

# **Into**

By Dave Carley

**Dave Carley**  
dcarley@interlog.com  
www.davecarley.com

Agent:  
Patricia Ney  
Christopher Banks and Associates  
6 Adelaide Street East, Suite 610  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5C 1H6  
(416) 214-1155

**Into** © 1993 Dave Carley

Into is inspired by the Julio Cortazar short story “The Southern Thruway”.

Into exists in two versions. The original, shorter version – about 60 minutes – was first produced at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 1993, and is available in a Playwrights Canada Press edition with Taking Liberties.

This version is about 85 minutes in length and was first produced at Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto, in a co-production between that theatre and Theatre Cognito. The production ran from September 27 to October 30, 1994. The cast and production team was as follows:

BUSINESSMAN – Geoffrey Bowes  
URBAN NUN – Marium Carvell  
BOY – Michael Waller  
LUCY – Gina Wilkinson

Director – Bill Lane  
Assistant Director – Jocelyn Hublau  
Designer – Glenn Davidson  
Sound Design – Jack Nichol森 and Paul Tedeschini  
Stage Manager – Janet Gregor  
Assistant Stage Manager – Bella Srubiski  
Technical – Nathaniel Kennedy and Bill Anderson

The **time** is slightly in the future. The **setting** is a freeway, one hour east of the metropolis.

## Into

*NUN is alone on stage.*

NUN: I'm an urban nun.  
 I take my God with smoke.  
 I like him loud;  
 Rumbling like the Queen car,  
 Howling drunk,  
 Crazy with despair,  
 A thorn in the side,  
 A kick in the gut.  
 Don't want him leafy:  
 Gold leafy, green leafy, palm leafy.  
 Don't want him pastoral;  
 Pastoral is death.  
 And yeah, yeah, death's a comfort  
 But comfort is false.

*(A letter appears magically.)*

So this comes:  
 An invitation.  
 To an up-north, get-down Nunfest.  
 A Retreat for all the remaindered nuns of the world.  
 The valiant last two hundred.  
 All of us called  
 To a fine and quiet place  
 Of birds and bugs.  
 And birds.  
 And bugs.  
 And bugs.  
 And bugs.  
 So many, many bugs.

*(Long, disgusted sigh.)*

Nuns alfresco.  
*(Reading.)* "In God's own perfect nature."  
 I think not.  
 If nature's so perfect, God won't be there.

What's for him to do?  
 Relax?  
 God's going to relax?  
 Maybe he's going to lie under a tree  
 And daydream new plagues?  
 Right.

*(Remembers letter. Shrugs.)*

But I go.  
 If only to remember what my sisters look like.  
 Hey – even nuns get nostalgic!  
 We get lonely!  
 I get lonely!  
 I'll often dig out my convent yearbook  
 On a slow Saturday night  
 And imagine proms that never were,  
 Football games never cheered,  
 Clash Days that faded into black and white.  
 I'll recall novices who slipped  
 On the trip up God's altar.  
 And I'll curse the sisters who never visit me  
 Because of the trough of incorrectness  
 In which I wallow.

*(Sound under grows. Magical. Nature.)*

We retreat by bus and car,  
 Minivan, multivan, mountain bike.  
 Some hobble up the northern concessions –  
 Barefoot Nuns of Perpetual Atonement –  
 Grateful for the gravel,  
 The sharper the better.  
 And arriving by floatplane?  
 You guessed it – the Yankee Techno Nuns.  
 We're met by Sister Katherine.  
 Kate the Innocent.  
 My convent bunkmate way back when.  
 A vestal goofball sap  
 With a saran wrap smile.  
 Kate welcomes us to the lodge,  
 Her arms upraised  
 Like a Rio statue.

*(For just a second NUN raises her arms. Traffic has  
 been building under her.)*

Naturally, there's an orientation cocktail party.  
 And yes, the jokes are just what you'd expect  
 From a giggle of Godbrides:  
 Requests for Virgin Marys.  
 Purple Jesuses.  
 Rusty Nails.  
 But funny thing: the walls of isolation  
 Begin tumbling like Jericho.  
 We're so diverse, this last two hundred.  
 We're so international.  
 We're so intercultural.  
 Yet we're also interlinked  
 By this umbilical wince of faith.  
 A tender bond, fortified with booze.  
 So: when Sister Kate gets out her singing nun guitar?  
 And warbles "Kumbayah"?  
 Like a Kate Bush with hymen?  
 Well, shut up!  
 Show some respect!  
 A musical cliché chased with Scotch  
 Can cure any sister's blues.  
 And: when Sister Kate suggests a little splish-splash?  
 Don't even think about laughing!  
 God's tilted the world into darkness.  
 His moon is warming the lake.  
 His sand fleas are urging us off the beach.  
 So we strip!  
 And we run!  
 No shit!  
 Carmelites, Ursulines, Josephines, Magdalenes!  
 Militants, Pacifists, Militant-Pacifists!  
 New Agers, Mainliners, Hardliners, One Liners!

*(Sounds of rising joy, splashing, happiness.)*

The chaste – and the chased!  
 The dogmatic, the pragmatic, the stigmatic!  
 The night is filled with the rustle of shedding habits!  
 Falling wimples muffling fleabeach!  
 Twittering like a hundred plucked ravens  
 We pound over naked sand!  
 An army of motoring legs and arms!  
 We immerse in the northern waters!  
 Two hundred throats – gasp!  
 Four hundred nipples – pop!



