SHORY
FIVE-ACT
PLAYS
OTHER RK BOOKS OF PERFORMANCE TEXTS
   Vocal Shorts (1988, 2012)
       One-Line Plays (2014)
       One-Word Plays (2014)
           Qualities (2014)
           Qualities II (2019)
       Spondees (forthcoming)
For the composer Terry Riley (known for more than fifty years)

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CONTENTS

Short Five-Act Plays I
Scripts for Improvisation
Short Five-Act Plays II
Minimal Aphorisms
Short Five-Act Plays III
In Memorium John Cage
I. Writing a text.
II. Rewriting.
III. Rehearsing.
IV. Performing.
V. Remembering.
I: A sunny beach.

II: Inside a cabana.

III: In a detached house.

IV: Drinking in a living room.

V: Rolling in a double bed.
I. Walking.
II. Running.
III. Sprinting.
IV. Struggling.
V. Stopping.
I: Ambition.
II: Inhibition.
III: Exhibition.
IV: Failure.
V: Extinction.
I. Intercourse.
II. Impregnating.
III. Birthing.
IV. Raising.
V. Bankrolling.
I: Standing beneath an American flag.

II: Military training.

III: A battlefield.

IV: A hospital.

V: A morgue.
I: Dinner with two children.

II: Four children.

III: eight children.

IV: Three children.

V: No children.
I: Delivering a speech.

II: Schmoozing with the audience.

III: Dining in a plush restaurant.

IV: Afterwards drinking to excess in a small group.

V: Falling into a bed with a drunken stranger.
I: On a train.

II: In a spacious terminal.

III: Meeting a stranger in a bathroom.

IV: Making love behind a stall.

V: Returning to the street.
I: Coming to a baseball park.

II: Taking batting practice.

III: Playing out in the field.

IV: Coming to home plate with a bat in hand.

V: Taking pitches before hitting a home run.
I: Crash.

II: Help.

III: Resume.

IV: Hospital.

V: Recuperation.
I: Returning home after years away.

II: Dinner with one’s immediate family.

III: Sleeping in one’s childhood bedroom.

IV: Increasing tensions during breakfast with a family that seems estranged.

V: Leaving for an airport, perhaps never to return.
I: Only.

II: Many.

III. Several.

IV: Few.

V: One.
I: A theatrical dressing room.

II: Appearing before an enthusiastic audience.

III: The dressing room again.

IV: Bantering at the stage door with well-wishers, some of them flirtatious.

V: Alone in a tight hotel room.
I: Eating.

II: Dieting.

III: Eating.

IV: Dieting.

V: Wasting.
I: Studying in a small dormitory room.

II: Objecting to a roommate who brings his girl friend into their space.

III: Leaving to a common room while the two probably make love.

IV: Going out into the street.

V: Making love with his girl friend in her space.
I: Interior.

II: Exterior.

III: Posterior.

IV: Ulterior.

V: Interior.
I: Getting fired from a job long held.

II: Revealing disappointment to your family.

III: Searching in vain for other employment.

IV: Settling for a lesser job.

V: Getting fired again.
I: Running

II: Swimming.

III: Climbing.

IV: Skating.

V. Flying.
I: Getting arrested.

II: Meeting a supportive lawyer.

III: Returning to jail.

IV: A court room.

V: Walking home alone.
I: Yes.

II: No.

III: Yes, yes.

IV: No.

V: Yes.
I: One.

II: Two.

III: Three.

IV: Four.

V: Last.
I: to audience: Scream

II: Scream louder

III: Scream yet louder.

IV: Scream weaker.

V: Silence.
I. Dark.

II. Light.

III. Apocalypse.

IV. Light.

V. Dark.
I. Did I know you?

II. Should I?

III. Why not?

IV. Too bad.

V. No go.
i. Right side up.

ii. Upside down.

iii. Turned sideways.

iv. Spun around.

v. Flipped over.
I. Arriving in a strange city.

II. Befriending a good Samaritan.

III. Accepting his hospitality.

IV. Sleeping continuously through the night.

V. Purchasing his house.
I. Writing a script.

II. Finding a producer.

III. Hiring actors and a director.

IV. Making a film.

V. Screening it to an appreciative audience.
I. An infant.

II. A teenager.

III. An adult.

IV. A retiree.

V. A centenarian.
I. One dollar.

II. Ten dollars.

III. One thousand dollars.

IV. One hundred dollars

V. One dollar ten cents.
I. Purchasing a musical instrument
II. Learning how to play it.
III. Playing it properly.
IV. Failing a public recital.
V. Smashing the instrument.
I. Purchasing a painting.

