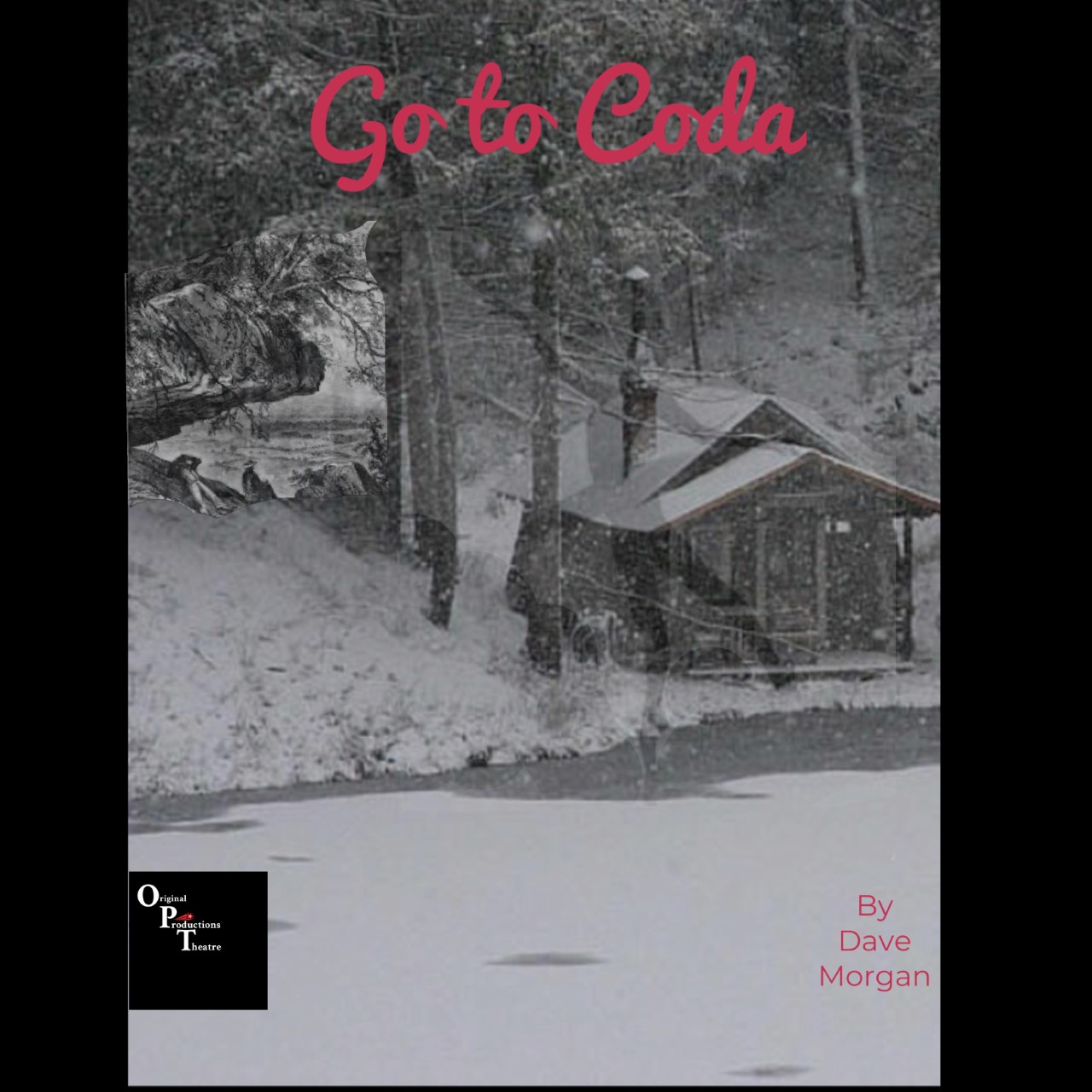
***Go to Coda***

by

Dave Morgan



Cast

WORRELL- 65-75 ish. Conscious thought of the BODY. Gentle, rustic, naive

MICK- 40-75 BODY’S subconscious/instincts- Wise, hardened but sensitive

MRS. POST- sweet lady, same age as Worrell. Has onset dementia

EMILY-Her daughter. Very kindly, patient, perhaps a little dowdy, unmarried, devoted but has a sense of humor 35-50

Memories:

DAD- 45 ish- a brute

MARCY-20-30s-Worrell’s wife, beautiful, modern dancer

ROBBIE-mid 20s all American young man

PETER- 16-18 WORRELL’S grandson, vulnerable, intelligent, trusting and perhaps “young”

PETEY-a nice boy of about 10-12 (PETER’S subconscious)

LUCAS- 16-18 Peter’s Friend, a little untrusting at first, eventually animated and friendly

MELODY-11-15 dancer in a tutu (MRS POST’S subconscious)

MR MCONNELL-WORRELL’S BODY. A mannequin made up to look similar to WORRELL. Sits in the shadows throughout most of the show and says nothing

SETTING *The stage right two thirds of the set are the back porch of a farmhouse somewhere in the Appalachian foothills. It is not an impoverished or unkempt area but modest and clean. It should be sparsely decorated. Nothing on the porch will be used or touched. Off of the up right area of the porch is an old lawn chair. A mannequin meant to intimate a BODY*

*sits there. The chair must not be well lit. Far downright is a low stump or bench. MICK will spend much of his time there. Down right center slightly from the porch are two chairs and a patio table. This is where WORRELL spends much of his time. Across the table are spread photos and a high school year book. Upstage left are a tangle of platforms. The characters from WORRELL’s memories and nightmares live there. Down left on the apron sits a wheelchair and small, low over sized chair meant to intimate a day room in a convalescent home. The porch side set as described is not realistic. It represents the inside of WORRELL’S mind as the last memory of his consciousness.*

AT RISE: *WORRELL MCCONNELL/BODY has had an event as the lights come up.*

*(MICK) sits near the stump down right. MICK wears a cowboy outfit. It is about 4 pm on a late November day.*

Ii4

**ACT I sci**

(From offstage in the dark—WORRELL CALLS “JUBILEE! JUBE!”)

RED LIGHTENING ACROSS BACK SCRIM. A MOMENT…lights up on WORRELL AND MICK

WORRELL

(Enters from up right of the house calling to his dog)

Jubilee!! Jubilee?! Hey Jube.. (He does not notice MICK. He begins singing under his breath as he sets down a bowl of dog food.) Don’t make it bad…yer a bad dog…come get yer supperrrrr… (crosses sits at the patio table)

MICK

Afternoon.

WORRELL (Deadpan)

(A moment. Mick is almost in front of him)Whoa! Almos’ scared me to death. Can I help you?

MICK

Hi.

WORRELL

(Another long moment) Do I know you?

MICK

I think you might.

WORRELL

Again?.

MICK

I said, I think you might.

WORRELL

Say again.

MICK

I think we know one another.

WORRELL

I recognize the voice. Don’t know where from, though. I was just getting my dog her supper. But I haven’t seen her in a couple days.

MICK

She needs to get back. We’re supposed to get some weather later on.

WORRELL

Yep…that’s what I heard. Little bit of snow won’t hurt things. It *is* that time. But she should be inside. ( a moment) I like the cowboy outfit. What’s that for?

MICK

I believe you like cowboys.

WORRELL

Sir?

MICK

I’m Mick, Worrell.

WORRELL

Mick Mantle? Mickduff? Mick death? Mick Jesus? (Chuckles) That should be a sandwich McJesus.

Ii5

MICK

I’m you. I’m the voice inside your head talking. You call me “Mick”?

WORRELL

That don’t seem likely.

MICK

Less likely than a Jesus burger in your head?

WORRELL

You’re probably right, there. I don’t see him wasting His time on me. I *do* recognize your voice, though.

MICK

( A little more exasperated)You recognize it because you’ve been talking to me and I been talking back to you for 75 years. This…(indicating the surroundings) is not your backyard, either. Near as I can figure, It’s the middle of the inside of your head. And this is the first time we’ve ever *seen* each other.

WORRELL

(A long moment….WORRELL stares at MICK. Then suddenly accepts the absurdity) Huhn. (Nods approval) Glad to finally meet you, then. I figured something was up. I got to say, you’re a fine looking young man. I uh…had no idea. I mean going on my battlefield mug…I figured things would be all kinds of a minefield in here.(points to his head) But hell…I must have a beautiful inner being, then. Everybody else sees ugly as sin. I get to see what kind of a beautiful soul I must have.

MICK

Yeah, that’s it exactly. We may have problems, Worrell. Our health might be in a serious predicament.

WORRELL

It is what it is. I didn’t figure I was gonna last forever. I remember bending over to feed that dog a minute ago and feelin’ a little goofy inside. I guess I passed out somewhere around here...and there it is. (Sees the BODY, stands, crosses)

MICK

I do believe we got some real trouble, Worrell. WORRELL

Seems more likely by the moment. I don’t look too good, do I?.

MICK

This… (He points to the two of them alternately) Might not be reality, either.

WORRELL

That’s what you said. How long have I been like that?

MICK

Four or five hours. We might be having an out of body moment of some kind. Your face numb?

WORRELL

No…

Ii6

MICK (Points to the BODY)

I’ll bet his is.

WORRELL

He *looks* like me.

MICK

He does. He looks a *lot* like you.

WORRELL

(Tries to kick the BODY’S chair lightly. Misses) Hmh. Went right through it.

MICK

I would think out of body moments are not really a good thing. Especially when there doesn’t seem to be anything or anybody around close by *in* reality to bring a person back to it.

WORRELL

What are you talkin’ about?

MICK

Sit down.

(WORRELL SITS)

It means, I think you may’ve had a seizure or something, or passed out and stayed out for some reason and you kind of jumped out of your body for a little bit.

WORRELL

If you saw me have a stroke why didn’t you call somebody? Why did I sit here for five hours?

MICK

Well…I’m kind of in this with you, I think. I can’t touch outside things either…besides, the cell phone is inside.

WORRELL

Tried to wake him up?

MICK

You don’t listen at all, do you? We’re on the inside of his head. He’s on the outside. How are we going to contact you or anybody from inside your brain? We got no way to get at him to wake him up. We’re thoughts.

WORRELL

Wait…what?

MICK

Sometimes … communicatin’ with you is like talking to a Beagle. You know that?

WORRELL

I thought contacting your own body was automatic. Isn’t that part of *your* job?

MICK

As long I have your face in my hands and our eyes are locked I think maybe we got a chance. But the second you look away it’s like you’ve forgotten everything and everybody you ever knew.

WORRELL

Well, this is an irregular situation.

Ii7

MICK

Yes it is. Cause if we *are* in trouble, and that body *can’t* get inside the house…if we can’t find a way to wake that up (Indicates the body)…I’m just saying…when the sun goes down it’s gonna get colder than the winter of Nineteen Twenty Holy Jesus God out here. And I don’t think a 70 plus year old man in distress will do too well in sub 30 degree weather for eight hours over night. Do you?

WORRELL

(Rises and walks to the door, tries to open it. Can’t. Turns and looks at Mick, smiles) You’re not kiddin’ are you?

MICK

No sir.

WORRELL

My hand went right through the door, too. Am I a ghost or something?

MICK

You’re not dead!

WORRELL

How do you know?

MICK

You’re still breathing over there. (Points to the BODY)

WORRELL

I guess I’m just not getting what your words are saying to me. How can I be alive here and over there at the same time? Or maybe dead one place and alive in another.

MICK

Okay…I’m gonna say this one more time. I am the little voice inside your head. The part that answers you, when you talk to yourself. (Points to the BODY) And he’s the body part of you . You payin’ attention?

WORRELL

Uh-huh

MICK

I’m the guy you talk to in your head.

WORRELL

Right.

MICK

When this event started happening you got things shattered up inside. Brain went to pieces. One piece is me. One piece is you. One piece is over there. (Points to the BODY)

WORRELL,

(Oblivious)I guess it would be okay to die like this.

MICK

And this is the last thing you saw. So your perception….kind of froze…on the back porch here.

WORRELL

I mean if I am having a stroke or something, it’d make sense that nothing makes sense. And everything would be acting crazy.

Ii8

MICK

They say, sometimes people remember coming out of their bodies and hovering over the operating table or something and they can see their dead body. You just seem to have jumped the gun and took me with you.

WORRELL

So you do think I’m … You sure one of me isn’t dead? Or just dyin’?

MICK

No, once again. You’re breathing.

WORRELL

And you’re not God and you’re not Satan and you’re not the reaper

MICK

(Frustrated)I sincerely hope not. I’m not a McDouble-you either. What was the last thing you remember doing?

