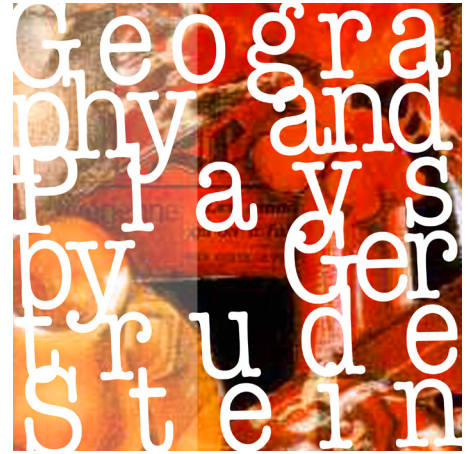
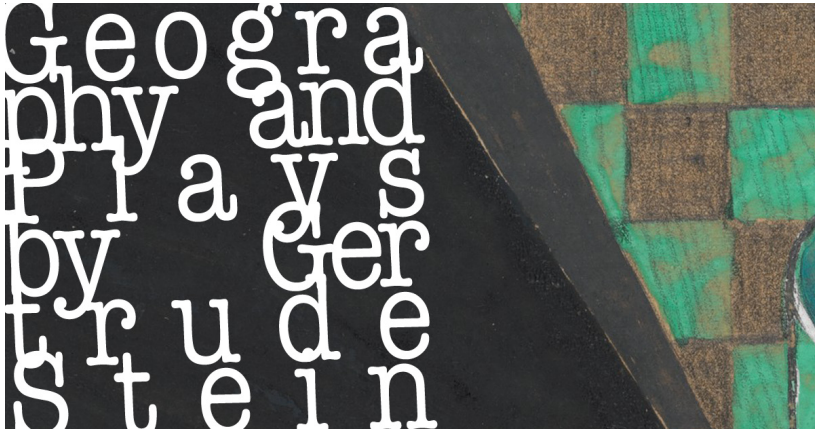