II. Purchasing a second painting

III. Purchasing a dozen paintings.

IV. Purchasing one hundred paintings.

V. Mounting an exhibition.
I. Learning a second language.

II. Learning a third language.

III. Leaning a fourth and five language.

IV. Learning a dozen languages.

V. Forgetting what language one is speaking.
I. Tying a tie.

II. Donning a jacket

III. Fitting into slacks.

IV. Undressing

V. Wearing a dress.
I. Dreaming oneself a princess.

II. Becoming a queen.

III. Queen mother.

IV. Revolution.

V. Deposed royalty.
I. Accepts a contract.

II. Writes a book.

III. Suffers copyediting and other production challenges.

IV. Sees it in bookstores.

V. Learns that it’s declared “out of print.”
I. Enters college.

II. Graduates.

III. Graduate school.

IV. Original research.

V. Teaching unhappily at a junior college.
I. Cooking.

II. Serving.

III. Feasting.

IV. Cleaning.

V. Barfing.
I. One-meter dive.

ii. Three-meter dive.

III Ten-meter platform dive.

IV. Twenty-meter platform dive.

V. .....
I. Upturn.

II. Downturn.

III. Left turn.

IV. Right turn.

V. U-turn.
i. First joke.

ii. Second joke.

iii. Third joke.

iv. Fourth joke.

v. Laughter.
I. Win.

II. Lose.

III. Win.

IV. Lose.

V. Loss.
I. Subsistence farming.

II. Harvesting.

III. Produce selling.

IV. Planting.

V. More subsistence farming.
I. Shoplifting.

II. Carjacking.

III. Assault.

IV. Arrest.

V. Deportation.
I. First date.

II. Second date.

III. Third date.

IV. Denial.

V. Score.
I. Accident.

II. Ambulance.

III. Emergency room.

IV. Operation.

V. Recuperation.
I. Swim
II. Dive.
III. Compete.
IV. Lose
V. Coach.
I. Leap.

II. Fall.

III. Recover.

IV. Fall.

V. Recuperate.
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Moon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Mars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Pluto.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Gone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Trampoline.
II. Trapeze.
III. Performance.
IV. Adulation.
V. Retirement.
I. Baking.

II. Deserts.

III. Lemon pie.

IV. Eating.

V. Throwing.
I. Balding.

II. Shining.

III. Transplanting.

IV. Seducing.

V. Refusal.
I. Reading.
II. Writing.
III. Reading.
IV. Writings.
V. Reading.
I. First base.

II. Second base.

III. Third base.

IV. Home plate.

V. Out.
I. Punch.
II. Punch.
III. Parry
IV. Punch.
V. Knock out.
I. Ball.
II. Bat.
III. Glove.
IV. Throw.
V. Out.
I. Sleep.
II. Sleep.
III. Awake.
IV. Sleep.
V. Sleep.
I. Life.

II. Death

III. Rebirth.

IV. Relive.

V. Redeath.
I. Plan.

II. Loan.

III. Store.

IV. Losses.

V. Bankruptcy.
I. Sleeping.
II. Dreaming.
III. Nightmare
IV. Tossing.
V. Awaking.
I. One step.

II. Two steps.

III. Three steps.

IV. Falling.

V. Recuperating.
I. Conspiring.
II. Campaigning.
III. Electing.
IV. Governing.
V. Imprisonment.
I. Drafting.
II. Revising.
III. Rereading
IV. Disappointment.
V. Burning.
I. Igniting.

II. Seat-belting.

III. Driving.

IV. Skidding.

V. Parking.
I. Go.

II. Stop.

III. Go.

IV. Stop.

V. Go.
I. Eat.
II. Drink.
III. Digest.
IV. Piss.
V. Poop.
I. Infallible.
II. Ingenuity.
III. Palpable.
IV. Inspiring.
V. Ineffable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I.</th>
<th>Scale.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Tie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Hang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Swing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Fall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Snore.

II. Sneeze.

III. Decongestant.

IV. Sniffle.

V. Breathe.
I. Above.

II. Around.

III. Diagonal.

IV. Beneath.

V. Beside.
I. Exploitation.

II. Inflation.

III. Indebtedness.

IV. Deaccessioning.

V. Demise.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>Eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>Drinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>Swallowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>Screaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>Barfing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. Shooting

