

FLYING THROUGH WINDOWS

CHARACTERS

ADAM: the person who lives there. Male, late teens, student.

NO ONE: the person that is there. Female, close in age to Adam. Never truly leaves.

NATE: the person that goes there. Male, same age as Adam, goes to Adam's school.

NATE cannot see, hear, or interact with NO ONE.

SYNOPSIS

Flying Through Windows follows the story of childhood friends Adam and Nate as they navigate their junior year of high school. Everything is changing, and they are no exception. We see hangouts, conversations, and memories. However, there is something in the corner of our eyes: No One, the shadow of a girl who seems to be haunting Adam in his room. It all begins when a bird tries to fly through Adam's window, only to break its neck. That single moment seems to carry on day after day, until, finally, the cycle is broken.

This submission contains the following:

-excerpt of Act I, scene 1

-Act I, scene 2

-Act I, scene 4 (Homecoming)

-Act III, first moment

// indicates where a line is interrupted. / indicates the interruption.

ACT I, Scene 1

(ADAM's room. A window is all that adorns the back wall, slightly to stage right. A bed unmade lies longways against the window wall, with the fitted sheet being the only thing in place; blankets, pillows, and covers are otherwise strewn about on the bed. A desk is pushed against the stage left wall, to the inside of the door to the hallway. On the other side, a dresser is to the inside of the closet door. The door may be a sliding partition. Down center left there is a bedside table with a desk chair to stage left and storage ottoman stage right. On the bedside table is a game of chess near completion. Only a few pieces, most prominently the white queen, remain on the board; the rest are in a plastic shoebox on the floor.

ADAM is lying down on his bed, staring at the ceiling. He is seventeen, wearing white socks, jeans with a brown belt, and a short sleeve tee. His shoes sit kicked-off on the floor next to the bed. If he were sitting up, he would be facing stage left.

NO ONE is sitting on the ottoman observing the chess board. She wears killer boots, dirty black jeans, and a leather jacket over a long dark blue cardigan over a tee shirt. She has a ring that she fiddles with, but it is obviously of no romantic significance. Her empty eyes pop through her eyeliner.

A silence. ADAM sighs. NO ONE sighs. Beat.)

ADAM

Long day.

NO ONE

Yep.

ADAM

They // all are.

NO ONE

/ All are, yeah.

(Beat. ADAM sighs.)

ADAM

Felt like a ghost.

NO ONE

I // know.

ADAM

/ Very aimless.

(Beat.)

It's still exhausting.

NO ONE

You could move your bishop. That's probably your best bet. Even though you can get check now, there's not much else to do after that.

ADAM

(Sitting up.)

You know how they describe ghosts?

NO ONE

Um... transparent? Ethereal, if you want to wax poetic about it. Which you do.

ADAM

(Lying back down.)

Ghosts are people who have forgotten they're dead.

NO ONE

...did they know before?

ADAM

Never *realized* they're dead.

NO ONE

Do they remember dying though? Is it that they forget?

ADAM

Either they think they're still alive, or have some unfinished business. But I think one is the subset of the other. If they have unfinished business, they won't realize they're dead, they'll want to take care of it so bad.

NO ONE

That's not it.

ADAM

...what?

NO ONE

If ghosts are people who didn't realize they were dead, and that's it, then we would see ghosts all the time, because they would be going about their normal lives, right? Also they would obviously notice they're dead if they try to interact with people who knew they were dead.

(Beat.)

Sorry.

ADAM

It's fine.

But like... what about the people who don't know they're dead?

NO ONE
...I guess they just wouldn't know.

ADAM
Mhm.

NO ONE
Look, I wouldn't know, alright?
(Beat.)
Were you going to say something?

ADAM
Yeah. Uh... yeah.
(A short silence. NO ONE looks back at the game.)

NO ONE
Could move your queen to take that pawn.

ADAM
(Looking at her.)
Hm?

NO ONE
You'd put the king in check, but for a few moves.
(ADAM gets up as she talks. NO ONE gets up for him to sit on the ottoman.)
White wouldn't be able to do anything and you could figure out a checkmate.
(He sits and NO ONE sits in the chair. Beat as ADAM looks.)

