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Title:

ERRATUM to: Guest editors of special issue “Experimentation and Experiment in Southeast Asian Art” (Southeast of Now, 6, 2, 2022)

Date:

2023-03-01

Citation:

Rath, A. K. & Dirgantoro, W. (2023). ERRATUM to: Guest editors of special issue “Experimentation and Experiment in Southeast Asian Art” (Southeast of Now, 6, 2, 2022). Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia, 7 (1), pp.212-236

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*Guest editors of special issue "Experimentation and Experiment in Southeast Asian Art" [Volume 6, Number 2 (October 2022)]*

Amanda Katherine Rath, Wulan Dirgantoro, Elsa Clavé, Judy Freya Sibayan

Southeast of Now: Directions in Contemporary and Modern Art in Asia, Volume 7, Number 1, March 2023, pp. 212-236 (Article)



Published by NUS Press Pte Ltd

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56159/sen.2023.a890226>

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# ERRATUM

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*Amanda Katherine Rath and Wulan Dirgantoro*  
Guest editors of special issue “Experimentation and Experiment  
in Southeast Asian Art” [Volume 6, Number 2 (October 2022)]

Unfortunately, an error occurred in the October 2022 issue of *Southeast of Now* (Volume 6, Number 2). For the artistic conception, the *Three Kings* and *Sound Bags* “scripts” (Ray Albano, 1979) should be read together, as the performances were meant to complement each other, but the pages of “Sound Bags” are illegible due to the small size in reproduction (pp. 208–10). In this issue, the error is being rectified with the reprinting of both scripts, as well as the informative captions by Judy Freya Sibayan. Figure captions have been adjusted accordingly. For the historical and critical context of these texts/performances, please refer to the article “Revisiting *Three Kings* and *Sound Bags* (1979) as Philippine ‘Experimental Art’”, by Eva Bentcheva in the October 2022 issue (pp. 187–94).

The guest editors sincerely apologise for the error.

## THREE KINGS AND SOUND BAGS

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FIGURE 1: Theatre actor Peng Olaguera reading the “scripts” for the performances *Three Kings* (in Filipino) and *Sound Bags* (in English) at the End Room of the Main Gallery at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), January 6, 1979. They were written by Ray Albano, then Acting Director of the CCP Art Museum. The End Room was actually the space at the end of the Main Gallery, which when not in use for art exhibitions was used for staging intimate theatre plays produced by Samahan sa Dulo, a group of theatre and visual artists organized by Albano. Seated at the back of Olaguera is Huge Bartolome, waiting for Karioka to perform. Karioka’s members were Albano, Bartolome and Judy Freya Sibayan. These performances were part of the activities of the 1978 CCP Thirteen Artists Award (a funding and exhibition award). The award was not given to artists for their body of work but for showing potential for contributing to Philippine contemporary art. Bartolome and Sibayan received the same award two years earlier. Interesting to note here is that the paintings by Mercy Grace Acosta, one of the Thirteen Artists awardees, became the backdrop of the performances which occupied the whole space negating the area for proper viewing of the paintings. Yet, the event was announced as being held at the End Room. The event was a conflation of species or the loss of species—performance art, theatre and art theory: a theatre actor not acting but merely reading scripts that were not enacted by the performers who were not actors but were visual artists; a staging of a performance in a space that was not a stage but an art gallery which was called the End Room which traditionally was a space for intimate theatre plays; the reading of a discourse on art no matter how ludicrously parodic of art theory, rendering the art exhibition space as discursive site. Courtesy of Judy Freya Sibayan Archive.

