Better Maybe

A play for one or more folx

By

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A Fornes Institute/Play At Home commission

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For more information about Caridad Svich, visit www.caridadsvich.com or their profile page on New Play Exchange. Newplayexchange.org or on twitter @Csvich

The Fornes Institute, an LTC initiative, preserves and archives Maria Irene Fornes’s legacy as a teacher, mentor and artist. Visit https://fornesinstitute.com

Play at Home founding partners are Baltimore Center Stage, Long Wharf Theatre, The Public Theater, The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis and Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Website: playathome.org and hashtag #PlayAtHome on twitter.
Some words before we begin:

There may be one or more actors.

Lines (of text) may be assigned as you see fit.
Where there are words in parentheses, they are meant to be spoken
When there are lines in italics, they are also meant to be spoken

Where it says [insert here]
go ahead, insert your favorite song, moment, etc. into the performance.

When there’s a stand-alone ellipses, let’s just take a moment/breath, before we move forward.

Note: This is a space to gather, listen, and work things through when everything is not working at all or nearly enough and it makes you want to do things but you may not know what or how.
... 

Listen
We'll get through this

Some of us will

We'll get through this
And we'll even sing

Keep singing

Like we do now

Like we did once (years ago)

....

At first, we will sing the songs we love

The sad ones, the common ones, the ones we carried in our hearts

And then we'll sing the songs we miss

The weird ones, the unusual ones, the ones we pressed against our chests (for love)

And then later,
We will start to dance

*Because dancing is a thing, and it makes us feel alive*

Dancing is a thing and it makes us wanna shout

And so, we do

*[insert dance/shout here]*

...

We shout

We scream our joys and passions

Our love of
football and futbol (soccer) baseball basketball hockey tennis golf volleyball
skateboarding you name it we did it the sports are it

Our love of
music dance theatre movies concerts potlucks (good-luck) nightclubs day clubs street
fairs parades

Our love of
Beyonce, Drake, Tyler the Creator, Lady Gaga, Fountains of Wayne, Bill Withers and

*[insert everyone you love here]*
Our love of
cats dogs hamsters birds rabbits chickens and all the pets in the universe
And all the non-pet animals too

Our love of
food yummy different form all the corners of the globe baking bread simmering spices
tastes that fill our mouths and hearts with the wonder of the gods

And plants, lots of plants and trees and rivers and lakes and oceans and sky

_and for a while we think about…_

We dream of the sky
While we look at it from windows
While we dream about it in our sleep
While we rest our heads on our desks aching from work and too much Zoom

We zoom through the trees
We zoom through the fields

We are a camera
zooming in for close-ups and lingering hard and fast on the details that we missed once
In our waking lives

Like,

Your finger curled up around a pen
Your toes squiggling in the dark
Your arms reaching for an embrace
Your hands promising faith
Your eyes saying Goodbye and sometimes too Hello
And sometimes our camera just rests
Cos it too needs a break and it longs for no lenses no screens no virtual anythings

Cos all the lenses do is remind us of the power of touch
And how when we are like this

Aching
Breaking
Loving
Sheltering
Fearing
Dreaming
Craving
Wanting

It is touch that seems to free us connect us make us feel
Human

....

Although yes, we won’t soon forget
That in this world
Human-ness has a cost
It has a price
It has a value
And sometimes that value is shored up on the frontlines of laws deemed to ill-serve the humans they are supposed to protect

Funny/sad how that is, the way of the world (before and after)
We know this cos we study history
We know this cos we study pain and its contours
We know this cos we are dog tired of being dogged by hate and lies and dark malice

And most of the time
A lot of the time

We want out

Of
This
World

And how we have made its systems
And how we have said We and meant something else entirely
And it just....

Burns us up
Until we are flame

....

But today is not for that
Today is for the rage to be directed elsewhere for a while

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Cos today we want to understand joy and its meanings
Even when we wrestle with the fact that joy is possible
Can be possible
In this dark theatre in which we live
....

And so, we say,
To anyone that will hear

Here in this room
Here in this Zoom
Here in this...

space

Today let me pretend
some joy

Let me wear its face
Let me sing it an old song

[insert old song here]

Let me speak sing cry emojis and heart emojis and cat with sunglasses emojis BIG SMILE

Cos joy is how we revel in the spirit of all human-plant-animal-water-mineral-ness

And reveling is something we remember
Cos it’s the stuff of
parades and floats and mermaids and marching bands and Fat Tuesday and way too much revelry for its own good

And it is also the stuff of
Catching the last plane train bus looking at your face wondering when the last time will be before we meet again IRL

....

Hey, listen
Remember being IRL?

It was a thing once
And it will be again

if we pray, shout our love, & be patient enough to see this through

Can we see this through?
Will you see this through with me?

Say you will

See
this
through

Say you will

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Be patient
Be kind

Be
Just be

Try to be
As best you can
However you can

In whatever
clothes makeup no makeup lightness hardness softness being-ness of YOU even when emojis fail and stocks plummet and the outside feels like it will break with mere breath

Cos listen…

The birds are singing

Can you hear them?

And it will be,

somehow, someday,

somewhere

(as that other song goes)

A better maybe day.