hit out at everything. (*The door chimes chime.*)

MARTHA. Go answer the door.

NICK. (*Amazed.*) What did you say?

MARTHA. I said, go answer the door. What are you, deaf?

NICK. (*Trying to get it straight.*) You ... want me ... to go answer the door?

MARTHA. That's right, lunk-head; answer the door. There must be something you can do well; or, are you too drunk to do that, too? Can't get the latch up, either?

NICK. Look, there's no need ... (*Door chimes again.*)

MARTHA. Answer it! (*Softer.*) You can be houseboy around here for a while. You can start off being houseboy right now.

NICK. Look, lady, I'm no flunky to you.

MARTHA. (*Cheerfully.*) Sure you are! You're ambitious, aren't you, boy? You didn't chase me around the kitchen and up the goddamn stairs out of mad, driven passion, did you now? You were thinking a little bit about your career, weren't you? Well, you can just house-boy your way up the ladder for a while.

NICK. There's no limit to you, is there?

MARTHA. (*Calmly, surely.*) No, baby; none. Go answer the door.

NICK. (*Considers, gives in, moves toward the door. Chimes again.*) I'm coming, for Christ's sake!

MARTHA. (*Claps her hands.*) Ha HA! Wonderful; marvelous. (*Sings.*) "Just a gigolo, everywhere I go, people always say ..."

NICK. STOP THAT!

MARTHA. (*Giggles.*) Sorry, baby; go on now; open the little door.

NICK. (*With great rue.*) Christ. (*He flings open the door, and a hand thrusts into the opening a great bunch of snapdragons; they stay there for a moment. Nick strains his eyes to see who is behind them.*)

MARTHA. Oh, how lovely!

GEORGE. (*Appearing in the doorway, the snapdragons covering his face; speaks in a hideously cracked falsetto.*) Flores; flores para los