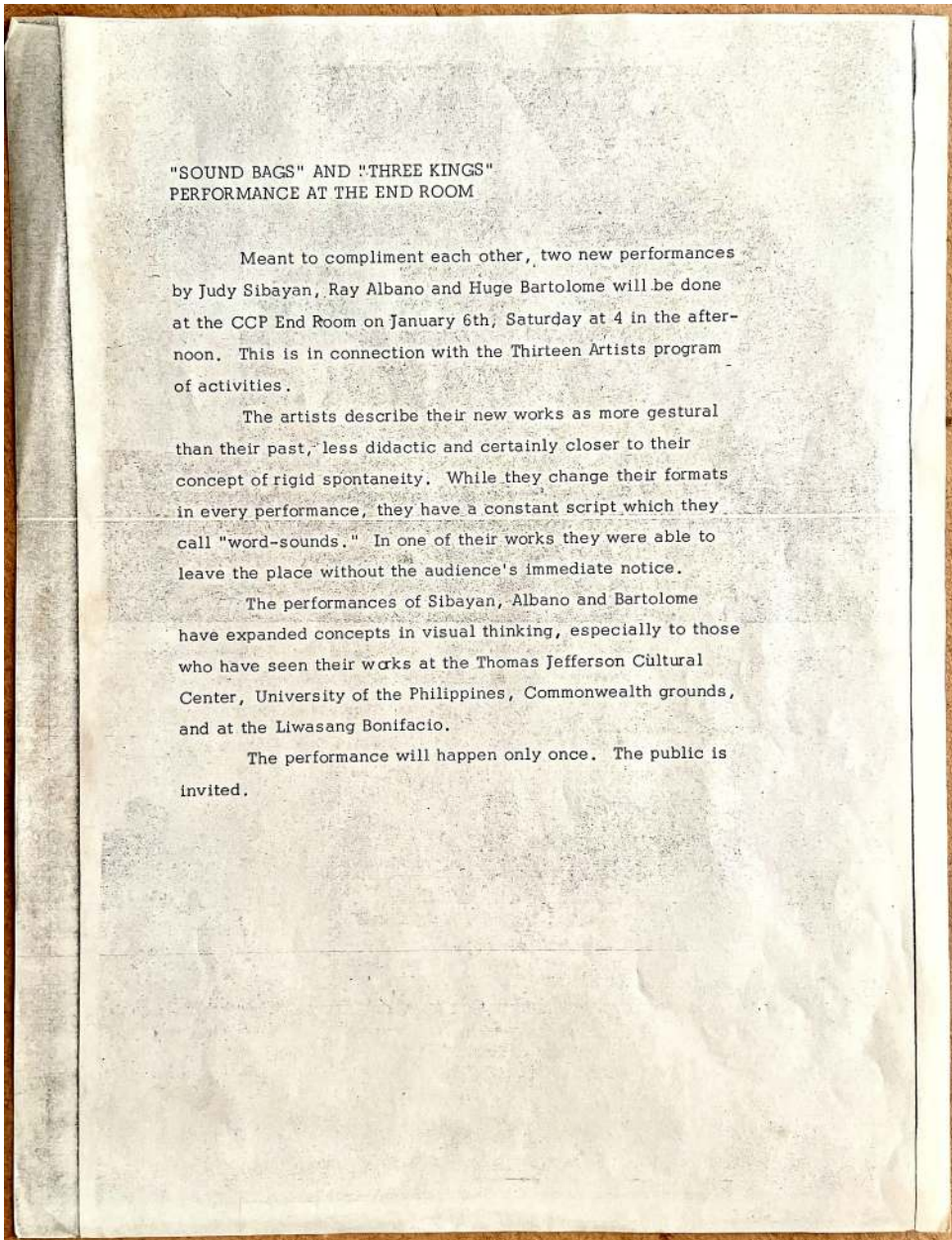


FIGURE 2: *Sound Bags* and *Three Kings* performance announcement. *Three Kings*, written by Ray Albano, was technically not a script for artists Ray Albano, Huge Bartolome and Judy Freya Sibayan (members of Karioka) to enact, since it was read solely by Peng Olaguera while the three artists sat it out waiting for the next script to be read. Courtesy of Judy Freya Sibayan Archive.

# *Three Kings*

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*Ray Albano, 6 January 1979<sup>1</sup>*

*Translated by Elsa Clavé in collaboration with Judy Freya Sibayan*

Good afternoon  
Good afternoon.

Good afternoon sa inyong lahat  
Good afternoon to all of you.

Huwag sana kayong magagalit sa katotohanan  
I hope you won't be angry at the truth

na maibabalita ko sa inyo  
That I will tell you

dahil  
because

tila mahirap ngang tanggapin na katotohanan ito  
this truth seems difficult to accept

Sabagay mahirap tanggapin ang katotohanan  
After all it is difficult to accept the truth

kung minsan.  
sometimes.

Eto nga, tungkol sa “three kings”  
Here it is, about the “three kings”

[ **Southeast of Now**  
Vol. 7 No. 1 (March 2023), pp. 215–25 ]

Ang tatlong hari  
The three kings

Na nagbigay ginto, insenso at mirra  
who gave gold, incense, and myrrh

Kayamanan, pag-ibig ba't kapaitan ?  
Wealth, perhaps love, and bitterness?

Parang ganyan  
It seems like it

Kung gawin ang modern version nito,  
If you do the modern version of it,

ano kaya ang insenso?  
what would be the incense?

Palagay ko cigarette lighter iyo  
I think that would be a cigarette lighter

Ang ginto ay ginto  
Gold is gold

At ang mirra ay ... maaring langis  
And myrrh ... could be oil

Baka nga lang  
Perhaps

Pero ang tunay kong ibabalita sa inyo  
Ay ang malaking katarantaduhang ginawa  
Sa paniniwala kay Melchor, Gaspar at Baltasar  
But what I really want to tell you  
Is the utter nonsense made  
About the belief in Melchor, Gaspar, and Balthazar

Sa katotohanan, sila ay mga prinsipe lamang  
In reality, they were only princes.

Siyempre naman, kung hindi sila hari,  
Really, if they had not been kings,

sino kaya ang magkagusto ng kuwento nila ?  
who would have come to like their story ?

Wala.  
Nobody.

Kailangan na ang mga bida ay mga hari  
The heroes should be kings

Ni Diyos hindi nga puwede, e  
Not even God could!

Ano pa kaya sa mga ordinary citizens?  
What more for ordinary citizens?

Hindi puwede.  
It is not possible.

At ang pangalan nila ay Principe Amante, Prinsipe Abante  
At Prinsipe Florante.

And their names were Prince Amante, Prince Abante  
And Prince Florante.<sup>2</sup>

Sila ay patungong silangan  
They were heading to the East

Nang nakakita sila ng « shooting star »  
When they saw the “shooting star”

Natuliro sila  
They were stupefied

Ang hindi natin malaman ay kung bakit  
What we cannot understand is why

Nagbigay sila ng mga handog  
They gave presents

Masyadong nag-abala sila sa isang anak  
They were too preoccupied by the child

Ng karpintero  
Of a carpenter

Gusto nilang mag-charity work  
They liked to do charity work

Kung minsan  
Sometimes

Si Principe Amante ay isang “ Businessman”,  
Prince Amante was a “businessman”,

ika nga. Marami siyang negosyo  
as they say. He was doing a lot of business.

Guwapo siya at maaring maging aktor siya  
He was handsome and could have become an actor

sa Hollywood  
in Hollywood

Mahusay siya siguro ng gumanap ng  
He was really skilled in performing

eksena para sa mga role ng prinsipe  
princely roles

Mabilis sa kamay  
A master of sleight of hand

Maraming bisyo  
(He had) many vices

Kaya gusto niyang magpakatino  
So he wanted to be better

Parang nararamdaman niya na kung mag-  
It's as if he felt that if

bigay siya ng handog sa mga sanggol,  
he gave presents to babies,

mababawasan ang kabiyang kasalanan  
it would lessen his sins.

Sa bagay  
In any case

parang may bisa ang pagbibigay ng  
It seems the giving of

handog. Si principe Abante ay  
an offering was effective. Prince Abante was

isang mandirigma  
a warrior.

Parang hostess:  
He was like a hostess:<sup>3</sup>

may hindi kanais-nais na layunin nguni't  
He did not have pure intentions but

may gintong puso  
had a heart of gold

Lalaki siya.  
He was a man.

Maraming ulo ang gumulong sa daan  
Many lost their heads along the way

Dahil sa kanya  
Because of him

Huwag nga nating pag-usapan iyan  
Let's not even talk about that.

Hindi yata bagay sa pasko ang  
Kuwentong mandirigma. Maliban  
The warrior story  
does not sound like a Christmas thing. Except

lamang siguro kung pag-ibig ng  
perhaps if the topic is about the love

Mandirigma ang pag-uusapan  
Of the warrior

At si Prinsipe Florante?  
And Prince Florante?

Tama kayo, siya ang kumakanta  
You are right, he is the singer.