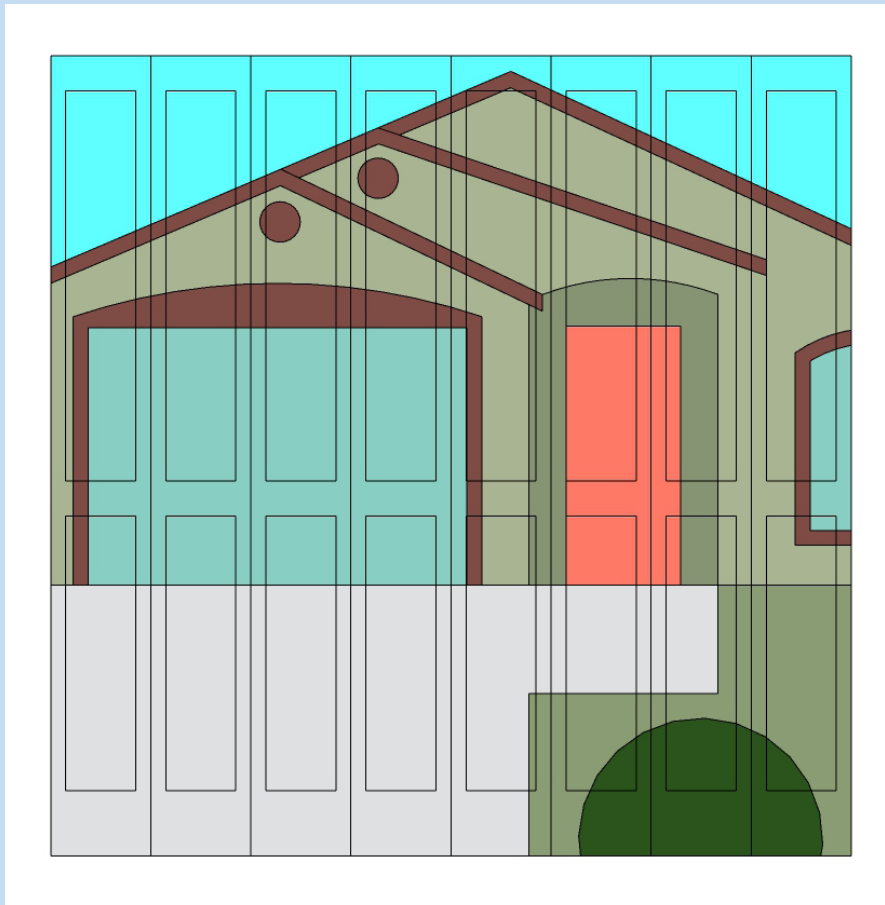
Geography and Storytelling

adapted and directed by Joseph Lark-Riley
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Promotional Design





Scenic Concept

Script

This script for *Geography and Plays* was developed between August 2018 and March 2019 through a series of readings and workshops in Brevard County, FL.

The spoken text comes entirely from pieces collected in Gertrude Stein's 1922 *Geography and Plays*: 'Susie Asado', 'Miss Furr and Miss Skeene', 'Ladies Voices', and 'White Wines'.

Stage directions and actor names are from the original 2019 production at The Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival.

(CATHY, ALIE, KARI, AMANDA, and MARCIA enter in a single-file line. CATHY stands DC facing the audience with the OTHERS standing behind HER.)

CATHY. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet.

ALIE, KARI, AMANDA, and MARCIA. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet.

CATHY. Tea. Susie Asado. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea. Susie Asado. Susie Asado which is a told tray sure.

(ALIE, KARI, AMANDA and MARCIA walk out from behind CATHY and sit in a line DS, facing HER.)

CATHY.(cont.) A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers. When the ancient light grey is clean it is yellow, it is a silver seller.

(ALL stand. THEY switch sides and sit.)

CATHY.(cont.) This is a please this is a please there are the saids to jelly. These are the wets these say the sets to leave a crown to Incy.

(KARI raises her hand.)

CATHY.(cont.) Incy is short for incubus.

(KARI lowers her hand. CATHY scans the others. SHE scans the audience. SHE exits. ALIE stands and takes CATHY'S place.)

ALIE. A pot. A pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees tremble, the old vats are in bobbles, bobbles which shade and shove and render clean, render clean must.

KARI. (standing) Drink pups. Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold, see it shine and a bobolink has pins. It shows a nail.

ALIE. What is a nail?

KARI. A nail is unison!

(KARI exits. SHE reenters, helps ALIE to her feet, and THEY exit together.)

AMANDA and MARCIA. (to each other) Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

(Pause. MARCIA stands, helps AMANDA to her feet and walks HER to DC. MARCIA stands UR.)

MARCIA. Helen Furr had quite a pleasant home. Mrs. Furr was quite a pleasant woman. Mr. Furr was quite a pleasant man. Helen Furr had quite a pleasant voice a voice quite worth cultivating. She did not mind working. She worked to cultivate her voice. She did not find it gay living in the same place where she had always been living. She went to a place where some were cultivating something...

MARCIA.*(cont.)* ...voices and other things needing cultivating.

AMANDA.*(turning to MARCIA)* She met Georgine Skeene there who was cultivating her voice which some thought was quite a pleasant one.

(AMANDA extends her hand to MARCIA. MARCIA joins AMANDA and takes her hand.)

BOTH. Helen Furr and Georgine Skeene lived together then.

AMANDA. Georgine Skeene liked traveling.

MARCIA. Helen Furr did not care about traveling, she liked to stay in one place and be gay there.

AMANDA. They were together then and travelled to another place...

(CATHY, KARI, and ALIE cross upstage, as a train.)

AMANDA.*(cont.)* ...and stayed there and were gay there.

MARCIA. They stayed there and were gay there, not very gay there, just gay there. They were both gay there, they were regularly working there both of them cultivating their voices there, they were both gay there.

(ALIE, CATHY, and KARI enter. THEY have tea and talk real proper.)

ALIE. What are ladies' voices?

KARI. Do you mean to believe me?

CATHY. Have you caught the sun?

KARI. Dear me have you caught the sun?

ALIE. Did you say they were different?

