

**TOM**

I'd guess you're a teacher. In fact, if I were to bet -

**JUSTINE**

I'd say you'd win that bet. What gave me away?

**TOM**

You sound like one...the way you choose your words. "Hence", for example. It's not a word you hear every day.

**JUSTINE**

Perhaps not.

**TOM**

See, there you go again with "perhaps". "Perhaps"... "hence" ...you've got "teacher" written all over you. I'm Tom.

**JUSTINE**

Hello, Tom. I'm Justine.

**TOM**

So, Justine the teacher, how do I look?

**JUSTINE**

Excuse me?

**TOM**

Do my socks match? Any spinach in my teeth? I'm flying solo here today. Just curious how I'm doing.

**JUSTINE**

You're doing fine.

**TOM**

Glad to hear it. My roommate usually helps me out with this sort of thing, but he's out of town for the weekend.

**JUSTINE**

Ah.

**TOM**

It hasn't always been this way. There was a time...

**JUSTINE**

I'm sure it's been difficult for you.

**TOM**

I've learned to cope. At least I have my memories...my "reference points", as I like to think of them.

**JUSTINE**

How long has it been?

**TOM**

About ten years ago is when it started. It's a gradual thing. The doctors at St. Mary's say I've lost maybe eighty...ninety percent of my vision.

**JUSTINE**

Is there any hope that you'll recover?

**TOM**

It's not likely. (*JUSTINE waves her hand in front of TOM's face – testing him*) I'm not *totally* blind. I can still make out shapes. You, for instance, I can tell have a terrific shape. And I don't need my eyesight to see that you're blushing right now. But my point is – you take care of yourself...haven't let yourself go. A sign of high self-esteem.

**JUSTINE**

Maybe I just have a high metabolism.

**TOM**

Do you?

**JUSTINE**

God, I wish.

**TOM**

So you have to work at it. That tells me that you're *also* self-disciplined. You're beginning to sound like the ideal woman.

**JUSTINE**

I'm really not all that special.

**TOM**

Now you're just being modest. (*Pause. He stands.*) Funny story - I knew a Justine once...had this crazy crush on her. The problem was – to her I didn't exist.

**JUSTINE**

Really? How sad.

**TOM**

Sad? It's worse than sad. It's tragic. The Greeks couldn't have done justice to this kind of tragedy. (*Beat*) Where did you say you were from?

**JUSTINE**

I didn't. (*Pause.*) Harristown. It's about two hours north of here. It's –

**TOM**

The home of Wilson's Crackers. Birthplace of All-Star Quarterback, Bruno Grabowski.

**JUSTINE**

You know the place?

**TOM**

Know it? Hell, I grew up in it. Little known fact: Harristown was also home to the Bachman sisters – Justine and Helen.

**JUSTINE**

Wait a minute...

**TOM**

Now that younger one... "Justine"...now she was one hot tamale.

**JUSTINE**

"Hot Tamale"? I wore braces and had the figure of a number two pencil!

**TOM**

And then you blossomed. Me...I was a late bloomer. (*Beat*) You don't remember me, do you. (*Beat*) Tom Ridgeway. I grew up near the park, on Cherry Street.

**JUSTINE**

Cherry Street, huh? Let me think. (*Thinks.*) I do *vaguely* remember a boy by the name of Tom Ridgeway. He was a little on the heavy side, as I recall.

**TOM**

(*With Irish Brogue*) 'Tis true. I was a wee bit fluffy.

**JUSTINE**

Fluffy. I like that. (*Beat*) You really had a crush on me?

**TOM**

I did. You worked at Farrell's Drug Store after school. I used to go in there all the time – pretending to shop. I'd usually blow my entire allowance on candy bars just to get a glimpse of you.

**JUSTINE**

Did we ever talk?

**TOM**

You gave me some advice once. Told me I should lay off the candy bars.

**JUSTINE**

*(Laughs)* I really said that?

**TOM**

Uh-huh. Funny thing is I took your advice. Dropped eighty pounds in college.

**JUSTINE**

All because of what I said...

**TOM**

All because of what you said. Scary, isn't it? *(Pause)* Now are you ready for another confession?

**JUSTINE**

There's more?

**TOM**

When I sat down and we started talking, I recognized you right away.

**JUSTINE**

You've known it was me this whole time? But how?

**TOM**

It's funny what I remember. Your voice, for one thing. Through the years it stayed with me. And your perfume. Shalimar, right? You always wore Shalimar.

**JUSTINE**

That's right. That's...amazing. *(Beat)* Why didn't you speak up sooner?

**TOM**

I was hoping that you'd recognize me back.

**JUSTINE**

But I didn't.

**TOM**

No.

**JUSTINE**

I'm sorry.

**TOM**

Don't be. I have you at a disadvantage. Being blind, I've learned to sense things that most people don't bother with.

**JUSTINE**

What do you sense in me?