WORRELL

That was kinda funny. Mc Double me, Mcdouble you.(Mick glares at him) Anyway….I thought I was calling for the dog to feed her. I was thinking about the dog runnin’ away and I was looking at them photo albums on the table there earlier. And high school yearbooks on the table. Old pictures of family, sweethearts. I was thinking about this girI I knew in high school. She didn’t even know I was alive. She popped her gum when she chewed it.

MICK

Anything else?

WORRELL

I was humming Hey Jude. I do it everyday when I feed her.(Hums the ending of “Hey Jude”) Na..na…na..nana na na….nana na na….Hey Jude…

MICK

Yeah..

WORRELL

Cause that’s the dog’s name…Jube…well Jubilee…is the whole name

MICK

I know our dog’s name.

WORRELL

That’s the coda…did you know that?

MICK

What

WORRELL

A coda is the happy part of the song at the very end…It lets the listener know that life will go on.

MICK

Well, that’s good to know.

Ii9

WORRELL

Similar to a denouement. Usually a denouement is like….well did you ever watch Bonanza? Or any TV show where after the final commercial the entire cast gets together…like in Bonanza after the Cartwrights kill all the rustlers and bad guys and come home…then the show goes to commercial and then when they come back from commercial everybody is sitting at the supper table making fun of Hoss’s appetite and Hop Sing mutters some Chinese cuss word his breath. There was always a rumor that Hop Sing was cursing everybody else out under his breath in Mandarin. I mean they did that on TV back ten. Did you know that “Tonto” means stupid in Spanish and “Que no Sabe” mean he who knows nothing also in Spanish?

MICK

(Shakes his head) mm-hm

WORRELL

The point is denouement and coda both mean the same kind of happy unexpected ending. Had nothing to do with the main plot line. And the one in *Hey Jude* is probably the most famous musical coda ever.

MICK

Well...okay then

. WORRELL

I guess I been hoping for a happy ending with the dog situation. (suddenly)There is nothing to be gained by panicking. We have an unknown issue. If this is the end…so be it. My grandmother used to say “When in trouble, when in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout.” I disagree with that.

MICK

Stop it, please.

WORRELL

I found out later she was being facetious, of course.

Mick

Please, I’m serious.

WORRELL

Well then….we gotta wake me up. We gotta put Humpty back together.

MICK

That’s what I was sayin’.

WORRELL

I don’t have any friends any more. Nobody checks up on me. I don’t know what I thought would happen when I got old and died.

MICK

We don’t know for *sure* what’s going on

WORRELL

(Quiet, resolute) I’m gonna die out here and won’t nobody find that body for months. Sometimes I just wish it was all over. Maybe the dog smelled something sickly on me and ran off.

Ii10

MICK

Yeah, she knew about this ahead of time and thought she’d leave you here alone to get even with you.

WORRELL

She is good company, though.

MICK

Well, she sure as hell isn’t Lassie.

WORRELL

Noble thing, just the same. Ol gal could still tree a mean groundhog

MICK

What we’re gonna do here?

(WORRELL struggles, stands, wanders to the BODY Stares a while)

WORRELL

I’m funny looking from this angle. Maybe that’s why everybody left.

MICK

What are we gonna do?

WORRELL

Looks like…staring down into my own casket. I got big ears. (To the BODY) I wish…I wish I could get you a blanket or somethin’. Get you up. Get you going. (Bends down) You gonna be alright? You and me we always been able to get out of things like this before.

MICK

Any ideas?

WORRELL

Everything seems kind of jerky and abrupt. It’s like a dream. Nothin’ makes sense from one thought to another So you can read my mind?

MICK

I am your mind. Remember?

WORRELL

I remember things quite well. Just because I’m old, doesn’t mean I’m senile and forgetful. If I forget a few things, young man, it just means I have a hell of a lot more to remember than you do. Anyway, I thought a person’s brain told the body what to do. Just tell it to get up!

MICK

It doesn’t seem to be listenin’ right now. Before you came in, that’s all I was doing. WORRELL

Maybe it’ll listen to *me*…(Closes his eyes, holds his breath and squints hard) Nothin’..(whispers) giiiiiit uuuuuup….git up….

MICK

Maybe you need to lay hands on it or something. Like raise it up. Like them Evangelicals do. Did you try touching it?

WORRELL

I ain’t touchin’ no dead bodies.

MICK

That’s *your* body, Worrell*.*

Ii11

WORRELL

Would you touch yourself if you were dead?

MICK (narrows his eyes)

(A long moment..laughs, gently) No, you’re right. Probably not.

WORRELL

See what I mean?

MICK

I just don’t think our brain is at full blast right now. I think it might have fried a couple of synapses and pretty much…well come kind of unplugged. Unresponsive

WORRELL (Off on a tangent again)

My gall bladder went out once and I was on the table for two and a half hours.

MICK (shakes his head)

Is that right

WORRELL

Complete mess in there. That thing blew up. Gangrenous. Almost coulda died…almost.

MICK

Thank you for sharing that.

WORRELL

You weren’t there. Nobody was. Completely checked out. They put me under and I didn’t dream, talk to myself, think to myself nor nothing. And when I come to I had no recollection or awareness of any time that had passed. Out. I thought “This is what unconscious is?…this level of completely oblivious?” I felt… resurrected when I came to. And then I thought, “Can dead be any *more* absolutely gone than that?”… I don’t like looking at me like this. This is weird. From this angle. I never seen the top of my head before. You need a shave. (Returns to his chair)

I think you are right. It could get cold enough to snow. I don’t know what to do. You got an inkling?

MICK

Just stay calm. Just like you are doing. Try to think. Shoulda got one of those distress buttons you hang around your neck. “I FALLEN AND I CAIN’T GET UP”. Always laughed at that old lady on the floor in the commercials….and now the shoe’s on the other foot.

WORRELL

(crosses to MICK) Can we touch…? Can we touch each other?

MICK

I don’t know… what?

WORRELL(Reaches out to embrace)

Lemme try something… (Hugs Mick hard)

MICK

Easy!

WORRELL

Is he moving?

MICK

I’m pointin’ in the wrong direction.

Ii12

WORRELL

Well I can’t see him from over here…here, let’s move over closer

(They hold the embrace but walk closer to the body)

MICK

You are smothering the breath out of me.

WORRELL

I’m trying to squeeze you real hard to see if I can get him to move, or twinge, or gasp up for air.

MICK

Dammit man!

WORRELL

Look at me! I’m “beside” myself. Ha ha…Sorry

MICK

I guess that’s one way of getting’ your shit together. Literally just physically squeeze it all together.

WORRELL

You see anything?

MICK

No. Did you?

WORRELL

I didn’t see it move. Him. Me. Us.

MICK

Maybe if I scratched you behind your ear, (Scratches him)we could make his leg spin like the dog used to do.

WORRELL

Cut it out.

MICK

You *are* part Beagle. Might be worth a try.

WORRELL

Leemy alone.

(They separate)

MICK

I would hate to see us pass away. I don’t think I ever said this but…I always kinda liked you.

WORRELL

I liked you too.

MICK

Pretty simple-minded sometimes, but you’re a good egg.

WORRELL

That’s a good life. To know that you liked yourself for the most part.

Ii13

MICK

You ever wondered why we ended up alone? If you were such a good guy. I woulda thought some woman would’ve snatched you up by now.

WORRELL

I woulda thought. But…I’m 70 odd years old, now. I think my babe magnet days are behind me.

MICK

Well…don’t sell yourself short.

WORRELL

We had a good ride, though, huh?

MICK

You quittin’?

WORRELL

I imagine…there are old people all over the world every day that do some sort of this routine. And then check out.

MICK

I imagine there are.

WORRELL

Well…I don’t think I’m ready.

MICK

I’m with you. We’ll figure somethin’ out.

WORRELL

When mom was still alive she used to think she could sense when one of her kids was in trouble.

MICK

Yeah. Mother’s are mystics.

WORRELL

She’d call me up out of the blue and ask if I was okay.. I miss her. She’d *sense* it!

MICK

Yeah.

WORRELL

Sure wish she was still around.

MICK

We gotta work together here.

WORRELL

Maybe if we got up and danced (Starts doing some gentle sort of impromptu Appalachian stomp)

MICK

Maybe.

WORRELL

Whattya think?

II14

MICK

Yeah, that might jar him awake. Might kill him too. I mean, this place *is* the inside of his head

(WORRELL stops cold) So you and your mom used to do a mind meld kind of thing.

WORRELL

Yeah…she thought so.

MICK

Call God... Why don’t you pray?

WORRELL

I kind of forgot how. Like I said, we haven’t ever been too close lately and I don’t know if he’s really talking to me anymore.

MICK

Test it out. I’ll be God. (Turns to WORRELL, abruptly) Whaddya want?

WORRELL(To heaven)

Well sir, I’m uh…I was wondering if you could kind of help me out here. I’m in a lot of trouble I think and uh..

MICK

Why should I?

WORRELL

What?

MICK

Why the hell should I do anything to help you out? What’ve you ever done for me?

WORRELL(to MICK)

I gotta *do* stuff for ya?…what?

MICK

What makes you special? Everybody dies. Why should I help you out now?

WORRELL

*I don’t know. Maybe you want to do something nice to me for a change!?*

MICK

I’m gonna move over here …In case of lightning bolts’n …things

WORRELL

(To Mick) I’m sorry. I didn’t mean it that like that.

MICK

( From the other side of the stage)No problem.

WORRELL

If God wants to be the boss, what’s with all the games? Always teachin’ me lessons and shit. Why doesn’t he just help out sometimes.

MICK

Well, you may get a chance to ask him in person pretty soon.

WORRELL

No god, no dog, no family

MICK

Settle down

II15

WORRELL

So…this is uh…You think all of this is kinda like all going on in his (Points to the BODY) head right now?

MICK

Yeah…

WORRELL

In pieces?

MICK

Yeah

WORRELL

Oh my…

MICK

And I *really* wouldn’t jump up and down like that anymore.

WORRELL

I think maybe….maybe I been getting’ too much coffee?

MICK

Pretty good coffee. I mean, if that’s what’s causing you to think up all this weird shit.

WORRELL

You remember when we did that lid of acid that time? This is what…

MICK

Where you going? Focus. WORRELL

…this all kind of reminds me of. Can’t remember that girl’s name who gave it to me. I took her to Toledo to see her dad….(Stops…) Sorry…I like to say my memories out loud sometimes to make sure they’re still here. (a moment) People sometimes go into comas for years, y’know.

MICK

Yer a fart inna windstorm.

(WORRELL Closes his eyes, grimaces as though wishing for something. PETEY, appears on top of the platforms briefly in a low spot…then the light goes out)

WORRELL (Stops grimacing)

Would you miss me if I was really dead.

MICK

(Whispers)Petey? That you, boy?

(PETEY is gone)

WORRELL

Hmh. We could play cards, maybe. While we’re waitin’. You uh…you wanna play some cards?

MICK (staring at where the boy was)

What? No.

WORRELL

Oh…yeah right. Probly see right through’m huh? We could do some brain games?

MICK

I don’t think we need any of those

Ii16

WORRELL

Oh yeah. (Sighs) So you ever been to Alaska? I mean, have you ever wanted to go to Alaska? Have you ever wanted US to go to Alaska? Did we ever talk about…I mean think about…

MICK

Not that I can recall.

WORRELL

I’m sorry, I just don’t know how to talk to you.

MICK

Yeah…I’m a puzzle.

WORRELL

I don’t even know of anybody I could hope for to come here and check on me. Check on us. MICK

Cistern need cleaned?

WORRELL

Just cleaned it this summer. He won’t be back for a year or two

MICK

Probably not.

WORRELL

If somebody found the dog.

MICK

I don’t have any faith in that happenin’.

WORRELL

Hmh.

MICK

What?

WORRELL

I just realized something.

MICK

What’s that?

WORRELL

Only reason to have people around is because you need something off of them. When they ain’t there, that’s when you miss them.

MICK

(a moment, smiles)You ever hear of Yogi Berra?

WORRELL

Baseball player? Sure!

MICK  
Yeah, he used to say things like that. “When they ain’t here, that’s when you miss ‘em.”

WORRELL

Yeah?

MICK

Yeah. He said uh…“Future isn’t what it used to be.” and “A nickel ain’t worth a dime anymore”.

Ii17 WORRELL

That’s funny.

MICK

“Déjà vu all over again’

WORRELL

Oh yeah.

MICK

“Always go to other people’s funerals, otherwise, they won’t go to yours”

WORRELL

I always liked baseball.

MICK

I know you do.

**END ACT I scene i**

Ii18

**ACT I scii**

(Lights immediately up on day room of a convalescent home…MRS. POST and EMILY knit. MRS POST is in the wheelchair. MELODY dances a gentle ballet in the background then comes In front of MRS. POST. EMILY does not ever see MELODY… MRS. POST quietly hums as the girl dances and she reaches out her hand to touch MELODY… MELODY crosses up and sits on the top platform. A moment passes)

MRS POST

So...?