KARI. I said it made no difference.

ALIE. Where does it?

CATHY. Yes.

(Pause.)

KARI. Mr. Richard Sutherland.

ALIE. This is a name I know.

CATHY. Yes.

(Pause.)

KARI. The Hotel Victoria.

ALIE. Many words spoken to me have seemed English.

CATHY. Yes, we do hear one another and yet what are called voices the best decision in telling of balls.

KARI. Masked balls?

CATHY. Yes, masked balls.

ALIE. Poor Augustine.

(THEY clink cups and exit.)

AMANDA. They were very regularly gay. To be regularly gay was to do every day the gay thing that they did every day. To be regularly gay was to end every day at the same time after they had been regularly gay. They were regularly gay. They were gay every day. They ended every day in the same way, at the same time, and they had been every day regularly gay.

(ALIE, KARI, and CATHY reenter. Tea again. KARI throws tea into ALIE'S face.)

ALIE. Honest to God Miss Williams I don't mean to say that I was older!

CATHY. But you were.

ALIE. Yes I was. I do not excuse myself. I feel that there is no reason for passing an archduke.

KARI. You like the word. You know very well that they all call it their house.

CATHY. As Christ was to Lazarus so was the founder of the hill to Mahon.

KARI. You really mean it?

CATHY. I do.

(THEY clink and exit.)

MARCIA. The voice Helen Furr was cultivating was quite a pleasant one.

AMANDA. The voice Georgine Skeene was cultivating was, some said, a better one.

MARCIA. They were gay where there were many cultivating something. The two were gay there, were regularly gay there.

(Pause.)

MARCIA.(cont.) Georgine Skeene would have liked to do more traveling. They did some traveling.

AMANDA. Not very much traveling, Georgine Skeene would have liked to do more traveling, Helen Furr did not care about doing traveling, she liked to stay in a place and be gay there.

MARCIA. They stayed in a place and were gay there, both of them stayed there, they stayed together there, they were gay there, they were regularly gay there.

BOTH. Georgine Skeene and Helen Furr were living where they were both cultivating their voices and they were gay there.

(ALIE enters with a lollipop microphone.)

ALIE.(as a news anchor) Helen Furr and Georgine Skeene were living very regularly then, being very regular then in being gay then. They did then learn many ways to be gay and they were then being gay, being quite regular in being gay, being gay and they were learning little things, little things in ways of being gay.

AMANDA. They were quite gay, they were quite regular, they were learning little things, gay little things.

(CATHY enters.)

CATHY.(as a news anchor) They were regular in being gay, they learned little things that are things in being gay, they were gay the same length of time every day, they were gay, they were quite regularly gay.

(KARI enters with a microphone and an earpiece. SHE is a field reporter on location.)

KARI. Georgine Skeene went away to stay two months with her brother.

CATHY. Her brother?

KARI. Her brother.

ALIE. Her?

KARI. Went away.

CATHY. Two months?

KARI. To stay.

ALIE. Two months?

CATHY. With her?

KARI. Brother.

(CATHY, KARI, and ALIE exit, repeating the previous exchange.)

MARCIA. Helen Furr did not go then. Helen Furr stayed there where they had been regularly living the two of them and she would then certainly not be lonesome, she would go on being gay.

AMANDA. She did go on being gay. She was not any more gay but she was gay longer every day than they had been being gay when they were together being gay. She was gay then quite exactly the same way. She learned a few more little ways of being in being gay.

MARCIA. She was not lonesome then, she was not at all feeling any need of having Georgine Skeene. She was not astonished at this thing. She would have been a little astonished by this thing but she knew she was not astonished at anything and so she was not astonished at this thing not astonished at not feeling any need of having Georgine Skeene.

(Pause. ALIE enters and stands next to AMANDA, comforting HER.)

ALIE. Helen Furr had quite a completely pleasant voice and it was quite well enough cultivated.

(KARI enters and stands next to MARCIA.)

KARI. She had learned very many little ways to use in being gay. Very many were telling about using other ways in being gay. She was telling about using other ways in being gay, she was telling about learning other ways in being gay, she was learning other ways in being gay, she would be using other ways in being gay.

