

BEVERLY'S LOVE

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THE FIRST REAL THEATRICAL MEMORY I HAVE OF MY MOTHER, Beverly Bentley, was seeing her in 2 plays at Trinity Repertory Company during the summer of 1977. She played Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and was in another play I can't remember, but she had a line that brought the whole house down: "Clarence, if bullshit were music, you'd be a bygone brass band!"

My mother and father started Act IV Café Experimental Theater in the late sixties. I was born in 1966, so I absorbed some of that creative energy and passion. My dad always spoke of how great my mother was in LeRoi Jones's (before he changed his name to Amiri Baraka) play, *Dutchman*.

I don't think I could have been an actor without my mother's inspiration and support. Seeing her perform vaulted me into the ranks and her encouragement always guided me through all the self-doubt. If you are an artist of some kind, that drive, that electricity, is decided for you, but it certainly helps to have a parent in your corner.

With my two boys, I feel at times to be more of a mother than a father. I have a lot of mothering in me because my mother loved me with her whole being. If my brother Michael or I ever got sick, she was the medicine. She was a healer and many were drawn to her nurturing spirit. She was also very political, which motivated her to try and do great things for the earth. In raising my sons, I incorporate her golden shadow—I just do what she did for me.

In October, 2017, I played Jamie in *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, a benefit for the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum produced by, and starring, Halcyone Hurst. My mother sat in the front row for both performances. I decided to break the fourth wall at the end of Act II and look into my mother's eyes. In that instance my character was seeing the ghost of his mother and my instinct compelled me to connect with Beverly. She'd re-

cently had a stroke, but the actor in her held my gaze and we shared our first theatrical moment. It was a profound, blessed experience, and an incredible way to bookend our first time acting together earlier that year, on the film, *Flaubrucht*, a piece I also wrote and directed. In the scene she played herself and I played a warlock searching for his mother, Frau Beverly Blucht, a powerful witch living inside her host, the actor, Beverly Bentley. Our work flowed like a creative symphony and we effortlessly soared to emotional highs and lows, our truths connecting organically and peacefully, an artistic gift, and loving journey, which we had been preparing for our whole lives.