EMILY

What?

MRS.POST

I could rip your arm off and beat you over the head with it. What did you do with it?

EMILY

Now I told you, I sold that chairlift to a man who answered the ad. You know that. I told you.

MRS POST

The only time I ever see you is when you come and tell me you stole something else from the house.

EMILY

Mom, we have to sell the house.

MRS POST

Will please you tell me what I’m supposed to do when I go back? You’ve sold all that furniture.

EMILY

Mom…

MRS POST

My bed and the chair. I can’t get up to go to the bathroom without that lift chair. How’m I supposed to pee? (Whispering) Do I just have to pee in my pants?

EMILY

I don’t know that you’ll ever…

MRS POST

It’s just like that lady in the bed next to me in that despicable room they’ve put me into. She’s not right. Did you know that?

EMILY

Yes. She’s in a coma.

MRS POST

And she steals my bras.

EMILY

Nobody steals your underwear.

Iii19

MRS POST

The heck she doesn’t! She gets up every night and has an affair with that old geezer that walks around the halls peeking in at all the old women. She had an affair with him in the bed right next to me a couple of nights ago.

EMILY

Mom, I’ve never seen her open her eyes in the six months you’ve been in that room with her.

MRS POST

Well that’s what she wants you to think! Don’t be stupid. Now what do you want?

EMILY

What?

MRS POST

Why did you come see me? What do you want?

EMILY

You called me. Last night. Remember?

MRS POST

I didn’t call you!

EMILY

You called me at three o’clock in the morning, mom. Last night. You said you were at a Lazarus department store.

MRS POST

*I WANTED YOU TO COME GET ME*!

EMILY

Three o’clock? You scared me to death. I thought something was wrong.

MRS POST

There *was* something wrong. I was in the back of that store in the dark. They’d locked me in and tied me down. I finally found the phone and I called you and I wanted you to come take me to my home so I could sleep in my own bed.

EMILY

No, you were here. In your bed here. At this rest home. Here.

MRS POST

Why didn’t you come?

EMILY

Because they closed all the Lazarus’s fifteen years ago. I told you when you called if you could get somebody who was working there to call me back, I’d come get you. But you didn’t, did you? ‘Cause they closed 15 years ago. The caller ID said the phone call came from here. You were here. You were just a little confused

MRS POST

Why doesn’t my father come see me? I have been here for …how long?

EMILY

Six months.

Iii20 MRS POST

I have been here for six months and my daddy hasn’t visited me once?

EMILY

Mom…you’re 77 years old. He’d be about 115 now…. He’s passed away…

MRS POST

HE’S DEAD?

EMILY

Yes. In 1978.

MRS POS (Stunned)

Why doesn’t anybody *tell* me these things?

EMILY

Mother, (Stands behind her, arms around her neck) I’m sorry. Somebody should have.

(EMILY kisses her MRS POST on the top of her head, releases her and turns to leave. MRS POST turns to see who has kissed her)

MRS POST

When did you get here? I haven’t seen you in *soooo* long!

**EMILY returns** and sits next to her mother again

EMILY

I just thought I’d stop to see how my mommy’s doing?

MRS POST

I’m fine. It’s been such a pretty day in that garden. There is a squirrel out there sometimes. He’s jet black and he is such a catbird. I’m so glad you came. I love it when you visit me. You don’t have to stay long, just stick your head in and let me know you are all right. I have been dancing today.

EMILY(Playing along)

Have you?

MRS POST

Yes. Almost all day. Thank you for coming.

EMILY

I love to spend time with you.

MRS POST

Do you remember that time we went to Great Aunt Mildred’s farm and we rode the horses? We were both only little girls. You were so good at equestrian events and I was merely a beginner. We both rode down in the back of daddy’s truck and spent the whole weekend and you showed me how to ride. And that became a lifelong passion for me. Thank you. I always wanted to thank you for that, Linda.

EMILY

Linda…Linda Dilly? I’m not…

Iii21

MRS POST

We had that terrible fuss about the Robertson boy. But, I didn’t really care. He thought he was so important in school, but it didn’t really matter to me. He was smitten with me, I suppose. I only wanted the weekends to come so I could ride, and later I became a dancer. Did you know that? I’m a dancer, now.

EMILY

Yes, you are.

MRS POST

I am a professional dancer. I have been on Broadway. I have danced at Madison Square Garden in front of the Queen. I studied with Ballanchine, but he couldn’t hold me into his troup. I think he was angry with me. And that French girl he was married to thought we were an item. She was *maaaad* at me. So after our first little fling, I threw him over and went to Alvin.

EMILY

I never knew that.

MRS POST

Oh yes! But I wasn’t a tramp. I thought I loved him. I wonder sometimes if I wasn’t truly a lesbian. I never seemed to warm up to any men.

EMILY

Except for dad.

MRS POST

Your father? That’s silly, Linda. He’s got to be twenty-five years older than me. How is he?

EMILY

Dad’s dead, mom.

MRS POST

Howard Dilly died? I’m so sad to hear about your loss. He was a nice man. But really, Linda.

No, unfortunately I never married. I never had any children.

EMILY (Frowns, hurt a moment)

But…

MRS POST

Never had an interest in them. Children appalled me. I found out very early the only thing boys really wanted. (Strongly to Emily) You need to keep your legs crossed!

EMILY(Crosses her legs)

‘kay.

MRS POST

Most boys were almost offensive. A few…a very few… were soooo dear. And sweet. And socially utterly incompetent. But you trust a boy like that. Too pretty for my own good and unfortunately, not a lot upstairs I mean, I had common sense but little use for books. Unlike now.

EMILY

I’ve always thought you were pretty smart.

Iii22

MRS POST(Smiles, pats EMILY’S knee)

Best friends….best friends. You never wanted to have sex with me, did you?

EMILY

Mom! I’m your daughter. I’m not Linda Dilly! Okay?

MRS POST (Recognizes her when EMILY gets loud)

Did I say that? Oh my! Please. Don’t be loud with me, Emily. EMILY

I’m sorry. This is really hard, isn’t it? This is hard to do, huh?

MRS POST

Sometimes I just cry and I don’t know why. That’s why I really need you to come see me.

EMILY

I know.

MRS POST

I sit here and sometimes things that aren’t real get so real. And nothing else happens that *is* real to help me tell the difference.

EMILY

Well, we’ll get you better and you can come home with me.

MRS POST

I’m not worth anything to anybody like this.

EMILY

You are to me.

MRS POST

But what about if I go crazier and am not me any more?

EMILY

You’ve always been bonkers. But you’ll always be you. Always. Sometimes your imagination gets away from you, but I always come get you, don’t I? We’ll always get you back.

MRS POST (Smiles, a moment)

I was looking at my hands this morning and just laughed and laughed. My hands look like little dried up bird feet don’t they?

EMILY

Well….yeah, kinda, they do, sorta…

(They laugh. MRS POST, almost hysterical, looks back and forth between EMILY and her hands.)

MRS POST

I’m getting really *old*,

EMILY

Well, it’s okay.

MRS POST

I think it’s wonderful. I go on exciting adventures.

EMILY

Yes you do. (Hugs her) Why don’t you take a nap. I’ll go home and take care of my doggies and come back tonight. We’ll watch a movie or something. See ya.

Iii23

(**MELODY, in a pink tutu, enters from top platform and begins dancing quietly**. **EMILY exits**.)

MRS POST

Okay. Bye darling.

(After a while, MELODY dances directly in front of MRS POST who softly wind whistles a ballet and gently directs an imaginary orchestra as the girl continues to dance.)

**LIGHTS OUT SCENE Act I scii**

Iiii24

ACT 1 sciii

(A short while after the end of scene I WORRELL has returned to the chair . He rises slowly and holds one of the photos in his hand. MICK now has a baseball players outfit on, and is sleep near his stump/bench)

WORRELL

I don’t know if they’re snow clouds or shadows in here.

MICK

What’s that?

WORRELL

Shadows of me on the inside of his head, or on the ceiling. Maybe this really is a sky of some kind. Imagined. Everything is so screwed up. He’s got this place scrambled up bad in here.

MICK

Not thinkin’ clearly. That’s for sure.

WORRELL(Photo in hand))

I been saying goodbye to my family. Just in case, you know?

Mick

You feeling alright?

WORRELL

No, actually.

MICK  
What’s the matter?

WORRELL

Just uneasy. I sense he’s declining (Indicates BODY). Somewhat. I do like your new outfit. MICK  
Thank you.

WORRELL

You remember when we were little we’d go downstairs and play that baseball game with the Lincoln log and the sponge? We hid out by stairway. If we got the sponge to stick on one stair it was a single and another was a double and another was triple.

MICK

If you hit it all the way to the landing it was a homerun.

WORRELL

Yeah, everything else was an out. I always told you I was the Reds. I made you be the Yankees.

MICK

Yankees or not. I didn’t beat you very often.

WORRELL

No you didn’t.

MICK

When you came down with your special T-shirt on, I knew I was in trouble.

Iiii25

WORRELL

I pretended I was Ted Kluszewski. In real life, his arms were so big he had his sleeves on his uniform cut off. So one day I took one of my T shirts and cut the sleeves off of it.

MICK

Dad didn’t care for that.

**(RED LIGHTNING. Suddenly a loud electrical arcing, buzzing sound and a loud “bam” like a transformer explosion is heard. The lights flicker and go out, then come up immediately in pulsing red. A swishing, pulsing sound like a heartbeat sounds for a short moment. The lights gradually come back on and WORRELL has dropped to the floor.**)

WORRELL (Gasping)

Huuuh…

MICK

Get up! Get up! You gotta get up Worrell. You can’t sit here . We’ll die on the ground!!! Please! Get up!

WORRELL

Ohh man.

MICK

There we go.

(MICK helps WORRELL back to the chair. The pulsing has stopped and the red lights go out)

Man…I thought that was it. WORRELL

Whew…what the heck was that?

MICK

Kind of unstable in here.(Looks at the BODY) His leg is not where it was.

WORRELL

That hurt me.

MICK

That jolt was enough to move his leg. Something might be happening

WORRELL

What?

MICK

The body moved. Maybe he’s wakin’ up.

WORRELL

Sure didn’t feel like a good thing.

Ii26

MICK

(CROSSES TO THE BODY)

His eyes are flickerin’. Like he’s havin’ dreams.

WORRELL

Yeah.

MICK

Maybe his life is flashing in front of his eyes. They say that happens before you WORRELL

…die.

(**DAD APPEARS** **ON THE LEFT PLATFORMS** **and descends to the bottom platform)**

Oh god..That’s my dad.

(WORRELL Crosses to DAD, goes to his knees. Spot up on those two only)

DAD

Hey…

(Starts play fighting with Worrell)

You think you’re any good?

(WORRELL takes a couple of slaps, puts up his fists in a little boy defense)

You wanna fight? You wanna fight me, boy? You think you can take me?

(WORRELL covers up and whimpers)

Oh come on…don’t start cryin’, you big sissy. Come on, hit me back you pansy! WORRELL

I didn’t start anything, dad.

(DAD Slaps him a little harder with a four or five combination. Worrell falls down. )

DAD

You talkin’ back to me?

WORRELL

No sir.

DAD

Come on ya big sissy.

WORRELL

Don’t!

Iiii27

DAD

You gotta toughen up. Maybe if I slap you around before the other kids do. Whattya cuttin’ up your shirts for?

WORRELL

Okay…

DAD

Okay? No, it’s *not* okay.

WORRELL

Don’t hit so hard.

DAD

So tell me. Everybody else in that school of yours has daddies who are big lawyers and doctors? You proud of your dad?

WORRELL

Yeah.

DAD

Even though he’s a janitor?

WORRELL

Yeah..

DAD

How could you be?

WORRELL

I don’t know.

DAD

You don’t know much do you?

WORRELL

I’m okay in school. The teacher says I might be an excellent…

DAD

You think you’re smarter than me? Eight year old? You think your smarter than your dad?

WORRELL

No.

DAD

What then? What’s your point?

WORRELL

Hey dad?

DAD

What?

WORRELL

Aren’t we still friends?

DAD

What? What has that got to do with anything?

WORRELL

I just didn’t know?

Iiii28

DAD

You’re lucky I let you live here.

WORRELL

I’m sorry.

DAD

Now, what’d you do?

WORRELL

I got spanked at school.

DAD

I know. That’s why we’re out here. You need to say it.

WORRELL

I’m sorry.

DAD

But what…did…you…do.,

WORRELL

I made a girl fall high off a see saw.

DAD

Yeah, ya did. What were you doing playin’ with girls, anyway? You’re too young to worry about them. They screw your life up, pal. Remember that.

WORRELL

I’m sorry. I got her too high. And then I jumped off and she fell off from the top of the seesaw. I’m sorry.

