

FOODSTUFFS
By Rebecca Dzida
10-minute dramedy

JOHN, 60s, Shelley's father, just lost his wife to cancer

(SHELLEY goes to the box. She takes out two canvas shopping bags. She sets down one bag by JOHN's feet and sits on the couch.)

JOHN

The Year of Magical Thinking? A Grief Observed? What the hell is this?

SHELLEY

I thought they might help.

JOHN

With what?

SHELLEY

It's just been you and Mom for a long time and now she's gone.

JOHN

Shelley, all these books are the same. Huge sob-fests. I can't do that anymore.

SHELLEY

They're not like that. Look, C.S. Lewis. You like him. Joan Didion. She's a good writer.

JOHN

No, Shel.

SHELLEY

We could talk about them together.

JOHN

I don't need a little book club to help me cope.

(JOHN reaches in the bag and takes out a baseball glove and a baseball.)

SHELLEY

I thought you might like to teach Danny sometime. He's really gotten into it.

JOHN

Where'd you get this stuff?

SHELLEY

Mom gave them to me. I thought you could use them. I know it's been a while.

JOHN

Here we go...

SHELLEY

The last time you left this house was for the funeral reception a week ago.

JOHN

And look what happened! The dog pissed on my shoe!

SHELLEY

He got too excited. Normally, Howard is very well-trained.

JOHN

I don't need this.

SHELLEY

Need what?

JOHN

This! The food, the books, the baseball. You've been treating me like a fetus, and I'm telling you, Shelley, I am this close to changing the locks on my doors.

SHELLEY

It's just that ever since she passed away, you've been sitting around here alone with your puzzles.

JOHN

(Interrupts after "passed away")

You know, that's another thing. I hate the phrase "passed away." It sounds like they "passed gas" or something. She's dead, Shel. Let's call it what it is. I watched her die for three years. I've paid my dues. You don't have to come here every day, trying to get me to grieve correctly or something. I'm done. I don't want to give it the satisfaction.