

## With Assistance from The Bard

Jeffrey R. Paine

'All the World's a stage,'  
He said, 'and  
all the men and women in't,  
Merely players...'

Seem like bit players, mostly,  
And a few character actors cast  
In supporting roles,  
But all are leading,  
Or so they think,  
In the drama tragic  
Or comedy dark or  
Light of their own lives.

Some are better at  
Acting than others,  
But few have the depth  
Force of presence  
Sense of timing  
Projection  
Comfort in their skin

(Casting report for  
one of the better ones: "Can't

sing. Can't act. Balding.  
Can dance a little.")

To land and inhabit  
A truly leading role,  
Even in their own  
performances.

Yes, all the world's a stage  
And of all the merely players in't,  
There's nary a one  
Who doesn't believe  
He or she could not  
Write a better script  
Be a better director  
Or mostly, be  
The star of their show  
If they could just—  
*Please oh Pretty Please!*—  
Be given the chance  
Just let them read for  
The part, for  
Some other role  
In some other play  
On some other stage.