

THE CROSSING

a play in one act,  
with musical inter-act

by Jenny L. Ferguson

Character List

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1): Woman, mid-30s, well-dressed, sharp haircut.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2): Woman, mid-30s, well-dressed, sharp haircut, although clearly different than Molly Holliday (1) in some way. They should appear to be a type, but a variation on the same type. Doppelgangers, slightly off.

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD: uniform, mid-40s to 50s, gun-holster, male.

CANADIAN BORDER GUARD: uniform, mid-20s, male.

BOYFRIEND: mid-20s to 30s, seedy, a little rough around the edges, male.

MAN: mid-30s to 40s, hipster, male.

Synopsis

MOLLY HOLLIDAY crosses the Canadian / US border and is interrogated by the border guards because she shares a name, birthdate, and birth place with a wanted criminal.

Musical Inter-Act

"It's You"

Molly Holliday (1), Molly Holliday (2)

## THE CROSSING

### Scene 1

(MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) and a MAN are sitting next to each other in a car waiting at the American border crossing. They pay the toll and join the line to speak with a border guard. The MAN is driving. The car is packed, as if for a long trip. They have too much stuff. Weird things: a coffee maker in its original box, a unicycle.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Hand me the passports.

MAN

Why? He's going to ask me for them.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

You assume it's going to be a man. You always assume shit like that. (beat. She's exasperated but she's used to this kind of talk from him.) Would you hand them to me?

MAN

Border guards are like a subset of the police. And they're typically men. You never get pulled over by a lady cop. Except in airports. In airports, they're mandated to staff at least 30% women on each shift. You get it? Mandated? (He doesn't pause for the joke, just moves on.) I heard that on CNC or something. You know why? Because of the pansies who won't go through the body scanner. Because they're scared of cancer. Or being naked in public. (He drums his hands on the steering wheel.) Those pansies are mostly women. Women keeping women in jobs. For the pat down, you see. Can't have a man doing that. In public. (He sneers. He drums again, louder.) Don't worry—

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

I'm not worried. Would you just- (She stops herself mid-sentence. She checks her watch.) It's CNN, not CNC. (beat) You made up that up, didn't you?

(The MAN smiles, caught. He passes two passports folded open to the picture pages to MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1). She folds her passport in a half and peers at the picture. Then she hands the passports, hers tucked below his, back to the MAN. She runs her hands through her hair, checks it in the mirror, adjusts a few invisible stray pieces.)

MAN

You look fine. Really fine.

(MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) ignores him. She applies a fresh layer of lipstick carefully, stares at herself in the mirror, changes her mind, wipes the lipstick off with a tissue.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Too much like her.

(The MAN laughs. He reaches out and pats MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) on the thigh. She pushes him away. But when he fights her, she settles in, her hand on top of his on her thigh.)

End scene.

SCENE 2

(Split scene: MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) is with the AMERICAN BORDER GUARD, MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2) is with the CANADIAN BORDER GUARD in fairly similar, small, bare, but clearly governmental interrogation rooms. Both MOLLYs are sitting next to each other on either side of the split scene. Their body language mirrors each other throughout the scene, for the most part. The border guards are across a table from the MOLLYs, one sits, one stands. The border guards move about the scene, the MOLLYs stay fairly stationary, as if stuck in this moment, in their place, together.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

Let's get this over with. I'm on a schedule. And, unlike you, I'm not getting paid.

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

Simmer lady. This takes the time it takes. (He pauses. He's in control.) Where you headed?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

My family owns a vacation property in the Adirondacks. I go there every year. Every single July since birth. I'm sure you have a record somewhere. (She smiles when he looks down at his clipboard.) Of my movements. Of me.

CANADIAN BORDER GUARD

Where?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

I stay with friends. Downtown by the lake. Do you want their address? (beat) Postal code?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Found my name, didn't you? (beat) Don't you get bored of this?

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

It's the job. You do what you do to put food on the table.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

I'm so bored of this. I mean the thrill has just gone out of our relationship. Could I... Would it help at all—at all?—if I changed my name? I always wanted to be a Heather. Heathers are always blonde and buxom and haven't a care in the world they can't solve (she pauses, she smiles like a cat about to end the mouse, to crush its bones into a fine powder) by smiling.

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

(deadpan) Wouldn't help any. Besides, I've only known horrible bitchy Heathers.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Is it true they have to keep 30% women on staff at airports and the like? For patdowns?

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

(shrugs) Sounds about right.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

Have we been here long enough... (stops mid-sentence, stares at the clock on the wall—the clock is behind a metal grate as if to keep it safe.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

(picking up the sentence) to make your boss happy yet?

(The BORDER GUARDS turns toward each other, as if, as if they can almost see each other. One waves his hand around in the air, one nods. Then they look down at a clipboard, each flip a page, and begin reading aloud.)

CANADIAN BORDER GUARD  
(bored)

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

Do you swear you are of no

relation to one Molly  
Holliday, wanted by this  
God-fearing nation for

violence against the state,  
unlawful protest, and  
obstruction of

the one true and fearful  
justice, born March 12,  
1980 in Brooklyn, New  
York to parents Ricardo  
and Angela Holliday?

(The lighting in the room shifts—red and  
yellow spotlights hit the interrogation  
rooms. The BORDER GUARDS freeze. A  
strange, sharp coloured spotlight hits  
MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1), bringing out the red  
in her outfit).

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)  
(with a wicked smile—  
rhythmically, like rock music).

It's you. It's you. It's you.