(CATHY enters and stands next to ALIE.)

CATHY. She would always be gay in the same way, when Georgine Skeene was there not so long each day as when Georgine Skeene was away.

ALIE. She came to using many ways in being gay, she came to use every way in being gay.

KARI. She went on living where many were cultivating something and she was gay.

CATHY. She had used every way to be gay.

(MARCIA and AMANDA drop each other's hand.)

MARCIA and AMANDA. They did not live together then, Helen Furr and Georgine Skeene.

CATHY. Helen Furr lived there the longer where they had been living regularly together.

ALIE. Then neither of them were living there any longer.

(ALL but AMANDA sit DS, facing HER.)

AMANDA. Helen Furr was living somewhere else then and telling some about being gay and she was gay then and she was living quite regularly then. She was regularly gay then. She was quite regular in being gay then. She told many then the way of being gay, she taught very many then little ways they could use in being gay. She was living very well, she was gay then, she went on living then, she was regular in being gay, she always was living very well and was gay very well and was telling about little ways one could be learning to use in being gay, and later was telling them quite often, telling them again and again.

(MARCIA joins AMANDA. THEY bow to the audience, kiss, and exit.

ALIE, CATHY and KARI stand in a row facing the audience.)

ALIE. One.

KARI. All together.

CATHY. Two.

KARI. Witnesses.

CATHY. Three.

ALIE. House to house.

KARI. Five women.

CATHY. All together.

(Music. KARI and ALIE begin to slow dance with invisible partners. CATHY walks amongst THEM.)

CATHY. Cunning very cunning and cheap.

ALIE. At that rate a sale is a place to use type writing. Shall we go home.

CATHY. Cunning, cunning, quite cunning.

KARI. A block a strange block is filled with choking.

CATHY. Not too cunning, not cunning enough for wit and a stroke and careless laughter, not cunning enough.

ALIE. A pet, a winter pet and a summer pet and any kind of a pet, a whole waste of pets and no more hardly more than ever.

(AMANDA enters and joins the dance.)

AMANDA. A touching spoon a real touching spoon is golden and show in that color. A really touching spoon is splendid, is splendid, and dark and is so nearly just right that there is no excuse.

(MARCIA enters and joins the dance.)

MARCIA. The best way is to wave an arm, the best way is to show more used to it than could be expected.
Comfort a sudden way to go home, comfort that and the best way is known.

CATHY. All together!

*(ALL dancers absorb their partners into themselves.
Beat. ALL gather props from the trunk and circle DS.)*

KARI. Hold hard in a decision about eyes!

AMANDA. Hold the tongue in a sober value as to bunches!

ALIE. See the indication in all kinds of rigorous landscapes!

MARCIA. Spell out what is to be expected!

*(CATHY, ALIE, KARI, and AMANDA produce tape
measures and measure the stage. MARCIA stands
center with a clipboard, writing what they call out.)*

ALIE. Show much blame in order and all in there.

AMANDA. Show much blame when there is a breath in a flannel.

KARI. Show the tongue strongly in eating.

CATHY. Puzzle anybody?

(ALL return props to the trunk.)

MARCIA. A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers.

(ALL stand in a line US. CATHY ushers KARI DS.)

CATHY. Violet and the ink and the old ulster, shut in trembling and a whole departure, flood the sunshine,
terrorize the grown diddy, mingle sweetness with communion.

*(KARI turns to CATHY and extends her hand to her.
CATHY joins KARI and takes her hand.)*

KARI. All together. Change the sucking with a little sucking.

CATHY. Modify the brave gallant pin wheel. Show the shout, worry with wounds, love out what is a
pendant and a choke and a dress in together.

ALIE. Punish the grasshopper with needles and pins are plenty. Show the old chink. All together.

*(CATHY turns to ALIE and extends her hand. ALIE
joins her, taking her hand.)*

CATHY. Put the putty in before the door put the oil glass in with what is green.

AMANDA. Put the mellow choice with all the test, rust with night and language in the waist.

