

Invisible Fingers
a monologue from *The Suicide Table*
by Kris Thompson

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If it matters, which it don't, I enlisted. One way or the other, it didn't matter a bit over there. Enlisted. Drafted. Charlie didn't know the difference. After basic, I married my girl, Louise Marie Parker. Day before I shipped out. Justice of the Peace. Together two years and had only that one sweet night before Nam. Last thing, I promised I'd come back to her. Served two long tours. Ain't nobody should see the things we saw, do the things we done. I kept my promise. Came back to Louise. Came back myself but (long pause) came back somebody different too...you know?

One day I'm sleepin. She shakes me. I grab her arm. She screams at me to let her go. I'm not really awake or not really myself. (looks at hands) I would never...She ask me why I didn't answer the phone. She though something's wrong. I tell her nothing wrong. She ask why I'm not at the shop, workin my shift. I tell her time got away from me. She tells me it's the third time this month. I said I know. She tells me prolly Daren gonna fire my ass. I tell her I'm sorry. She tells me I can't go on like this, sleepin all day, not goin to work, not answering the phone, not...Before I know it, I've got her against the wall. (angry, out of control) Damnit woman! Maybe I don't wanna answer the phone! Maybe I don't wanna get up! Maybe I don't wanna work for Daren at the shop! (ugly now) Maybe I just don't wanna hear your goddamn voice no more. You talk and talk and talk and sometimes I just want to (with one hand wrap invisible fingers around an invisible throat) wrap my fingers around your throat and...(long pause) Louise is crying. I come back to myself (emotional, choking up) and the woman I love, the woman I cherish, is trembling, afraid. Afraid of me. (looks at hands.) I...Louise I... (fast) She grabs an old suitcase from under our bed, starts throwin clothes in it. Tells me she can't live like this no more. Tells me I changed, that somethins wrong with me, that she gonna go stay with her Mama till the baby comes. (pause then fast paced again) Wait! I tell her I'll be better. I swear to it. I'll go see Daren...fix it with the job. (long pause) Please, Louise. Please don't go. I'm sorry. (get on knees, pleading.) Louise, please. (trying not to cry, slow paced now) You the only good thing I got. Please. (pause) I love you. She stops packin, comes to me, holds my face, tells me she loves me to the moon. But...she be worried all the time and scared sometimes and none of that good for the baby. She says baby be here soon and maybe we can try again, the three of us. (smiling, remembering)

We had us a baby girl. Named her Mavis after Louise's sister. She was just as pretty as her Mama. And smart too. (pause, then thoughtful) We tried, the three of us did, just like Louise said. But I just never got back to myself and over the years things just sort of unraveled 'till we couldn't put 'em back together no more. (pause) I wasn't the man Louise married. Wasn't the man she needed. Wasn't the father little Mavis deserved. (sad smile) I hear from folks that little Mavis grew up and got herself to college. First in our family. That makes me real proud.