

**Authors note 2023.** I found this snippet, now titled “The Mirror” in going through old papers. Written in 1970, it is miniature portrait/ about a young couple awakening one morning in the early stages of their relationship trying to stay connected while facing the fears of aging and decay. The Play was originally in Seven Acts. In reviewing it over 50 years later, and showing it to Johanna, my wise wife of 53 years, that a new Act Eight was warranted. It was written before (though placed after) and in juxtaposition to The Last Harbor (above) --about an older couple in the final stages of their relationship.

Below are my two comments from 1970, and Johanna and my comments from 2023

Author notes from 1970 and 2023  
Johanna comments (2023).

Author thoughts (1970):

- 1) Although I am voicing these existential concerns through the female, and with the focus on “looks” the issue applies to both of the characters, and all humanity, and in all domains of life.. At one level the play is clearly saying that beauty, like everything in life, is in flux, transitory. Trying to capture and hold onto a moment is impossible, and can’t be the basis for freedom and happiness. What needs to be learned is something more, like an inner peace, As Tillich said “Accept that you’re accepted.”

*Johanna Comment #1 (2023): Very nice exposition of the intent of the play.*

- 2) Although the play ends in Act Seven in a quiet, dark unresolved silence, I think for me an answer, is how to learn an acceptance on the one hand, plus to keep pushing the rock up the mountain, like Camus and Sisyphus. Defiance of aging as best you can, with an acceptance. Battling uphill even though it is ultimately hopeless and it (we) will in the end crumble. Yet, there is also a chance to make the climb less painful, to add sweetness to it, by making it a shared journey. Their distance makes it sadder.

*Johanna Comment #2)(2023)This is really poignant and beautiful, but I'm not sure is what's expressed in this play. AGREE. SEE #3 BELOW)*

Deane's comment to Johanna's # 2 above.(above

I totally agree. that idea isn't even implied in the play. Based on your comment, I decided (2023), to add an Act 8 Thank you, partner. Also, I'm thinking of putting it up on the website after The Last Harbor. The Last Harbor is the story of an old couple looking back on their lives. This is a young couple beginning theirs!

**Johanna's comment:** I like the idea of an alternative ending quite a bit, especially one that is nearer to reflecting your life philosophy stated in 1 and 2 above. THANKS! really excellent I really enjoyed this play. It's well-written, well observed, and has a great message about fight the good fight within a context of acceptance! Love this! I like the division into mini-acts, this works very well. I also like removing the names, it makes it more universal. The new ending has the same hopefulness of your first attempt, but it's much clearer a) that they will fight the good fight TOGETHER and b) that she might have a little more insight into how best to approach aging with acceptance as well as resistance. It's pretty cute how you worked in your Iliad recitals...! Also, I love the idea of "pairing" it with The Last Harbor, Daled and Selma - young couple, old couple! Love, J

**Johanna's comments on different Acts:**

**ACT ONE** I'm intrigued, it's well-written and playful, some really great images. I'm curious to see what happens next. I was confused as to whether the wall or the mirror should be the object crying, but the idea she's compassionate even toward inanimate things is adorable. 😊 Love, J

**ACT TWO** The audience, Like the male character, is not sure what's going on at this point. His monologue seems over the top. Is he chiding her. Mocking her? Admiring her? His monologue is great, witty, so I wouldn't change a word

**ACT THREE.** She becomes more alive here, with her Grr..., they seem to have a happy playful relationship. And she's witty—her comment about “understanding “wall talk.” Also you can see that he loves eth way she looks physically, and she giving a little wiggle shows playfulness s in their relationship.

**ACT FOUR** She is now starting to seem awfully neurotic, and in a lot of pain. . She e seems to have some body dysphoria, or fear of aging. He seems to try to be reassuring: he comes across now as sweet and loving and a lot deeper than she is – inner beauty all the way! Love, J

**ACT FIVE** Great shift from the affectionate, playful tone of earlier “submerged in their own worlds.” Good image – very touching

**ACT SIX:** Here it is not clear if he understands her struggle; or if he does, if he feels helpless about what to do about it. Is he trying to help her by “managing” her food proportions? Or control her? Or encourage her to not be so controlled by her external: or is he a bit of an enabler since he considers a little cream and sugar a “splurge.” and Brings them even after she has said she doesn't want them. It seems she's angry at him for not being able to fix her issue, and at the issue itself. Also, poor guy, he gets “blasted for doing push ups Ouch! Poor guy, and he's just doing what he can to make himself feel more in control in the face of aging and death!

ACT SEVEN They seem silent, separated. Darkened....The image at the end is quite poignant for both of them. This ending is so sad! She needs a therapist!!! They need a couple's therapist too.

EIGHT ACT I like the additional ending, it is a little less existential despair and a little more hopeful. As the lights get brighter, curtain re-rises..nice touch. Works very well, and more hopeful than the original of their just sitting in silence. I love the idea that they take each other's hands - very sweet., and playful banter. When she says "As I age." I like this, it at least hints that she may reconsider what she means by the battle and what her weapons will be Here they work through the tension. He reassures her they will continue to fight the battle together, she recognizes that acceptance of aging and decay must be one of her weapons, and they both return to the playfulness of the opening acts. I especially like the way you brought back the mirror as the Zen observer, which also strengthens the justification for its use in the title. I like The Mirror as a name! . The couple's "sweetness" with each other is very touching. And the arc of "make-up" clever☺