

BESS MONOLOGUE, ACT 1

From *An Increasingly Uncordial Invitation*

By Mark Chrisler

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BESS

He--it seems--masked the pain. Bird-like, you know. Just to get through his last week of shows. Probably. Or afraid to show weakness. Afraid to be weak. Hopefully not that. But maybe. One night, in Vancouver, he collapsed. Right after the lights went down, in the midst of the applause. I'm trying not to read any romance into that. That's eroding. We'd been in that hospital five days before. I had a cyst on my chest. Just cosmetic. But I'd caught it on a zipper and it became inflamed. So, they cut it out and stitched me up. I was embarrassed about it. Had been embarrassed about it, the cyst, I mean, not the... whole thing; in the past. It would have been nice to perform with something low-cut, like a gymnast or some stupid thing like that. There with Harry, I already knew. The doctors walked in while he was sleeping and... it didn't take a psychic; he was burning up and his skin was as though painted pale yellow. But hearing it, when they told me. I started heaving. Not just crying or weeping; heaving. And my chest; my chest just opened up, right the fuck up and, right from the heart, my blood just started pumping out of me. So cliché. Or, it would be, if it were the sort of thing that happened more often. Does that make sense? Too fantastic for the real, too awful for the magical.