DAD

Yeah…well that’s not gonna put that kid’s tooth back in her mouth and pay for the stitch in her lip, is it? I’m gonna have to pay for that. You know how much fixing a tooth costs?

They TOLD YOU ONCE BEFORE TO STOP DOING THAT! I *told* you!!

(Pulls his belt out of his pants)

Get some sense into you one way or another.

(Mutters as WORRELL rises and crosses back to MICK)

Damned family.

(DAD Whips the belt to the space where Worrell has just left)

I don’t need this.

(**DAD finishes whipping and crosses back and climbs to the left platform**

WORRELL

Then he’d go in the house and beat mom for raising a sissy kid that misbehaved at school. I’d get spanked there, go home and then get whipped again for getting’ punished at school. MICK

Never could abide a bully. Even just callin’ people names.

Iiii29

WORRELL

Who takes a belt to an eight year old?

MICK

Everybody in the 1950’s.

WORRELL

Nobody could make him happy. Mom went back to work and started making more money as telephone operator than he did so he couldn’t stand that and just left us. Most kids grieve when their parents split up. Not me.

DAD (Shouts from the platform)

Someday you take a swing at me sissy! We’ll see what happens!! **(DAD** **Exits)**

WORRELL

He died when I was seventeen. They didn’t have much in the way of dialysis back then. So I went to the funeral and I was almost the only one who showed up. I stood there and looked into the casket. Into the dead and still malicious face. And I couldn’t help it.

(Starts punching into the imaginary casket)

I hit him…and hit him. I took my swings as hard as I could just like he’d told me to do. Must have hit his corpse in the jaw eight or ten times . Him lyin’ in that casket, smirking. And when I was done….when I was done and was standing over his body and his beaten face, out of breath and legs shaking ….I realized he’d gotten to me *again ‘*cause I’d broken my hand on his dead jaw.

MICK

At least you got a sense of humor about it.

WORRELL

Funny is the only way to avoid the sadness, sometimes.

MICK

Only way to get over being cold is to get warm, too. Getting back to the problem at hand I mean.

WORRELL

You remember what mom said about teeth.

MICK

Or not…

WORRELL

“One day you’ll eat all your Halloween candy in one night and all your teeth will fall out someday”

MICK

She was right.

WORRELL

Sure enough, 60 years later on Halloween, they pulled out all my teeth and I got these babies. (Points to his teeth)

Iiii30

MICK

Yep

WORRELL

I gotta keep talkin’. I gotta laugh about somethin’.. I’m alone here in this fix with you and that guy (the BODY) because I have never managed to be utterly necessary to anyone. And I have no idea why not nor do I have any idea how to make that happen. This is a mess in here. I have such a tiny, messy life.

MICK

We’ll be alright.

WORRELL

Dyin’ is a confusing, scary procedure isn’t it?

MICK

Seems to be.

WORRELL

Well….I feel like I am getting to know you a little better.

MICK

That was a rough memory.

WORRELL

That was unnatural, just then. With him.

MICK

It was.

WORRELL

That was worse than a dream. He was so vivid.

MICK

It can get that way sometimes, they say.

WORRELL

I could almost smell him. You think it’s getting colder?

MICK

Little bit.

WORRELL

I wonder if this *is* the way your life starts to flash before your eyes? When your body starts to shut down.

MICK(To the BODY)

He’s got a jacket on. He’ll be alright a little while.

WORRELL

Won’t be enough if it gets cold enough to snow. What was I thinking? I knew it was going to get cold. Why did I come out in that windbreaker? Waiting there in that chair for the damned dog to come home. That messed me up.

MICK

This whole day has been a real treat.

WORRELL

I do like your outfit.

Iiii31

MICK

I thought you might. WORRELL

I only followed baseball cause the boy liked it.

MICK

Nah…you always liked baseball, too. Who you kiddin? Clear back to when you were a boy. All the games you had. And the baseball cards. Cut everybody’s grass in the neighborhood if they’d let you. Get a couple bucks to buy another box of cards.

WORRELL

I was a fan, that is true. I can’t watch it anymore though. Can’t watch any sports. Can’t really abide any TV.

(Cell phone ring can be faintly heard from the inside)

Listen!

MICK

That’s sounds like its coming from the bathroom. That’s where you always leave it. Why do you do that?

WORRELL

What?

MICK

Take your phone out and leave it in there.

WORRELL

I uh..play solitaire when I’m on the toilet.

MICK

(Tongue in cheek) Ain’t no irony there.

WORRELL

I can’t do *anything* right today. Maybe somebody I know will notice that I didn’t answer and come and check up on me.

MICK

Probably just those foreign robot calls again. I think it’s the president’s people trying to chase down illegal aliens. They say if you answer in Spanish, then they send somebody out here after you.

WORRELL

Could be. I’ve had them from all kinds of countries (The phone stops) That’s depressing. They sure gave up easy..

MICK

I mean, when was the last time somebody real called you?

WORRELL

I can’t remember. ( A moment) I like watching twilight like this. Pretty. I think its twilight. Could just be clouds. A clouded mind. (Laughs uneasily)

MICK

You know, next dog you get, you should start right in on training him to fetch things

WORRELL

It’ll be Christmas again in a little over a month.

Iiii32

MICK

Like cell phones and blankets along with shoes and the usual stuff.

WORRELL

Maybe Ill get a cat, this time. ‘Cept they don’t fetch.

MICK

Yeah, but there’s no disappointment. You kind of go into the arrangement knowing that neither one of you gives shit about the other one. They don’t care about you, you don’t expect nothing from them. The bar’s pretty low for both sides.

WORRELL

I was in my second year of college and had just finished my autumn quarter and realized I wasn’t gonna have enough money to buy any Christmas presents so I took a job at a department store…Lazarus store…I took this job there as a Santa Claus. I worked there from 9 to 5 shift…whole month of December maybe even back to Thanksgiving. Anyway the routine was to go down to the store put on the costume. I’m a beanpole back then, so I brought a pillow in from home. And then I’d go out and let the kids tell me their wants and sit on me and let ‘em cry and pee on me. Then at five I’d give the costume to this relief Santa, run home, let the dogs out, get fed and make it back to the University by 7 for a late night janitor gig. Anyways…That went on fine every day, 9 to 5 for a while and then one day this relief guy doesn’t show and he doesn’t show. And pretty soon I *have* go. So I run everybody off, sent the elves home, and closed up the North Pole. I’m drivin’ up Westerville Road fastern’ I should have been, I know. It had been snowin’ a good bit all day. But I was late and I’m a good driver for a kid. And I turned onto Agler and I noticed out of the corner of my eye this group of little kids playing in the snow in a circle in this house’s front yard. Then all of a sudden this little grey puffball zips out from the middle of the group and runs out in front of me. I’m goin’ to myself “Oh God, run kitty, run” Then I felt this “thud-thud” underneath the tires on the car and I just pounded the steering wheel! (A moment) I was gonna stop. I was gonna talk to the parents and say I was sorry and that I would buy the kids another cat but I look up and the kids are lookin’ at me an’…ya see, I still got that Santa Claus outfit on. I mean, how the hell am I gonna show those

kids Santa Claus just came outa nowhere and squashed Christmas Fluffy in a ‘64 Catalina? So I just floored it.

MICK

Yeah, You probably oughtn’ to get a cat.

WORRELL

My favorite Christmases were when I was child. You don’t mind my talking about this stuff do you?

MICK

Been here. Heard it all a 100 times. 101 won’t hurt me

WORRELL

I always thought things out thoroughly. Say them over and over the way I wanted to say them . Then change my mind and not say them at all.

MICK

Sometimes…most of the times, in your case, holding your tongue was the prudent thing to do.

Iiii33

WORRELL

I didn’t really enjoy Christmases with my married family. I tried. Eventually, my wife didn’t either. (Lights fade down on the stage and up to the spot where WORRELL and his dad had the

previous scene)

Beautiful…beautiful woman.

**(WIFE APPEARS from stage left PLATFORM. A YOUNG MAN appears on the top platform. She crosses through dimly lit shadows to WORRELL who meets her at the bottom of the platforms. “O Mi Bambino Caro” comes up She and Worrell will do a brief Pas de Deux to the music that culminates in her presentation of a baby in blankets…a few more steps to the dance as they shortly stop touching and finally stop dancing altogether…staring at one another. She goes to him, takes the baby away from him and runs up away, up the platform where another young man enters. She gives the baby to him and then BOTH WIFE AND YOUNG MAN EXIT)**

I loved her more than my next breath. She took my son and gave him to another man. Then Robbie left her and came to live with me when he was twelve. He’d had enough of her and his step dad.

(He reaches for his head again, spins confused….)

Oh my….

(Confusion, static, strobe effect fill the stage)

**(WORRELL’S son enters and stands in the audience in a spot.**

ROBBIE

WORRELL(Slowly to Robbie)

Welcome…

ROBBIE

Hey dad. Wanna plays cars?….hey dad wanna play army men?. Hey dad …wanna play catch? Hey,hey dad my bicycle chain snapped can you help me fix it? Hey dad , hey dad can you take me to school? Can you take me to scouts meeting, can you take me to baseball practice? Hey dad hey hey dad look at my report card…hey dad Im sorry I broke the kitchen window hey dad

WORRELL

Home

ROBBIE

Hey dad …I love you dad. Can you teach me to drive, man? Can you take me to school? Hey man can you let me borrow the car for work? For college, can you buy me my own car so I can pick up girls and go get my drugs and drink and do all kinds of crazy shit.…Hey dude, hey man, ….hey dad ….dad.

WORRELL

Soldier

Iiii34

(ROBBIE DESCENDS TO STAGE FLOOR, face to face with WORRELL. WORRELL drops the picture he has been clutching since the top of the scene)

ROBBIE

So…what do you think dad?

WORRELL

How are you going to afford to marry that girl and start a family?

ROBBIE

I’ll have to find a way. If you can help that would be great.

WORRELL

What about school?

ROBBIE

I’ll drop out and get a job.

WORRELL

I put all that money into tuition so that you could *get* a decent paying job and maybe go….

ROBBIE

Dad, I know what you’ve done, and I appreciate everything but…

WORRELL

I don’t like this girl…I’ve told you that. I don’t trust her.

ROBBIE

Well I do.

WORRELL

How do you know that this baby is even yours? She gets around, you know. You told me what kind of a player she was. Your buddy Marcus said the same thing. Are you sure it’s not his kid? Maybe he’s been with her too.

ROBBIE

So? That’s my wife you’re talking about.

WORRELL

What? Oh God, son. You married her?

ROBBIE

Where do we stand? Can you help me out?

WORRELL

I’ve given you everything you got, Rob. Your home, your education, your car, your food. I’m dry.

ROBBIE

I’ll go to mom then.

WORRELL

They don’t have anything.

ROBBIE

I’ll join the army.

WORRELL

You could get shot.

ROBBIE

I might.

Iiii35

WORRELL

Why don’t you move her in here, rather than do this.

ROBBIE

Ahhh…no. Four people, one a baby in this dinky place?

WORRELL

I know it’s not much. Have you two considered an abortion?

ROBBIE

No, dad. That’s why she doesn’t like you any more than you like her.

WORRELL

I don’t want you to throw away your opportunities for an education on a mistake.

ROBBIE

I’m not throwing anything away. MY son or daughter will not be a mistake, by the way. Listen, they’ll pay for my education when my tour’s done. That’s if I decide to even go back to school.

WORRELL

I just didn’t want you to be ashamed of things.

ROBBIE

I’m not ashamed.

WORRELL

Like I was of *my* dad. You already enlisted, didn’t you?

ROBBIE

I plan to.

WORRELL

You just gonna walk out?

ROBBIE

It won’t be that bad.

WORRELL

Just leave me alone like everybody else. No reason?

ROBBIE

We gotta live our own lives, dad. I love you. I always will. When you retire, you can come live with us.

WORRELL

I wish you would reconsider. Maybe we could get another room put on the back.

ROBBIE

Dad. Thanks. I’ll figure it out.

(Smiles, TURNS AND WALKS BACK TO LEFT PLATFORM. Hits the same pose as the beginning of the scene as Worrell picks up the photo)

WORRELL

See you later, soldier.

ROBBIE

It’ll all work out for the best.

(**ROBBIE EXITS**)

Iiii36 WORRELL (To Mick)

These days…Getting closer to Christmas time of year, you really start to notice you’re alone. I just got so I didn’t want to be around anybody. Everybody else had family. Then Rob passed. I couldn’t stand livin’ in that house so I moved to the country here. Then I thought the grandson was gonna come and live with me…

MICK(Comforting)

That’s alright.

WORRELL

Then *he* was gone.

MICK

Worrell, just don’t do this.

WORRELL

Might be my last chance.

MICK

Worrell.

