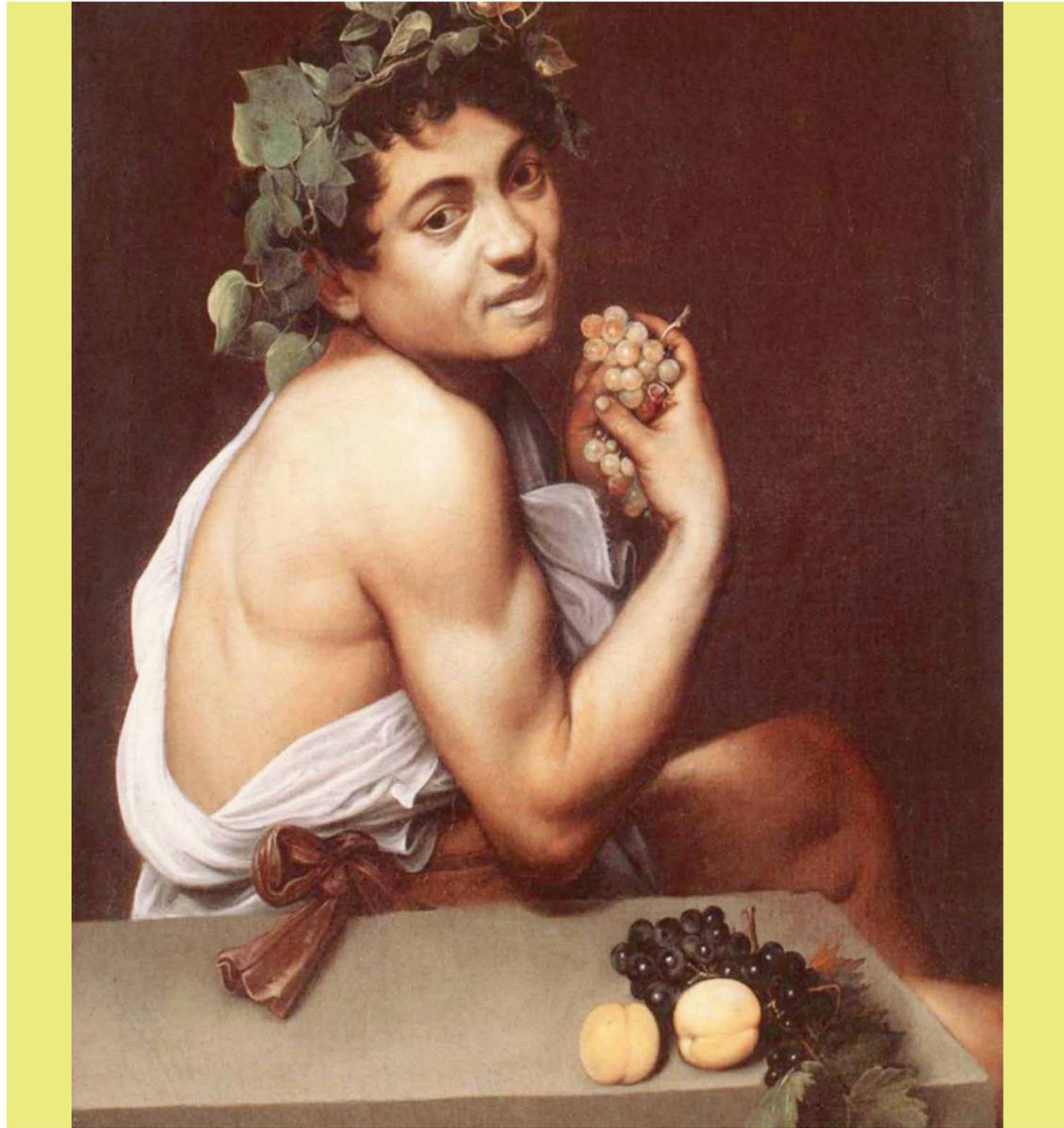


THE INSPIRATION



When looking for inspiration for her play *Hurricane Diane*, playwright Madeleine George looked two places. One was Red Bank, NJ, where she had already spent time while working on her play *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England* at Two River Theater. The other was Ancient Greece, and specifically Euripides' great play *The Bacchae*, which became the groundwork for *Hurricane Diane*.

THE GOD



YOUNG SICK BACCHUS BY CARAVAGGIO, C. 1593

Most Greek tragedies told cautionary tales of hubris: humans disrespecting a greater power through excessive pride. *The Bacchae* is no exception: it is a story of the god Dionysus, the god of wine, nature, and revelry. As with many Greek gods, Dionysus has many names – Bacchus is the most familiar. He is also a shape-shifter, and can appear in many forms. While *Hurricane Diane* also centers around Dionysus (now taking the form of Diane, a lesbian permaculture gardener from Vermont), in the play there is another higher power that must be respected: Mother Nature.

THE BACCHAE



The Bacchae begins with the god Dionysus directly addressing the audience. He explains that the ruling family of the city of Thebes has publicly doubted his divinity. Worse, the king of the Thebes, Pentheus, has outlawed his worship. To punish Pentheus and his family, Dionysus comes to town in disguise. He gathers women of Thebes as his followers, called Maenads, to dress in ritual animal skins and have what are called bacchanals – wild parties in the woods. Reports begin to reach Pentheus of the women's actions, including drinking, dancing in an ecstatic madness, and even tearing wild animals apart in their frenzy.

Dionysus convinces Pentheus to go the forest to see the bacchanal for himself. Once there, the god orders the Maenads to attack Pentheus, and they tear him apart. The royal family, now punished for their hubris in doubting a god, acknowledges Dionysus' divinity and vows to worship him accordingly.