**Taking the Plunge**

(a 5 minute monologue by Claire Booker)

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 **Character:** Tim - a young man.

**Props and Set** Tim’s bedroom. An open set which is strewn with underwear, half-finished food and a mess of paper and books. In one corner stands a tropical fish tank. Props include a chair, a poetry book, and a mobile phone (non-functional).

*(Lights rise on Tim who is slumped on the chair, wearing socks, underpants and a T shirt)*

Sitting around. Thinking. Sitting. More sitting. A lot of unpaid sitting. Where’s the justice in this world? Dosh, Duccat & Dubloon reward Dad’s lard-arse with a hundred and sixty big ones per hour. That’s eighty quid per buttock! *(he moves to the door and listens for a moment*) Listen to them. It’s the same every morning. Mum forgets to take the bread out of the freezer – I think that’s what she calls the menopause. Dad never has time for a second slice anyway, but he still has to argue about it. (*mimics his father*) “It’s cooked breakfast that put the ‘Great’ in Britain, Katrin. Now look at us!” I don’t know how she puts up with him. She must be on crystal meth, or something.

(*checks his watch*) Seven fifty five precisely. (*listens intently)* Wait for it, wait for it. *(shouts a reply to his father*) Yes, Dad. I do know what time it is! (*pause*) He doesn’t dare confront me face-to-face these days. Loiters outside my door, or leaves The Daily Telegraph lying around strategically ringed in red biro. (*mimics*) “When you’ve got time, Timothy, take a look at the article on page five. Brilliant young entrepreneur. Just made his first million. And he’s got NO LEGS!”

(*Tim moves across to the aquarium and taps affectionately on the glass*) Who needs legs, eh Jacqui? Look at those little fins whirring round. *(pause*) Sometimes I think I must have been a fish in a previous life. Just floating blissfully, not a CV in sight. When I put my finger in, she does a snaky little move with her tail, like a grand Burlesque. Quite erotic in your own way. Aren’t you, Jacqui? Ooh, don’t nibble. (*he inspects his finger*) A fish love-bite. That’s the best I can hope for these days. (*he pulls out his mobile phone*) Why are women so hard to read? They’re like predictive text gone mad. (*he checks the phone, grunts, then puts it away*) Still nothing. (*pause*) At least you know where you are with a fish, eh Jacqui? You’ve only got a five second memory. You’ll never harbour rancour about anything I might have said about your bum. To you, I’m a god. I bring good things. Food. Light. Poetry. (*he picks up a book from the floor*) She loves poetry. I read her some John Masefield yesterday. Lapped it up. She’s very bright for a fish. (*he stands by the tank and recites, enunciating clearly*) “I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky. And all I ask is a tall ship . . . (*a tentative knock at the door*) . . .and a star to guide her by. (*more knocking)* And the wheel’s kick and the wind’s . . . (*a volley of small knocks*) Oh for Christ’s sake, Mum! Not now. I’m busy. (*listens impatiently)* Why do you want to come in? (*listens*) I don’t need pants. I’m awash with pants. (*listens*) Yes. *(he sniffs a pair from the floor dubiously*) They are clean. Go away! (*Aside*) That’s all she ever thinks about. Skid marks. Skid marks and status. What about the wheel’s kick and the wind’s song and the white sail shaking?

(*Tim reluctantly starts to tidy up a bit*) Look at it all. (*he gathers up sheets of paper*) Half the Amazon rainforest had to die, just to tell me I’m a failure. Now I’m not just a waste of space. I’m an ecological disaster too. (*quoting from random letters*) “We read your application with interest, but do not feel able on this occasion to invite you to interview.” Bastards! “Thank you for contacting Metal Box, but due to recent restructuring . . .” “Carter and Sons will be out-sourcing all its UK operations by the year two thousand and . . .” Wankers! “Status – unsuccessful.” “Status – unsuccessful.” (*he sits down, crestfallen)* “Status – unsuccessful.”

(*a violent knocking at the door*) What the . . .? (*listens anxiously to his fater*) I did not swear at her. I simply said ‘go away’. (*pause)* No, I will not open the door. (*pause, then with dignity)* I am reciting poetry to my fish. (*replies*) I don’t give a shit who pays the mortgage. It’s my room and I’m not unlocking the door. (*replies sarcastically*) Oh well, if that’s your attitude. It’s your door, but it’s my chubb lock and I’ve got the receipt to prove it. (*listens wearily*) No, Mum. My pupils are not dilating. Just leave me alone. Both of you. Please! (*he moves towards the tank and addresses the fish*) Oh Jacqui, I wish there wasn’t all this glass between us. It would be so simple - just to open my mouth and let the water in.

(*a very heavy thud against the door*) Dad? Don’t be bloody stupid. You’ll dislocate your shoulder. Mum? Mum! Tell him to stop. It’s upsetting Jacqui. She’s very sensitive. (*another heavy thud*) Jesus, he’s flipped. (*Tim runs to the window, looking for escape*) I’ve pushed him too far. He’s going to kill me. (*he looks down*) I’ll break my neck if I jump from here. (*shouts to his parents*) Is that what you want? Do you want me to break my neck? Will that satisfy you? (*he starts to remove his T shirt*) Don’t be scared, Jacqui. I’m going to sort it. I’m going to sort it, once and for all. (*he pulls off the T shirt, and stands naked but for his sock and underpants by the window*) You’ll take me as I am, won’t you, Jacqui?

 (*the sound of bubbling water begins to fade up)* “I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide, is a wild call and a clear call that cannot be denied . . .” (*pause*)

*(There is a sudden explosive sound of splintering wood, and an angry voice shouts “Tim!” Tim flings his arms out as if he’s been shot in the back. The stage becomes bathed in blue-green light and an expression of bliss slowly spreads across Tim’s face. He begins to float, fish-like, around the stage, moving in slow motion, dancing to sound of ‘Octopus’s Garden’ by the Beatles)*

*(Lights fade to Final Black Out)*

TO PERFORM THIS PLAY PLEASE CONTACT:

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