(The focus is on MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) as  
she ramps up the tension. When MOLLY  
HOLLIDAY (2) joins in, she too is bathed  
in coloured light--yellow. The drums  
pick up, an electric guitar joins in.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

No, YOU  
YOU  
WITH THE HAT  
THE DISGUISE  
I DON'T SEE HOW YOU,  
(pointing at the BORDER GUARDS) YOU AND YOU  
YOU DON'T SEE WHAT'S IN FRONT OF—

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

MY BABY BLUE EYES  
(music shifts)  
JEEPERS, CREEPERS,  
WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE PEEPERS!  
JEEPERS, CREEPERS,  
WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE EYES?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

THEY'RE ALWAYS  
MISTAKING—NO BLAMING!—ME  
FOR YOUR DAMN CRIMES  
DON'T YOU SEE  
WHAT YOU'RE DOING  
TO ME?

(The MOLLYS circle each other like animals, like kindergarteners. At the last second, they break away from each other and spiral out. Jazz hands. Dance moves. Everything is stylized; this is not realism. Music shifts, something softer, something sweeter, now MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2) is on the attack.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

YOU'VE TAKEN MY LIFE  
Not that it was a great life.  
But, it was ALL MINE  
IT'S LIKE THE WAY  
A LITTLE GIRL DREAMS  
OF LITTLE GIRL THINGS  
OF KITTENS  
OF A PAIR OF GREEN MITTENS  
OF A DOCTOR  
A SURGEON  
A NEW NOSE OR BOOBS OR WHATEVER SHE PLEASES  
FOR HER SIXTEENTH BIRTHDAY  
AND MAYBE SHE DREAMS OF SOMETHING  
ELSE, SOMETHING DIFFERENT, SOMETHING LIKE  
A DISH SOAP THAT DOESN'T—

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Dry out your hands?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)  
(warmly)

Yeah.  
(back on the attack)  
OF HEALTHY CUTICLES  
OF JUNK MAIL THAT THRILLS  
OF GOOD SEX  
OF GREAT SEX  
OF NO SEX AT ALL  
FOR MONTHS AND MONTHS  
OF BAD HAIR CUTS  
(she sighs, big, dramatic, clears her throat)  
IT WAS ALL MINE  
AND BITCH THAT'S FINE  
TO DREAM ABOUT THE THINGS  
THAT YOU CAN HAVE  
NOT THESE THINGS  
THESE THINGS ARE  
MINE  
ALL MINE  
NOT YOURS  
M-I-N-E

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

WHAT WAS MINE  
IS MINE  
ALL MINE  
STOP PRETENDING  
STOP TAKING THE PISS  
IT'S NOT PRETTY  
IT'S NOT UP TO YOUR  
USUAL STANDARDS  
THIS INNOCENT  
THIS PLAYING THE PART  
OF A WOMAN WHO'S HURT  
AS IF  
AS IF  
AS IF AS IF ANYONE ONE  
WOULD BUY THAT LIE  
NOT TO SEE  
THAT THE ONE SUFFERING  
(saucy) BITCH  
IT'S NOT YOU  
IT'S ME  
ALL ME  
(aside) I wish I were called Heather.



MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

ALL YOU  
DO IS SPIN THIS LITTLE TALE  
AS IF IT MATTERS  
AS IF IT CHANGES THINGS  
IT'S NOT ME  
IT'S YOU

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

YOU

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

NO  
YOU

(The light shifts again, back to normal.  
The BORDER GUARDS resume their  
movements, as if they've just finished  
speaking: they're waiting for an  
answer.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (2)

Yes. I am not that woman.

I do swear.

AMERICAN BORDER GUARD

CANADIAN BORDER GUARD

Sign here.

Thank you, welcome to  
Canada and enjoy your  
trip.

END SCENE.

SCENE 3

(MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) exits the border guard station, and heads toward her car and her BOYFRIEND. He's waiting for her. He looks like he's been waiting for a while. It's as if the two MOLLYS have traded places, or as if this is a different crossing entirely, but no one notices. Nothing is wrong. This is just another day.)

BOYFRIEND

What a pain it is to take you anywhere nice, Ms. Molly. It's a wonder I try. And try. And try and I do it to keep you happy. I do it all for you, babe.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Did they let you keep the duty free?

BOYFRIEND

No problems. This time. You?

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

No problems. I'm happy. (She's flat—she hears it too. She tries again) I'm happy. Like a girl named Heather. (beat) My only wish in this whole wide world, baby, is that we don't stop and visit your mother on the way to the mountains.

BOYFRIEND

She likes you.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

And it's a good thing I like you, for now.

BOYFRIEND

I like your threats.

(BOYFRIEND wraps an arm around MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)'s shoulder and leads her over to their car. MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1) sinks into the driver's seat. BOYFRIEND taps the hood of the car three times as he walks over to his door. He climbs in.)

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

(She carries on with their conversation, but her voice is warming) We're going to have to leave early on Sunday morning. It's worse on the way back in.

BOYFRIEND

It's so worth it. And you know it.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

I really don't think it is.

BOYFRIEND

Hey, they quiz me too.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

You're not the one in that room. You don't know how hard it is to be me.

BOYFRIEND

Shut up and drive, Ms. Molly. Don't think on it. We're on vacation now.

MOLLY HOLLIDAY (1)

Would you still love me if my name were Heather?

(She waits. She waits. He's looking out the window. She waits.)

END SCENE.

CURTAIN.

Jenny Ferguson is Métis, French Canadian, an activist, a feminist, and an accomplice with a PhD. She believes writing and teaching are political acts. *BORDER MARKERS*, her collection of linked flash fiction narratives, is available from *NeWest Press*. Feel free to get in touch with her online at <http://www.jennyferguson.ca> or @jennyleeSD.