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| | Burton | II.8 |

(Scene, postludially time, diaphanous. A shepherd
boy, holding a child for a lamb, is standing on
a high hill, holding a toy lamb in his hand.)

GANYMEDE: a myth in one act

See, Ganyede! The black spot in the sky is gone. You
don't have to be afraid any more. Did you think it was a
hawk, waiting to pounce and eat you up? Well, it wasn't.
Besides, I would have protected you because you are my
friend, my best, oldest--and only--friend. When that black
spot got larger, which meant it was coming closer at last,
and I dropped you, it didn't mean I was frightened, or
forgot about you. I just--accidentally--dropped you. There
you were, poor little Ganyede, lying on the ground with
your legs in the air, and you didn't get to see what happened.
Let me tell you.

(He was alone down from the hill and sits on a rock.)
Remember how that little black spot hovered straight over
our heads all morning? Then we moved this way, so did it,
and when we moved that way, so did it. Now thought it was
a hawk, because what you are most afraid of is hawks. I
thought it was...I thought it was--the future, waiting to
pounce, because...anyway, it wasn't either. It was an eagle,
an eagle as large as a man! And it not only had the eyes
of a man, it had the voice of one. The eagle's voice had
the first one I've ever heard since I was a child and ran
away from my father's palace. He was a king, and I was a
prince. I like being a shepherd better. You are the only
being, Ganyede, I took with me when I ran away. Ever since
then I've been talking only to myself. The old man who
wrote the plays back in my father's country called that
"soliloquy." Talking to yourself. Why can't you talk?
After being black but you're not even a real black. I think
that's why I love you better than I do, but I'm tired of
this long soliloquy. There's something else, I've heard.
Those playwrights called it "challenge."

Scott Burton

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AL.4-7196

people have challenged, why are they
sometimes they even listen to me. I
listen. My son, you are listening to
me. I thought I was going to leave you
with that big eagle, but I can't do that
out of fear, but because he started laughing at me.
That's why I ran away from my father--because
he was a king. And the eagle didn't listen to me at all. It
pulled out "Ganyede!" and I thought you were in danger
after all, so I told it to fly away and leave my lamb alone,
but it didn't seem to hear me, so even pretent to, and that's
not challenge. Now then that, what it looks like, out
of its golden beak took a small, "Come closer!" so I
backed away. It kept repeating, "Come closer, most beautiful
of mortals!" or something like that I didn't understand
and every time it repeated so, I backed further and further

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(Scene, pastoral; time, classical. A shepherd boy, neither a child nor a man, is standing on a high hill, holding a toy lamb in the air.)

BOY

See, Ganymede! The black spot in the sky is gone. You don't have to be afraid any more. Did you think it was a hawk, waiting to pounce and eat you up? Well, it wasn't. Besides, I would have protected you because you are my friend, my best, oldest--and only--friend. When that black spot got larger, which meant it was coming closer at last, and I dropped you, it didn't mean I was frightened, or forgot about you. I just--accidentally--dropped you. There you were, poor little Ganymede, lying on the ground with your legs in the air, and you didn't get to see what happened. Let me tell you.

d will (He has come down from the hill and sits on a rock.)

Remember how that little black spot hovered straight over our heads all morning? When we moved this way, so did it, and when we moved that way, so did it. You thought it was a hawk, because what you are most afraid of is hawks. I thought it was...I thought it was--the future, waiting to pounce, because...Anyway, it wasn't either. It was an eagle, an eagle as large as a man! And it not only had the size of a man, it had the voice of one. The eagle's voice was the first one I've ever heard since I was a child and ran away from my father's palace. He was a king, and I was a prince. I like being a shepherd better. You are the only thing, Ganymede, I took with me when I ran away. Ever since then I've been talking only to myself. The old men who wrote the plays back in my father's country called that "soliloquy." Talking to yourself. Why can't you talk? Other lambs bleat but you're not even a real lamb. I think that's why I like you better than them. But I am tired of this long soliloquy. There's something else, I've heard. Those playwrights called it "dialogue." That's when two people have soliloquys, only they interrupt each other. Sometimes they even listen to each other; that's real dialogue. Why don't you ever interrupt me, Ganymede? The eagle did. I thought I was going to have one of those dialogues with that big eagle, but I had to run away from him. Not out of fear, but because he started issuing commands at me. That's why I ran away from my father--because I don't like commands. And the eagle didn't listen to me at all. It called out "Ganymede!" and I thought you were in danger after all, so I told it to fly away and leave my lamb alone. But it didn't seem to hear me, or even pretend to, and that's not dialogue. Worse than that, when it spoke again, out of its golden beak came a command. "Come closer!" So I backed away. It kept repeating, "Come closer, most beautiful of mortals!" or something like that I didn't understand; and every time it commanded me, I backed further and further

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Aren't you?

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away. Until I could no longer hear it or even see it. I wonder where it went.

(Pause.)

So here I am again, with you, alone. This soliloquy of mine must come to an end sometime. But this wasn't the right time, I guess. Although that eagle was beautiful. The power of his black breast, the strength in his silver legs, the sharpness of his talons--I can still see him...

(A man appears.)

Who are you? I've never seen you before...and yet I have. Yourself. Perhaps you've already *acted?*

MAN

Yes, you have.

BOY

Why do you remind me of a bird?
You remind me of an eagle.

MAN

I am an eagle--the eagle. Why did you run away from me?

BOY

I prefer men who look like eagles to eagles who act like men. Hands don't tear you when they touch--talons do.