Take it.
(ADAM reaches to the black queen. He hesitates. NO ONE leans in.)

Take. It.
(ADAM picks up the queen. Suddenly something slams into the window. NO ONE sees, ADAM hears. ADAM jumps a bit, dropping the piece.)

ADAM
(Under his breath.)
Shit.—

NO ONE
Woah!

ADAM
What // was that?

NO ONE
/ Did you see that?

ADAM

No, what?

NO ONE

A fucking bird just hit the window!

ADAM

(Looking to the window.)

This high up? On the 8th floor?

NO ONE

Well usually birds *are* this high up.

ADAM

Well yeah, but to hit the window?

NO ONE

Look and see. I think it fell onto the sill.

(Beat. They stare at each other.)

Do it.

(Beat.)

Do. It.

(ADAM gets up and goes to the sill. He puts his hands on the bottom of the window. You can hear his breathing. Beat.)

ADAM

I see it.

NO ONE

It's there?

ADAM

(Deep breath.)

Yes.

NO ONE

Get it.

ADAM

No.

NO ONE

Get it. Bring it in.

ADAM

No. I won't.

NO ONE
Get. It.

ADAM
No.
(Beat.)
It stopped breathing.
(Beat.)

NO ONE
Will you get it now?
(Beat. She sits on the bed.)
Was it twitching?
(Beat. ADAM puts his hands on the window to open it. He takes them off. He then goes back to the ottoman.)

ADAM
Where's the queen?

NO ONE
There.
(She doesn't point.)

ADAM
Thank you.
(He picks up the queen and sits down. Taking a breath, he considers taking the pawn; instead he places the queen where it was, hand still on it.)
I didn't like that.
(NO ONE looks at ADAM. She moves back to the chair, sits, and studies the board. She points to the white queen, tracing its path to a spot on the opposite side of the board, leaning over to do so. She does not touch it.)

NO ONE
(Looking up.)
Checkmate.

...

ACT I, Scene 2

(It's a new day. ADAM and NATE are lying down on the bed, facing down center. NATE is wearing flannel with cuffed jeans. They are not asleep, but lost in thought, or deep in conversation.)

NO ONE sits leaning against the bed. She speaks.)

NO ONE

Every day you wake up, you're a new person. It's not always obvious because every day is the same. It doesn't feel any different, but it is. Because we're new, and the old one's dead and gone.

Every day we wake up and kill the one who's sleeping.

(ADAM sighs.)

NATE

Remember when we used to go down to the swings?

(Beat.)

ADAM

The swings?

NATE

Yeah, in our old neighborhood.

ADAM

Oh, right. We'd walk down to them—

NATE

Well, we'd go through the fucking sewers.

ADAM

I wouldn't call tunnels under the road for small streams *sewers*.

NATE

Sewers sounds more badass, though.

ADAM

Yes, but it's inaccurate.

(Beat.)

You were saying?

NO ONE

You were saying.

NATE
I think I might've cut you off.

ADAM
Honestly, no clue.

NATE
...Well, I // guess...

ADAM
/ Oh! I got it. The swings.

NATE
Right.

ADAM
We'd go to the swings.

NATE
Yees!

ADAM
And we'd talk.

NATE
Yeah. // For hours.

ADAM
/ For hours on end!

NATE
Seemed like it, anyway.

ADAM
About... things.

NO ONE
Love, you mean.

NATE
~Love~, you mean.

ADAM
Well, I—

NATE
Chill, man. Not that deep.

ADAM
...Okay.
(*Beat.*)

NATE
We'd talk about Brooke. And Ronnie, later.

NO ONE
You mean *you* would.

ADAM
We would, wouldn't we?

NATE
For hours.

ADAM
For hours on end.

NATE
She was pretty.

ADAM
Yeah.

NATE
I remember that one time she straightened her hair for her birthday.

ADAM
Who?

NATE
Ronnie, I think. I had remembered it was her birthday because, well, who wouldn't fuckin' remember *her* birthday? And it's not like she pushed it or anything, // she just...

ADAM
/ No, of course not.

NATE
I dunno. You wanted to know. For her sake.

