



# AGES OF THE MOON

BY SAM SHEPARD



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AGES OF THE MOON  
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AGES OF THE MOON was commissioned by the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, Ireland. It received its world premiere performance at the Peacock Theatre in Dublin, Ireland on March 3, 2009. It was directed by Jimmy Fay; the set design was by Brien Vahey; the costume design was by Joan Bergin; the lighting design was by Paul Keogan; and the sound design was by Phillip Stewart. The cast was as follows:

AMES ..... Stephen Rea  
BYRON ..... Sean McGinley

The American premiere of AGES OF THE MOON was presented by Atlantic Theater Company at the Linda Gross Theater in New York City on January 27, 2010. It was directed by Jimmy Fay; the set design was by Brien Vahey; the costume design was by Joan Bergin; the lighting design was by Paul Keogan; the sound design was by Phillip Stewart; and the stage manager was Alison DeSantis. The cast was as follows:

AMES ..... Stephen Rea  
BYRON ..... Sean McGinley

## **CHARACTERS**

AMES

BYRON

## **PLACE**

The porch and yard of a country house.

## **TIME**

August 2007.

**NOTES:** All stage directions are from the point of view of the actor, facing the audience.

Although the setting hints at being Appalachian, the actors should not attempt a corresponding accent. A flat, middle-of-the-road sound is best.

I am the womb of every holt  
I am the blaze on every hill  
I am the queen of every hive  
I am the shield for every head  
I am the tomb of every hope

Who foretells the ages of the moon?

(from *Song of Amergin*, 1268 B.C.)

# AGES OF THE MOON

*Early 1800s whitewashed brick country house (Kentucky style), a story and a half high. Dark green or black trim around doorframe and windows; kitchen door stage-left wall of house, letting out to plank wood porch facing audience directly. Porch is set about three feet above stage floor; plank stairs letting off to stage-right with railing. Porch has a raised-seam metal roof, dark green. Large black fan hangs down from center of porch roof, with thin chain dangling down. Fan is already in motion when play begins. Two raw cedar Adirondack chairs with broad armrests, well-aged with weather stains, set on porch stage right and left, slightly angled towards each other with a small round wooden table between them. Solid kitchen door is wide open with an exterior screen door closed, revealing warm orange interior light of kitchen but seeing no details like appliances, furniture, etc., just space. Each time screen door is opened by Ames, it snaps shut behind him with an emphatic pop. Window in stage right wall of house with interior blinds half closed; yellow glow of light within. Two dormer windows set high above porch roof, right and left; no light from either. Roof of house disappears up into flies. Light surrounds house at all sides with no attempt at literal background, i.e. trees, hills, etc. House should appear to be hovering in space.*

*Play begins in bright noon sunlight of late summer and gradually falls off into dusk and then into black night with full moon effect occurring slowly like a stripe of white light, gradually narrowing to a knife's edge by end of play.*

*Lights down to black as audience settles. A song like Ernest Tubb singing “Have You Ever Been Lonely” begins in dark.\* Lights slowly rise as song continues, revealing Ames, seated in stage-left chair; Byron in stage-right — each staring straight out over the audience and nursing glasses of bourbon on ice. They are both in their mid-sixties. Ames is wearing well-worn pointed dress shoes, old-fashioned with white wing-tips, laces untied, and no socks; khaki work pants too short, no cuffs, revealing his skinny ankles; slightly stained white t-shirt, black suspenders over, no hat. Byron wears a pair of black work-boots stained with red clay, faded brown Carhartt pants; black Western shirt with synthetic pearl snaps — no design on shirt, sleeves worn long, snapped at the wrists; a plain blue baseball cap with no insignia of any kind; and a gray vest.*

*When song reaches its first instrumental break, the lights are up and the instrumental slowly fades away to silence. Pause as the two of them stare out and casually sip their bourbon.*

AMES. Okay, okay, okay. (*Sips from glass and sets it down.*) Here’s the really sour part of the whole deal. She discovers this note — this note from this girl, which to this day I cannot for the life of me remember. I mean — all right, maybe vaguely — very dimly — somewhere in the long ago. Some parking lot — middle of some rainy night. Bozeman or Billings, could’ve been. Fishing. I don’t know. I truly — but I swear, some girl I would never in a million years have ever returned to for even a minor blowjob.

BYRON. Minor?

AMES. Well, you know —

BYRON. No, I don’t know. They’re all major, as far as I’m concerned. At this point.

AMES. Not something lasting — memorable.

BYRON. Aha! Quickly forgotten.

AMES. Exactly.

BYRON. But not in *her* mind.

AMES. What?

BYRON. In her imagination.

\* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

AMES. Whose?

BYRON. Your wife's.

AMES. No — Well — that's the thing.

BYRON. That's why I'm here, I guess.

AMES. That's why I called you, yes.

BYRON. Some kind of moral support or something.

AMES. Well, I wouldn't go that far.

BYRON. Good. Just so we're clear. *(Pause. They both sip bourbon and stare out.)* So, long story short, looks like you've got yourself into Big Doggy Doo-Doo, "Mr. Frisky."

AMES. I don't know where it came from, I swear.

BYRON. What?

AMES. The note.

BYRON. Just appeared outta nowhere, huh? I bet that went over big.

AMES. Never saw her write it.

BYRON. Too busy with your zipper?

AMES. She wrote it on the border of my fishing map when I wasn't looking. Can you believe it?

BYRON. Quaint.

AMES. Just scribbled her name and phone number. Right parallel with the Yellowstone River. As though I'd actually call her.

BYRON. What *was* her name?

AMES. Can't remember. I'm telling you —

BYRON. But young —

AMES. Twenty-two, twenty-three, maybe.

BYRON. You should be ashamed.

AMES. I know.

BYRON. But are you?

AMES. I'm —

BYRON. Banished.

AMES. Yeah.

BYRON. Exiled. Never to return no more, no more.

AMES. Well —

BYRON. She'll forgive you. Maybe. Down the road.

AMES. I don't know. It's not a good feeling, being despised.

BYRON. No. Meanwhile, this is not a bad place to lay low. Birds. Stars at night, I bet. Deer furtively grazing.

AMES. Yeah.

BYRON. Trees. Peaceful.

AMES. I guess. Yeah.



# AGES OF THE MOON

by Sam Shepard

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A gruff, affecting, and funny play. Byron and Ames are old friends, reunited by mutual desperation. Over bourbon on ice, they sit, reflect, and bicker — until fifty years of love, friendship, and rivalry are put to the test at the barrel of a gun.

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