MAN

You know, then, that I want to touch you? Come closer. These are hands.

BOY (Backs away)

I do not like to obey commands. I reject all commands. The only time I ever saw my father, when I was very young, he made me stand rigidly at attention before him while he told me what my life was to be like. I was commanded to be manly, to grow tall and become a warrior and eventually the king, and then give commands myself. If I hadn't run away from him and become a shepherd, the rest of my life would have been spent in carrying out that *one great* big command of my father's. My life would have become a role to be forever acted. I do not like to act roles. I reject all roles.

MAN

What do you think you are doing now?

BOY

You are very clever. You mean that I am acting the role of refusing to act a role, and *so forth, that is called* all that sort of logic.

MAN

Aren't you?

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BOY

The difference is this: I am making up my own role as I go along, at least. I am improvising. Spontaneously!

MAN

How self-conscious you still are. Soon a role will come along for you to play, a role commanded to you, already written without your consultation, and you will accept it joyfully, and finally forget yourself, and finally become yourself. Perhaps this role has already come along, Ganymede.

BOY

Ganymede?! Why do you call me that?

MAN

What is your name then?

BOY

I don't have one. I left my name, along with my toys and my father's commands, in the palace when I ran away. It's odd, you should call me that though. It's my lamb's name.

MAN

Why do you call him Ganymede?

BOY

That's almost the only name I found when I looked in my memory. I don't remember my father's name, or my country's. I don't know my own name--or yours. What is it? "Eagle"?

MAN

Call me that for the time being. And what shall I call you?

BOY

I don't know. "Shepherd"?

MAN

Because you have given this lamb your name, I will give you his. I will call you the Lamb.

BOY

I've told you Ganymede is not my name.

MAN

He is not ready yet. Very well. You are the Lamb and I am the Eagle.

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BOY

As you wish. Well, Eagle, as I was saying, I have a poor memory for names. I only remember "Ganymede"---and one other.

MAN

No, the poet said it shouldn't be told in the past tense. Where did you hear these names? who has a name. His name

BOY

Once at my father's palace, an old man, half-blind, came wandering in. My father commanded him to state his business, and he said he was a poet. I asked what a poet was--

MAN

You were there too? I thought you only saw your father once.

BOY

I did. This was the same time. I was there, standing at attention, having all those commands hurled at me, when the poet entered the room suddenly. He was almost blind; I think his name sounded something like "Homer," though I can't be sure. Homer? Is that a name?

MAN

Go on. You were saying, "I asked what a poet was..."

BOY

You don't have to prompt me, as if I were reciting a role. (Recites:)

I asked what a poet was and he said it was a man who told stories. I asked if they were true stories or just mythical, and he began to explain why there isn't any difference, that when my father interrupted and commanded him--~~to tell~~ to tell one of his stories. A true one. OF COURSE--

MAN

What about the name of "Ganymede," Gany--I mean, Lamb?

BOY

I'm coming to it. It's in the story the poet told. I can remember it so clearly.

MAN

Tell it to me. I don't have any more.

BOY

Once upon a time, there is a king--

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MAN

BOY

You mean, there was a king.

You keep prompting me... the most beautiful mortal who ever lived. One day, the BOY of all the gods--all the gods... (Pause.)

No, the poet said it shouldn't be told in the past tense. There is a king, who has a son, who has a name. His name is--

Have you forgotten?

MAN

BOY

Ganymede?

I haven't forgotten anything.

BOY

Have you heard this story before, Eagle?

MAN

BOY

I was guessing.

One day, the king of all the gods--there's another name here and I can't say it. BOY's a name even more beautiful than Ganymede. It's the only other name I can remember.

Ganymede. His name is the most beautiful name in the whole world.

Shall I say it for you? MAN

Was that part in the story?

How do you know it? BOY has heard the story before.

No, but the king's son is the most beautiful mortal who ever lived.

I'm still guessing.

MAN

BOY

Therefore it follows that his name must be the most beautiful name in the whole world?

BOY

Exactly! You see, a person and his name are the same thing. What your name is comes from what you are.

MAN

And can what you are come from what your name is?

BOY

I don't know. I don't have any name.

MAN

Go on--"The most beautiful mortal..." as Ganymede and falls in love with his. He--

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BOY

You keep prompting me...The most beautiful mortal who ever lived. One day, the king of all the gods--all the gods...
(Pause.)

BOY

MAN

Not Ganyede, the other one, the one you said.
Have you forgotten?

MAN

BOY

Zeus.
I haven't forgotten anything.

BOY

MAN

He then disguises himself as an eagle, flies down to earth,
Well? Ganyede--

BOY

One day, the king of all the gods--there's another name here
and I can't say it. It's a name even more beautiful than
Ganyede. It's the only other name I can remember.

No, on a hillside, he's a shepherd. Wait! You're mixing
me up with your questions. You're making me confuse my
Shell I say it for you? Let me finish...finds Ganyede,
embraces him, and flies away with him--back into the sky.
(Stares up into the sky.)

BOY

How do you know it? You have heard the story before.

Is there more to the MAN?

I'm still guessing.

The eagle turns back BOY a man. I mean, a god.

Then guess.

And...

Zeus.

And becomes the lover BOY Ganyede.

Zeus...

(Pause.)
And that's the end of the story.

And what about him?

No, it isn't. Ganyede doesn't just lie around. He finds
something that fills him BOY He becomes the shepherd of...

...looks down from the heavens and sees Ganyede and falls
in love with him. He--

Invented by him

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BOY
MAN

Who?

