ANGELS IN AMERICA.
ACT ONE. SCENE FOUR.

LOUIS: My grandmother actually saw Emma Goldman speak. In Yiddish. But all Grandma could remember was that she spoke well and wore a hat. What a weird service. That rabbi...
PRIOR: A definite find. Get his number when you go to the graveyard. I want him to bury me.
LOUIS: Better head out there. Everyone gets to put dirt on the coffin once it’s lowered in.
PRIOR: Oooh. Cemetery fun. Don’t want to miss that.
LOUIS: It’s an old Jewish custom to express love. Here, Grandma, have a shovelful.
Latecomers run the risk of finding the grave completely filled. She was pretty crazy. She was up there in that home for ten years, talking to herself. I never visited. She looked too much like my mother.
PRIOR (Hugs him): Poor Louis. I’m sorry your grandma is dead.
LOUIS: Tiny little coffin, huh? Sorry I didn’t introduce you to...I always get so closety at these family things.
PRIOR: Butch. You get butch. (Imitating) “Hi Cousin Doris, you don’t remember me I’m Lou, Rachel’s boy.” Lou, not Louis, because if you say Louis they’ll hear the sibilant S.
LOUIS: I don’t have a...
PRIOR: I don’t blame you, hiding. Bloodlines. Jewish curses are the worst. I personally would dissolve if anyone ever looked me in the eye and said “Feh.” Fortunately WASPs don’t say “Feh.” Oh and by the way, darling, cousin Doris is a dyke.
LOUIS: No. Really?
PRIOR: You don’t notice anything. If I hadn’t spent the last four years fellating you I’d swear you were straight.
LOUIS: You’re in a pissy mood. Cat still missing?
(Little pause.)
PRIOR: Not a fur ball in sight. It’s your fault.
LOUIS: It is?
PRIOR: I warned you, Louis. Names are important. Call an animal “Little Sheba” and you can’t expect it to stick around. Besides, it’s a dog’s name.
LOUIS: I wanted a dog in the first place, not a cat. He sprayed my books.
PRIOR: He was a female cat.
LOUIS: Cats are stupid, high-strung predators. Babylonians sealed them up in bricks. Dogs have brains.
PRIOR: Cats have intuition.
LOUIS: A sharp dog is as smart as a really dull two-year-old child.
PRIOR: Cats know when something's wrong.
LOUIS: Only if you stop feeding them.
PRIOR: They know. That's why Sheba left, because she knew.
LOUIS: Knew what?
(Pause.)
PRIOR: I did my best Shirley Booth this morning, floppy slippers, housecoat, curlers, can of Little Friskies; “Come back, Little Sheba, come back…” To no avail. Le chat, elle ne reviendra jamais, jamais...
(He removes his jacket, rolls up his sleeve, shows Louis a dark-purple spot on the underside of his arm near the shoulder)
See.
LOUIS: That's just a burst blood vessel.
PRIOR: Not according to the best medical authorities.
LOUIS: What?
(Pause)
Tell me.
LOUIS: (Very softly, holding Prior's arm): Oh please...
LOUIS: Stop.
PRIOR: My troubles are lesion.
LOUIS: Will you stop.
PRIOR: Don't you think I'm handling this well? I'm going to die.
LOUIS: Bullshit.
PRIOR: Let go of my arm.
LOUIS: No.
PRIOR: Let go.
LOUIS: (Grabbing Prior, embracing him ferociously): No.
PRIOR: I can't find a way to spare you baby. No wall like the wall of hard scientific fact. K.S. Wham. Bang your head on that.
LOUIS: Fuck you. (Letting go) Fuck you fuck you fuck you.
PRIOR: Now that's what I like to hear. A mature reaction. Let's go see if the cat's come home. Louis?
LOUIS: When did you find this?
PRIOR: I couldn't tell you.
LOUIS: Why
PRIOR: I was scared, Lou.
LOUIS: Of what?
PRIOR: That you'll leave me.
LOUIS: Oh.
(Little pause.)
PRIOR: Bad timing, funeral and all, but I figured as long as we're on the subject of death...
LOUIS: I have to go bury my grandma.
PRIOR: Lou?
(Pause)
Then you'll come home?
LOUIS: Then I'll come home.