Anyway, it was super pretty how she did it. To middle school me.

NO ONE

She was prettier with her hair how it was.

ADAM

You used to really like her.

NATE

Well... I think for Ronnie it was all looks.

ADAM

A rebound?

NATE

HA, not even. We never went out or anything, if you can call it that in fucking middle school.

ADAM

Still getting over Brooke.

NATE

What can I say?

(With melancholy.)

We had something.

(Beat.)

ADAM

You did.

NO ONE

Her mother died. It was sudden and long.

She doesn't live around here anymore.

ADAM

You two were friends before me.

NATE

Yeah. Yeah we were.

(A long silence.)

If I were gay I think I would want to be a lesbian.

ADAM

...what?

NATE

Like... okay, hear me out.

ADAM
I... yeah.

NATE
(Gesticulating towards the ceiling)
So here's the thing.

ADAM
Yeah?

NATE
Here's the goddamn thing.

ADAM
Mhm.
(Beat.)

NATE
I like girls.

ADAM
Yes.

NATE
I've always known that.

ADAM
(Puzzled look.)
Yeah sure.

NATE
And sure maybe guys are attractive // sometimes but I don't think about them that way. //

ADAM
/ Sure, sure... / Okay.

NATE
So ... yeah. So I can't think about guys like that. But I like girls, and lesbians like girls.

ADAM
Right.

NATE
They *are* girls.

ADAM

Right.

NATE

So... but that's not it.

(Beat.)

ADAM

What is it then?

NATE

It's, I mean...

(Awkward beat. NATE is at a bit of a loss.)

ADAM

You don't get anyone pregnant.

NATE

Yeah.

Yeah that's definitely part of it.

(Beat.)

ADAM

Is there something else?

(NO ONE sits on the floor, leaning against the bed.)

NATE

Well... there's just something about girls liking girls. Something about it just makes sense. Like, yeah, girls like girls, girls like each other, I dunno.

Like... girls hug each other all the time. And like it's just normal shit. It's normal as fuck, for girls to walk up to each other and... geez I don't know what I'm talking about. Like... so uuuuh... like, girls can talk and they can talk whenever they call each other on the phone... um... say, go get coffee, I don't know...

I don't fucking know...

But like they're... they can just do that, they can just be... they can be together and nobody bats an eye. Two girls together talking, nice, friendly...

Holding hands. Girls, little girls... no, like, normal ass girls can just hold hands and walk in the fucking street and nobody cares. Two girls cuddling on a bench in the hallway? Normal. They could fucking make out and...

Look, what I'm trying... I'm trying to say that, it'd be nice.

Nice to be a girl and do that.

ADAM

Huh...

NATE

It's not like, a weird thing, or whatever. I could like a girl like normal, like I d— ...could, now, and we could hang out. Be friends without any weird shit. Maybe the gay shit happens later, but first we're friends, doing friend things, and that's that, that's... that. I can, could do that, because...

Girls are allowed to like each other.

ADAM

Just like?

NATE

I mean, I know the entire LGBT thing. The *like* like... the LGBTQ+ thing. The *like* like part does mean something different and a lot of people don't like it, but...

ADAM

I see // what you're saying.

NATE

/ If I were gay... Lesbian.

Yeah.

(A silence.)

ADAM

Remember going to the swings?

NATE

Yeah.

ADAM

We'd go down the stream, through those tunnels.

NATE

The sewers.

(ADAM ignores him.)

ADAM

There were minnows in that water.

NATE
Crawfish, too.

ADAM
Right, crawfish. But the minnows. We tried for *hours* to catch those minnows, but one day we got two of them!

NATE
Heh, my mom wudn't very pleased about that.

ADAM
Remember wanting to fry them?

NATE
And *eat* them? Ha, imagine it. Might as well eat 'em whole.

ADAM
Alive?
(NO ONE looks up.)

NATE
I guess.

ADAM
Well, we didn't fry them.

NO ONE
You left them to die. Suffocating in dead water. Poured over a sandbox. You wanted to see their beady little eyes look upon you in twisted agony, not knowing—
(Something invisible hits the window. ADAM sits up suddenly, gasping for air.)