*(ALIE turns upstage and extends her hand to
AMANDA. AMANDA joins her, taking her hand.)*

ALIE. Praise the cat and show the twine the door.

MARCIA. Mention every scrap of linen carpet.

(AMANDA turns upstage and extends her hand to MARCIA. MARCIA joins her and takes her hand.)

AMANDA. See the eagle and behold the west.

CATHY. Win the day light with the hat unpressed.

ALIE. Show it in a shudder and a limp.

KARI. Make a best container with no speed.

MARCIA. And a jacket and a choice and beets.

AMANDA. Beets are what there are when bets are less.

CATHY. Bets are less in summer.

AMANDA. Single Witnesses.

(ALL, holding hands, walk in a circle, leaving KARI standing C and the OTHERS sitting in a circle around her.)

KARI. One.

(KARI gets a top hat from the trunk and puts it on.)

KARI.*(cont.)* A spread out case is so personal it is a mountain of change and any little piece is personal, any one of them is an exchange. No forethought is removed. Nothing, hindrances, butter, a safe smooth, a safe why is a tongue a season, why is a loin large by way of spoiling. There is no cake in front. A choking is an example.

(KARI removes the top hat and sets it DC.)

KARI.*(cont.)* More witnesses.

(SHE plays "duck, duck, goose" with the REST, choosing AMANDA who chases her. KARI takes AMANDA'S place and AMANDA is left standing C.)

AMANDA. It is true.

(AMANDA picks up the top hat and puts it on her head.)

AMANDA.*(cont.)* It certainly is true and a coat any coat, any dress, all dress, a hat, many hats, all colors, every kind of coloring, all this makes shadows longer and birds, makes birds, just makes birds.

(AMANDA returns the top hat to DC while ALIE gets a mask and dagger from the trunk. ALIE intercepts AMANDA and spins her around.)

ALIE. Not much limping is in the back, not much limping is in the front. Not much limping is circular.

(ALIE brandishes the dagger. Throughout the following she repeatedly stabs AMANDA who falls to the floor.)

ALIE.*(cont.)* A bosom, a candle, an elegant foot fall, all this makes daylight. Single Witnesses. Two.

(ALIE returns the mask and dagger to the trunk. SHE returns to the perimeter. CATHY crosses to AMANDA and pulls red streamers out from AMANDA'S costume, simulating spraying blood.)

CATHY. A blunder in a charger is blue. A high pocket not higher than the wrist and the elbow, the pocket is not added.

(CATHY returns to the perimeter. KARI crosses to the top hat DC, picks it up, and gathers the streamers into it.)

KARI. A clutch, a real clutch is merry and a joke and a baby, a real clutch is such a happy way. A real clutch is so soon worried so easily made the same, so soon made so.

(SHE returns the top hat DC and returns to the perimeter. MARCIA crosses to C, standing over AMANDA.)

MARCIA. A real... I know what I want to say. How do you do? I forgive you everything and there is nothing to forgive.

(MARCIA returns to her place.)

AMANDA. A real white and blue, blue and blue, blue is raised by being so and more much more is ready. At last a person is safe. More witnesses.

(AMANDA picks up the top hat walks around the circle. EVERYONE takes two lollipops from it and hands them out to audience members. THEY return to C and form a frozen tableau.)

AMANDA. Shut in the floors.

(AMANDA crosses to the trunk.)

MARCIA. Shut in the doors.

(MARCIA crosses to the trunk.)

(AMANDA and MARCIA pull a length of blue fabric over the OTHERS and stretch it across the stage DS. They wave the fabric as simulated water.)

AMANDA. More Witnesses.

(CATHY, ALIE and KARI begin to rock gently.)

ALIE. Put the patient goat away, put the patient boat away, put away the boat and put it, the boat, put it, put away that boat. Put away the boat.

MARCIA. Single Witnesses.

AMANDA. Three.

CATHY. An army of invincible and ever ready mustaches and all the same mind and a way of winding and no more repertoire, not any more noise, this did increase every day.

ALIE. A moon, a moon, a darkness and the stars and little bits of eels and a special sauce, not a very special sauce, not only that.

