

closed world of her own, full of leftover food scraps, dead houseplants, and stolen men's sweaters.

Monologue One: Cliff's bad language reminds Rose of "them kids at the zoo . . . radios up against their ears and wild ugly music and cursing! I hate that!" When Cliff asks, "What kids at the zoo?" Rose tells him about "those tall birds with the long thin necks . . . Derricks! No. Cranes."

Monologue Two: Cliff tells Rose about driving a truck. Rose, who has never gone anywhere, thinks it sounds "wonderful . . . free as a bird." Cliff responds.

1

START

ROSE

You may think it's funny but I was the last one to see them alive last summer. There was only seven of them in the world and the zoo had four of them. I used to walk there every night just to watch them stand so still in the water. And they walked so graceful, in slow motion. And they have legs as skinny as my little finger. Long legs. And there was only seven in the world because they killed them off for feathers for ladies hats or something. And one night a gang of boys came by with radios to their ears and cursing real bad, you know, F—, and everything. And I was, you know, ascaerd. And they started saying things to me, you know, dirty things, and laughing at the birds. And one kid threw a stone to see how close he could splash the birds, and then another kid tried to see how close he could splash the birds, and then they all started throwing stones to splash the birds, and then they started throwing stones at the birds, and I started screaming STOP IT! and a stone hit a bird's leg and it bended like a straw and the birds keeled over in the water, flapping wings in the water, and the kids kept laughing and throwing stones and I kept screaming STOP IT! STOP IT! but they couldn't hear me through that ugly music on the radios and kept laughing and cursing and throwing stones, and I ran and got the zoo guard and he

got his club and we ran to the place of the birds but the kids were gone. And there was white feathers on the water. And the water was real still. And there was big swirls of blood. And the birds were real still. Their beaks a little open. Legs broke. Toes curled. Still. Like the world stopped. And the guard said something to me but I couldn't hear him. I just saw his mouth moving. And I started screaming. And the cops came and took me the hospital and they gave me a needle to make me stop screaming. And they never caught the gang. But even if they did, what good's that? They can't make the birds come alive again.

2

STOP

CLIFF

Free. What's free? Pushin' an eight-year-old played-out dog on retreats that drops a gear box when you get a little ahead of schedule? Free. You say free 'cause you're stuck behind a candy counter all day and a Five-and-Dime don't move. Free. When a dispatcher slips you an extra yard to overload your rig, you ain't free to turn it down, because it's your bread and butter. Without the butter. So now you got to sneak past the scale stations where these jerky little guys with clipboards and twenty-seven pens in their shirt pocket wait for you and your freedom to come eighteen-wheelin' down Primrose Pike. Flags you over. Weighs the rig. You get a fine that wipes out the bribe you just took. Click a button and you got a thousand good buddies who map you a snakepath on backroads that never heard of rules and regulations. But then, out of nowhere, a little yellow flasher comes up in the rearview. Motor Vehicle Inspector out looking for his afternoon quota. Pulls you over. You know he's gonna weigh the rig and slap another summons on you. You know he's gonna crank up his portable scales. Gets out his car like John Wayne with an A-bomb in his holster. Sunglasses so you can't see his eyes. Asks for your logbook, please. Always says please. Looks at it. Scans your