NATE
Woah, you alright?

ADAM
Yeah... I am.
(He stays sitting up as he catches his breath. A silence.)
Hey, uh... Nate?

NATE
Yeah?

ADAM
Did we ever release those minnows?

NATE
Sure we did.

ADAM
Yeah...

(He looks to NO ONE, who has curled up on the floor, lying on her jacket.)
Sure we did.

END OF SCENE 2

ACT I, Scene 4: HOMECOMING

(Nighttime. The bedroom door is open. NO ONE sits on the bed, fiddling with her ring, distracted and unmoving. Her boots are at the foot of the bed. She hears someone.)

ADAM enters, dressed in a high school dance suit with a belt with a fun tie. He walks in at a noticeably normal pace and notices NO ONE. She is animate again in his presence. ADAM ignores her at first.)

NO ONE

Soooo... How was Homecoming?

(Nothing.)

You can talk to me, you know.

ADAM

Can I?

NO ONE

You can. And you have. I'm no one, remember? You can talk to me. I'm in here.

(She points to his head.)

ADAM

So I'm guessing you were there with me, huh?

NO ONE

Well... no.

That's why I'm asking.

(ADAM starts taking off his jacket. Beat as he holds it, staring into the distance.)

That was a nice outfit you wore.

ADAM

(Tossing jacket onto the chair)

Yeah... I dressed up a bit too much.

NO ONE

What do you mean?

ADAM

I dunno. I spent half an hour picking the right shirt-tie combo and the soccer team didn't even bother wearing shirts.

NO ONE

Oh really? I'm sure that was tasteful.

ADAM

It's tradition.

NO ONE

Uh huh.

(Beat as ADAM takes off his shoes.)

Who else was there?

ADAM

Bunch of people. Saw James and Latasha for the first time in forever. They, uh... they opted to take computer science instead of foreign language this year.

NO ONE

They still an ~item~?

ADAM

I'd say so. I don't think there was a moment of that dance they weren't at least holding hands.

NO ONE

Friends can hold hands, too.

ADAM

(Readjusting.)

Yeah, that's true. But it was like... *holding* hands, y'know? Like a static // caress...

NO ONE

/ Oookay, moving on before you wax poetic on your hand fetish.

ADAM

Which I don't have.

NO ONE

Which you don't have.

(Beat.)

Who else?

ADAM

Hm?

NO ONE

Who else was there?

ADAM

Uh... Nate?

NO ONE

Yeah, duh, Nate. You left here *with* him.

ADAM

This is correct.

NO ONE

Did you two hang out?

ADAM

Yeah, but... I dunno. He broke off with some of his band friends.

NO ONE

“Band” friends.

ADAM

Yeah. He was talking to this girl, too, I didn't // wanna butt in...

NO ONE

/ ~Girl~?

ADAM

Stop that.

NO ONE

Know her name?

ADAM

No. Something Irish sounding? But they seemed to be hitting it off. I'm not sure, I went to the card table for that half.

NO ONE

Were you alone?

ADAM

I mean... I guess.

NO ONE

Oof. Sorry bud.

ADAM

It's okay. I'm fine with being alone.

(Beat.)

NO ONE

I thought you said you enjoyed yourself at this thing.

ADAM

I did!

NO ONE

You're not being very convincing.

ADAM

I did, really. I got to see Latasha, James, uh... I *did* hang out with Nate for a bit, but we always hang out, so it makes sense why we'd split off, right?

NO ONE

...right.

ADAM

Liza, Shawn, Esteban, and uh... Lauren from calc, I think... they had a bit of a pod going.

NO ONE

Alright.

ADAM

And Constantinople and his senior friends dominated the dance floor. That's not to say // they were *good*—

NO ONE

/ Tell me about his friend.

ADAM

His... who?

NO ONE

Don't play dumb, tell me tell me tell me!

ADAM

I—

NO ONE

Tell. Me.

