**The Authors Voice
from the play written by Richard Greenberg**

**Todd:**

 Gene, Gene…Gene!

I didn’t mean to hurt you. Please come out.

Please come out! I’m not a cruel person! Gene Listen…listen…listen! Gene. Gene?

Are you feeling better? Are you better? You sound better. Gene. What can we do? Can we be friends. I got it. Listen. We’ll do like we used to. Remember? I’ll tell you a story. Something that happened to me. And you’re going to interpret it. You’re gonna tell me what it means. Ok? Okay? Is that OK? Ok.

This happened to me a few days ago while I was at the health club. You know where I work out? Right. Of course. Anyway, I went to take a swim there. I never used the pool before and I wanted to take a swim.

Anyway, I saw at the locker the row in front of me getting ready. Now, one of the men…he was bald but he seemed pretty fit. You could tell he was pleased with himself. Like he didn’t even mind that he was bald. And I figured well if I looked like that at his age I won’t be doing half bad, will I? And his friend looked pretty good too. They finished getting ready and went to the pool. And I finished getting ready and I went to the pool. Just the three of us and the attendant. And the attendant yelled at me. “No Trunks!” I didn’t understand. Then I saw those men swimming in the pool. And they were naked. When they were naked in the pool like that they didn’t look so good. They looked fat. They looked like fish. Like large extinct fish.

And I bent to take down my trunks. And as I did the bald man came up for air just looked at me. He kept looking. For a moment I though he was frozen solid in the cool water. And I dove in. A perfect dive. With a flip and a spin.

As I came up for air, the bald man I noticed wasn’t inside the pool anymore. He was standing by the pool side crying hysterically. His friend kept trying to calm him down. The bald headed man just kept crying.

“Why are you crying?” His friend kept asking.

“It was the dive. It was the dive.”

Gene, why did that make him cry? Gene. Gene? Why did that make him cry?

I need you to tell me these sort of things, Gene. I can't figure them out on my own.**(beat)** My life isn't good. You think it is, but it's not. Once it was, but it's not anymore. **(beat)** I used to be made happy by...stupid things. Parties! People around me. I was vain. I was a peacock. I looked in the mirror. I looked so hard I didn't recognize myself. I didn't recognize anything. I forgot why I did things. I got scared, Gene! I got scared outside, I got scared in my room. I didn't know where I was half the time. I wanted to drown, I wanted to be covered over....Then I found you. **(beat)** Make me famous, Gene. I want to be famous. People will photograph me and write about me. I'll study how they see me and live inside it....Fame will be a kind of home. But I need you to get it for me. Only they can't know it's you, they can't know it's you; if they ever see you, it will die like that. (Snaps his fingers. **(beat)** It panics me when you leave and it panics me when you're here. You're the whole problem of my life, but without you I don't have any life. **(beat)** I'll give you what you want. I won't deny you anymore. Anything I can, I'll give you.