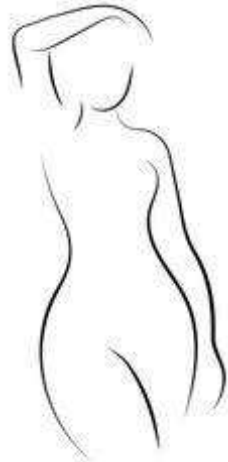


Hushed, Excerpts For A Body That Was Mine

[a short play]

By Joann Maxwell



For Anyone Who Has Ever Been Hushed

***** TRIGGER WARNING: Strong Language and Actions about Sexual Assault and domestic abuse/ Touches upon Eating Disorders *****

CHARACTERS:

HUSHED, Female, mouth is covered with a piece of duct tape, The movement.

UNHUSHED, Same character as "HUSHED", only she is free to speak, The voice.

HIM, Male, HUSHED's love interest.

PLAYWRIGHT NOTE: this play explores UNHUSHED and her past that she tells in time with excerpts on different parts of her body. The language is meant to sound poetic.

(/) indicates the interruption of the next line.

AT RISE:

Enter HUSHED, lit candle in hand, tape covering her mouth. UNHUSHED hums the tune of "Happy Birthday" from off stage. HUSHED acts as if she were to blow out the candle, though of course fails to do so, due to the tape. Enter UNHUSHED, she stops next to HUSHED and blows out the candle before proceeding.

UNHUSHED

Points at HUSHED eyes whom does not move

My eyes. Big and new. Wide with curiosity... fresh and itching to see something- anything! My eyes, which saw the light before hearing my own cries, saw the look of my mama as she held me close to her chest. My eyes, that saw the world before I even knew what it was. When I was younger, lollipops could be trees while my stuffed bunny was a perfect guest to a tea party. The world was innocent in my youth... and as I grew up I think I still held onto that... Back then everything was bright, yellow in happiness and energy. A-and it will be! I-I will continue to see

the world in a yellow gaze, for it's my eyes... so I get to choose what I see, Right?

UNHUSHED walks away from HUSHED

When you're born, You don't really get to choose the body your soul gets to be in all your life, you're kinda just... put in it and you're expected to learn your way around just like that.

She snaps

But it's... mine, right? Like... I'm in it so.. I get to choose what happens to it, right?

HUSHED walks around, stumbling as if using her feet for the first time. UNHUSHED looks back at her and giggles

My feet, Your feet

UNHUSHED holds her hands out to help HUSHED walk

Have walked... miles. Through mud and sand, puddles and hardwood floors. *Your* feet have moved through waves, scrunched while walking across pebbles, kicked while you swam... wobbled when you walked for the first time.

HUSHED trips and UNHUSHED catches her before helping her up and holding her hand, guiding her around

You've stood through the toughest and worked your way up. Now you walk through things that are bigger than you- than me.

She lets go of her hand, both girls walk around separately

My feet, strong and used to push me further and further everyday. They keep me balanced and tall. My feet, where every step counts.

HUSHED comes up behind her and pokes her cheek, a giggle bubbling before UNHUSHED pokes her back.

My cheek. The curve over my face that presses in dimples when I smile, rising like mountains that crash with my eyes to create happy glints along with the shinning of my teeth and bubbles of remembered laughter. The freckled complexion that shades red, sometimes white, pink, or green. My cheek, stuffed with yummy food or stained by secrets. A lock and key for the breath to fill my lungs just enough while under the blue.

Both girls admire each others face

A safe space for my deepest cries, a runway for tears. The happy and the sad. My cheek, a place for love, pinched at youth and kissed by many. From friends to family both near and far, to pets and aunts that aren't blood... to even lovers and those that were never there, lust from traitors and memories I want to forget. A chunk of skin that is mine but never pressed by my own lips, a part of my own that I barely lend my own touch to.

Enter HIM who walks backwards, holding a paper bag of groceries. HUSHED walks away from UNHUSHED who reaches out for her as if knowing what's going to happen next, she knows the end of this story... for she's lived it. HUSHED and HIM collide, causing the paper bag to fall to the ground.

HIM

Hey! /watch where you're going

UNHUSHED

/oh my bad!

The two look back at each other, a beat

HIM

...hey

UNHUSHED

...

Uhh let me help you with that!

