

Circles of Light  
(Part One of Topography: The Landscape of My Soul)

by dr. temi rose

Dark Blue Comedy  
Three Acts - Running time (approx.) 2 hours  
7 Characters  
Minimal Set

Synopsis

All Hallows Eve, *Lilly* is at home, trying to decide what costume to wear. It is New York City, October 2001, a month after the World Trade Centers collapse.

Act One: *Michael*, *Marianne* and *Barbara* inhabit the room with *Lilly*. *Barbara* is talking about her sexual history. *Marianne* is explaining alternative healing. *Michael* is a writer working on a peace about Thanatos (the desire for death) and Eros (the desire for life) as they play out in the human psyche.

Everyone listens as the *Art History Professor* analyzes a feminist painting that was destroyed in the World Trade Center galleries when the buildings collapsed.

Act Two: *Lilly*, *Michael*, *Barbara* and *Marianne* attend a performance art piece in which a *Mime* must battle to free herself from cultural absorption. The *Mime* is trapped in the painting by her clothes' resemblance to that painting. She must give up her clothes to find her true self. After the show, *Lilly* and *Michael* have a terrible argument over the nature of freedom and appearance. *Barbara* wants to stop the couple from fighting but she cannot.

Act Three: *Joshua*, an African American actor friend of *Lilly's* comes to visit her. *Joshua* is upset about the human misery, poverty and addiction he witnesses every day in the streets of New York. He feels that he is the only person who sees and cares. *Michael* is wildly jealous of *Joshua*. *Lilly* introduces *Michael* to *Joshua* as her mind, *Barbara* as her body and *Marianne* as her emotional self. When *Michael* asks who *Joshua* is - *Lilly* says that he's the influence good people have had on her spirit and is as much a part of her as the rest of the characters. *Barbara* and *Marianne* like *Joshua*, they ask him to stay and talk. *Joshua* talks about Thanatos and Eros in a more down-to-earth way than *Michael* was able to earlier. *Michael* is *Barbara's* son and feels that she let him down. *Barbara* reveals and faces the fact that she has died in the World Trade Center. In the final moments, *Lilly* and *Michael* are dressed to go out for Halloween: *Lilly* as a warrior, *Michael* as a magician.

The purpose of this play, as the first in the trilogy, *Topography: The Landscape of my Soul*, is to complicate our conceptualization of what goes on inside the minds of women. The questions that *Michael, Lilly* and the *Mime* pose about what we should wear are at once a subversion of the superficiality of consumerist obsessions with appearance and a validation of the importance of self-representation in the development of identity. The play asks how we might construct an erotic (eros based) ethical representation of ourselves in a post-modern (thanatos obsessed) age.