

FIREFLIES

(A Children's Play. For ~~Adults~~ Millennials.)

by Philana Imade Omorotionmwan

*There is some kiss we want
with our whole lives,
the touch of spirit on the body...
At night, I open the window
and ask the moon to come
and press its face against mine.
Breathe into me.*

—Rumi

CHARACTERS

| | |
|------------|--|
| THEN-SELF | full of youthful enthusiasm and hope while also being a little bit whiny; believes all the things she dreams for herself are possible; all heart |
| NOW-SELF | cold, detached, dispassionate; knows better; all head |
| THE MOON | THEN-SELF's first reflection of her light |
| SHINEs 1-2 | sweet; a little rough around the edges |
| GLOWs 1-3 | charming; used to getting what they want; everyone wants their attention/to be near them |
| BLUE | played by the same actor who plays THE MOON |

TIME

Now and then. Then and now.

PLACE

The darkness.

V. Fireflies

(SHINE 1's flashlight is on. THEN-SELF's is still turned off. The following song is a shared moment between THEN-SELF and SHINE 1, but the actors playing MAMA MOON, GLOWs 1-3 and NOW-SELF may harmonize with them.)

THEN-SELF

(singing)

Mmhhmmm¹ I want to linger

Mmhhmm A little longer Mmhhmm A little longer here with you

SHINE 1 and THEN-SELF

Mmmhhmmm

It's such a perfect night

Mmhhmm

It doesn't seem quite right

Mhhmm

That it should be my last with you

Mmhhmmm

And as the years go by,

Mhhmm

I'll think of you and sigh.

Mhhmm

This is good night And not good bye

Mmhhmmm

I want to linger

Mhhmm

A little longer

Mhhmm

A little longer here with you

(The actors playing THE MOON, GLOWs 1-3, and NOW-SELF continue to hum underneath the following.)

SHINE 1

Wanna go for a swim?

THEN-SELF

And get my clothes wet?

SHINE 1

Take em off then. It's just us.

THEN-SELF

You mean... right here? In front of you?

SHINE 1

We're girls, remember? It's nothing I haven't seen before.

THEN-SELF

No, The Moon said not to change clothes in front of you because you might be a— Never mind. You know we're not supposed to get our hair wet.

SHINE 1

But it's our last night.

(Silence. Small lights begin to twinkle in the treetops.)

THEN-SELF

What are those lights flickering up there in the treetops?

SHINE 1

You've never seen lightning bugs before?
You know, fireflies?

THEN-SELF

I've heard about them.

SHINE 1

You have to be out in the country to see them. There's too much light in the city for them to see each other.
So they can't survive.
Some things need the darkness.

(The humming underneath stops. A moment.)

THEN-SELF

Oh. This is my first time this far out, I guess.
So why do they light up like that?

SHINE 1

Cause they wanna fuck.

THEN-SELF

Ooooooh...

SHINE 1

What? It's the truth. They light up like that cause they wanna fuck.

THEN-SELF

You're not supposed to say bad words like that.

SHINE 1

What did I say?

THEN-SELF

Fuuuh— You know.

SHINE 1

If it's so bad, then what does it mean, huh?

THEN-SELF

Uh... um... I don't know. But I know it's bad.

SHINE 1

It just means kissing and stuff.

THEN-SELF

Oh.
Is that all?

SHINE 1

That's all. You don't think kissing's bad, do you?

THEN-SELF

I don't know. I mean, I guess it might be nice.

SHINE 1

You mean to tell me you ain't never been kissed before?
That's the secret you shoulda told me. Not that ashy snake thing.

THEN-SELF

I knew you'd just make fun.

SHINE 1

I'm not making fun.
But why haven't you been? Did The Moon tell you not to?

THEN-SELF

The Moon doesn't talk about stuff like that.

SHINE 1

You don't have to go out to the country to be kissed, you know.
But since we're here, do you wanna be?

THEN-SELF

Yeah.
I mean, I guess so. But there are no boys around.

SHINE 1

Who said anything about boys? Why should they always get to have all the fun?

THEN-SELF

That's who girls kiss in books.

SHINE 1

Books are stupid. That's why I don't read.

But you let me know if you wanna write a different story.

(SHINE 1 blinks her flashlight on once, a second, and third time. Nothing from THEN-SELF. SHINE 1 turns her flashlight off.)

THEN-SELF

"Some things need the darkness?"

As the nights turned into days

and the days turned into nights,

the creature couldn't get those words out of her mind.

"Some things need the darkness."

Like bears and snakes.

(A moment.)

And... fucking fireflies!

(THEN-SELF blinks her flashlight on once, a second, and third time. After a moment, SHINE 1 turns her flashlight on. A moment.)