BOY

Not Ganymede, the other one, the one you said.

MAN

Zeus.

BOY

He then disguises himself as an eagle, flies down to earth, finds Ganymede--

MAN

Where does he find him, in the king's palace?

BOY

No, on a hillside, being a shepherd. Wait! You're mixing me up with your questions. You're making me confuse my own life with the story. Let me finish... finds Ganymede, ^{wins} embraces him, and flies away with him--back into the sky. ^{turns over,} (Stares up into the sky.)

MAN

Is there more to the story?

BOY

The eagle turns back into a man. I mean, a god. I took advantage of his distraction to escape. I ran away and never saw my father again.

MAN

And becomes the lover of Ganymede.

MAN

And that's the end of the story.

BOY

No, it isn't. Ganymede doesn't just lie around. He finds something helpful to do. He becomes the cupbearer to...

MAN

Say it.

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BOY

No.

MAN

Say it! I command you.

BOY

Cupbearer to--Zeus!

MAN

Who is Zeus?

BOY

The most powerful god, the king of all the gods.

MAN

Who is Zeus?

BOY

But you know what your name is.

The Eagle.

MAN

I know, and I know my role now too. My future has been decided. You are ready now. Who am I? What is my name?

BOY

After the story was finished, my father grew furious and ordered the poet out of the palace and out of the whole kingdom. He hated that story. He screamed and cursed at the poet and I took advantage of his distraction to escape. I ran away and never saw my father again.

MAN

What is my name?

BOY

First tell me what mine is.

MAN

Then?

BOY

Then I'll know yours.

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MAN

Your name is Ganymede.

BOY

Your name is Zeus.

(He kneels. Zeus lifts Ganymede up.)

GANYMEDE

Are you going to take me away into the sky now?

ZEUS

Yes, Ganymede.

GANYMEDE

Don't call me that yet. I'M not used to it--and I don't want to get used to it too quickly. Call me the Lamb a little longer.

ZEUS

But you know what your name is.

GANYMEDE

I know, and I know my role now too. My future has been commanded to me and I accept the command. Joyfully, just as you said. I am eager to play the role of myself--for the rest of my life.

ZEUS

It doesn't have to be for the rest of your life.

GANYMEDE

There's no other story for me, is there?

ZEUS

None at all. I am the ending of your story. But I want you to say, not "for the rest of my life," but "forever."

GANYMEDE

Forever. Oh! You just told me to do something and I obeyed you. I didn't even know I was obeying. It came so naturally!

ZEUS

I told you it would.

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to 10

GANYMEDE *repeat me!*

Something else is different. This isn't like soliloquy any more, even two of them. It's real dialogue. For the first time in my life! Command me again. Tell me to say "forever" again.

ZEUS

I commend you to say "forever"--that is, if you want to.

GANYMEDE

Forever! Forever! (Pauses) But what does that mean, "forever?"

ZEUS

It means that you will never die, but live with me always. I give you--immortality.

GANYMEDE

Oh. Thank you. *my mother*

ZEUS

You're disappointed? You are still too young to thrill at the offer of immortality?

GANYMEDE

It's very nice, especially since it means I will always be with you.

ZEUS

Thank you.

GANYMEDE

But I'd like something else, something I truly want.

ZEUS

Youth is not only unafraid of death, it is vain. Perhaps the two are the same thing. Very well, Ganymede--Lamb-- I give you a likeness of yourself. I will cause the world to remember you always *with* a portrait of the most beautiful mortal who ever lived--you. *with admiration*

GANYMEDE

You mean a statue of me, in the purest marble, with real gold for my hair and sapphires for my eyes? A statue by that famous sculptor? I forget his name.

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ZEUS

Praxiteles? No, I mean a portrait even more enduring than that.

GANYMEDE

A flower? Like the spring hyacinth which was created in the image of ...of...

ZEUS

Of Hyacinthus, another beautiful mortal, *friend to* Apollo's friend. Wrong again. You are more beautiful than Hyacinthus, and your likeness shall be too.

Ganymede, I invented GANYMEDE. All but one part, at the end. "But Ganymede doesn't just lie around." He finds Tell me. "to do..."

ZEUS

I give you your likeness created in the stars! I will order the star-artists to make your portrait in the night sky for all to see. There will be a new constellation; it will be you.

"Something helpful to do. He becomes that."

GANYMEDE

Oh. Thank you.

The captor to Zeus! Give me that. Let me have something to do. I can pour you a drink whenever you're thirsty. I can't even touch you that being a shepherd but it would ZEUS. Still disappointed? Then what gift can I offer you? Everything is in my power.

GANYMEDE

Everything but knowing what I really want.

ZEUS

Do not ask too much. You are not a god.

GANYMEDE

Don't be angry. What I want is very small and simple. Why do you think I ran away from my home?

ZEUS

Because you didn't like to be ordered about, but that's all over.

Yes there is. If you're ready to go away, I'll show you.

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GANYMEDE

And because I wanted to do something on my own. Being a shepherd is--was--very humble, but it was a role I chose for myself.

ZEUS

Wait! There was a part of the story you told that was unfamiliar to me. What was it?

GANYMEDE

Then you had heard the story before!

ZEUS

Ganymede, I invented the story. All but one part, at the end. "But Ganymede doesn't just lie around." He finds something to do..."

GANYMEDE

"Something helpful..."

ZEUS

"Something helpful to do. He becomes the--"

GANYMEDE

The cupbearer to Zeus! Give me that. Let me have something to do. I can pour your nectar whenever you're thirsty. I know it isn't much more than being a shepherd but it would be my own responsibility.