Gumawa siya ng kantang handog  
He performed a song as a tribute

Sa ating pagsasama  
For our friendship

Magkakaibigan ang tatlo. Hindi  
The three were friends.

malinaw sa alamat ang kanilang  
pagkakaibigan. Basta na lang magkakabarkada  
sila. Hindi masyadong mahirap  
The legend is not clear about their friendship  
Suddenly they became close friends  
It is not too hard

intindihin kung bakit ang mga reino<sup>4</sup>  
to understand why the princes

ay may kasamahan. Lahat ay  
had a fellowship. They all

naghahanap ng kapayapaan  
looked for peace.

Kaya ng makita nila ang shooting star  
So when they saw the shooting star

may kutob sila na ang bituin na iyon  
they had a hunch that the star

ay mag-bibigay ng tunay na direksiyon  
would guide them to the right place

sa kapayapaan.  
to peace.

At napatungo sila sa daan ng mga  
And they followed the way of the

bituin. Naglakbay sila.  
star. They went on a journey.

Hindi nila malaman kung saan  
They did not know where

sila pupunta, kung tumataas sila o bumababa.  
they were going, if they were going up or down.

(4)

Hindi sila nahirapan sa paglakbay.  
They had no difficulty in their journey

Mamaya na lang e lumalapit sila sa buwan.  
It was only later that they came close to the moon.

Wala silang dalang bandila  
They hadn't brought a flag

Kaya wala silang tanda.  
So they had nothing to identify themselves.

Doon nila nakita na ang kanilang mundo  
There, they saw that their world

Ay maliit pala.  
Was small.

Ngayon ay nasanay na sila sa kalawakan.  
Now they were used to the vast space.

Napansin nila ang paglipas ng Andromeda.  
They noticed the passing of Andromeda

Malayo pala.  
It was really far.

At walang daan patungo doon.  
And there was no way to go there.

Lumampas sila sa bilyong bituin  
They exceeded a billion stars

Ngunit mayroon pa ring nasasalubong  
But they kept meeting others

Alam nila na ang mga bituin at planeta  
They already knew that the stars and the planets

Ay hindi mga bola na ibinabato  
Are not balls which are thrown

Sa mga bowling pins  
At bowling pins

Apoy, langis, bato, tubig  
Fire, oil, rock, water

Ang mga elementos ng buhay  
The elements of life

Ang mga elementos ng pagsimula  
The elements of the beginning

Mga elementos ng lakas  
The elements of force

Marami silang naunawaan  
They understood a lot

Marami silang napag-aralan  
They learnt a lot

Kapag nadagdagan ang inyong nalalaman,  
When you increase your knowledge,

Nadadagdagan din ang mga alam mo  
You also increase your knowledge

Sa misteryo ng mundo  
Of the mystery of the world

Nagbigay sila ng handog – iyon na lang  
They gave the only thing

Ang maibibigay nila.  
they could give.

Naubos lahat sa paglalakbay  
They were all exhausted by the journey

Nahanap nila ang kapayapaan.  
They found peace

(5)

Naging masaya sila  
They were happy

Mahalaga sila sa belen  
They were important in the nativity.

Ngunit ang masama na naman sa ating  
But what is bad about our consciousness

Nalalaman ay ang external things  
are the external things

Palagi ang mahalaga  
It is always what matters

Dahil siguro medyo dramatic makita  
Maybe because it is quite visibly dramatic

Ang tatlong prinsipeng nagbibigay ng  
The three princes who gave

Ginto na kumikinang, insenso na  
The glittering gold, smoking incense

Umuusok, at mira na nasa makorteng  
And myrrh inside a beautifully made

Kahon. Ang hindi natin malaman  
Box. What we do not know

Ay kung paano si Abanteng nakipag-  
Is how Prince Abante had fought in duel

Duel sa mga bayan para lamang  
In the towns so they could

Makaraan sila. Si Amante ay nahirapang  
pass through. Amante had difficulties

Bumola sa mga tao upang may discount  
sweet-talking the people so that they would get discounts

Sila sa mga hotel. At si Florante –  
At the hotel. And Florante –

Huwag na nating idamay si Laura – ay  
Let's not include Laura<sup>5</sup>–

Naging idolo sa kanyang pag-awit  
Became an idol in his singing

Ng mga ballad  
Of the ballads.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Elsa Clavé** is an assistant professor of Austronesian Studies at the University of Hamburg where she co-organizes the study program, the Philippines in Austronesian Studies. She specializes in the social and cultural history of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia and has recently published her first monograph *Les sultanats du Sud philippin – Une histoire sociale et culturelle de l'islamisation* (XVe-XXe siècles) (Paris: EFEO, 2022).

**Judy Freya Sibayan** is a conceptual artist doing self-instituted projects as Institutional Critique. She is the director of the *Museum of Mental Objects* which she embodies and performs. Her autobiography, *The Hypertext of HerMe(s)* was published in 2014 by KT Press with a grant from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. She is also co-founding editor and publisher of the online *Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art* (<https://www.ctrlp--artjournal.org>).

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The *Three Kings* script was written by Ray Albano. As editors of this edition, we want to bring people into a dialogue regarding translation, artistic practice and academic expertise. The translation of the script from Filipino to English was a collaborative effort between Judy Freye Sibayan and Elsa Clavé between 2021 and 2022.
- <sup>2</sup> Prinsipe Amante was the hero in the comic book series *Prinsipe Amante* published by Aksiyon Komiks in 1950. Prinsipe Abante, on the other hand, was the lead character in the slapstick film comedy titled *Prinsipe Abante* released in 1973. Florante (Florante de Leon) was a singer-songwriter in the 1970s and a pioneer and leading exponent of Pinoy (Philippine) folk rock. One of his most popular songs was the ballad *Handog* (Offering), a tribute to his fans. Ray Albano was a fan of his and designed the publicity materials for Florante's concert at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.
- <sup>3</sup> Hostess (feminine) is a euphemism for a waitress in a sex club, and at times for a prostitute.
- <sup>4</sup> It is possible that Ray Albano intended a masculine version of the feminine *reyna* or queen. *Reino* means kingdom.
- <sup>5</sup> Laura is the object of Florante's love in the epic poem *Florante at Laura* by Francisco Baltasar, whose pen name was Balagtas. It was written while the poet was in prison and published in 1838 when he was freed. Considered a classic and a masterpiece in Philippine literature, this work of 399 stanzas is an allegory of Baltasar's life, particularly when he was imprisoned. According to Filipino scholar E. San Juan, Jr., *Florante at Laura* "is a sustained poetic interrogation about the nature of justice, truth and the human commitment to socio-political equity. It concerns the meaning of oath and contract, promise and betrayal, individualism and solidarity. It concerns historical relations: between father and son, ruler and ruled, lover and beloved, Christian and Muslim, man and woman. Love (piety) and force (heroism), passion and society are counterpointed to the mutable response of the characters. Balagtas wrestles ultimately with the dialectic interaction between reason and reality, being and consciousness. What is actual and what is possible." <https://panitikan.ph/2014/06/23/reintroducing-balagtas-and-his-work/> [accessed 20 May 2022].



