

**Zen Basketball
Script
Mike Hoolboom**

image: mike 2 cars

He had been a star in the minor leagues, in the off-off-off Broadway world of semi-professional basketball. You've probably never heard of him, and little wonder, he was never a maestro of the slam dunk, his pick and rolls never interested the sneaker giants.

image: rock climb 1

On court he practiced a smothering defense. He was able to move alongside opponents in an uncanny dance that forensic experts related to the tango, though others protested that it was clearly the beguine or even the foxtrot that he had somehow smuggled into the noble game of basketball.

image: rock climb 2

But even the most casual onlookers observed that he was able to move before his opponent moved. So even though they were younger, more gifted, he would invariably wind up at the spot they were only moving towards. It was like playing against the future.

Image: basketball shot here

When he retired he continued to practice alone, still enjoying the feel of the court. When he had been the most formidable defensive player of his generation, he harboured a secret wish. He longed to be the 27th best scorer of all time. He wanted to soar through the air and effortlessly slip ball into mesh. He wanted to perfect the no-look jumper, the mid-court rainbow.

But in all these years, the truth is, he never scored a basket. There were many who followed in his tiny footsteps. But only one player could claim that he tried his very best each night and never manage even a single point. Even standing by himself, free and clear, with the net waving at him like an open-hearted friend, he finds himself unable to put the ball where it is supposed to go.

Still he maintains his love for the game, his attention above all to every detail that might one day allow him to bring ball and basket together. He is never discouraged, and refuses to dwell on the past. He has left nostalgia behind. All he has is this moment, this infinite present, where he is working, forever working, to find the grail, the union, the kiss of ball and net.

As the former French resistance fighter used to say: One must imagine Sisyphus happy.