ZEUS

I plan to be thirsty very often.

GANYMEDE

Thank you!

ZEUS

And that's the end of the mythical story, but just the beginning of the real one.

GANYMEDE

But there isn't any difference. The poet said so.

ZEUS

Yes there is. If you're ready to go away, I'll show you.

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GANYMEDE

Let me say goodbye to earth first. Goodbye, ^{king} rock; goodbye, hill, trees, sheep. (To toy lamb) Goodbye, Ganymede, or lamb, or whatever your name is.

The light would dim and Zeus' eyes into blindness. Cover them and wait there.

ZEUS

You can bring your toy if you want. *His eyes and voice, eyes, waits for the moment, then looks at the*

GANYMEDE

I'm too old for toys now. I've changed. I have a name now and a role to play and *responsibility*. Goodbye, toy lamb.

I can't find him!

ZEUS

As you wish. But you could have brought him.

GANYMEDE

Goodbye, father and country.

ZEUS

But you said goodbye to them long ago.

GANYMEDE

Not really. I was always afraid I might go back.

ZEUS

No more, though.

GANYMEDE

No more...and goodbye, nameless shepherd boy.

ZEUS

Hello, Ganymede.

GANYMEDE

Hello, Zeus. It already feels more comfortable. Take me away now.

(Zeus turns away and starts to walk off stage.)
Where are you going? Take me with you!

ZEUS

I must become the eagle again. You don't think I can fly, do you?

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GANYMEDE

Turn into the eagle right here, Let me watch you.

ZEUS

The sight would dazzle your eyes into blindness. Cover them and wait there.

(He exits. Ganymede covers his eyes and waits, then peeks, waits a moment, then uncovers his eyes, waits again, then runs off after Zeus. He soon runs back on stage.)

GANYMEDE

I can't find him!

(Runs off again, then back on.)

He's disappeared completely! He tricked me. I'm not really Ganymede at all and he's not--

(Looks up at sky.)

The eagle! There he is! I am Ganymede. Wait for me!

(Runs up the hill and stretches his arms up in the air. His hands reach up out of sight of the audience.)

Closer!

(He starts to be slowly lifted into the air.)

Wait! Let me down for a minute.

(He is let down and runs back down the hill to pick up the toy lamb.)

Come with me, Ganymede--I mean, lamb. After all, I'm not really so old yet. *I suppose I never will be.*

(Runs back up the hill.)

I'm ready ^{now}, Eagle!

(He is slowly lifted into the air until he is completely out of sight.)

CURTAIN

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The Eagle and the Lamb
GARRIMED: a myth in one act

by Scott Burton

(UNREVISED) 1963

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Scott Burton
28 East Second Street
New York, New York 10003
ALgonquin 4-7196

THE EAGLE AND THE LAMB

a one act play

by Scott Burton

1967

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(A boy, no longer a child, and yet a man, is standing on a hill, gazing into the sky. He is dressed as a shepherd and holds a toy lamb in the air.)

TIME: Classical

SETTING: Pastoral black spot in the sky is gone. You no longer have to be afraid, and you think it was a hawk, waiting to pounce and eat you? It wasn't. If it had been, I would have protected you, you know.

CHARACTERS: A boy friend. My best, my oldest, my only friend. Even though I dropped you on the ground when that black spot started to get larger. It was a man, not a boy, at least, and when I dropped you and ran, it didn't seem that I was frightened, or had abandoned you. I just accidentally dropped you. There you were, poor little Gargueta, lying on your back with your legs in the air, all alone. Because you didn't get to see what happened, I will tell you.

(He has come down from the hill and sits on a rock.)

Do you remember how that little black spot hovered straight over our heads all morning? When we started this way, so did it, and when we dodged that way, it did too. You were sure it was a hawk. That is because what you are most afraid of is hawks. When did I talk it best? I thought it was...an omen of the future. That is because...anyway, it was neither. It was an eagle! An eagle as large as a man. And it not only had a man's size, it had one's voice! What was the very first voice I have heard since I was a child and ran away from my father's palace to be a shepherd. He was a king, if you remember, and I was a prince. I prefer being a shepherd, even though you are the only lamb in my flock, and a toy lamb at that. You are the only thing, little lamb Gargueta, I took with me when I ran away. Ever since then, I've had only words to talk to. Talking to you is pretending. The white-haired old man who wrote the plays back in my father's kingdom called this "soliloquy." Talking to yourself. Why can't you talk back? I am tired of my long soliloquy. There is something else, I've heard. The old man called it "dialogue." That's when two people have soliloquies, only they interrupt each other. Sometimes they even listen to each other; that's true dialogue. Why don't you ever interrupt me, Gargueta? The eagle did. I thought I was about to have one of those dialogues with that big eagle until I realized I had to run away from him. Not because I was afraid, but because he started to issue commands at me. That's why I ran away from my father—because I can't like commands, and the state didn't listen to me at all. It called out "Gargueta!" I thought you were in danger after all so I told it to fly away and leave my lamb alone. It didn't seem to hear me, or even pretend to, and that's not dialogue. Shows that that, when it spoke again, out of its golden beak was a command. "Come closer!" So I leaned up, it kept repeating, "Come closer. Come closer, best beautiful of creation," or something like that which I didn't understand. Every time it commanded me, I looked further and further away. Until I would no longer hear it.