KARI. A wide pair that are not slippers, not a wide pair of slippers, not pressed to be any of that in that particular but surely, surely, surely a loan, surely every kind of a capital.

AMANDA. More Witnesses!

KARI, ALIE, and CATHY. *(ALIE begins a beat behind KARI, CATHY a beat after ALIE.)* A splendid little charles louis philip, a splendid spout of little cups and colds, a splendid big stir, a splendid glass, a splendid little splinter, a splendid cluster.

MARCIA. Single Witnesses.

AMANDA. Four!

(KARI grabs onto something SR for stability. ALIE holds onto the trunk. CATHY begins tying down invisible ropes UL.)

KARI. Why should wet be that and cut, cut with the grass?! Why should wet be that and clut with the purse?! Why should wet be wet and the wet that wet?! Why should wet be the time to class?! Why should there be solemn cuppings?!

ALIE. The lean bark, that is the round and intense and common stop!

CATHY. And in shouting, the left bark and the right bark and a belt, in that belt, in no belt and a corset!

(ALIE bails blue tissue from the trunk. KARI kneels DC, praying. CATHY continues to tie down around perimeter of the stage.)

ALIE. In a belt and chores, in a belt and single stitches, in more boys than enough!

KARI. In all thin beer and in all such eggs, in all the pile and in all the bread!

ALIE. In the bread, in the bread!

CATHY. In the condition of pretty nearly saying that yesterday is today, and tomorrow, tomorrow is yesterday!

ALIE. The whole swindle is in short cake!

CATHY. And choice cake is white cake!

ALIE. And white cake is sponge cake!

KARI. And sponge cake is butter!

*(Freeze. AMANDA pulls the fabric off. ALL exit.
CATHY enters to C.)*

CATHY. House to house. One.

(CATHY works at flipping the shutters US. KARI enters, sweeping.)

KARI. A habit that is not left by always screaming.

(ALIE enters, sweeping.)

ALIE. A habit that is similar to the one that made quiet quite quiet.

(MARCIA enters, sweeping.)

MARCIA. And made the whole plain show dust.

CATHY. And white birds.

(AMANDA enters with a dustpan and sweeps up the piles of tissue, dumping it into the trunk.)

AMANDA. And little plaintive drops of water.

KARI. A habit which brightened the returning butter fly.

MARCIA. And the yellow weed.

ALIE. And even tumbling.

AMANDA. The habit which made a well choose the bottom.

CATHY. And refuses all chances to change.

(ALL exit. CATHY, ALIE, KARI, and AMANDA enter, carrying closed umbrellas.)

CATHY. The habit which credited a long touch with raising the table.

(SHE opens her umbrella.)

ALIE. And the hour glass.

(SHE opens her umbrella.)

KARI. And even eye glasses.

(SHE opens her umbrella.)

AMANDA. And plenty of milk.

(SHE opens her umbrella.

THEY exit.

ALL reenter in a line, AMANDA DC.)

AMANDA. Telling them again and again.

MARCIA. The habit which made a little piece of cheese wholesome.

ALIE. And darkness bitter.

KARI. And clanging a simple way to be solemn.

ALIE. A habit which has the best situation.

CATHY. And nearly all the day break.

AMANDA. And the darkness.

MARCIA. A habit that is cautious.

KARI. And serious. And strange. And violent. And even a little disturbed.

(AMANDA turns and faces MARCIA.)

AMANDA. A habit which is better than almost anything. A habit that is so little irritating, so wondering and so unlikely is not more difficult than every other.

AMANDA and MARCIA. Two.

(THEY dance together.)

CATHY. A change a real change is made by a piece.

KARI. By any piece.

(CATHY and KARI dance together.)

ALIE. By a whole mixture of words.

(AMANDA leaves MARCIA and dances with ALIE.)

MARCIA. And likenesses.

(KARI leaves CATHY and dances with MARCIA.)

CATHY. And whole outlines.

(ALIE leaves AMANDA and dances with CATHY.)

AMANDA. And ranges.

(MARCIA leaves KARI and dances with AMANDA.)