# Sound Bags

FIGURES 3–12: *Sound Bags* was the second script read by Peng Olaguera, but this time Ray Albano assigned pages to each of the members of Karioka. Each was provided with a microphone on a stand. The first page was labeled Huge, the second, Judy, and the third page, Ray, with the succeeding pages labeled with their names in the said order. After Olaguera had read page one, he paused as a cue for Bartolome to take out an object from a paper bag to make sounds with, which was amplified by the microphone. After the second page was read by the actor, Sibayan did the same, and the artists continued to take turns in an act of ‘gifting’ the audience with sounds like the strumming of a comb or the crumpling of pieces of paper. Note here, traditionally the closing remarks should have been the welcome remarks. As in all parody, not only is the story rewritten as commentary on the original, but even the form is transformed. In both “scripts” Albano, the homo ludens, is present. Courtesy of Judy Freya Sibayan Archive.

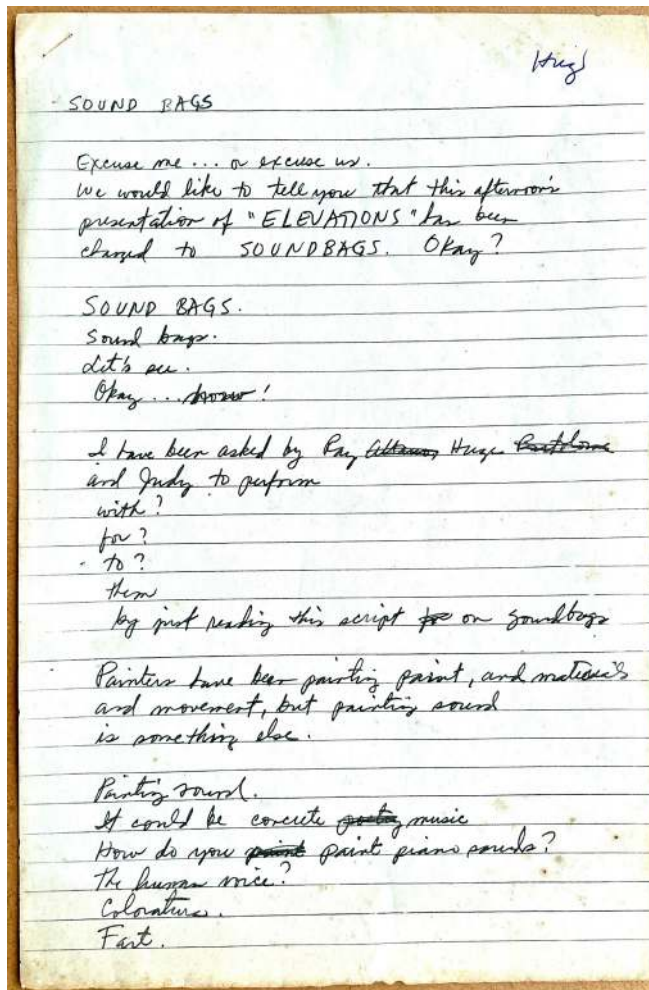


FIGURE 3

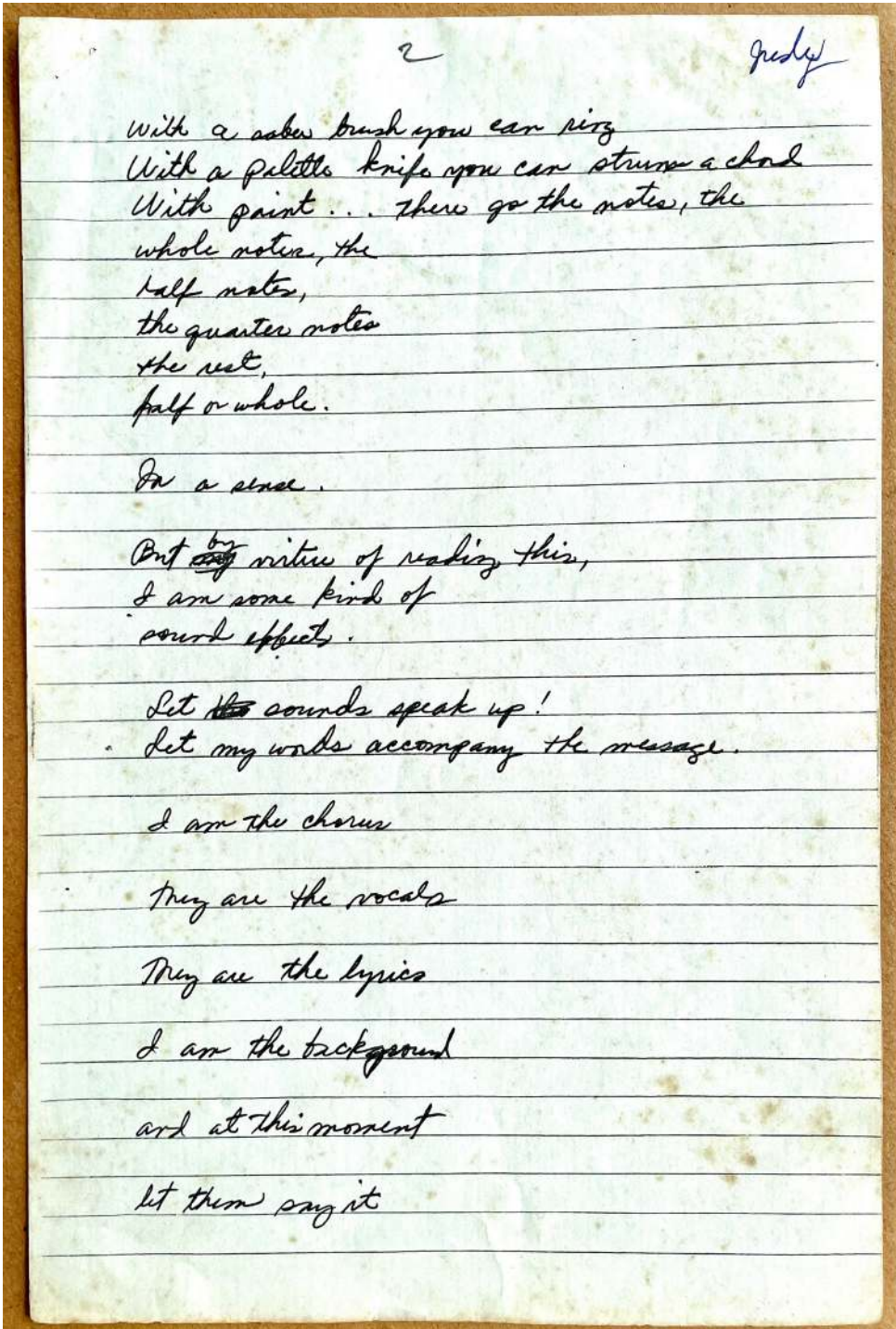


FIGURE 4

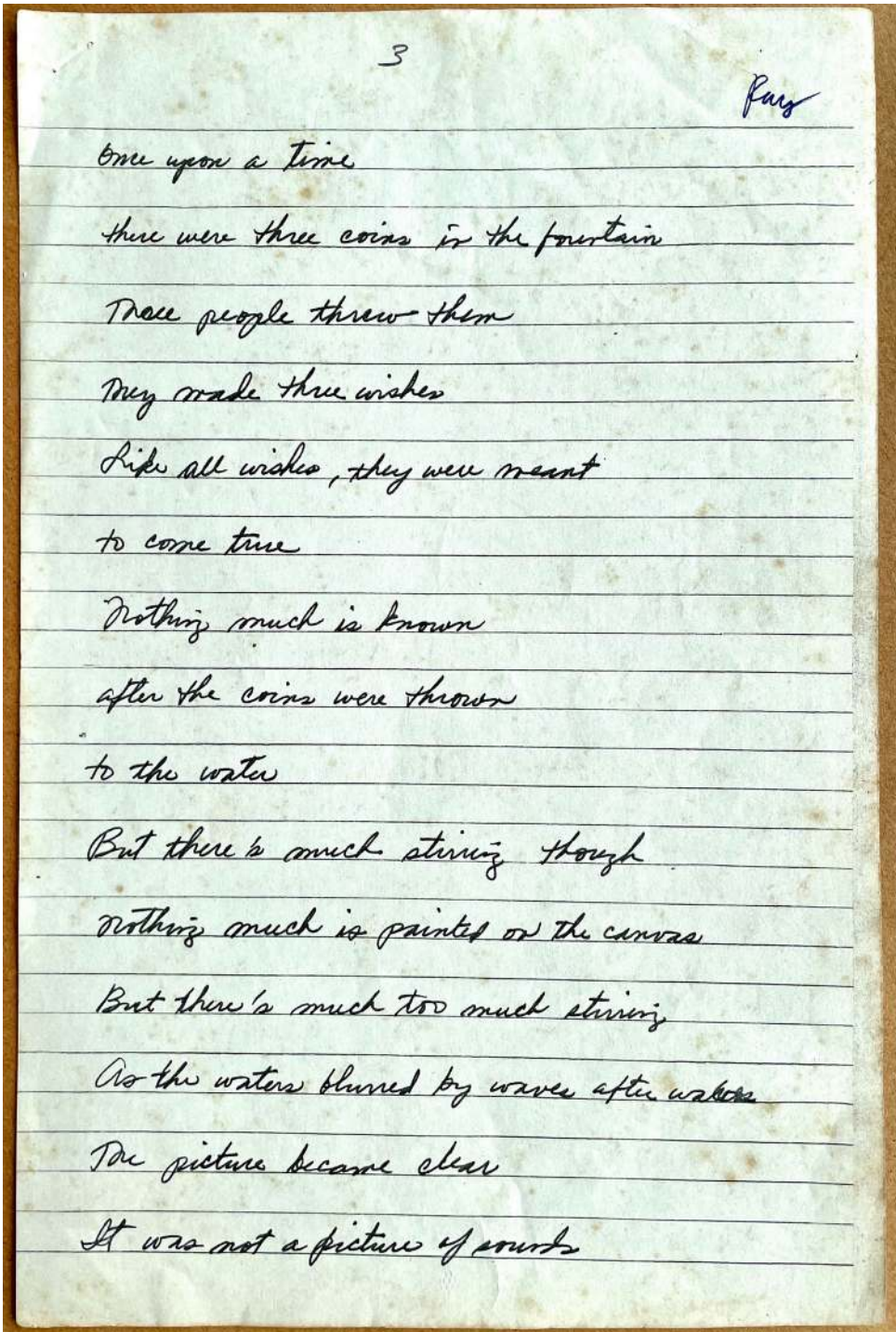


FIGURE 5

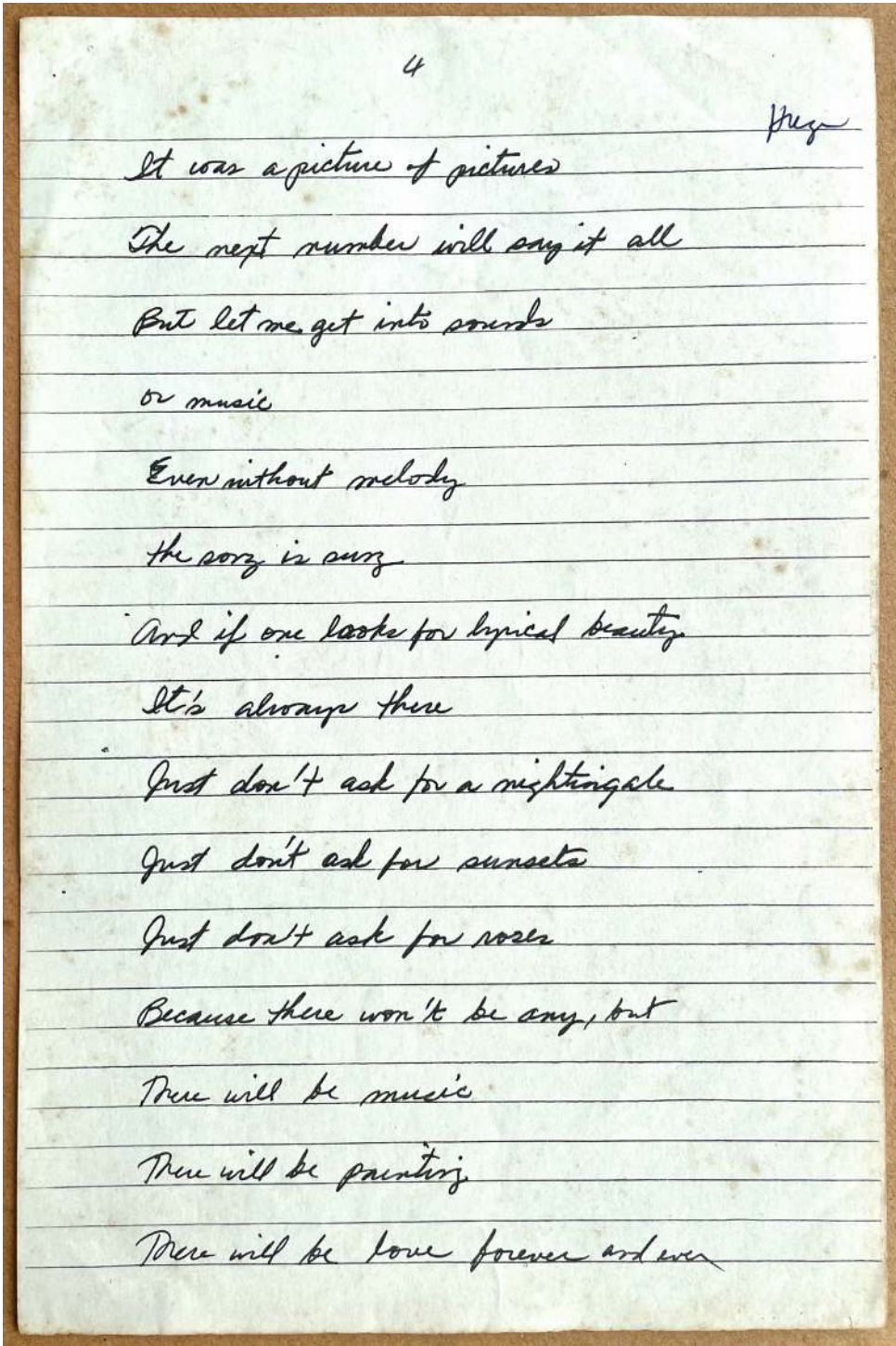


FIGURE 6

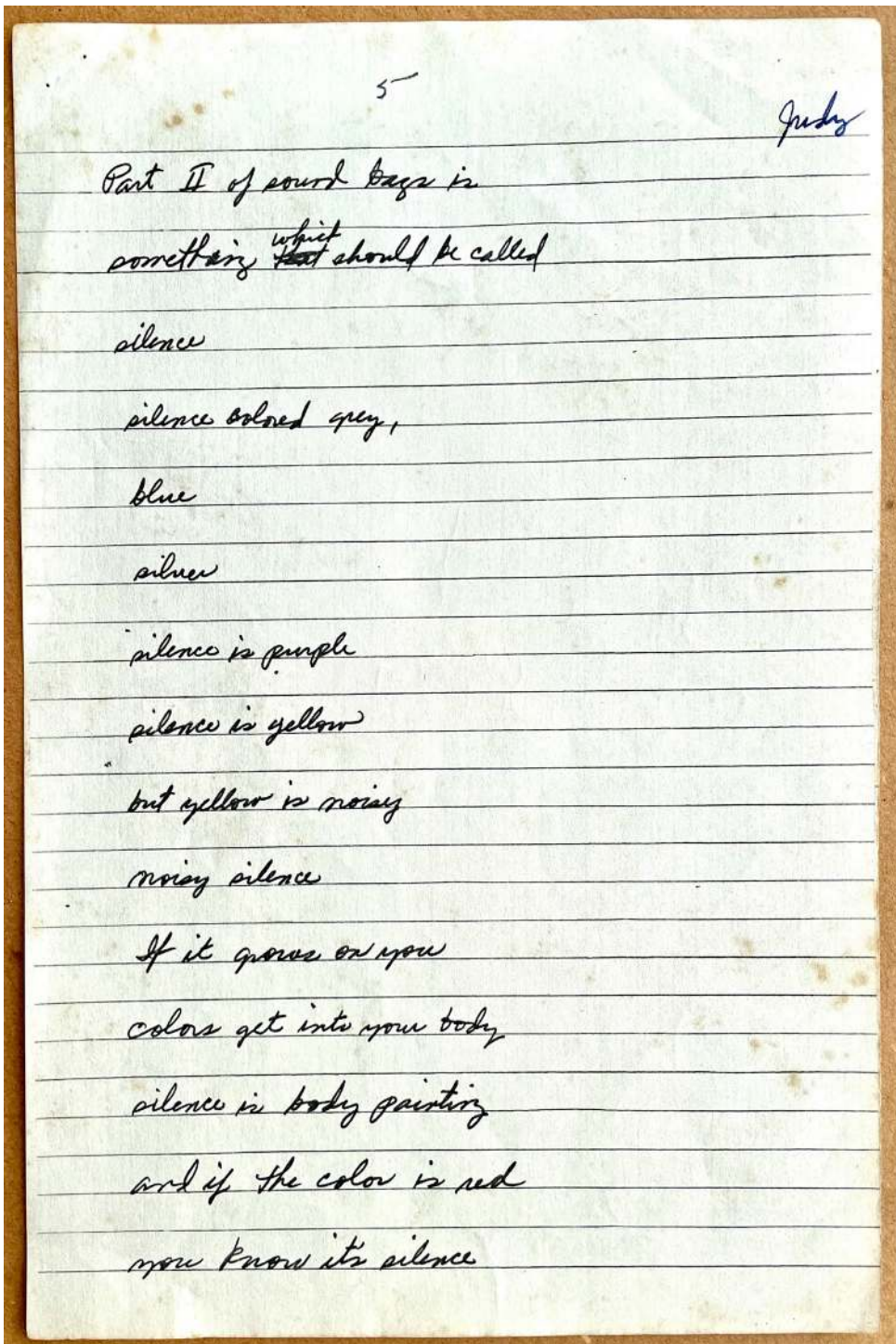


FIGURE 7

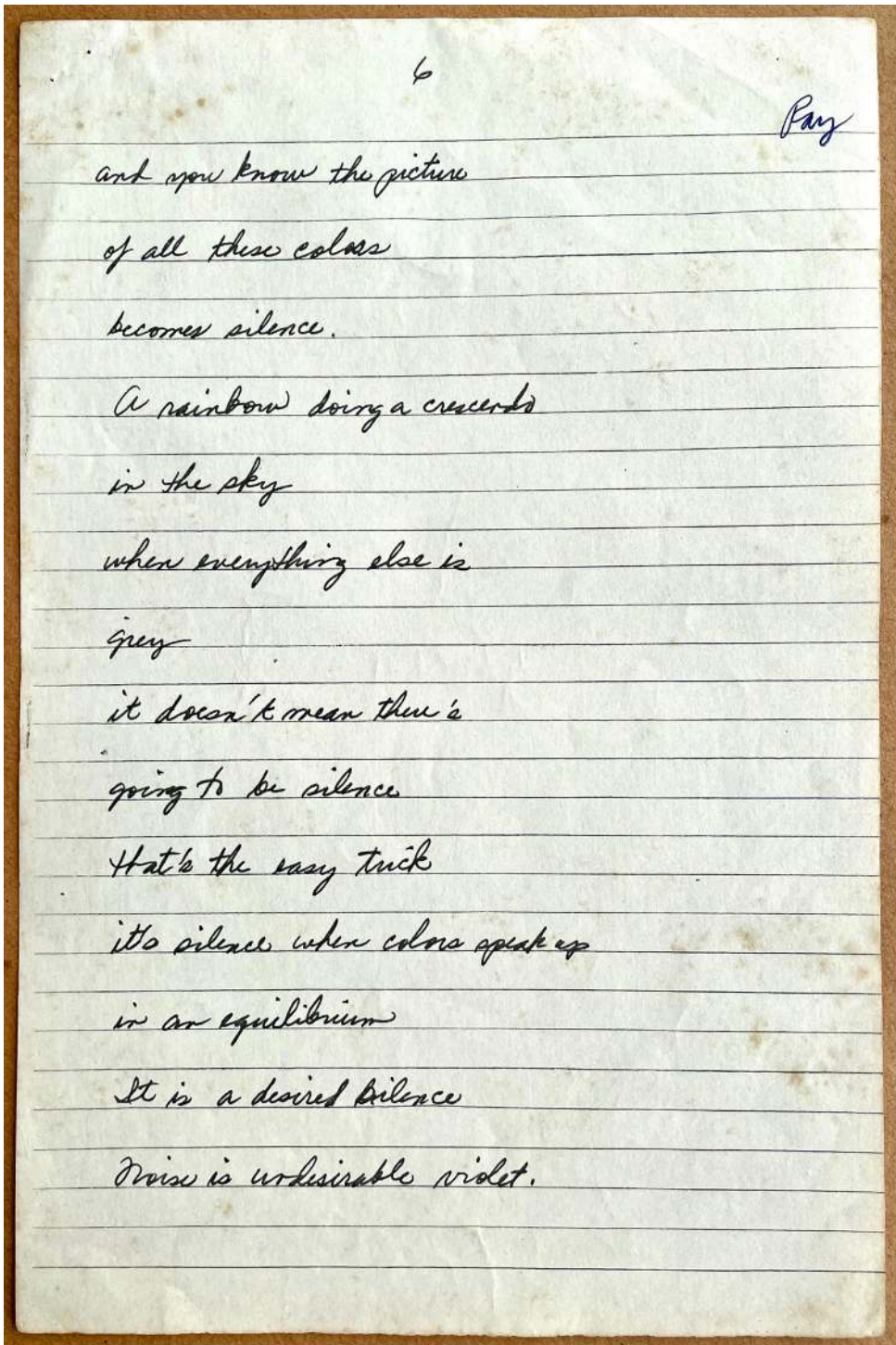


FIGURE 8

7

Hug

We hope that  
we did not give you the impression  
that we were forcing  
something  
into the realm of another

Painting sounds  
is not - take note  
trying to speak  
or metaphors

The artists are just using  
sound as materials.  
To manipulate pictorial  
~~some~~ possibilities of sounds,  
sources of sounds  
and sound ideas,  
this is what is all about.

But let me tell you  
about the next work.

By the way:

We all thank you for coming

Mary Isabela Cargson is our  
sound technician  
I am ~~for~~ Perz Osquena

FIGURE 9

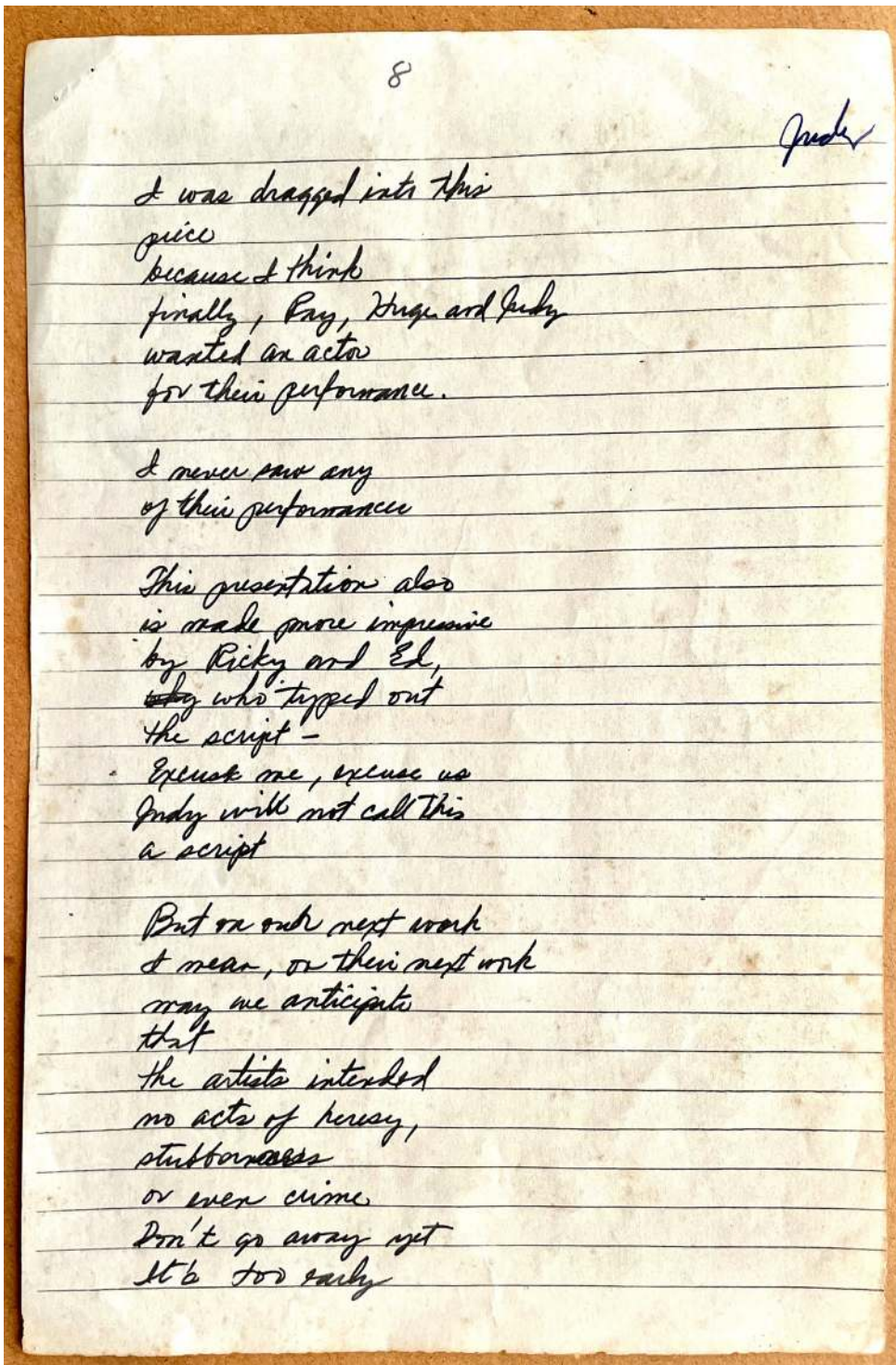


FIGURE 10

9

Ray

Relax.

This performance is  
in connection with  
the Winter Artists 1978  
exhibition

"The name of the game  
is gimmicky."

Oh well, let me  
not editorialize.  
Time is running fast

The next work  
has a different script  
• Call it anything  
but bring  
you'll know what I mean

You can walk out now  
but be sure to come back  
right on time

which may be now

but missing, the <sup>next</sup> show  
is missing, the whole thing  
it's missing the main feature

FIGURE 11

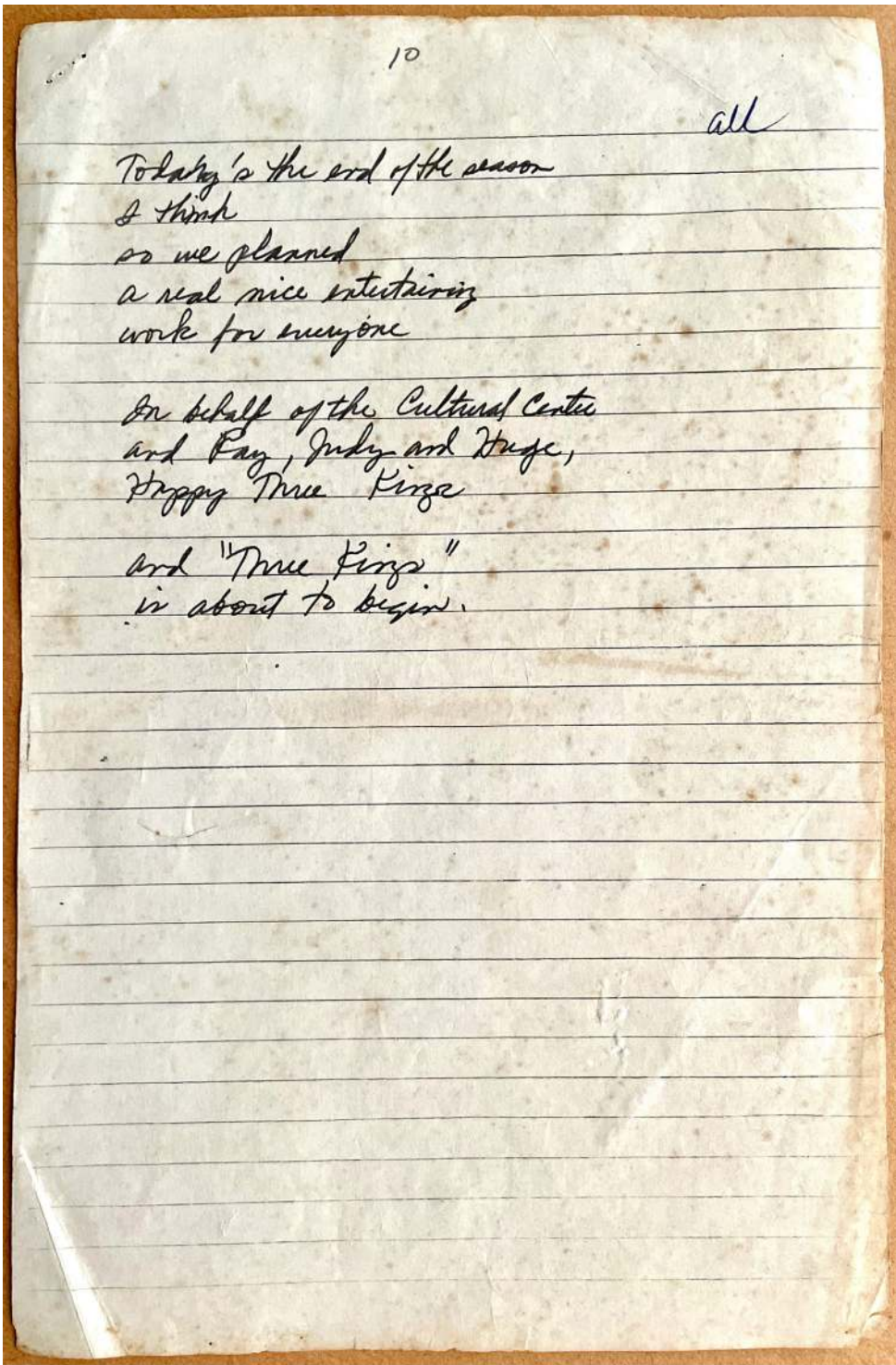


FIGURE 12