HUSHED quickly bends down to pick up everything he dropped.

HIM

Oh that's not necessary- thank you

Freeze frame on HUSHED and HIM who standstill in their position, eyes locked.

UNHUSHED

My eyes, locked into yours-

HUSHED and HIM fall out of their freeze.

It's no problem at all! Least I could do after...

HIM

Could I buy you a drink?

UNHUSHED

... what?

HIM looks away bashfully

HIM

I think you're... beautiful and i'd like to buy you a drink

UNHUSHED

Oh! Right now? I-I just knocked everything out of your hand
/seems like an awful first impression

HIM

/It was just an accident, honestly no hurt feelings
(a beat)

I-I mean It doesn't have to be right now... honestly actually doesn't have to be ever! You could tell me to turn around and I would and we could forget this ever happened- although I could

probably never forget you- fuck wait that sounded weird.. am I being weird? Be honest because if I am then-

UNHUSHED

Yes

HIM

...yes I'm being weird?

UNHUSHED

Yes, you can buy me a drink

HUSHED and HIM walk away from each other

UNHUSHED

My Heart...what is this feeling? It's skipping a beat, pulsing my blood...quicker, rapid but... light and airy and warm and refreshing and good and happy but kind of scary... but also exciting! And passionate and-

My heart... it thumps. *Thump thump thump thump thump thump*- it no longer beats. It skips and squeezes and quickens and- oh! My cheeks, they're red and hot and my lips they spread in a smile that show my teeth, strong and white. This feeling... fluttery and airy, warm and light and... refreshing. Perhaps... perhaps this feeling is something I could be acquainted with.

HUSHED and HIM stop in front of each other again, indicating another meet up.

HIM

My mind

UNHUSHED

Your

HIM

Your eyes...

UNHUSHED

My eyes

*In a whisper as he leans in to
kiss her*

HIM
So... beautiful

*Freeze frame on HIM and HUSHED
laced in eachothers arms*

UNHUSHED
My lips, blushed pink and pale...soft and plump with a rise and
a fall. My lip, caressed at the harp with his that lingered hot
and close. He kissed me, oh he finally kissed me.

*HIM and HUSHED fall out of their
freeze, HIM gently placing his
hand on HUSHED cheek before
freezing again*

UNHUSHED
My cheek, once a patch of dirt for blooming acne-
Now a blank canvas... for a line of blush that burns just below my
eye line-

HIM
Your neck

*A beat. This alarms both HUSHED
and UNHUSHED, they look at
eachother. This is the first time
an excerpt has been interrupted.*

UNHUSHED
...My neck

*She doesn't know what to do, not
ready to go on to the next
excerpt.*

HIM
Your neck.

*He walks up behind HUSHED whom is
tense, pushing her hair off her
shoulder to show her neck, leaning
into it. HUSHED is frozen, both
women breathe heavily.*

UNHUSHED
Wait...what are you-

HIM
Hushhh

Is this okay?

He tilts HUSHED head to the side

After a moment of thinking, both women calm down, HUSHED eases into it

UNHUSHED
Yes

He starts to trail down

-just not anything more!

He stops, coming back up to her neck

HIM
Just/ the neck

UNHUSHED
Just the neck

HIM
It's warm and fragile

UNHUSHED
Strong and lean

HIM
Sexy and bare

UNHUSHED
Freckled and tall

HIM
Perfect

UNHUSHED
Devine

HIM
Mine

UNHUSHED
Mine

UNHUSHED

WAIT!

*UNHUSHED breathes heavily as HIM
and HUSHED freeze again.*

My Neck, lined with you... purples and blues. My favorite color is yellow though it seems I glow anything but that... anymore. Blue can be a gentle color to love...for it reminds me of *you*. you cover me in it, outline me in it, make me it, make me *feel* it.

HIM

Hush

UNHUSHED

...Hush

(a beat, on the verge of tears)

Possibly... maybe... unfortunately... blue can be a beautiful color to love.

HIM looks at UNHUSHED

HIM

It can be.

UNHUSHED

I don't want this.

HIM

You do.

UNHUSHED

I DON'T WANT YOU!

HIM

YOU NEED ME.

UNHUSHED

I DONT FUCKING NEED YOU-no no no this is going TOO fast. I don't want this...anymore I DON'T WANT YOU-