KARI. A change is a butt!

(Music. ALL dance.)

ALIE. And a wagon!
KARI. And an institution!
CATHY. A change is a sweetness!
MARCIA. And a leaning!
AMANDA. And a bundle!
ALL. A change is no touch!!
ALIE. And buzzing!
CATHY. And cruelty, a change is no darkness!
KARI. And swinging!
AMANDA. And highness!
MARCIA. A change is no season!
ALIE. And winter!
KARI. And leaving!
CATHY. A change is no stage!
AMANDA. And blister!
MARCIA. And column!
ALIE. A change is no black!
KARI. And silver!
CATHY. And copper!
MARCIA. A change is no jelly!
CATHY. And anything proper!
ALIE. A change is not place!
KARI. A change is not church!
MARCIA. A change is not more clad!
ALIE. A change is not more in between when there is that!
CATHY. And the change is the kind!
KARI. And the king is the king!
MARCIA. And the king is the king!
AMANDA. And the king is the king!

(ALL collapse. Music continues to the end of the song. Throughout the remainder of the song THEY blow up balloons from the floor and release them with a PPTHPTHTTHDDDTHHHHDD. The song ends. Beat. AMANDA stands.)

AMANDA. Could there be the best almost could there be almost the most, could there be almost almost, could there be the most almost. Could there be the most almost, could there be the most almost, could there be almost almost. Could there be almost, almost.

(AMANDA sits. KARI stands.)

KARI. Can the stretch have any choice, can the choice have every chunk, can the choice have all the choice, can the stretch have in the choice. Can there be water, can there be water and water. Can there be water.

KARI.(cont.) Can there be.

(ALIE stands.)

ALIE. All this makes willows and even then there is no use in dusting not in really redusting, not in really taking everything away. The best excuse for shadows is in the time when white is starched and hair is released and all the old clothes are in the best bag. House to house.

(CATHY stands.)

CATHY. A wet hurt and a yellow stain and a high wind and a color stone, a place in and the whole real set all this and each one has a chin.

(Beat.)

KARI, CATHY and ALIE. (CATHY begins on KARI'S fifth "sweet", ALIE on CATHY'S fifth.)

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea. Susie Asado. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea. Susie Asado. Susie Asado which is a told tray sure. A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers. When the ancient light grey is clean it is yellow, it is a silver seller. This is a please this is a please there are the saids to jelly. These are the wets these say the sets to leave a crown to Incy. Incy is short for incubus. A pot. A pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees tremble, the old vats are in bobbles, bobbles which shade and shove and render clean, render clean must. Drink pups. Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold, see it shine and a bobolink has pins. It shows a nail. What is a nail. A nail is unison. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

(On ALIE'S "A nail is unison", AMANDA and MARCIE stand.)

ALL. Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

CATHY. They were gay there.

ALIE. They were gay there.

KARI. They were gay there.

MARCIA. They were gay there.

AMANDA. They were regularly gay there.

ALIE. This is not a claim it is a reorganization and a balance and a return.

(ALL exit. Beat.
END.)



“She was not any more gay but she was gay longer every day than they had been being gay when they were together being gay.”



*“Show much blame in order and all in there.”
“Show much blame when there is a breath in a flannel.”
“Show the tongue strongly in eating.”
“Puzzle anybody.”*



“Show the shout, worry with wounds, love out what is a pendant and a choke and a dress in together.”



“A spread out case is so personal it is a mountain of change and any little piece is personal, any one of them is an exchange.”

“Put the patient goat away, put the patient boat away, put away the boat and put it, the boat, put it, put away that boat. Put away the boat.”



*“The habit which credited a long touch with raising the table.”
“And the hour glass.”
“And even eye glasses.”
“And plenty of milk.”*





“A change is no stage!”
“And blister!”
“And column!”
“A change is no black!”
“And silver!”
“And copper!”
“A change is no jelly!”
“And anything proper!”
“A change is not place!”
“A change is not church!”
“A change is not more clad!”
“A change is not more in between when there is that!”

“And the change is the kind!”
“And the king is the king!”
“And the king is the king!”
“And the king is the king!”