WORRELL

I think I wanted to be alone. I pushed everybody away. I wanted to be alone, but I didn’t. How do you tell people not to leave you alone without becoming a burden? It *is* getting’ colder.

MICK

Suns goin’ down. Cloudin’ up too.

WORRELL

I’m sorry I’m runnin’ my mouth. Or racin’ my brain or whatever I’m doin’

MICK

Not a problem.

WORRELL

Just don’t want to fall asleep again.

( Suddenly runs to the BODY and screams)

Baaaaahhhhh!!!!

MICK

No…That wasn’t weird.

WORRELL

Worth a shot.

MICK

Probably not.

WORRELL

I don’t see *you* coming up with anything.

MICK

I don’t know what to tell you.

WORRELL

So we gonna just sit here?

MICK

I guess so.

Iiii37

WORRELL

Sit here and talk and then die?

MICK

Until one of us comes up with something.

WORRELL

(Stands, WORRELL crosses to the body…crosses its arms across its lap)

MICK

You don’t stay put in your head very long.

WORRELL

Yeah original attention deficit guy, that’s me. Got any Ridolin?

MICK

Maybe that’s why you’re alone. Just too hard to communicate with. You’re too much trouble aren’t you?

WORRELL

Every woman I had a thing with after I was divorced had a little fat boy or some loser male BFF that would have cut out his own liver out and given it to her if she’d have wanted it.. And they would tell me…”I’ll never love him like the way he wants. No chance of us being together” But she still got out with him and he would be so proud that she deigned to even talk to him. And she would go on taking his attentions. And she would allow him to gut himself and let him assemble so much hope in his fantasies…but there was never any hope.

MICK

It made him happy to give someone his love.

WORRELL

It made him miserable when she wouldn’t even miss him when he was gone. He wouldn’t have known what to do with her if she took him up on his love. So we fat boys stick to ourselves and don’t deal with realities.(to the body) Huh.

MICK

What?

WORRELL

I remember when I got that scar. (Indicates one of the BODY’S hands)

MICK

You don’t need to go there.

WORRELL

I can’t seem to help it. Every one of them. I gotta see everybody one more time.

MICK

I suppose.

WORRELL

He was the only grandchild. Did you know that?

MICK

Yep.

Iiii38 WORRELL

He was a good boy. Only person I ever connected with really. Not even Robbie.

(**PETER appears** on the platform, descends and crosses halfway to Worrell )

WORRELL ( To PETER as he descends)

Pretty down here in the country, isn’t it?

PETER

Yeah, it is. I was thinking it’s gonna sound stupid, but I like being outside. WORRELL

You don’t get outside where you are?

PETER

It’s different. Being outside in the country at my grandfather’s house, it’s different than being outside at home. Just…I don’t have to be on guard all the time. City outside is not that special.

WORRELL

(Crosses to the table, sits right chair, PETER follows sits in left)

Maybe you’ll like it down here.

PETER

I already do. I wouldn’t mind staying down here forever.

WORRELL

I could teach you how to hunt. Get ya a dog maybe.

PETER

Mom won’t let me move. But I’m not really a city person. I don’t like it there. I get bullied around some. I don’t like fightin.

WORRELL

I could teach ya how to stick up for yourself in school. Kids are idiots. They talk about body orifices and text messages, love triangles, and clothes and grades and…and you know what?

PETER

What?

WORRELL

They ain’t any different than their parents were nor their grandparents before them. Just about everybody has gone through some variations of the same thing. Get me?

PETER

Yeah, I think so…its hard not to let my feelings get hurt sometimes.

Iiii39

WORRELL

When you get bullied, you can’t hit back. That doesn’t settle things and usually makes them worse. Lemme tell you somethin’. A boy by the name of Tommy Olson was in a tree chucking crabapples at me on my brand new bicycle on time. I was a couple years older than him. One of them smacked my headlamp and another got *me* in the head. I got off my bike, pulled him out of the tree by his dangling foot, and knocked him ass over teakettle right there. I was about ten. We wasn’t that old. Couple hours later he was crappin’ out some of his teeth. Couple hours after that when my dad came home from work, I got whomped. My parents told me I was *never* to raise my hand to anything ever again. Pretty soon all the little rat kids started pickin’ on me at school cause they knew I wasn’t allowed to hit back.

(Suddenly a tiny boy’s face, **PETEY, APPEARS** in the screen door to the house)

WORRELL (CONT) Iiii39

But I never hit and pretty soon those guys backed off because it wasn’t any fun to pick on somebody they knew wasn’t…

MICK (Sees LITTLE PETER but no one else can)

What the hell?!!!

WORRELL

…going to get mad and (Turns to MICK)

What?!

(MICK points at LITTLE PETER. WORRELL looks at the door)

WHAT?

PETER( To WORRELL)

What!? (Turns and looks to the door) What?

(**LITTLE PETER EXITS**)

MICK

You don’t see that? HEY! (MICK CROSSES and looks in the door)

(WORRELL and PETER turn back and look at one another for a long moment, finally they both lower their eyebrows and begin to cock their heads slowly at exactly the same time…mirror image.)

PETER

Whooooooa….

WORRELL

Did you….hear all that going on too? (Indicates his own head)

PETER

Yeah. Did you?

WORRELL

Yeah…Good…I mean, I didn’t want to think I was only one that heard any of that.

Iiii40

PETER

Wow! What *was* that?

WORRELL

You talk to yourself?

PETER

Yeah, all the time.

WORRELL

I do too

PETER

I was just sittin’ there getting’ this image of the kid whippin’ that crabapple and how I’d have wanted to kick in his junk and then I remembered you were sayin “Don’t hit back…don’t hit back” and then….I was thinkin’ how really kind of cool you were and how you were maybe gonna let me live in your home with you and how we never really got to know each other and the INSIDE of me was startin’ to say that was really cool and you were really funny and nice and then I had this shadow image of him…my inside guy… standing at the door back there and then all of a sudden you go like “what?” and you turn around and I’m all like “ what-WHAT?” How did you know something was back there?

WORRELL

I…I didn’t.

PETER

How did you know that? Did you see him? What’s he look like? Does he look like me?

WORRELL

I didn’t see him.

MICK

I sure did.

WORRELL (growls)

Mmmmhmm

MICK

What *was* that?

PETER

You just channeled me! YOUR INSIDE GUY JUST FRICKING CHANNELED ME!!!.

WORRELL

Quiet, you’ll wake the dead.

PETER

Do it again!

WORRELL

No, I’m not gonna “do it again”. You…you…yer getting too loud!

PETER

Wait a minute. (Closes his eyes really hard for a second)

WORRELL

You been up too late. You’re startin’ to hallucinate.

Iiii41

PETER

(Opens his eyes after a moment and confidently looks right at WORRELL).

A baseball outfit. He’s wearing a baseball outfit. And my guy says your guy doesn’t look anything like you, he’s bigger/( littler) than you.

MICK

Well*, that’s* not good. Didn’t know anybody else could hear me, let alone see.

WORRELL

Cut it out! Ain’t bad enough I got all this serious stuff going on in my life and I can’t tell up from down for sure. Probably had a stroke and now I got *people* in my head.

PETER

Let’s make’m meet!

WORRELL

Oh HELL no! And how the hell if this is all a memory flashback thing…(TO MICK) how does he know you’re wearing a baseball outfit NOW..?

MICK

You’re hallucinating…you’re brain thinks what it wants to think.

WORRELL

I thought *I* was the brain.

MICK

Maybe I *was* wearing a baseball outfit back then…you always liked baseball players. I don’t know.

WORRELL

STOP IT!! All of ya!!

PETER

Just once. And then we don’t have to do it again. Ever. I promise.

WORRELL

No! And I…

MICK(Jokingly deadpan)

I’m game. Maybe I can catch the little bastard and wring his neck. Won’t have to blow my cover.

(Worrell frowns at this, PETER notices.)

MICK

What? He wants to do it, doesn’t he? He wants to do it! Look at me! Look at me, Grampa.

(They stare for a long moment. Nothing happens)

WORRELL

I never noticed. You sure look like your grandmother’s side of the family. You’re a good lookin’ young man. You’re a good boy, Peter.

Iiii42

(Suddenly, **PETEY reappears** and crosses slowly to MICK. WORRELL AND PETER freeze)

MICK(To the boy)

Hello.

PETEY

Hi.

MICK

Whattya know for sure?

PETEY

Are you God?

MICK

Probably not.

PETEY

Is what we’re doing God, then?

MICK

I don’t know what you mean.

PETEY

Everybody has a little bit of God in them, right?

MICK

This is just a dream. This is just something your grandpa’s going through in his head right now. PETEY

Are we the God part of them?(Indicates PETER and WORRELL)

MICK

They’re done for if we are.

PETEY

I think we *are*.

MICK

Well, maybe so. I don’t really know that stuff very well.(Leans down to PETEY) Wynchu tell that boy (Indicating PETER) that his grandfather loves him a lot.

PETEY

I will. Nice to meet you, sir.

(LITTLE PETER shakes hands with MICK and then quietly goes to PETER and whispers in his ear. **PETEY Returns to the door. EXITS**)

(PETER quietly returns to the platform and turns to WORRELL)

PETER

I love you too, Grampa. (**PETER EXITS**)

**Lights out on act I**

Iii43

**Act II sc i**

(Dimmed light come up on Mrs POST.. MELODY dances in the shadows in the background. Mrs POST is smiling. After a long moment her left hand begins to tremble slightly. Her eyes fly open. MELODY stops and stares. MRS POST seems confused and gradually appears to be more terrified. Gradually her hand shakes more violently and her left leg begins to shake. She begins to lean to the right. She grabs out with her left hand and catches the arm of the chair. She is leaning far to the right, holding on to the chair teeth bared and quietly snarling The left side of her face contorts slightly. **EMILY ENTERS**. Lights come up full )

MRS POST

Aghhlllhlllghlllllll!

EMILY

Mom! (Catches her, straightens her back up) MOM! Are you alright? Are you alright? Mom? Mah….(Stops…waves her hand backwards through the air. OOOOHHHHH, mom!!!! Honey!! What did you have for supper? Good lord woman!

(MELODY starts twirling again)

MRS POST

I’m…fulla…beans!…

EMILY

Yes you are.

MRS POST

I am.

EMILY

Good night nurse!

MRS POST

Yeah! And she *gave*’m to me!

EMILY (Sits)

I’m gonna bring in some incense or something next time. Or call a fumigator. Or somebody to hose you down. Good Lord! Have to burn the place down.

MRS POST(To herself)

Not funny.

EMILY

Jimminy Cripes! You put my eyes out! (MELODY moves toward the front, twirling.)

MRS POST

Heh heh heh heh heh! (MELODY twirls by in front of her.) Wheeee!

**(MELODY sits** in shadows upstage)

IIi44 EMILY

I should go home soon. MRS POST

I know it’s dark out but can you tell me, is it 6 O’clock at night or 6 O’clock in the morning?

EMILY

It’s evening.

MRS POST

I think it is getting much colder too.

EMILY

Weather reports said it might snow.

MRS POST

The coldest I can ever remember being was when I was dancing in a troop in Wyoming. We would rehearse all evening and afterwards go to this wonderful cowboy bar. Now I was staying in this little house about four or five blocks away from the town center and would walk to and from rehearsal. There was a motel, a few houses, another motel, a restaurant, and a school, and a few more houses, and then we’d come to my house. I was still a young girl then and hadn’t met Benjamin yet. Have you met Benjamin?

EMILY

You mean Dad?

MRS POST

You’re silly. I was quite a dancer then. (Stops) What was I saying?

EMILY

Walking home from dance rehearsal and a bar.

MRS POST

Oh yes. Along the way home there was this little rustic restaurant and it was the only thing open all night long. I would stop in on my walk home and order a French dip sandwich, walk back to the house, let dogs out and then walk back and pick up my sandwich in about twenty minutes. I’d have the whole restaurant to myself.

EMILY

Sounds beautiful mom.

MRS POST

It got so quiet late at night in the mountains that when the wind was still, you could hear the snow land on the cars, the roof tops and the sidewalks. You could really hear it! . I thought I could hear people talking on the other side of the world. This one night it was bitterly, bitterly cold and blowing …below zero. I’d ordered my French Dip sandwich and let the dogs do their businesses and was on my way back. My hands were scruntched deep into the pockets of this glorious oversized parka. I had several layers of scarves and thick boots on. There must’ve been two feet of snow on the ground and more was coming down. Middle of the road had been plowed, but nothing else. So, down the middle of the road I walked. I passed the school and noticed through the streetlamp, hoarfrost blowing from the roof. I looked down to shield my eyes and thought to myself how nice it must be in California with the palm trees. As I walked…my boots made the only noise and they made this “boing” sound. My steps in the

IIii44

MRS POST cont

snow chanted “Go…home….go…home”. It was so cold and crusty the snow echoed as though I was walking in a box of chalk. Suddenly, I noticed that my boots were making much too much

noise for the number of steps I was taking. I looked up and there, in front of me, was this….Jabberwocky…Right in front of me!