Next day, Kate the Innocent announces activities.  
 Morning is for: "Silence, light crafts, non-competitive prayer."  
 Afternoon, however, is a feast of options:  
 Seminars run by every faction;  
 Exercises in self-affirmation –  
 If it's your faction,  
 Exclusion if it's not.  
 The Yankees go up in the plane.  
 They're videotaping God.  
 Close-up.  
 The universe has 500 channels now.  
 One of them will buy God on shaky cam.  
 The advocates of a female God  
 Huddle over their Bibles  
 Frantically changing pronouns.  
 A cheer goes up as each He falls to a She.  
 The Atoners are rolling about a bed of poison ivy,  
 Pissing themselves with joy.  
 They swell.  
 They itch.  
 Nearer to their God they scratch.  
 I'm an urban nun but there's no urban option,  
 So I go all the way:  
 I take the St. Francis.  
 Bird-watching.  
 But even here there's dissent.  
 There are those who will only count vegetarian birds.  
 Not raptors. Not ones with claws.  
 Some note the superior plumage of the males  
 And, out of jealousy, count only the females.  
 Which brings them a kind of joy, because  
 "Blessed are the envious for they probably have less."  
 Less being more holy.  
 Envy therefore being more righteous.  
 Such is the logic of nuns with binoculars.

*(A magic gong.)*

Ah! That'll be the dinner bell.  
 The Cardinal's coming.  
 Cardinal A.  
 You know who I'm talking about.  
 The Big Silk.  
 The Grand Old Fart!  
 That silken redundant whiff of ecclesiastical flatulence.  
 But I digress.

No one's going in the dining hall!  
 There's controversy on the lawn!  
 The Macro-Feminists are organizing a boycott.  
 They're saying a male Cardinal shouldn't address a Retreat of  
     female Sisters.  
 All this time the Cardinal's limo is idling.  
 His eminence is waiting for a friendly nod.  
 Kate the Innocent thinks fast!  
 "His penis has been inactive since World War II!  
 Where lies the problem!"  
 A leading Macro glares back.  
 "The problem, sister, lies not with the dormant dangler.  
 The problem stems from what that mini-flesh is connected to:  
 One hundred and ninety pounds of suppressed testosterone."  
 A compromise is proposed.  
 By the Canadian nuns.  
 The Cardinal is declared an Honorary Woman.  
 But his virile driver is locked in the limo  
 Where he ogles and plots.  
 (More on the driver later.)

*(Under – a start to the traffic.)*

I've never actually seen Our Cardinal.  
 Our Cardinal lives in Rosedale.  
 In a great big mansion.  
 On a tiny perfect street.  
 I work in Parkdale.  
 On a road with aching shoulders.  
 I work.  
 I WORK!

*(Struggling to stay under control.)*

Our paths of righteousness never cross.  
 The Cardinal lectures us on Obedience.  
 He wants us to obey.  
 "Girls: obey."  
 Well excuse me, Mr. Cardinal:  
 What do you know that's worth obeying!  
 How dare you tell me to obey!  
 I don't even have time to OBEY!  
 Someone – I don't know who – throws a bun.  
 OK OK, I do know who.  
 T'was I.  
 All star pitcher, Triple A Convent League.

I rise to my feet.

*(Bun appears magically.)*

I grip the bun in my hand.  
It burns my palm like hot salt.  
I wind up.  
OBEY THIS, YOU PIG!

*(Nun throws – perfect form. Oomph sound from Off.)*

Nailed him!  
Square in the pre-War nuts!  
He's going serious grey.  
The hall's going dead silent.  
Until:

*(Sound of applause, wild track "Urban Nun" chanting.)*

Thank you thank you! Thank you very much!  
My first standing O! Oh, this is quite nice.  
I could enjoy this. Thank you. Thank you.  
And now! A cathartic rain of pumpernickel!  
And - - snowballs made of hashbrowns!  
Honeypots! Jampots!  
And, from an ancient Carmelite who vaguely remembers a 1965  
Tom Jones concert:  
Her immaculate panties!  
The Cardinal "obeys" the laws of bun-bardment.  
He falls!  
The Cardinal "obeys" the laws of gravity.  
He hits the dining hall floor!  
Hard!

*(Dead silence.)*

But his death?  
Oh, that was from natural causes, no question.  
We all agreed on that.  
His – virile – driver dragged him off while we watched in silence.  
We're so diverse this last two hundred.  
And our collective awe stills our voices.  
But remember? I don't like silence.  
I'm an urban nun.  
Silence is pastoral.  
So I throw another bun.

At the Atoners.  
 Easy targets – they're puffed up like zeppelins.  
 When they glare back  
 With hate in their itchy-pig eyes,  
 I blame the Carmelites, and duck.  
 A minute later the dining hall's filled with missiles.  
 Everyone's beaming everyone who does not share their exactly  
 monopoly on grievance.  
 Good! I say.  
 To hell with this fiction of Nuns in Paradise.  
 We're too intercultural!  
 We're too transglobal!  
 There are 500 channels  
 And we're all surfing different waves.  
 I run out of there.  
 I howl at the moon until it begins to shake.  
 God's shivering behind it.  
 He knows how far I can hurl my angers.  
 He sees that babel of bunning nuns.  
 He knows he could be next.

*(NUN is now almost completely in the moment.)*

I've got to get out of here!  
 I've got to get back to the city!  
 I leave a note for my friend Kate.  
 Come to my neck of the woods!  
 Come weep for my people!  
 And I drive off.  
 I drive past the dead Cardinal's limo.  
 The Cardinal's in the trunk now.  
 His driver's taking his time leaving.  
 His driver is a man with a plan.  
 His driver is an auto-chemist.  
 The virile worm is changing into silk.

*(Sound of traffic.)*

I have left my sisters behind.  
 They are not of my kind.  
 And now: I'm just another human  
 Hurtling along this vast, trackless highway.  
 Aw hell!  
 Brake lights!  
 Flashing now. Flashing!  
 Flashing into the horizon...