"A wet hurt and a yellow stain and a high wind and a color stone, a place in and the whole real set all this and each one has a chin."



*"They were gay there."
"They were gay there."
"They were gay there."
"They were gay there."
"They were regularly gay there."
"This is not a claim it is a reorganization and a balance and a return."*

Reviews

Susan Mitchell - Orlando Sentinel May 20, 2019

Author Sherwood Anderson described Gertrude Stein's craft as language "to throw into a box and shake, making a sharp, jingling sound..." Indeed, her words and phrases are not linear; they tumble and crash in unexpected ways.

Her experimental approach to the written word makes "Geography and Plays," based on her work, an odd choice for a show, but somehow the adaptation by Joseph Lark-Riley is successful. Much of the original text, particularly in scenes taken from "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene," is excruciatingly repetitive. Moving the words among the five actors makes it seem far less monotonous. Suggesting contexts like picnics and chores helps ground the dialogue as well. The addition of small things like ever-changing hats and small props provide an amusing touch.

The chit-chat is frequently interrupted with movement and music. With stylish, often elegant gestures, the characters take on an abstract quality. Their dream-like dances are a good match for the tempo and surreal quality of Stein's work.

Fringe Factor: Gertrude Stein, bored by life in Pittsburgh, became a key figure in the salons of Paris. She gained permanent notoriety for her relationship with her partner, Alice B. Toklas. Stein is credited with the first use of the word "gay" to mean homosexual. She lived as a highly visible Jewish woman in Vichy France during Nazi occupation. Quite clearly that adds up to a Fringe show.

ORLANDO — Gertrude Stein was born in 1874 and raised in Oakland, California, then moved to Paris in 1903, making France her home for the rest of her life, where she hosted a Paris salon and became a leading figure in literature.

Her stream-of-consciousness writings — “Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle” is an example — were intended, she once noted, to evoke “the excitingness of pure being.”

For those who still love reading Stein’s writings, and those unfamiliar with her work, the production now at the Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival called *Geography And Plays* explores her writings, taking three of her short stories and staging them in a creative and often highly imaginative manner. Stein’s own experimental writings actually lend themselves beautifully to theater, and it’s a credit to the playwright and director Joseph Lark-Riley that he came up with the idea for this show.

What Is *Geography And Plays* All About?

In *Geography and Plays*, Lark-Riley explores stories from Stein’s 1922 avant garde collection of portraits and plays. While Lark-Riley noted that the book *Geography and Plays* is considered one of Stein’s more ‘difficult’ works, showing no interest in clear narratives or conventional characters, the nameless women who illustrate her work on stage do a superb job of carrying the audience through her ideas and concepts.

On a mostly bare stage, the five actresses bring us three pieces from Stein’s book. The first one, “Miss Furr and Miss Skeene,” comes the closest to offering a traditional plot, telling of the love between two women that Stein knew in Paris, who decide to live together and discover happiness in the 1920s — long before the gay rights movement would be anything but an underground one. In fact, this piece is unique in that it repeatedly uses the word “gay,” although with a double meaning: the traditional use meaning happy, and also one of the earliest uses of the word to suggest homosexuality. The love we see is pure, with no apologies being made to a more socially conservative society. This one is beautifully done.

The other two pieces, ‘Susie Asado,’ about a flamenco dancer, and ‘White Wines,’ about the desire to break free from mundane routines, have neither conventional plots nor characters, but instead ingeniously stages mood, attitude and exhilaration through spoken words and the talented performances by the actresses. The last piece in particular, when the actresses begin to dance and bring members of the audience on stage to join them, and end by lying on the floor, blowing up balloons so they can watch them sail away, is captivating.

The performances by Alexandria Litras, Cathy Moubray, Kari Ryan, Amanda Smith, and Marcia Nicole Smith are uniformly good, and this is a fascinating work that asks the audiences to remain sharp and closely follow the words, to get hypnotized and intoxicated by them, and to join into the emotional rebellion. *Geography and Plays* has one performance left on Saturday, and I highly recommend you see it.