EMILY

A what?

MRS POST

He had a rack like….(Gestures wildly with her arms) That sonnuvuh bitch would have had to have ducked to get into a football stadium. It was a moose! A huge bull blowing steam out of his nose like Con Ed or a mill out of a Dickens novel and he’s looking right at me! No further away than from here to the door.

EMILY

Jeez, mom.

MRS POST

He was like “Hey Rocky, watch me pull this white girl out of my ass. Nothin’ up my sleeve. Presto!!” So, I just sat down right there in the snow. I’m from the Midwest. I didn’t know what mooses were. I thought they were little sweet Bambi creatures. I didn’t know this thing wouldn’t eat me. You see, when it gets cold enough, many forest animals are forced out of their natural habitats and into towns where a bear might go through a garbage and a wolf might kill a cat or a small dog, moose will come down into town and nibble on low tree foliage and whatever exposed shrubbery might be available. After a while, he came over and gently bumped me with his big nose. He knocked me down splayed, but then I got up. And then I guess he saw that I was okay and was alive he just turned and walked away. Quietly…loped…away…through the streetlamp shadows and the cold blowing snow. Down the street. Well, I got up. And a normal girl would have run back to her house and never come out till springtime. But I got up and stomped two blocks to the restaurant. I was ticked that thing scared me so. Screaming obscenities at the top of my lungs. I just went Tourette’s all over that neighborhood. A gentleman smoking a cigarette at his motel doorway flipped his butt at me and went back into his room. And I heard him lock his door. All of this because of a sandwich. Because I was hungry.

EMILY(Smiling)

Wow.

MRS POST

I’m hungry now, Jennifer.

EMILY

Emily.

MRS POST

Of course you are. Will you tell me something?

EMILY

What?

IIi45

MRS POST (sadly)

Can you tell me what is happening to my life? I can remember things that happened like that years and years ago as clearly as if they are happening now. But I can’t remember… I know you’re name isn’t Jennifer. Who are you again?

EMILY

I’m your daughter, Emily

MRS POST

Emily what?

EMILY

What?

MRS POST

What’s your name? Your family name.

EMILY

Post. Just like yours.

MRS POST(Laughing)

Emily Post? What the hell were your parents thinking?

EMILY

I always wondered that myself, mom.

MRS POST(Cackles)

I suppose they just wanted to make sure you were a mannerly girl. Emily Post

EMILY

Maybe so.

MRS POST. (Whispering)

I knew a Richard Cox one time. He actually went by Dick.

EMILY

Mom!

MRS POST

Well he did! At least your parents didn’t name you “Hitching” or “Parcel” or Saturday Evening”.

EMILY

What?

MRS POST

And Lisa Ford. She was such a sweet girl. But why not lease a Honda or a Pontiac?

EMILY(Rising)

You are out of your frickin’ mind. Aren’t you?

MRS POST

Yup.

(Emily Tweaks her mother’s nose, playfully)

EMILY

I’m going to see where your supper is. (**EXITS**)

IIi46

MRS POST

And I knew a Ronald Mac Donald once. But he had the name first. They took this marvelous, gentle, sweet and helpful young man and a hamburger company turned him into an imbecile

right before our eyes. (Lifts her head gently, looks out into a garden. Quietly) There’s the squirrel. Hey Rocky! Hello. Tell your friend to Bullwinkle this!! ( She flips the squirrel the finger or grabs a body part that best indicates “this”)

**(MELODY RETURNS** and begins twirling again)

**LIGHTS OUT II sci**

IIii47

**Act II scene ii**

(MICK is asleep down right in his spot. WORRELL sits in his chair wears an identical outfit to that of BODY and WORRELL, MRS POST sits asleep in the dark in her wheelchair. MELODY is seated on the top platform in dance rest position. Snowfall is falling gently projected to all parts of the stage.)

WORRELL

C’mon, stay awake….

(Slaps the side of his own head)

Stay awake. Think. Dammit. Think.

(**DAD APPEARS** on the LEFT platform.)

DAD

One shot…any time you want, you little crapper. Anywhere.

WORRELL (Closes his eyes to avoid the memory)

I don’t want to see you.

DAD

You should have enlisted you coward.

WORRELL

I don’t want…I don’t want…

(Runs to push DAD away but collapses when he touches him)

DAD

I could have used my GI bill after the war and gone to college and made something of myself

WORRELL

I don’…

DAD

But you and your worthless mother came along and there went that idea.

WORRELL

Please

DAD(Somberly)

You ruined my life.

(Turns and sits on the platform)

WORRELL

And you ruined mine.

(**Lights off on DAD. He EXITS LEFT PLATFORM**. **WIFE ENTERS from the RIGHT platform**)

Oh Marcy…

WIFE/MARCY

Hello Worrell.

IIii48

WORRELL

I’m sorry. I’m sorry you had to come in here. I try not to think of you too often.

MARCY

I don’t blame you.

WORRELL

I know. It still hurts.

MARCY

I left. The whole thing was my fault.

WORRELL

But there must have been a reason you went away.

MARCY

It was me.

WORRELL

It was me too. How could you leave? What did I do? Why wouldn’t you talk to me?

MARCY

Maybe the whole marriage was a mistake.

WORRELL

I don’t think so. I loved you more than my life…

MARCY

And someone always loves more.

WORRELL

You betrayed me. Robbie and me. You betrayed us both. Because someone turned your head.

MARCY

I loved Gary.

WORRELL

You knew him for a month before you threw me away.

MARCY

I knew the minute I looked into his eyes, Worrell.

WORRELL

What did you see?

MARCY

I talked to his soul. I realized that the first second.

WORRELL

You couldn’t have told him when you first met him, “No…we shouldn’t be faithless? I’m married? I have a husband who adores me and child who needs me? My marriage vows mean something”?

MARCY

I saw that our marriage was a fraud.

WORRELL

I don’t get to watch my little boy grow up because of your whim?

MARCY

I didn’t feel you needed me or Robbi*e*, for that matter.

IIii49

WORRELL

Why did you get to decide that? How could I have made that clearer to you that I *did* need you.?

MARCY

*You* couldn’t have. *He* talked to my face, *he* talked to my heart. He was in every thought…he was in me and he talked to me…I understood him because he…let me in (Touches WORRELLS forehead) behind his eyes. (Whispering) Into his head. And his heart. He let me see his world, Worrell. Do you understand? I was in his mind. I was there and he trusted me…and he needed me. And I knew it. You didn’t. And I didn’t need to stay with you. This is the first time I’ve ever been in here. (Indicates their surroundings) Really. In your heart, in your thoughts. Goodbye Dear.

**(ROBBIE ENTERS from the left platform.** WORRELL Watches **MARCY EXIT** up the **RIGHT** platform and out, then sees ROBBIE lit at the top of the LEFT platform)

WORRELL

Welcome home soldier

ROBBIE

I’m sorry I didn’t get to hear you say that dad.

WORRELL

So am I, son.

ROBBIE

I know.

WORRELL

I got something to get off my chest.

ROBBIE

What’s that, Dad?

WORRELL

I blame myself for your not comin’ back from over there. I never told you but, I could have bought you and your wife that house.

ROBBIE

I knew that.

WORRELL

I didn’t like that she was taking you away from me, that she was not Christian, that she had trapped you with a baby. I didn’t like that I wasn’t your champion anymore. Didn’t want you to grow up so quick.

ROBBIE

That’s alright. I’m not really dwelling on anything these days.

WORRELL

I coulda bought you the house. I had the money. (Quietly) If I’d have bought that house for you, would you have still joined the Army?

IIii50

ROBBIE

Probably not.

WORRELL

Gone to college?

ROBBIE

Maybe

WORRELL(Grimaces)

So, just as surely as if I’d pulled the trigger.

ROBBIE

I made the final choice to go.

WORRELL

But I could have helped. I could have changed your life, and my life here now. I wouldn’t be alone…I would have family.

ROBBIE

You blame yourself if you want to. I don’t. We’re good , dad.

(**ROBBIE EXITS on the left platform**. **PETER ENTERS from right platform** and walks toward WORRELL)

MICK (Awakens)

How are you doing?

WORRELL

Thinking about my about my family, again.

MICK

Worrell.

WORRELL

I need to see him again.

(After a moment WORRELL crosses and picks up a photo from the table and looks at that. PETER reaches the bottom of the platform as LUCAS enters behind PETER and walks to PETER’S side)

Peter? Is that really you?

PETER

Hey grampa.

(PETER AND WORRELL embraces)

WORRELL

My gosh…you changed a little. Haven’t seen you for a while.

PETER(Smiles)

Yup

WORRELL

Who’s your buddy?

IIii51

PETER

This is Lucas.

LUCAS

Hey.

PETER

He’s my best friend. We just cut school today and I thought down here would be a cool place to go. We haven’t seen each other and we’re only 45 minutes away.

WORRELL

Won’t you boys get in trouble?

PETER

Nah…we’re seniors. We always cut.

WORRELL

You graduating from high school already?

PETER

Yup. Six months.

WORRELL

Really. You going to college?

PETER

We both got accepted to the same place. But he don’t know if he wants to go. Neither do I, really.

WORRELL

Your dad didn’t seem too high on college before he joined up the military.

PETER

He loved it there.

WORRELL

He did. When was the last time we saw each other?

PETER

Couple years ago. I came down for two weeks when mom went on vacation with Paul, remember?

WORRELL

How *is* your mom? And your step dad.?

PETER

She’s good.

WORRELL

How about him. He treat you okay?

PETER

Paul. Yeah, he’s nice.

WORRELL

Lucas, make yourself at home.

(LUCAS moves to inspect the rifles)

IIii52

PETER

You remember. It was that time we channeled each other

WORRELL

Oh yeah.

PETER

That was the last time we saw each other. That was pretty cool.

WORRELL

Yeah, it was. Spooky.

PETER

Ever happen again to you.?

WORRELL

Nooo…You’re still the only weird one.

PETER (To Lucas)

My inside guy climbed right inside his head and talked to his inside guy. He was wearing a cowboy suit.

LUCAS (Uninterested)

Cool.

WORRELL

Anything bring you down here in particular?

PETER

No, just hanging around. You want to come to my graduation ceremony?

WORRELL

Wouldn’t miss it.

PETER

Great.

WORRELL

You guys eat yet?

PETER

Yeah, on the way down.

(A dog bays in the distance)

WORRELL

There’s your dog. Coon or a groundhog probably.

PETER

She sounds like she means it.

WORRELL

Serious varmint killer. Maybe we’ll eat later, then? So, how did you two studs meet?

PETER

Oh just at school and stuff

WORRELL

You play ball on the same team?

PETER

No. Nothing like that. Mostly video games and stuff.

IIii53

WORRELL

‘Member I couldn’t even find the password for my computer? I had a computer down here for a couple of years but your Dad was the one that used it. I didn’t even know how to fire it up.

PETER

I’ll have to teach you again.

WORRELL

What’s your dad do, Luke?

LUCAS ( A little darkly)

My name’s Lucas.

WORRELL

Sorry…Lucas

LUCAS

He works at a lumberyard.

PETER

When he’s in town.

(The dog bays again)

WORRELL

He doesn’t live with you…

LUCAS

Whose rifles are these?

WORRELL

Well…the one is an M1.

LUCAS

I know

WORRELL

That was my dad’s.

LUCAS

Pretty. looks in good shape. Garand.

WORRELL

The M16 was my son’s. The AK belonged to Peter’s dad.

LUCAS

That can be a nasty tool. Government know you have that?

WORRELL

They do.

LUCAS

Afghanistan?

WORRELL

Mm-hm. The AK came back with a friend of Peter’s dad. The other two… One’s an old twelve gauge antique and the other is a little single bolt 22 I’ve had since I was a kid. (Crosses to Lucas) You know a lot about weaponry.

IIii54

PETER

His dad *was* military

LUCAS

My father is active in the NRA.

PETER

He knows his stuff…

LUCAS

And the Klan, too. That’s what my mother thinks.

WORRELL

Yeah…well…I personally never understood that. That confederate flag stuff all over the houses and cars. South ain’t gonna rise again and sure as heck not around here. We’re a hundred miles from Canada for cryin’ out loud.

LUCAS (A moment, stares at Worrell)

I agree. My dad’s a dick.

WORRELL

You uh..you want to take the 22 and go see if you can help that dog out…maybe?

LUCAS

22?

WORRELL

You probably don’t need the AK to get after a ground hog. Do you?

LUCAS (Smiles for the first time)

Good point. Sure. Thanks (Takes the gun)

WORRELL

You wanta go with him?

