

ORBIT

A monologue
by Rebecca Kane

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Cast of Characters

CYNTHIA:

A mom of flexible age. Any race.

Place:

Some generic rented space, like a conference room, classroom, church basement, etc.

Time:

Modern day.

(CYNTHIA is seated in a chair. She's obviously physically uncomfortable, no matter what kind of chair she's in. She looks put together, almost a little too much, and fixes her hair throughout the monologue.)

CYNTHIA:

Hi, I'm Cynthia, thank you for welcoming me today. Not really used to the whole group therapy atmosphere, do we—do we thank—well, too late, I did. And I meant it! Thank you, all. For being so welcoming. As welcoming as we can be.

When I was thinking of—of *her*, today—it was when I went out to look at the sun. And no, I wasn't *staring* at the sun. I'm not self-harming. Well, not like that. Not anymore. I haven't for years. Right after she—right after she went away—I mean, left us—I mean, died, I am able to say it, it *was* years ago—but right about then, there was a brief period of time where I felt like I didn't want to live anymore. Not like killing myself, per se, but not like living anymore either. No plan or anything, just, I'd look at the sun and I'd wish to be absorbed into it. You know, lighthearted wishing like that. Haha. A little joke. For those of us who had lighthearted wishes. I'm sure you all can relate. Anyway.

Now I realized when I look at the sun, just for a minute, I don't think of it as the sun. I look at it and I realize I still think of it as "Hoo-wee." I know. Ridiculous, right? I look at the sun and I actively think of it as "Hoo-wee." "Hoo-wee sure is burning bright today. Better go put on some sunscreen or Hoo-wee will get me today."

You see, the reason is, my dad – he would come to baby sit a lot – he loved her – I mean, who didn't, she was, you know, that age is so – only three when – well, anyway, he's one of those guys who speaks like, every morning in the summer, he'd let out this noise like, "Hooo-weee the sun is SHINING today, folks!" And he figured out pretty quick that when he made that noise, she'd laugh. And when she laughed, I laughed, and everyone was laughing. So he would get up, creep out of the guest room to surprise her, and he'd go, no warning—"HOOOO-WEEEEEEEE" and he would make it bigger and bigger every time. And wow, how she'd just cackle with delight, every time, without fail. Soon he forgot to even keep mentioning the sun. It was just their little morning ritual. Even when my dad wasn't visiting, she would look at the sun outside and say that. "Hoo-wee! It's the hoo-wee! Grandpa hoo-wee!" And half the time she'd crack herself up. But even as she began to get older and get other words – like moon, and stars, all that she'd get – doesn't hurt that *Goodnight, Moon* is her favori—*was* her favorite book. So the moon, she knew well. But she just had this one word-- She'd point at her picture books. [*miming pointing at pictures in her lap*] "Moon. Star. Cloud. Rain. Hoo-wee. Snow. Tornado." Isn't that funny? *Tornado*, she knew. Not the sun.

Yeah, um. So. The sun. The hoo-wee, as we call it in my house. Not sure where I'm going with that. It's sunny a lot here. Florida, you know – I mean, sure, you all know, you all live here too – but yeah, I mean, when you're driving, it's sure—it's a bitch, huh? Really. Haha.

Going down I-95 some days, I can barely see, and I wonder – how are we not all just crashing into each other non-stop? Why are we going so fast? Why are we going so fast down the freeway like that? Why does everyone here drive so fast? When we can't see anything at all? Like we can't even see anything behind us when we're backing out – but still people just—they just zip down their driveway like— Like there's nothing behind them—

When there IS, when there IS SOMEONE BEHIND THEM—

I mean it's been *years* so that particular thing, it doesn't get me so angry anymore, but it does—does get me a little angry. Still.

What really gets me is that I'll see something, a word that's long and complicated, and what I'll think is, "She never got to learn that name." And it just comes out of nowhere! The other day I was in my garden, trying to plant some romaine for the first time, and I took a look at the little seed packet. It says on it, *lactiva sativa*. And out of nowhere, it comes to me. She will never hear that phrase. She will never hear *lactiva sativa*, never know it means romaine lettuce, never know the word *antioxidant* or that it's found in romaine lettuce or – did she even ever get to try romaine lettuce? She already hated salad. Hated her vegetables. Only three and already giving me lip about vegetables. But she'll never know how good some of them can be. How good some roasted vegetables are, how to plant something in the yard, what the scientific names of other plants and animals are, how we find them. What the sun is called. What it means to us and the plants. How we orbit around it. She orbited around it and never knew what it was called. Or maybe she did, and she chose not to. I don't know. I'll never know.

Yeah. It's that. It's what she didn't get to know. That gets to me. It's been getting to me a lot lately. I can't look at things without thinking of her not knowing it.

[*to someone near her*] I'm sorry, what's that? Her name? Oh it was—

Well.

I think maybe—sometimes I just have trouble—

Maybe next time. I think it's someone else's turn now. Just, yeah, I'll name her then—um—yeah.

For now it's just, uh, you know. "Hoo-wee."