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or even see it. I wonder where you again. My soliloquy must have been the right time. Although the strength of his silver talons, I cannot see him... (A boy, no longer a child, not yet a man, is standing on a hill, gazing into the sky. He is dressed as a shepherd and holds a toy lamb in the air.)

(A man appears. The boy jumps up.)
Who are you? I've never seen you before... BOY

See, Ganymede! The black spot in the sky is gone. You no longer have to be afraid. Did you think it was a hawk, waiting to pounce and eat you? It wasn't. If it had been, I would have protected you, you know, because you are my friend. My best, my oldest, my only friend. Even though I dropped you on the ground when that black spot started to get larger. It was coming closer at last, and when I dropped you and ran, it didn't mean that I was frightened, or had abandoned you. I just accidentally dropped you. There you were, poor little Ganymede, lying on your back with your legs in the air, all alone. Because you didn't get to see what happened, I will tell you.

(He has come down from the hill and sits on a rock.)

Yes, you have. I am an eagle. Do you remember how that little black spot hovered straight over our heads all morning? When we darted this way, so did it, and when we dodged that way, it did too. You were sure it was a hawk. That is because what you are most afraid of is hawks. What did I think it was? I thought it was...an omen of the future. That is because...Anyway, it was neither. It was an eagle! An eagle as large as a man. And it not only had a man's size, it had one's voice! That was the very first voice I have heard since I was a child and ran away from my father's palace to be a shepherd. He was a king, if you remember, and I was a prince. I prefer being a shepherd, even though you are the only lamb in my flock, and a toy lamb at that. You are the only thing, little lamb Ganymede, I took with me when I ran away. Ever since then, I've had only myself to talk to. Talking to you is pretending. The white-haired old men who wrote the plays back in my father's kingdom called this "soliloquy." Talking to yourself. Why can't you talk back? I am tired of my long soliloquy. There is something else, I've heard. The old men called it "dialogue." That's when two people have soliloquies, only they interrupt each other. Sometimes they even listen to each other; that's true dialogue. Why don't you ever interrupt me, Ganymede? The eagle did. I thought I was about to have one of those dialogues with that big eagle until I realized I had to run away from him. Not because I was afraid, but because he started to issue commands at me. That's why I ran away from my father--because I don't like commands. And the eagle didn't listen to me at all. It called out "Ganymede!" I thought you were in danger after all so I told it to fly away and leave my lamb alone. It didn't seem to hear me, or even pretend to, and that's not dialogue. Worse than that, when it spoke again, out of its golden beak came a command. "Come closer!" So I backed away. It kept repeating, "Come closer. Come closer, most beautiful of mortals," or something like that which I didn't understand. Every time it commanded me, I backed further and further away. Until I could no longer hear it

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or even see it. I wonder where it went....And here I am, alone with you again. My soliloquy must come to an end sometime, but I suppose this wasn't the right time. Although that eagle was beautiful. The strength of his silver talons, the softness of his black feathered breast--I can still see him....

(A man appears.) (The boy jumps up.)

Who are you? I've never seen you before....have I? role of refusing to set a rule, and so forth. That is called logic.

MAN

Come closer.

Yes, I know. But wasn't you?

BOY

(Backs away)

You remind me of something. A bird. An eagle. I've never seen you before. Is the difference: I am making up my own role, at least, as I go along. Following no orders but my own. I am improvising. Spontaneously!

MAN

Yes, you have. I am an eagle. The eagle. Why did you run away from me? How self-conscious he still is. Soon a rule will be revealed for you to play, a rule concocted to you, BOY, ready written without your consultation. You will accept it joyfully, and finally forget yourself, and I prefer men who look like eagles to eagles who act like men. Hands don't scratch you when they touch you; talons do.

MAN

You assume that I intend to touch you, then? These are hands. Come closer.

MAN

BOY

(Backs away)

I do not obey commands. I always do the opposite of what I am told to do.

MAN

MAN

I don't have one. I left my name, along with my childhood toys and my Very well then, go away. Run away. as I run away. It's an odd coincidence that you should call me (The boy comes closer to him.)

BOY

I do not like to obey commands. I reject all commands. I only saw my father once in my life, when I was very young. He ordered the servants to bring me to him. He made me stand rigidly at attention before his throne while he told me what my life was to be like. He ordered me to grow tall, to be manly. I was to become a great warrior and eventually the king myself. Then he stood up and made me kneel before him. If I hadn't run away from him to become a shepherd, I would have had to spend the rest of my life obeying that one great command from the king, my father. My life would have been a role, to be forever acted. I do not like to act roles. I reject all roles.

For now, call me....the Eagle, and what shall I call you?

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BOY
MAN
I don't know. "Shepherd?"
What do you think you are doing now?
BOY
Because you have given the toy lamb your name, I will give you his.
You are very clever. You mean that I am acting the role of refusing to act a role, and so forth. That is called logic.
BOY
MAN
My name? I've told you Ganymede is not my name.
Yes, I know. But aren't you?
BOY
He is not ready yet. Very well. You are the lamb and I am the Eagle.
Here is the difference: I am making up my own role, at least, as I go along. Following no orders but my own. I am improvising. Spontaneously!
As you wish. Well, logic, or MAN saying, I have a poor memory for names. I can only remember two vividly; one is "Ganymede."
How self-conscious he still is. Soon a role will be revealed for you to play, a role commanded to you, already written without your consultation. You will accept it joyfully, and finally forget yourself, and finally become yourself. Perhaps this role has already been revealed to you, Ganymede.
BOY
BOY
At my father's palace. Once an old man, half-blind, came wandering to Ganymede? Why do you call me that? business. He replied that he had a post. I asked what a post was--
MAN
MAN
What is your name then?
You were there? You said you only saw your father once.
BOY
BOY
I don't have one. I left my name, along with my childhood toys and my father's commands, in the palace when I ran away. It's an odd coincidence that you should call me that, though. It's my lamb's name.
He was almost blind; I think his name was something like "Lamb" but I'm not sure. "Lamb".... MAN
MAN
Why do you call him Ganymede?
BOY
BOY
Go on. You were saying, "I am a post..."
It's just about the only name I found when I looked in my memory. I can't remember my father's name, or his kingdom's. I don't know my own name—or yours. What is it?
MAN
MAN
For now, call me...the Eagle. And what shall I call you?
MAN
MAN
What about the name "Ganymede," Gany--I mean, Lamb?