ADAM

...okay. Her name was Lydia, I think. It was loud when he introduced me to her, so I don't know for sure. She had her hair in a ponytail, I think, or maybe a braid, no not a braid... ponytail, yes. She... she knew it was a dance, obviously, because it was a dance and she was dancing... but—yeah. She danced like it. But if she wasn't dancing you couldn't tell. Couldn't tell she knew it was a dance, I mean. Her shoulders protruded a bit, and she was wearing a sleeveless dress, but not like a fancy one... like something one of those single women from church would wear. But not so wild a fabric. Yeah, like a large child's dress... but instead of a short dress, it was long,

and if she was standing it almost draped over her shoulders in such a way that you couldn't tell she was there. But when she moved—and she did—it was obvious she knew how, or not that she knew, but that she *felt* how to move, and she knew people were watching. She knew people would watch her in motion with that pretty dress. I guess I did. So.

(Beat.)

Anyway... I talked to her for a bit. She seemed cool.

NO ONE

Someone you'd like to be, huh?

(No response.)

Was she wearing shoes?

ADAM

...no.

NO ONE

They never do.

ADAM

Who?

NO ONE

The hot ones.

(They both look down at how neither of them are wearing shoes.)

ADAM

I guess they'll have to make an exception.

NO ONE

Two exceptions. And I think you need a foot fetish to get in.

ADAM

Not a hand fetish.

NO ONE

Which you don't have.

ADAM

Which I don't have.

(Beat.)

It was nice to see people.

NO ONE

You see them every day anyway.

ADAM

Yeah, but... this is different. We don't *have* to do anything, like school or whatever. We're just there.

NO ONE

Existing together.

ADAM

Existing together.

NO ONE

How nice.

ADAM

And exhausting.

NO ONE

No kidding. I'm passing out just looking at you.

ADAM

I think I'll skip the shower and just put on sweatpants tonight.

NO ONE

Good call. It's getting dangerously late.

ADAM

Yeah.

NO ONE

(Getting up, gesturing to door.)

Want me t'...?

ADAM

Yeah, close and lock it.

NO ONE

(Getting up.)

Sure.

(She goes to the door. ADAM stands up and starts fiddling with his belt to get it off.)

ADAM removes his belt and both he and NO ONE freeze. ADAM examines the belt closely and a sudden powerful urge overwhelms him. The lights, and mood, shift.

NO ONE shuts the door, and all outside light is gone.)

NO ONE

He shut the door and suddenly that was that. There was no more connection. The world became shut out, invisible, impossible to grasp, intangible, nothing. And the nothing crept in.

Despair is a crashing wave on a desolate shore of coarse white sand, and it immediately submerged him. A hand, or unmanned glove, grabbed him just above his stomach and pulled him down. Down, down, blood gathering in his feet, pooling in his veins. Gravity.

Sensation even in absence should indicate something, some feeling, but it didn't. Screams of fear cried out in the distance. They had made it past the door, and yet they were so far away. They were an echo of something that someone said at some point some time ago. But they didn't matter now. Right?

How much it would hurt. How much *would* it hurt? The skin on the neck would be pulled, yes, and maybe the spine would strain, but it's not like that would

Yes it matters of course it matters
It wouldn't soon enough.

People would notice, or at least I hope they

Of course they would notice, someone would have to open the closet to see you there,
next to

What a horrible sight to behold. How profound for your last impact on this Earth to be

I would never want that, no, how could I do that, how could I
It doesn't matter.

So many people would miss me

But I can't live for them

So I guess it's settled

No.

No, no... no...

no...

(Her words fade out as she turns to face ADAM. He continues to stare.)

Minutes pass. ADAM is fighting for his life, staring at the belt. He knows he will win eventually, but that is not reassuring.

The tides turn. ADAM's breathing gets louder, harder.)

NO ONE

No...

No... no... no...

(She is approaching, growing in power and volume. ADAM makes a final effort.)

No, no, no, no, NO, NO, NO, NO NO NO NO NO NONONONONONONO

(And finally, screaming in his face:)

NO!

(ADAM throws the belt aside and behind to the bed. Beat has he stares, unbreathing. He sits down hard on the bed, then punches the heel of his hands into his thighs. He breathes lightly, staring at the floor six feet below him. Then he buries his head in his hands.