PETER

He doesn’t need me. He’ll probably come back with two groundhogs and a deer on his own.

LUCAS

Got any extra rounds?

WORRELL

In the garage in the window sill. Go in through the house there, turn left and then go straight outside. Save you walking back around the house

LUCAS

Great. (**LUCAS EXITS)**

WORRELL

So…

WORRELL AND PETER cross and sit at the table

PETER

So…

WORRELL

You got a girlfriend?

IIii55

PETER

Nah…not really

WORRELL

You don’t look happy, Peter. You look tired. Too tired for a young man your age.

PETER

I just got done driving up here for an hour.

WORRELL

Dark circles almost like tar around a baseball player’s eyes.

PETER(smiles)

You tryin to channel me again, grampa?

WORRELL

(He takes a bottle from a bag near his chair)

I’m surprised you remembered that.

PETER

Meant a lot to me.

WORRELL

Me too. You want a snort.

PETER

Whacha got?

WORRELL

Scotch. Take a little shot. You’ll feel better.

(Passes the bottle to Peter)

PETER

Dad died 18 years ago today.

WORRELL

I know that. I hoped you might come down.

PETER

I wish I’d have moved in with you that time and not left after a couple weeks.

WORRELL

What’s wrong, boy?

PETER

School is getting a little tricky.

WORRELL

It often does.. School society is unnatural and makes everyone but the Alphas vulnerable.

PETER

I was doin’ okay till I started seein’ this girl.

WORRELL

What’s her name?

PETER

Hannah. But she wasn’t the problem. This other guy didn’ like that I was hookin’ up with her and he started spreadin’ some crap about me and stuff.

IIii56

WORRELL

That happens too

PETER

Said some things to her brother about what I was supposedly doin’ to his sister in bed. WORRELL

Oh, jeez

PETER

Every day something new…some new nasty comment. Look what he posted. (Takes out his cell phone) Look at this…let me bring this up.

WORRELL

Can’t you go to a principal or counselor or something?

PETER

(Shows him the phone) Look at this….

WORRELL

Holy crap, boy. Is that you?

PETER

Counselor can’t do anything about that.

WORRELL

Jesus, Peter why would you take a picture of yourself like that and let somebody get ahold of it to pass it around on the internet.

PETER

I didn’t, Pa. It’s airbrushed. They put my face on the body. They can do that stuff to anybody and it doesn’t take a genius to do it. WORRELL

(Gives him back the phone)The school lets them do that?

PETER

What are they gonna do? There are about fifty pictures of my face on filthy photos on line right now.. Sarah, started to believe some of it. She doesn’t want to be seen with me now. WORRELL

Sorry.

PETER

Her brother said to me “You’re the reason we still use terms like ‘nigger’ and ‘faggot’.” They burnt a cross on the lawn. I guess ‘cause I’m part jewish.

WORRELL

Burnt a cross?

PETER

Yeah

IIii57

WORRELL

I wish you would have moved down here.

PETER

You and I, we got along good.

WORRELL

Makes me so angry. You want me to go talk to somebody? You want me to go rough somebody up?

PETER

Yeah, and you’d end up in jail.

( A small caliber rifle shot can be heard in the distance…dog bays again)

WORRELL

Ill kick his ass. All of them!! Catch him after school and kick it good

PETER

He’s not ten years old, Pa. He’s eighteen. He’s a huge, football player sized grown man. He and his buddies would kill you.

WORRELL

I doubt that

PETER

Lucas is about my only friend They started up on him in the hall and he just gave them a creepy look and they kind of stay away from him.

(Another gun shot WORRELL, grimaces a little. Holds his hand)

PETER  
What? What happened.

WORRELL

Huh. I think I mighta just got hit with a ricochet.

PETER

Really…what? Lemme see!

WORRELL

No…that’s alright. I’m hardly bleeding. Not much more than a mosquito bite

PETER

He shouldn’t be shooting towards the house.

WORRELL

I doubt he was. You don’t know where a ricochet is going to go. Million different directions. It’s okay.

PETER

Still…

IIii58

WORRELL

They sound like they’re having fun, though.

PETER

Lucas is pretty chill about stuff. He keeps reminding me. “You only need to put up with them a few more months till we graduate.”

WORRELL

I don’t know why people don’t leave other people alone these days. They find they can get to you and they don’t stop.

PETER

You should have somebody down here with you.

WORRELL

Where you going after graduation?

PETER

Me and Lucas were thinking about hiking through Europe and staying in hostels. Decide there about college.

WORRELL

Your parents let you do that?

PETER

Not their call. I’ll be legal by then.

WORRELL

Yeah, I guess you will. Doesn’t seem possible. Well…you can come down here anytime.

PETER

You ever think about getting married again?

WORRELL

Me? Lord no. Never even close, really.

PETER

Maybe you should.

WORRELL

Never been very lucky in that department. Your grandmother couldn’t wait to ditch out. PETER

You never even had one that you would have liked to have been with?

WORRELL

When I was about your age. I would have opened my veins for this one girl. I’m not sure she even knew I was alive. Goofy thing. Popped her gum.

PETER

You ever get lucky?

WORRELL

With her?

PETER

Yeah

IIii59

WORRELL

Nah...Only in my dreams. ( a moment WORRELL, then looks at Peter) I’m gonna tell ya. I don’t look for that stuff anymore, though.

PETER

Yeah, right.

WORRELL

S’truth. Not since I was young. I don’t need the perfect body on a woman or bags of money if she has ‘em. And I don’t need to bask in shine of an exquisite woman. Knowing that I am the favored one. Not knowing the hell why. (earnestly) What I need is to be missed when I’m away. I need a great big smile when she sees me again. ( a moment) And I need her to hold my hand when I come back. I don’t need much. But I want it all.

PETER

What was my dad like when he was my age?

WORRELL

Your dad was one of those guys who just lit up when you came into the room. He could make you feel like you were the most important person he’d ever met. PETER

Everything I’m not.

WORRELL

That’s not true, son. You’re a lot alike. In your own ways. PETER

He was too patriotic.

WORRELL

Lot of irony in our family. Those that didn’t ever fight and never needed to, went off to war. And died. Those that wanted to fight, shouldn’t have. They ruined their lives and drove their loved ones away…like *my* dad did. And others who maybe should have fought back a little like me, and didn’t … they up with nothing to fight *for.*

PETER

I’m sorry.

WORRELL

You’re gonna find out when you’re my age that having somebody around that you know loves you is a most important thing.

PETER

Yeah.

(PETER CROSSES away to the platform. Sits on the first level)

MICK

I think I glanced him again tonight.

WORRELL

Who?

MICK

His little inside guy. Petey.

IIii60

WORRELL

I would have liked to have seen him.

MICK

He loved you so, Worrell.

WORRELL

I wouldn’t know love it if it stepped on me.

MICK

You might fool yourself.

WORRELL

You just feel any snow?

MICK

What?

WORRELL

Snow.

MICK

How the hell would it be snowing inside of your head? (Indicates BODY)

WORRELL

Well…. Brain does funny stuff sometimes. You said so yourself. I just thought…I felt something. Or maybe I’m feelin’ it for him.

MICK

You satisfied now?

WORRELL

With what?

MICK

Going back with the grandson. You get any answers to why you’re alone yet?

WORRELL

I didn’t go back all the way. I just went back to the first visit.

MICK

Then get it over with, Worrell. You come this far. Get it over with.

WORRELL(Sighs, turns)

‘kay…(walks back toward center stage)

They came back to visit the next week and the week after that and for several weeks to come.

(PETER crosses to Worrell**, LUCAS ENTERS and steps to PETER’S side**)

IIii60

LUCAS

Thanks for letting me and the dog go hunting again, Mister McConnell That M1 was bitchin’!

WORRELL

I’m glad you enjoyed yourself. I enjoy having you two here PETER

You were always a good cook, pa.

LUCAS

I’ll say. Thank you, sir.

WORRELL

Believe me, it’s my pleasure.

PETER

Well we should be getting going. Want to get back before dark.

LUCAS

You know, sir. The guns are not shooting as good as they could be. I mean, I been brushing them out but…my dad has some solvent that would get those bores true for you. You need to have them cleaned more often.

WORRELL

Hell, boy…I don’t know anything about those things. I forgot everything I knew. I haven’t shot any of them for years. I’m surprised they didn’t blow up in your face the first time you shot them.

LUCAS

Would you mind if I took them home and me and my dad cleaned them up for you? As like a, thank you.

WORRELL

Well that, that’s awfully nice of you. You don’t have to do that, but okay. (Opens his wallet) You wanna pick up some more ammo too? Forty…fifty dollars worth, maybe?

LUCAS

Sure. Ill bring them back next weekend

PETER

See you grampa. ( PETER hugs WORRELL **AND EXITS up the platforms in front of LUCAS who waits at the top.)**

WORRELL

But he didn’t get them cleaned. (LUCAS turns and faces the audience, holding the rifles in the shadows) He didn’t take them home, neither. (CROSSES TO MICK, as) He did take them to the high school the next day and use them on his schoolmates, though. And when Peter tried to stop him, he used them on him, too. **(LUCAS EXITS)**

MICK

Worrell…

WORRELL (Frantic, terrified)

I did this to myself. Didn’ I? Every person who ever was close to me got pushed away…or ended. I gotta find the dog….I gotta at least find my dog.

( MICK embraces him)

IIii61

MICK

Its gonna be okay. You’re gonna be alright. He’s strong(to the BODY)….We’ll get through this. He’ll get us through this.

WORRELL

It is such hell…to outlive everything you ever loved.

MICK

I know.

WORRELL

Maybe it’s true.

MICK

What?

WORRELL

If you die in your dreams, you die for real.

MICK

Don’t you give up on me, Worrell.

WORRELL

I should just go ahead.

MICK

Don’t you dare!

WORRELL

I am so forlorn. I am a wretched, miserable excuse for a man.

MICK

You did well. You only did what you thought you should do.

WORRELL

Then I was misled. (Turns to MICK)

MICK

I always did my best by you. I always tried to take good care of you.

WORRELL

Well, we certainly made some mistakes, though, didn’t we?

MICK

But that’s all they were. Your heart was in the right place.

WORRELL

(Sighs, then looks at the mannequin, crosses to BODY) It *is* startin’ to snow.

MICK

You’d think he’d start chillin’ or shakin’.

WORRELL

Maybe a part of him don’t want to stay alive.

MICK

As long as there is good in a man’s heart…there’s a possibility of greater good to other people.

IIii62

WORRELL

I don’t know, buddy. I think I’m done with all this. Dog?! (Dazed, disconnected) Help me find the dog? I gotta find my dog(Rises…**CROSSES LEFT OF THE HOUSE, EXITS**) (The lights fade out and leave MICK alone in a spot in the darkness)

MICK

Well I’m not. I ain’t a coward…I’ll ask. I’ll even beg….(Out, then to the heavens, out over backstage) I need something here. I need some help here. Anybody!! Anybody?! PLEASE! PLEASE! SOMEBODY HELP ME!!(Silence) Please…..somebody! I need somebody. I truly do need somebody.

MICK

Somebody. Please. Please. PLEASE HELP ME! (He goes to his knees) Help me…

(MICK’S calls gradually fade to barely voiced. As his calls weaken, the lights crossfade down on him and up to half on the BODY).

Please…someone…please.

(The lights on the BODY stay on for a few more seconds in silence as the snow falls harder… then lights on the BODY go down)

(Whimpers in near darkness) Help me….please. Help me….

(**MELODY** sitting in dance rest the top of the platform is suddenly hit with an upper body spot. The snow goes out. Her eyes fly open and she looks toward **MICK**. The lights come softly up on **MRS POST** sitting in her chair. **MELODY** runs to **MRS. POST’S** side and awakens her with a whisper in her ear. **MELODY** RETURNSto the platform)

MRS POST(Calling out)

EMILY! EMILY EMILY! Emily!

EMILY

**(ENTERS**) What mom? Are you okay

MRS POST

Emily…you have to do something!

EMILY

Did you have a bad dream!?

MRS POST(Almost violently)

NO! I have something we have to do. You have to do this. You *have* togo somewhere!

EMILY

Its dark mom and it’s snowing.

MRS POST

(Tries to stand)

Then give me your keys. I’ll drive myself. Please.

EMILY

Alright, alright. Let me get a coat.

**END ACT II sceneii**

IIiii63

**ACT II sceneiii**

(Nearly an hour later. MICK is alone. WORRELL has replaced the BODY in the chair onstage up right but it should not be apparent.