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BOY

I don't know. "Shepherd?"

BOY

I'm coming to it. It's in the story the poet told. I remember it so clearly.

MAN

Because you have given the toy lamb your name, I will give you his. I will call you the Lamb.

Tell it to me.

BOY

My name? I've told you Ganymede is not my name.

I will. Once upon a time, there was a king--

MAN

He is not ready yet. Very well. You are the Lamb and I am the Eagle.

You mean there was a king.

BOY

As you wish. Well, Eagle, as I was saying, I have a poor memory for names. I can only remember two vividly; one is "Ganymede."

There is a king, who has a son, who has a name. His name is....

MAN

Where did you hear these names?

Ganymede?

BOY

At my father's palace. Once an old man, half-blind, came wandering in. My father commanded him to state his business. He replied that he was a poet. I asked what a poet was--

MAN

You were there? You said you only saw your father once.

BOY

I did. This was the same time. I was there, standing at attention, orders and commands flying at me, when suddenly the old poet appeared. He was almost blind; I think his name sounded something like "Homer," but I'm not sure. "Homer"....is that a name?

MAN

Go on. You were saying, "I asked what a poet was...."

BOY

You needn't prompt me, as if I were reciting. I asked what a poet was and he said it was someone who told stories. I asked if they were true stories or just mythical ones and he began to explain that there isn't any difference, when my father interrupted and ordered him--of course--to tell one of his stories. A true one.

MAN

What about the name "Ganymede," Gany--I mean, Lamb?

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BOY
I'm coming to it. It's in the story the poet told. I remember it so clearly.

MAN
Tell it to me.

BOY
I will. Once upon a time, there is a king--

MAN
You mean there was a king.

BOY
No, the poet said it shouldn't be told in the past tense. There is a king, who has a son, who has a name. His name is....

MAN
Ganymede?

BOY
Eagle, have you heard this story before?

MAN
I was guessing.

BOY
It was a good guess.

MAN
Thank you.

BOY
His name is Ganymede, and it is the most beautiful name on earth.

MAN
Was that part in the story?

BOY
Not exactly, but the king's son is the most beautiful and handsome

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human being on earth.

MAN

Therefore it follows that his name must be the most beautiful name on earth?

BOY

Exactly! Your logic is as good as mine.

MAN

Thank you.

BOY

You see, a person and his name are the same thing. What your name is like comes from what you are like.

MAN

And can the reverse be true, that what you are like comes from what your name is like?

BOY

I can't be sure of that. I have no name.

MAN

Continue the story. "The most beautiful and handsome human being on earth..."

BOY

You keep prompting me.... Let me see...human being on earth. One day, the king of all the gods and goddesses....all the gods and goddesses....

MAN

Have you forgotten?

BOY

Not Olympus, the other one. The one you said.

BOY

I haven't forgotten anything.

MAN

MAN

Well?

BOY

He then disguises himself as an eagle, flies down to earth, finds Olympus--

BOY

One day, the king of all the gods and goddesses--there is another name

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here and I can't say it. It's a name even more beautiful than "Ganymede."
It's the only other name I remember.

Where does he find him, in the MAN's palace?

Shall I say it for you? BOY

BO, on a hillside, being a boy... BOY - Well! But are confusing me with your questions. You're making me mix my own life up with the story. How do you know it? You have heard this story before!

MAN (stares up into the sky.)

I'm still guessing. MAN

Is there more to the story? BOY

Then guess. BOY

The eagle takes him into a new world, a god.

Zeus? MAN

And... BOY

Why, yes! MAN
And the two become faithful companions, each delighting in the other.

And what about him? MAN

And that is the end of the story. BOY

He looks down from the heavens, sees Ganymede, and wants passionately to meet him and become his close friend. So he--
MAN
something helpful and useful to do for his friend. He becomes the cupbearer to...

Who? MAN

To whom? Say it. BOY

Not Ganymede, the other one. The one you said.

He. MAN

Zeus. MAN

Say it! I command you. BOY

He then disguises himself as an eagle, flies down to earth, finds Ganymede--

Captives to...to Zeus!

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MAN

Where does he find him, in the king's palace?

BOY

No, on a hillside, being a shepherd. Wait! You are confusing me with your questions. You're making me mix my own life up with the story. Let me finish....finds Ganymede, wins his devotion, and flies away with him, back into the sky.

(He stares up into the sky.)

MAN

Is there more to the story?

BOY

The eagle turns back into a man--I mean, a god.

MAN

And....

BOY

After the story was finished, my father grew furious at the post and ordered him out of the palace, BOY of his entire kingdom. He hated that story. He scorned and cursed at the post and I took advantage of And the two become faithful companions, each delighting in the other.

