

The Ballad - Assignment

The Rabbit Hole

Write a ballad for a specific moment in Act II, Scene 1 of David Lindsay-Abaire's play *The Rabbit Hole*. In the play, this moment is a stage direction: *Left alone, Howie is reeling but trying not to show it. He drinks his beer...*

Before you begin writing, jot down some notes regarding the problem in the play from Howie's point of view. Who is having a harder time with the mourning process – Howie or Becca? Why? What is the impact of this on the stage direction in question? What is Howie feeling at this exact moment, and how does it affect Howie's behavior in the following pages of the scene, especially the sequence with Jason? The stage direction tells us he is "reeling" – which in itself suggests a level of discomfort. What is he feeling? Why does this feeling cause him to be "reeling?" The song must explore this moment in a way that the stage direction cannot.

The parameters: This is to be an A-A-B-A song. You may write a short intro to the song if you like. If you write more than one refrain consisting of A-A-B-A, you may write a contrasting C section between the refrains if you like. The song could have either of the following forms: A-A-B-A, A-A-B-A; A-A-B-A-C-A-A-B-A; or A-A-B-A-B-A (with or without intro in each case). You may invent other permutations of the form. However, make sure we hear once through A-A-B-A before you do anything creative with the form.

Lyricists: write the lyrics, as well as a description about what each stanza is hoping to accomplish. Include some notes about Howie's subtext, as well as perhaps some ideas of how much of his thoughts he can say out loud to Becca, and how much he must keep to himself.

Composers: write the music, as well as a brief description about Howie's state of mind, and how you're hoping that is reflected in your music. Include some notes about how you're trying to use the music to convey the words which Howie is not speaking out loud (either to himself or to his wife Becca).