II. Hiding.

III. Shooting.

IV. Hiding.

V. Acoustic void.
I. Living.
II. Capture.
III. Imprisonment.
IV. Death.
V. Resurrection.
I. Balding.

II. Disappointment.

III. Retiring.

IV. Dreaming.

V. Toupee.
I. Drawing.

II. Painting.

III. Resting.

IV. Ladders.

V. A mural.
I. Speed up.

II. Slow down.

III. Stop.

IV. Faster.

V. Fly.
I. Promenading.

II. Clouding.

III. Raining

IV. Thunderstorm.

V. Quadmire.
I. Dressed.

II. Undressed.

III. Redressed.

IV. Reconsidering.

V. Emerging.
LETTER
TEXTS
bow are apt
mug wit
you zip fin
pig pie sox
row ore rim
kid map not
pen oak pig
hap inn ill
ink car but
bus dog fix
aye lap men
may pin pop
sax sap see
our ova put
who tie owl
mob hex hip
gab eel cod
sty awe ate
has jab tar
sap sue nut
mad hub
err inn eye
ill pit row
war tap pee
sag oak ham
did boy dip
bug lid pup
mix let jam
her fig rag
tie ray leg
hay doc cab
car hit jig
bun gyp nut
urn sow hat
don bye ask
awe egg lot
oud tax vow
mix get hob
sin fry pot
rum use yin
yon woe sip
sly sop ire
dim bid ant
one cam bad
doe apt ale
tug aid ago
try yea age
cup pep toe
job ego gap
kin zoo urn
you ore sit
hum nap rid
fat jam lid
rat lop due
sex dip bop
thy out lob
ram wig bye
few nut spy
dam nip kid
oak dub oil
ham gym
ewe day bin
and bop his
owl jig hit
own sag out
lip yak sum
ill had did
the bog hag
off wet bow
wit cur elm
pot nut fat
bud may
bib pen fit
mat ere ago
end joy par
fox dud ask
ran win god
rim lug end
bed you see
for lap pun
sub far bop
ape tar why
ova jig her
dry say tax
aye hay arc
gyp pit wed
red ebb mud
tee ask pry
hog vow rye
sue vex lax
had did but

88
ten buy sew
fox lit why
mew red rip
sip saw toe
pal hot moo
bar ego fan
car now van
yon men
law its hem
flu ear con
she win lip
jig hip fog
wow sup via
pie nor cob
boa boo ugh
rot nil mix
coy dry sea
hay rag ten
ebb dot see
bag lot mug
own old pub
now may
yon gag icy
cum ivy for
sue pot fee
hat mum
flu dry lit
pin spa rob
pat rib pew
toe job fey
nab bay key
top gap dad
hop rub rap
sat fag bum
rip yes low
hew nag fib
dip pap lug
nix yam
guy rue oar
fix tin hoe
wee lea set
hug ram cog
gin cub fen
pet net fob
zen nun ail
2-LETTER
TEXTSdo
ax me up to
to no bi ax
ho me on he
lo to my he
of ox if ma
or pa in me
be re us to
go he in we
or pa my my
oh ah um im
it le la to us
it so by he
if on oh me
ex id ex ma
ed ye be us
to do he in it
do ax me up
to so it is by
go in ox if
im bi ye he
dono in we
be on as un
my he in de
at it of my
ha in pa in
pi no be up
so am by go
if ah as pi
in us me do
pa re me to
be so no on
it ye hi it is
so on be at it
bi ye he do
no in we be
on as un my
he in de at it
of my ha in
pa in pi no
be up so am
by go if ho
ah as pi in
us me do pa
re me to be
so no on it
ye hi it is so
on be at it
do so no by
us to go on
do up my ma
un ah ox no
up me we do
up ha hi we
be me pi on
ma is to be
to no bi ax
me on he lo
to my he of
ox if ma or
pa in me of
ox if ma or
pa in me be
re us to go
he in we or
pa my me oh
ah um im it be if it so be no pa pi us at ha be so by ma to it la to us it so by he if on oh me ex ye be us to do he in it am ah to be in to ox me uh no oh no
MINIMAL APHORISMS: A TEXT FOR ANY NUMBER OF PERFORMERS

Instructions: As an initial performer begins with the first aphorism, a second performer recites the second, a third does the third, etc., for as many performers agreeing to participate. Each performer repeats his or her aphorism until tiring of it, at which point he or she moves ahead to the next. Hearing someone else speak one’s current words should prompt each speaker to move ahead. Once one speaker finishes the final aphorism, all should stop. If this piece opens a concert program, consider repeating it at the end with an entirely different group of people.
Skyward infinitely reach.

Never lose real money.

Thoughtfully initiate heterosexual seduction.

Wash yourself with luck.

Beneficence breeds bountiful booty.

Run around every block.

Pronounce “colonel” as “kernel.”

Be a skeptical student.

Remember, everyone respects excellence.

Cleanse out your mouth.
Flatter powerful people shamelessly.

Accurate arithmetic never lies.

Aspire to invisible humility.