MAN

And that is the end of the story.

BOY

No, it's not. Ganymede does not just sport and play aimlessly. He finds something helpful and useful to do for his friend. He becomes the cupbearer to....

MAN

To whom? Say it.

BOY

Then I will know yours.

BOY

No.

MAN

Your name is Ganymede.

MAN

Say it! I command you.

BOY

Your name is Iona.

BOY

Cupbearer to....to Zeus!

(He laughs. Some lift Ganymede up.)

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MAN
Who is Zeus?

BOY
I told you. The king of all the gods and goddesses, the most powerful and wonderful of all the gods.

MAN
Who is Zeus?

BOY
The Eagle.

MAN
You are ready now. Who am I? What is my name?

BOY
After the story was finished, my father grew furious at the poet and ordered him out of the palace, out of his entire kingdom. He hated that story. He screamed and cursed at the poet and I took advantage of his distraction to escape. I ran away. I never saw my father again.

MAN
What is my name? Tell me.

BOY
First tell me what mine is.

MAN
Then?

BOY
Then I will know yours.

MAN
Your name is Ganymede.

BOY
Your name is Zeus.

(He kneels. Zeus lifts Ganymede up.)

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GANYMEDE

Are you going to take me away into the sky now?

ZEUS

Yes, Ganyমেদে.

GANYMEDE

Don't call me that yet. I don't want to get used to it too quickly. Call me the Lamb a little longer.

ZEUS

But you know now what your real name is.

GANYMEDE

Yes, and I know my role now too. My future has been commanded to me, and I accept the command. Joyfully, just as you said. I am eager to play the role of myself—for the rest of my life.

ZEUS

It doesn't have to be for the rest of your life.

GANYMEDE

There is no other story for me, is there?

ZEUS

None at all. I am the ending of your story. But I want you to say, not "for the rest of my life," but to say "forever."

GANYMEDE

Forever. Oh! You just told me to do something and I obeyed you. I didn't even notice that I was obeying. It came so naturally!

ZEUS

I told you it would. So naturally that you haven't even noticed how you've been obeying my commands for some time now.

GANYMEDE

Really? I've just noticed something else different too. This isn't like soliloquy any more, even two separate ones. It's real dialogue. You see, soliloquy is what the men who wrote the plays—

ZEUS

is not only unafraid of death, it is vain. Perhaps the two are the same thing. Very well, I give you yourself. An image of

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of your own likeness. The world will never forget you, for I will
commission an eternal portrait of the most beautiful mortal who ever
I know. I heard you explaining it to your lamb earlier.

ZEUS

How did you hear? Where were you? I didn't see you!

ZEUS

I was very close. I was in your thoughts.

GANYMED

Real dialogue! For the first time in my life. Command me again. What do
you wish me to do? Tell me to say "forever" again.

ZEUS

I command you—that is, if you want to—to say "forever."

GANYMED

Forever. Forever!....but what does that mean, "forever?"

ZEUS

It means that you will never die, but live near me always. I give you—
immortality!

GANYMED

Oh. Thank you very much.

ZEUS

Are you disappointed? Are you still too young to thrill at the idea of
immortality?

GANYMED

It's very nice, especially since it means I will always and forever be
with you.

ZEUS

Thank you.

GANYMED

But there is something else I'd like, something I truly want.

ZEUS

Youth is not only unafraid of death, it is vain. Perhaps the two are the
same thing. Very well, Ganymede—Lamb—I give you yourself. An image of

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of your own likeness. The world will never forget you, for I will commission an eternal portrait of the most beautiful mortal who ever lived--you.

GANYMEDE

You mean a statue of me, in the whitest marble, with real gold for my hair and sapphires for my eyes? A statue by that famous sculptor? I forget his name.

ZEUS

Wait! There was a part of the story you told me that was unfamiliar to Praxiteles? No, I mean a portrait even more enduring than that.

GANYMEDE

A flower? Like the bud of spring which was created in the image of....of....

ZEUS

Of Hyacinthus, another beautiful mortal and friend to Apollo. Wrong again. You are more beautiful than Hyacinthus, and your likeness shall be too.

GANYMEDE

Tell me.

ZEUS

I will give you yourself created in the stars! I will order the star-artists to make your portrait in the night sky for all to see who lift their eyes. There will be a new constellation; it will be you.

GANYMEDE

Oh. Thank you. The capturer to Zeus! Give me that. Let me have a task to perform. I can't start being your capturer. When you have a responsibility like that, it means you're grown up. Do not ask too much. You are not a god.

ZEUS

Still disappointed? Then what gift can I offer you? All is in my power.

GANYMEDE

All but knowing what I really want.

ZEUS

Thank you! Let's hurry. I can't start being your capturer. When you have a responsibility like that, it means you're grown up. Do not ask too much. You are not a god.

GANYMEDE

Don't be angry. I am not presuming; what I want is very small and simple. Why do you think I ran away from my childhood?

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ZEUS

Because you didn't like to take orders, but that's all over with.

GANYMEDE

And because I wanted to do something on my own. Being a shepherd is-- was--very humble, but it was a role I chose for myself.

ZEUS

So this is the end of my story.

Wait! There was a part of the story you told me that was unfamiliar to me. What was it?

Yes.

GANYMEDE

Then you had heard the story before!

And of yours, too?

ZEUS

Ganymede, I invented the story. All but one part, at the end. "But Ganymede does not just sport and play aimlessly. He finds something to do for his friend...."

