BABY WITH THE BATHWATER
Christopher Durang

The Play: This outrageous, witty, and satiric comedy, depicts the raising of a baby whom the parents have never checked the sex of. Presuming that the kid is a girl, they name it Daisy and raise “her” as such, only to discover later that she is a he. The resultant identity crisis of Daisy is the focus of the play, as she/he encounters a zany nanny, acts out a bizarre penchant for throwing him/herself in front of buses, and eventually confronts his/her sexuality before his/her analyst and stops wearing dresses.

Time and Place: Contemporary. The home of John and Helen.

The Scene: Daisy comes before his/her analyst and discloses when he/she discovered she/he was a boy.

DAISY: When I was eleven, I came across this medical book that had pictures in it, and I realized I looked more like a boy than a girl, but my mother had always wanted a girl or a best-seller, and I didn’t want to disappoint her. But then some days, I don’t know what gets into me, I would just feel like striking out at them. So I’d wait til she was having one of her crying fits, and I took the book to her—I was twelve now—and I said, “Have you ever seen this book? Are you totally insane? Why have you named me Daisy? Everyone else has always said I was a boy, what’s the matter with you?” And she kept crying and she said something about Judith Krantz and something about being out of Shake-n-Bake chicken, and then she said, “I want to die”; and then she said, “Perhaps you’re a boy, but we don’t want to jump to any hasty conclusions,” so why don’t we just wait, and we’d see if I menstruated or not. And I asked her what that word meant, and she slapped me and washed my mouth out with soap. Then she apologized and hugged me, and said she was a bad mother. Then she washed her mouth out with soap. Then she tied me to the kitchen table and turned on all the gas jets, and said it would be just a little longer for the both of us. Then my father came home and he turned off the gas jets and untied me. Then when he asked if dinner was ready, she lay on the kitchen floor and wouldn’t move, and he said, I guess not, and then he sort of crouched next to the refrigerator and tried to read a book, but I don’t think he was really reading, because he never turned any of the pages. And then eventually, since nothing else seemed to be happening, I just went to bed.

(Fairly long pause.)

. . . Well I knew something was wrong with them. But then they meant well, and I felt that somewhere in all that, they actually cared for me—after all, she washed her mouth with soap too, and he untied me. And so I forgave them because they meant well. I tried to understand them. I felt sorry for them. I considered suicide.