Love those lacking lovers.

Reward beggars, rob crooks.

Leap into freezing lakes.

Lie down before violence.

Don’t rust to judgments.

Avoid archaic (mis)pronunciations.

Be indefensible before foes.
Whirl your wigs ostentatiously.

Race Chihuahuas for bettors.

Inflate your sagging ego.

Make love, not war.

Environment, not heredity.

Successful loving requires lying.

Let's achieve 100% unemployment.

Too much for nothing.

Befriend better friends.

Repeal poisons with palliatives.
Only stupidity generates wisdom.

Expand your mind voluminously.

Admire inferiors, exploit superiors.

Be awash with cash.

Enjoy every lover's loving.

Sit atop a ladder.

Don't disturb hornets' nests.

Ring ropes enclose boxing.

Sexual intercourse facilitates friendship.

None of your business.
Over only when over.

Accept every opportunity.

Strong writing isn't forgotten.

Fighters get knocked down.

Imagine yourself pleasurably seduced.

Allocate one’s shit sparingly.

Generate favorable self-publicity.

Basketballs go through hoops.

Don't initiate anyone's revenge.

Love surfaces as surprise.
Eat only what’s edible.

Only tanks defeat tanks.

Unravel obscure conundrums.

Arrest all plagiarism.

Sympathize with erotic insipidity.

Remove belly-button lint assiduously.

Imagine only lofty fantasies.

Arise self-energized daily.

Exemplify classiest diction.

Aim for lofty recognitions.
All gamblers eventually lose.

Loving keeps you young.

You can’t hide forever.

Aspire to be unbelievable.

Exhale foul emotions.

Awake to generous surprises.

Cultivate cunning diplomatic skills.

Shower several times daily.

Speak Chinese whenever possible.

Write nuggets of wisdom.
Imagine high and wide.

Build a counterclockwise clock.

Alabaster outlasts plywood.

Run up extravagant debts.

Books beat newspapers always.

Spin in a circle.

Multiply more than rabbits.

Support saints among us.

Master life's musical instruments.

Read books over newspapers.
Manage your resources skillfully.

Pick up stray pennies.

Classify your lovers’ sentiments.

“Rough-sex” can be tough.

Make risk-free speculations.

Time’s your only “money.”

Focus everyone’s attention.

Creeps creep creepily.

Believe in generous gods.

Epitomize excellence wherever possible.
Excavate life’s residues.

The wisest fool wins.

Regurgitate flattery from others.

Sprint away from fire.

Kisses sweeter than wine.

Understand unfathomable conundrums.

Fantasize about move stars.

Duck, run for cover.

Be smarter than “smartest.”

Food fatens, alcohol kills.
Dive only into water.

Enjoy sitting on toilets.

Love yourself.

Rain rains rain.

Never mispronounce “February.”

If confused, demand advice.

Acknowledge constraints in writing.

Practice “night-life” by day.

Sell your possessions.

Read only sagacious literature.
Swim with sharks.

Distribute one’s affections evenly.

Sexual abstinence teaches nothing.

Shoot the moon.

Seduction obviates quarreling.

Rewire your brain’s circuits.

Allow yourself chocolate occasionally.

Sex is rarely bad.

Invest in yourself initially.

Fly exclusively in airplanes.
Wave all patriotic flags.

Enjoy masturbation as available.

Crash through thin walls.

Confessed sins require absolution.
Only misfortune inspires wisdom.

Fruits make better cakes.

Snowing snows snow.

Befuddle one’s antagonists.

Don’t enrage your family.

Reveal your secrets reluctantly.
Eschew questionable explanations.

Bells get everyone’s attention.

Empty pockets before crime.

Get potential benefactors drunk.

Effervescent lectures stupefy.

Repel poisons with pests.

Watch yourself piss forever.

Make love, not war.

Identify paths through mazes.

Don’t build “dream houses.”
Much less is more.

Eat healthy, live longer.

Rent a retired fire-engine.

Beneficence bestowed on you.

Discipline your lousy lovers.

Be lovely before “beautiful.”

Run with the swiftest.

Eagerly engage in sex.

Wrangle horses, not men.

Thrilling surprises await you.
Discontents inspire higher ambitions.

Cure ills with sunshine.

Avoid perverse entanglements.

Recognize your deepest faults.

Eat healthy, nutritious foods.

Don’t peddle your integrity.

Sleep all you need.

Truths eventually defeat lies.

Money can’t buy love.
IN MEMORIUM JOHN CAGE

My performance piece would consist of making no intentional noise for seventy-nine years, eleven months, and seven days, by measure duplicating the span of his life in a manner he would have thought most appropriate.