

JUICE

Lights up on a woman, early 50's, facing audience.

WOMAN

I was afraid I would dry up. Like the proverbial prune. They say women do, after menopause. But I haven't. Not yet anyway.

(Puzzled.)

The fact is, I feel...*steamy*. It's not the hot flashes—they've come and gone. This is different. I wake up in the middle of the night and my whole body is...moist. My palms and soles feel like the leaves of lush tropical plants. It's as though my heart is pumping electric currents into all my fluids. And at that moist moment, I feel a readiness—no, an...*urgency*...to do something...to be something...*more*.

Something strange is happening. My pores are open. Things get in. Light, for example. It invades me. When I drive in the country on a bright morning, the sun passes through my flesh as easily as it passes through the car window. When I walk down the street on a sunny day, the light penetrates by body. I no longer cast a shadow. Last week, I went to a Monet exhibit and when I saw "Meadow at Giverny," I felt I *was* the light in that meadow—that my breath was the breeze above that yellow-green grass.

People get in too. They steam open my pores and come right in. I was sitting in the park yesterday, watching a toddler try to get on her sister's tricycle. She tackled it from the front, from the side, and eventually from the back, until she sat precariously but triumphantly on the seat, listing slightly, her feet dangling above the pedals. And suddenly I was crying, heady with my success, for I had become that fearless child.

I find now that my senses are more...*aroused*. By smells, for example. The leather conditioner I use on my boots...the crisp, glossy pages of a new book...the delicate spray of an orange as the skin is peeled...the warm, cloying scent of my own body as I bend over the breakfast counter in my nightgown. I'm more aware...more *appreciative*. Touching comforts me. I open to it. Nothing to hide, nothing to lose. I enjoy embracing my friends, pressing my body close to theirs, feeling the bulges of breasts and bellies, the sturdiness of thighs and shoulders, faces cradled in necks, inhaling affection like a fine perfume. Making love, I am surprised by passion flowing through me like a river of light. I know the dance by heart; yet still the music moves me deeply—until I sing and sing and flood the world with my delight.

Lights.

Publication:

More Monologues For Women by Women, ed. Tori Haring-Smith, Heinemann, 1996.

Mother/Daughter Monologues, Vol. 4: *Urgent Maturity*. Ed. Emily Cicchini. International Center for Women Playwrights, 2009.

Later Chapters: The Best Monologues and Scenes for Actors Over Fifty, ed. Diana Amsterdam. Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2018.