NO ONE begins to move again, approaching ADAM and crouching down a bit to see his face. She can't.)

NO ONE

You gonna cry?

(Beat. ADAM's head is still in his hands, breathing lightly.)

Well?

You gonna cry you little fucking bitch?

(He lifts his face out of his hands. His breathing calms until it is silent and invisible. He speaks, void:)

ADAM

I can't.

(Beat. He stands, beginning to walk to the closet after NO ONE starts:)

NO ONE

What a fucking pussy. So you're not gonna do it, huh? Woooow. You get all worked up about being ~suicidal~ and shit and you don't even know how to do it. You realize wanting to requires *actually wanting to??* But you just sit here moping with a belt. A *belt??* Gimme a break. Afraid of some blood, huh? Too much of a wuss for your mom to come in and see you hanging there and you be saved?? Why not jump off a **FUCKING BRIDGE**, do some **TRICKS** on the way down! Go out in style! Or, better yet, just **ACTUALLY HANG YOURS**—

(Her voice catches. ADAM has stopped at the door to the closet. NO ONE tries to speak again, but can't. She touches her throat to realize something invisible is there, slowly growing tighter. We cannot see it, but she can feel it, pulling her ever so slightly up by the neck. She resists a bit at first, but it hurts. She can't bear it. She begins to claw at her throat, trying to get it off, but she can't; there's nothing there. ADAM turns back to address her, void as before:)

ADAM

Because it would hurt.

(Incredible pain. It feels like forever, but it is only a few seconds after ADAM speaks that he lets her drop. She gasps for air.)

ADAM

And I'm afraid of hurting.

(He goes into the closet, closing the door. The hand stays on the doorknob. He stares through the door, then lets his eyes close and forehead rest on the wood. He disappears.

NO ONE realizes she doesn't need to breathe. She stands and rubs her neck for a second.

She starts towards the closet door, but stops.)

NO ONE

Adam...

(A train horn in the distance.)

No, nonono...

(The train approaches.)

It's just a *story*, a *story*...

(Closer.)

I AM NOTHING!

(A freight train passes the window, lights streaming inside. You can see NO ONE's silhouette as she collapses to her knees, then to the floor.)

END OF SCENE 4 (HOMECOMING)

ACT III

(The entire act is composed of “moments,” short scenes existing quickly and abstractly. Whenever a moment occurs, the lights focus on it; transitions between are fluid yet disconnected. Division between moments indicated by ...)

...

(The room is empty and dark.)

NO ONE

From a very young age he knew he would die from a piano falling on his head.

When his parents saw him watching cartoons, they first thought he was crying when an object of any kind would crush a character, but it was in fact a gripping laughter that made him roll across the floor and down the stairs. They were really surprised when he actually started crying after they told him that such a thing would never happen.

It became a running joke by the time he finished studying carpentry that he would die from a piano falling on his head. It was funny to everyone, to... varying degrees. It became much less funny when he started working in the Knabe & Co. piano factory, so he mentioned it a bit less, though you'd know anyways. At company parties he'd be asked: “Why?” “Why do you work here if you think a piano will be your end?” He'd respond that he lived his life to the fullest, did what he loved, and could die any day without regrets or reservations. Though really he just thought it would be funny.

When the company moved their factories to New York, he decided to work for a shipping company. It was still very engaging work, and you never knew if a crate had pianos or not. Well, he knew, he was in charge of keeping track of what was in what, but that's besides the point; “you never truly know,” he thought, “what was in a crate.” Or was it “Never believe a label if you didn't print it yourself”? I don't quite remember. For thirty years he worked there, and for the last eighteen an Italian piano manufacturer shipped in from that port, which was exciting; though once he was doing more administrative things, the excitement subsided.

Twenty-three years a retired man, he was taking a walk along the lake in the state park when the most fortunate of accidents occurred. A daredevil at the arena across the water was hoping to ride a rocket-propelled haphazard contraption straight up into the air; but he fell off, and the ramp broke, sending his ride on a perfect arc over the lake, and towards our man.

He turned, saw the burning piano flying towards him, and laughed as his small crooked body was crushed under one thousand pounds of wood, wires, and ivory.

...