

*Seven Minutes... Wow!*  
by Antonia Bueno

*(The light turns on. The stage is empty. There is a big counter or a chronometer. When it starts, a male “figure” appears singing. During his monologue he walks from the left side to the right one, until he disappears. Periodically he looks at his watch.)*

FIGURE- *(Singing.)*

Seven minutes, wow, wow, wow  
are enough to monologue;  
I can stretch it out ‘til ten,  
not another minute more.

*(Addressing to the audience.)* Well, I’m not joking. I have less than seven minutes. And I don’t see a reason to laugh... At least, *I* don’t.

What?... Who am I? Do you think I could find out in only ... *(He looks at his watch)* thirty, thirty one, thirty two, thirty three seconds? I’m sure it wasn’t so difficult for you. But, obviously, I’m not you, or you, or you. *(Pointing at 3 spectators.)* I’m not there. *(Pointing at the house.)* But here. *(Pointing at the stage.)* I am but a “figure”. This is how my author called me. *(Disdainfully.)* Figure!... Who does she think she is? She is the “figure”. She didn’t dare to give me birth on a bed, as it should be... but... on a table! Instead of sheets... papers! Instead of taking me carefully to the crib... she threw me disdainfully to the drawer! Bitch! *(Frightened, he looks toward the side from where he came. Looking at the audience again.)* Please don’t be afraid! She’s not here. Authors don’t come to performances, usually. Because of their arrogance, some of them don’t want to lose their temper when they see how others “destroy” their “stroke of genius”. Others, because of a sick shyness. They used to be home bodies... almost agoraphobics. Crowds frighten them. But, do you want to know something? *(Whispering confidentially.)* What really frightens them is the fear of failure. They prefer the protector cubicle of their office, where they “offer” us a happy dismissal, without thinking twice about it. Alone, without anybody arguing or questioning them. *(Desolated.)* Well, they open the *bull-pen* and they send us to the *public place* without compassion, with a kick on the ass, so *you* can have fun while watching us *manage*, with better or worse luck, the *chances* we confront in the dramatic *bullfighting*.

*(Looking nervously at his watch.)* Two minutes have passed, without knowing it. I only have five left! *(Trying to collect himself.)* Well, it doesn’t matter. They say that life is eternal in five minutes...

*(Singing again, comically.)*

Seven minutes, wow, wow, wow  
are enough to monologue...

*(Indignantly.)* How cheap! Seven minutes are trash, a lie that doesn't allow you to be introduced properly. Why couldn't she be kind enough to give me the permitted ten minutes, or at least nine, or even eight?... Seven! She loves that number. She thinks it's magic, that it will give her luck. *(Counting comically.)* The Lord sanctified the seventh day... The seals of the Apocalypse are seven... Seven, the Halls of Tolerance... the mental states... the days of mourning... the doors of Hell...

*(Excited.)* Who says I only have those minutes?... My author?... Whatever! Who knows when the counter will actually stop and the blackout will arrive? Not even "She" *(Enthusiastically.)* Maybe another goddess, the Director, shall decide to give me a break... Yeah, that's it. She will extend my existence by a few more minutes. She will give me a break. If it were like this, what an unexpected happiness! *(Doubting.)* But, who knows? Women are capricious. They love competition, but they don't like losing one. *(Whining.)* My author can even... forbid her to put me on stage. *(Horried.)* What a terrible thing! No, no. I choose these ephemeral seven minutes. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

And speaking of flying... *(Looking nervously at his watch again.)* Time flies. Three and a half minutes! I just reached my maturity. I'm on the top. *(Stopping at the middle of the stage, and looking back with sadness)* Naive youthfulness that thinks it lasts forever!... How many things I could have done, instead of losing my time doing nothing. *(Looking at the way he still has in front of him.)* Now I can only grieve... and wait until the counter stops.

*(He continues walking.)* I'm walking to my finishing line. I'm descending down the hill. First, my muscles will become loose... then, my words will become clumsy... *(Anguishly.)* Maybe, I will even end up losing my memory.

I don't want to leave without sharing with you my expectations, my dream of becoming the protagonist of a great comedy or of an unquenchable tragedy. What a joy!... being born Hamlet... or Don Juan... or Segismundo... *(Proudly.)* Segismundo. What a magnificent performance I could make of Segismundo's soul! Who would be better than me to know by heart what is hidden in this existential prison!... Lady Macbeth, Bernarda Alba, Celestina... Yes, why not? All very ostentatious women... Drama, is not a sublime act of travestism?... Hours of life... hundreds of minutes... thousand and thousand seconds savoured delightfully.

*(Melancholic.)* But, destiny didn't want it that way. I was born as a solitary and obscure extra for myself in a ridiculous and stingy monologue... of seven minutes! Nothing more and nothing less!

*(Stopping and looking at the corner he walks toward.)* Do you think that there is something else beyond?... *(Meditating. Then, he continues walking.)* Well, the shorter, the better. It's what they say. I can't complain. There are others who didn't even reach their minute of glory. I have... wow! seven minutes!

*(Encouraging himself progressively.)* And, in conclusion, although it's brief, with a bit of luck, this portion of time will be repeated tomorrow... maybe the day after tomorrow too... maybe during a whole season. Ah! The season. What a beautiful word! Time is short,

wretched... But the season... the season is great! A great goddess. That's what she is to me: a great goddess. The third deity in my trinity. Without Her, the other two are nothing: Author, Director... and Season.

*(Addressing to the audience.)* Sure, laugh at me. You too are going to make an "exit" like this. *(Pointing out the side wings he heads toward.)* Sooner or later, you will finish your portion of time. And you won't have the goddess Season to protect you. So "relax and enjoy". Enjoy while you can.

*(Walking the few steps left.)* I dreamt, once... that I was a man who used to dream. A man like you. I was out there, I had paths to walk, mountains to climb, mouths to kiss... Yes. Once... maybe... I dreamt. Hours without a watch, moments of recollection. *(Looking up with nostalgia.)* It was snowing in my dream. But, who knows? I have never seen the snow. I don't even know the white color. I have no smells, no colors... I don't know what hunger or thirst is. I don't know what knowing is... I have no memory.

*(Looking nervously at his watch again.)* Six fifty seven, six fifty eight, six fifty nine... *(To the audience.)* Thank you for coming...

*(He disappears at the right side. The chronometer stops at 7 minutes. The figure sticks his head out.)* Although... I have no freaking clue who you are.

*(Blackout. Silence.)*