Time is the school in which we learn,
Time is the fire in which we burn.

–Delmore Schwartz

As playwright Donald Margulies notes, “Mentors and protégés exist everywhere.” *Collected Stories* explores the relationship between such a pair: Ruth Steiner, writer and professor, and her student, Lisa Morrison. As time passes, we follow these two women in their triumphs and troubles as their relationship builds and breaks. From Lisa’s first novel being published to Ruth’s feelings of betrayal, we are left with questions of what it means to experience loss and who has the right to tell our stories.

**Collected Stories**

by Donald Margulies

May 6th – 8th, 2021

Directed by William An
Produced by Crystal Xu

[https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/collected-stories](https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/collected-stories)

**Audition Information**
**Timeline**

February 10th – 12th: Live audition slots available for sign-up:  
[https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-collected-stories](https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-collected-stories)

February 12th: Audition self-tapes due: email to william.an@yale.edu


May 6th – 8th: Show Dates!

**Characters**

**Ruth Steiner, ages 55–61**

A well-regarded, seasoned writer and professor. Has lived in Greenwich Village (Manhattan) since the late 1950s, grapples with and is deeply affected by her past.

**Lisa Morrison, ages 26–32**

Ruth’s student and, later, colleague. A young, hopeful writer who has looked up to Ruth for as long as she can remember. *[This role has been pre-cast.]*

**Setting**

Ruth’s apartment, Greenwich Village, Manhattan. 1990 to 1996.

**Audition Information**

Anyone, regardless of experience or enrollment status, is encouraged to audition for the role of Ruth. You can opt to sign up for a live audition slot ([https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-collected-stories](https://collegearts.yale.edu/opportunities/auditions/audition-collected-stories)) or film a self-tape and email it to william.an@yale.edu

For the audition, present a monologue or piece of writing of your choice (it can be a poem, song lyrics, or a short story or novel excerpt). Whatever you choose should be between 1-2 minutes in length. Alternatively, you may choose one of Ruth’s monologues on the following pages.

We look forward to hopefully working with you–please feel free to reach out with any questions!!
RUTH: Oh, yeah. It took me months, maybe years to get over it—that is, if I ever truly did. It was a terrible shock: recognition. I was so inured to living in obscurity, writing my little stories and shipping them off to these tiny esoteric journals. I thought I was looking at the rest of my life.

I’d given up hope. No hope was the code by which I lived. It was strangely comforting; it left little room for disappointment. I was a bit older than you, you know, a rather late bloomer compared to you. The Times played me up quite a bit. I was hailed as “a brave new voice,” “an urban balladeer.” I had my “finger on the pulse of the city,” they said, or some such nonsense.

They put me on the cover of the Book Review with a picture of me wearing these terrible—I can’t believe I ever wore them—harlequin-like glasses. There I was, the new lady writer of the moment, smiling painfully, at my desk, not knowing what to do with my hands. (A beat)

You’ve got to view this as purely an economic development. Maybe some grants will start to come your way, some neat opportunities. And that’s very nice. But the fact remains you still have to do the work and you still have to put up with assholes. Only now doing the work will be harder, and the assholes you’ll have to put up with’ll be a slightly higher echelon of assholes. And, that, as far as I can tell is the definition of success.
Monologue Option #2

RUTH: I...I should have had children of my own. It's my own damn fault. Too picky. I never met a man I could see myself having a child with. (A beat)

Nowadays the choice of partner would be totally irrelevant, I know, but it was a more conservative time then; things were different when I was ovulating. I should have just gone ahead and gotten pregnant with the next unsuspecting man that came into my life, snared him for his sperm and raised that child on my own. But I was never really the sort of woman who could do something like that. That would have required a brand of courage I sorely lacked. I was never truly Bohemian, never, that was all an act. A reaction to the fear, no doubt, of being hopelessly conventional.

It would have been good for me, I think, having a child.

I might have become a different person. A better writer, maybe; a better human being, possibly. My life surely would have been different. Instead, I spent many many years, too many years, nurturing other people's gifted children. (A beat)

The first day of every class I ever taught—thirty-two years, thirty-two first days—I'd scan the faces and try to predict who out there would one day dazzle me. Who would thrill and astonish me with their promise? Who will it be this year? I'd want them, like a vampire wants fresh blood. I'd want to fill them up with what I know, these beautiful hungry empty vessels, and watch them grow. I've had a succession of chosen daughters through the years, mostly daughters. A few sons. Unformed, talented, as susceptible to my wisdom as I was to their youth. But none I loved as much as you.