SNOW LOOP on the scrim across the stage)

MICK

(sitting next to the BODY/ WORRELL He is partially covered in snow)

(Dazed, weak) One Christmas we put a bow around her neck. If they was ever a dog that didn’t deserve a green and red sissy velvet felt Christmas collar with bow around its neck it was this one. We didn’t know the collar had a button that when you pushed it, it played a real tinny Japanese sounding “Jingle Bells”. Dog didn’ know either. She lived under the bed and Christmas night must’ve scratched herself and set it off. Jingles Bells comes out from under the bed followed right after by eight or nine really loud whams from underneath it. “Jingle bells, dee dee dee” ….Bang bang bang, bang!. She’s just cavin’ her own head in on the bottom of the bed. If Jingles Bells suddenly went off in your own head you might probably do the same thing maybe…I don’t blame her…poor thing. Pulled her out from under the bed and she was shakin’….bug eyes lookin’ at me like “What’d the hell’d you do that for?” Shouldn’t be surprised that she left. Vengeance. Not comin’ back, I mean.

You oughtn’ to leave me here, Worrell. (Walks away)You can’t just go out of your mind and go look for a dog. Somebody’s either picked it up or it’s dead, Worrell. WORRELL! You can’t leave me here! Can you hear me?! You ain’t gone and looked for the dog, have you? I know what you’re doing, you ain’t looking for no dog. You’re a runner. You run from everything. Where you going to Worrell? You ain’t got nothing ner nobody to run to. EVERYBODY LEFT YA. Nobody to run from and nobody to run to. ( A moment) This how it happens? When you die? I’ll tell you what…you don’t dare be alone at the end, do you? You probably shoulda made your peace with your God, huh, Worrell? Why dincha do that? Why didn’t ya? Cause of your crap, I’m screwed. I mean, what would it have hurt?

(Silence…he sits on the DC stage…puts his head in his hands as the lights slowly begin to dim..)

Obviously could have used….. some help….Oh…I’m forgetting how to breath.

I can’t do this by myself. I’m too little, Worrell. I wasn’t meant to do this alone. (Delirious, frightened, losing life) I uh…lemme I mean uh….I threw crabapples at Tommy. I beat him up. I don’t know why things turned out like this. I tried to be good. My father whupped me so hard onetime on my bare ass…I scooted it on the cold linoleum floor to cool it off.

(Laughs, the laughter dissolves into hysteria and tears)

IIiii64

How the hell do you go a whole, complete lifetime without being loved by at least somebody?

(Sighs…splays out on the floor face up. EMILY calls “Hello?” from offstage. After a moment, **EMILY ENTERS**)

EMILY (in a large winter coat)

(Sees WORRELL/BODY)

Hello?… (CROSSES to him) Oh gosh. (Shakes him a little) Are you alright? Mr. McConnell? Ohmigosh! (Takes off her coat and puts it around WORRELL)

(Takes out her cell and dials, turns away. WORRELL/BODY raises his head and tries to speak)

**END ACT II scene iii**

CODA-65

**CODA …ACT II SCENE IV**

(Indeterminate amount of time later. WORRELL sits in a wheelchair asleep next to MRS POST who is seated in her regular wheelchair. She holds a yearbook. MELODY sits in the dark at the top of the platforms )

MRS POST

(Looks out her window)

Little blue bird… Little puffball baby birdie….(WORRELL awakens.) Puffball little bird. Little blue bird. Baby bird….(Turns and looks suddenly at WORRELL) Never seen a bird that blue before. If I had a bowl of vanilla ice cream, I’d eat him …wouldn’t you?

WORRELL

What the hell?

MRS POST

Just one bite. He looks like a Peep, or a pastry. (Back to the window) By George, he *does* have wings. There he goes.

(Waves)

WORRELL

Where in the hell did they put me now?

MRS POST

They used to stick me in the back of Lazarus store at night. But my daughter put a stop to that.

WORRELL

Well, I’m glad for you. Can you tell me something? Am I real right now?

MRS POST

Rene Descartes!!! How are you today?

WORRELL

Hehn?

MRS POST

(Pinches him)

Yes. You are. Real. So am I. Are you okay?

WORRELL

Well…Who are you?

MRS POST

Puddin’ tane. Ask me again, I’ll tellya the same.

WORRELL

I’m fine. I think. MRS POST

After the snow last week it seems like springtime outside.

WORRELL

Did they just wheel me up? How long have I been here?

CODA-66

MRS POST

Forever and a day...

WORRELL

No. I mean…where am I?

MRS POST

Fossil farm.

WORRELL

Oh. How long have I been here?

MRS POST

Several days. A week maybe.

WORRELL

Gonna try to go back to my farmhouse first chance I get.

MRS POST

You need to rethink that one, Skippy.

WORRELL

Beg pardon?

MRS POST

You’re here for a reason. It’s Kismet.

WORRELL

What?

MRS POST

You’re not going anywhere now. (Sinister laugh) You’re one of us. Heheheheheheheh! (Silence) I haven’t seen you until today. I mean I knew you were coming. But that doesn’t mean much. You could’ve been here but they tell me I don’t remember things sometimes. Heck, I could’ve lived with you every day for the last 40 years and I wouldn’t know for sure. Sounds like a dream date, huh?

WORRELL

What?

MRS POST

Beautiful woman that doesn’t remember anything? You could probably ravage me and I’d forget all about it by morning.

WORRELL

So they had you in the back of Lazarus, huh?

MRS POST

What?

WORRELL

I worked at Lazarus for a little while.

MRS POST

I accidently burned down my house.

WORRELL

Izzat right?

CODA-67

MRS POST

Yeah. I was making bacon sandwiches and then I dropped some chicken soup right in the hot greasy pan and then BOOM…flash…whole place caught fire!

WORRELL

Wow. Then it sounds like you’re in the right place now, huh?

MRS POST

When you want people to like you, try to make them feel better about themselves.

WORRELL

Sorry.

MRS POST

I have onset senile dementia.

WORRELL

You’re an old crazy lady?

MRS POST

Yes. That seems to be the going consensus. WORRELL

Sorry.

MRS POST

You say that a lot. How are you feeling today?

WORRELL

I don’t know.

MRS POST

I really *did* burn my house down. I have scars on my keyster.

WORRELL

I’ll take your word on that.

MRS POST

Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth. So what’d *you* do?

WORRELL

Whattya mean “What’d I do”?

MRS POST

Strapping youngster like yourself, you must be skippin’ a couple beats somewhere or they wouldn’t have put you in here with people like me.

WORRELL

When I left the hospital…they musta moved me here,.

MRS POST

What reason’d they give ya?

WORRELL

Didn’t . And I don’t burn things down or eat birds or anything.

CODA-68

MRS POST

Listen, you don’t just check in like at the Hilton. What happened? They didn’t trust me to take care of myself and when I left the hospital, neither did I. My daughter can’t take me, so here I am. What about you? What’d you do?

WORRELL

I uh…talk to myself a little I guess.

MRS POST

Uh-huh

WORRELL

Sometimes I get a little loud like I think someone’s there carrying on a conversation with me. And I didn’t pay bills for a while.

MRS POST

And?

WORRELL

Forgot a buncha words. I didn’t bathe regularly, I guess. My son and grandson died because of me, just being born ruined my father’s life and drove my wife into the arms of another man….and my dog ran away.

MRS POST

Human sunshine. What did you do? Starve it ?

WORRELL

Who knows? I forget stuff. I can’t even remember its name. MRS POST

Well all that’s nothin’. Every man I’ve ever known does all of that not bathing and other stuff. Except the dog part. That concerns me a little. You sure you had a dog?

WORRELL

I caused my family …..

MRS POST

I have card from a nephew.

(Fumbles around in the yearbook and takes out a card)

I am going to be a great, great aunt soon! (Looks at WORRELL) We’re getting old . Soooo…I have written cards to everybody I can think of in my family in response to this glorious news. “I just thought of something terrifying. Apparently, I have a great nephew somewhere in his twenties who is about to be a daddy. (WORRELL is not listening anymore, she notices) Assuming he’s normal and gets married and the child is not stillborn or deformed.

WORRELL

Stillborn what? …what…what?

CODA 69

MRS POST

Sh-sh..” I will be a great, great aunt sometime in the very near future. Back in the 50’s and 60’ s an aunt was somebody boring who had sticky, plastic covering on the couches. Great Aunts were the ones who walked funny, whose carpets had weird flowers and prints on them, lived in old houses with creaky floors and all the furniture had claw feet. The “parlor” rooms always smelled like a bunch of old violets and gardenias who’d gotten together and vomited in there. GREAT, GREAT aunts… were dead. Nobody even remembered their first names for sure. My just great aunts all had names like Bertha and Marguerite and Esther.

Nobody has named a kid these names since the 1880’s. All I’m saying is WHAT THE HELL! How am I still alive? “Now I finished it with “Seriously, congratulations great nephew Joseph Alan on the baby on the way. But if anybody else on my brother’s side of the family, does any more of this crap, I promise, I will find you and somebody is going to get gelded” Whattya think?

WORRELL

You frighten me…

MRS POST

So, why are you in a wheel chair?

WORRELL

Can’t walk. They tell me I had episodes.

MRS POST

Wow.

WORRELL

They Thought I may have had two TIA’s at home and one “event” that tried to kill me on the way to the hospital. Seizure, something… But not much conclusive showed up in the tests so I don’t know that for sure anymore. I ain’ no doctor. Maybe the little guys inside of me are coming unstrung. Maybe I’m going nuts. I think maybe we had some serious, I don’t know, panic attacks or something. Do you think you can die from a panic attack? Absolutely nothing made any sense.

MRS POST

At the time I’m having them, yes.

WORRELL

That’s why I’m here, I’ll bet.

MRS POST

That must’ve been a terrible day.

WORRELL

It was… wildly interesting.

MRS POST

Why have they got you in the wheel chair then?

WORRELL

I can’t walk by myself.

CODA-70

MRS POST

Why?

WORRELL

I don’t know. I don’t think I can. Apparently they don’t want me wandering around until I can get little better handle on myself. All of my selves.

MRS POST  
Who?

WORRELL

My inside guy. Guys.

MRS POST

Roses are red, violets are blue. I’m schizophrenic and so am I.

WORRELL

What?

MRS POST

You know his name?

WORRELL

Who?

MRS POST

Your little guy

WORRELL

My little guy?

MRS POST(A little smirk)

Your little guy.

WORRELL

Where’s this conversation going, sister?

MRS POST

It’s a conversation, isn’t it? You’re communicating with the outside world.

WORRELL

Yeah. I don’t know if I need to go this far outside, though.

MRS POST

Come out, come out, whoever you are.

WORRELL(Smiles…a moment)

It’s a pleasure to talk to someone that at least tries to understand.

MRS POST

But don’t ask me to dance.

WORRELL

What? No I don’t…

MRS POST

Cause I’m not going to sit on your lap in a wheelchair.

WORRELL

I don’t want you to.

MRS POST

Pervert. Your “little guy”…hmph.

CODA-71

WORRELL(smiling)

*You* took us down that road.

MRS POST

You filthy old goat.

WORRELL

I am not. I didn’t…Jubilee!!

MRS POST  
(without missing a beat as playing word association) Wingding!

WORRELL

Dog’s name. I remembered the dog’s name.

MRS POST

Got any gum?

WORRELL

Nah…(he looks hard at her as though trying to figure out from where he recognizes her.)

MRS POST

Too bad I always dance better with gum. People used to think I was stupid, because I could pop my gum loudly. People used think I’d make a good hairdresser. I mean, really? (She has tears in her eyes)

WORRELL(To MRS POST)

I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you.

(A soft light comes up on MELODY as **MICK ENTERS** and sits next to MELODY on the platforms.)

MRS POST

I’m fine. Where have you been? (Bops his arm). I missed you.

WORRELL

What…hey.…ow.

(She takes the book and places it on her lap)

Hey look at that!

MRS POST(Playing coy)

Whatever are you speaking about?

WORRELL

Well, that’s a Westmont High yearbook.

MRS POST

Why yes. Yes it is.

WORRELL

Well. I went there too!! That’s the same book, same cover I had for my senior year. Where in the heck….

MRS POST

Do…effing…tell

WORRELL

Wait! Gimme that.(Takes the book) Lemme show you something. I’m in here. What year were you in?

CODA-72

MRS POST

1960.

WORRELL

Really? So was I!

MRS POST

Really? I’ve changed *that* much?

WORRELL(Oblivious)

See…(Show her his picture) That’s me!

MRS POST

(She impatiently takes the book back, thumbs a couple of pages and points)

And that’s me.

(He reacts, stunned)

(Smiles broadly)Come on pal…. Catch up… You can do this.

(He still doesn’t move but continues to gape at her. Finally, she leans over and kisses him gently on his forehead. She takes his hand)

WORRELL

(HE sighs deeply, catches his breath and whispers into her eyes)

Oh my..

(“SUMMER’S END” COMES UP John Prine)

**CURTAIN**