GANYMEDE

"Something helpful and useful to do...."

ZEUS

Now you are prompting me. "He becomes the--" *Let other Ganymedes, if you there is only one, for all time, but I and take many shapes.*

GANYMEDE

The cupbearer to Zeus! Give me that. Let me have a task to perform. I can pour your nectar whenever you are thirsty. I know it isn't that much more exacting than being a shepherd with a flock of one toy lamb but it would be my very own responsibility. Please?

ZEUS

So, you have one reliably.

I plan to be thirsty very often.

GANYMEDE

Then you will leave me. Will I leave, will it hurt me?

Thank you! Let's hurry. I can't wait to start being your cupbearer. When you have a responsibility like that, it means you're grown up. And I can't wait to grow up.

But as you are at this moment, filled among the stars, you will immediately be high above the narrow of change, of growing up, of growing old.

ZEUS

Cupbearer to Zeus....and that's the end of the mythical story, but just the beginning of the real one.

Then I want never to grow up.

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GANYMEDE

But there isn't any difference. The poet said so.

You never will. You will stay as you are now.

ZEUS

Yes, there is. If you are ready to go away now, I will show you.

What am I now? A little boy?

GANYMEDE

So this is the end of my story.

No longer.

ZEUS

Yes.

What am I a man yet?

GANYMEDE

And of yours, too?

No, you ever will be.

ZEUS

No, mine has many other chapters--some closed, some yet to open.

What am I? Tell me.

GANYMEDE

With other people in them? Other Ganymedes?

You are a poet.

ZEUS

Not other Ganymedes. Of you there is only one, for all time. But I have a wife, children, other friends, other lovers. I play many roles and take many shapes.

GANYMEDE

Youth? A sprinkling of golden hair.

Will I have those too--wife, children, friends, lovers?

ZEUS

Then you are not one.

No, you have one role only.

GANYMEDE

Don't be arrogant.

Then you will leave me. Will I mind, will it hurt me?

ZEUS

Oh no, I'm glad you're not. I don't think I'd like it if you were.

No, for you will always be just as you are at this moment. Fixed among the stars, you will ~~remain~~ be high above the sorrows of change, of growing up, of growing old.

GANYMEDE

Then I want never to grow up.

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ZEUS

You never will. You will stay as you are now.

GANYMEDE

What am I now? A little boy?

ZEUS

No longer. Goodbye to earth first. Goodbye, hills; goodbye, trees.
(To the birds) Goodbye, Ganyede, my lamb, or whatever your name is.

GANYMEDE

Then am I a man yet?

ZEUS

No, nor ever will be. I've changed. I have a name now, and a role to play, and a responsibility. GANYMEDE my lamb.

What am I? Tell me.

ZEUS

You are a youth.

GANYMEDE

Goodbye, father and kingdom.

ZEUS

What is that?

ZEUS

Youth? A sprinkling of golden hairs.

GANYMEDE

Then you are not one.

ZEUS

No longer, though.

GANYMEDE

Don't be arrogant.

GANYMEDE

Oh no, I'm glad you're not. I don't think I'd like it if you were. To be honest, you remind me a little of my father. But I hated him, and I--

ZEUS

Yes?

Yes, here. It already feels very comfortable. Take me away now.
(Zeus turns away and starts to walk offstage.)
Where are you going? Take me with you!

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GANYMEDE

I don't hate you, not at all. You don't think I can fly, do you?

ZEUS

Are you ready to go with me now?

GANYMEDE

Let me say goodbye to earth first. Goodbye, hills; goodbye, trees.
(To toy lamb:) Goodbye, Ganymede, or lamb, or whatever your name is.

ZEUS

You can bring your toy if you want.

GANYMEDE

I'm too old for toys now. I've changed. I have a name now, and a role to play, and a responsibility. Goodbye, toy lamb.

ZEUS

As you wish. But you could have brought him.

GANYMEDE

Goodbye, father and kingdom.

ZEUS

But you said goodbye to them long ago.

GANYMEDE

Not really. I was always afraid I might return to them.

ZEUS

No longer, though.

GANYMEDE

No longer;...and goodbye, nameless shepherd boy.

ZEUS

Hello, Ganymede.

GANYMEDE

Hello, Zeus. It already feels more comfortable. Take me away now.

(Zeus turns away and starts to walk offstage.)

Where are you going? Take me with you!

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ZEUS

I must become the eagle again. You don't think I can fly, do you?

GANYMEDE

Do it right here. Let me watch you.

ZEUS

The sight would dazzle your eyes into blindness. Cover them and wait there.
(He exits. Ganymede covers his eyes and waits, then peeks. He covers them again, waits a moment more, then looks around and runs offstage after Zeus. Soon he runs back on stage.)

GANYMEDE

I can't find him!

(Runs off again, then back on)

He's disappeared! He tricked me. I'm not really Ganymede at all and he's not--

(Looks up into the sky)

The eagle! There he is. I am Ganymede. Wait for me!

(Runs up the hill and stretches his arms up into the air. His hands reach up out of sight of the audience.)

Closer!

(He starts to be lifted slowly into the air.)

Wait. Let me down a moment.

(He is let down. He runs back down the hill and picks up the toy lamb.)

Come with me, Ganymede--I mean, lamb. After all, I'm not really so old yet. I suppose I never will be.

(Runs back up the hill)

Eagle! I'm ready now!

(He is slowly lifted into the air until he is completely out of sight.)

CURTAIN

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THE EAGLE AND THE LAMB

by Scott Burton