

ACT ONE
SCENE 1

#1 IF YOU KNEW MY STORY

(1945. LIMBO)

ALICE

IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
YOU'D HAVE A HARD TIME
BELIEVING ME
YOU'D THINK I WAS LYING
JOY AND SORROW NEVER LAST
I'LL DIE TRYING NOT TO LIVE IN THE PAST

IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
MY HEAVEN AND MY HELL
IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
YOU'D HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL

I LEFT MY CLOTHES ON THAT COLD RIVER ROCK
MY CARES AND MY WOES ROLLED UP IN MY SOCKS
I LAID DOWN IN THAT MOUNTAIN STREAM
AND THE ICY WATER RUSHED OVER ME

ALICE

IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
MY HEAVEN AND MY HELL
IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
YOU'D HAVE A GOOD
STORY TO
TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE

WOMEN AND MEN

OOH...
OOH...
OOH...
YOU'D HAVE A GOOD
STORY TO
TELL...

ALICE

TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE

WOMEN

TELL...

ALICE

MANY BACKS HAVE BROKEN FROM LESSER WEIGHT I KNOW
I WAS BORN TO CARRY MORE THAN I CAN HOLD
EVEN THOUGH I STUMBLE
EVEN THOUGH I FALL,
YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME CRUMBLE,
YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME CRAWL

ALICE

IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
DREW THE WATER FROM MY
WELL
IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
YOU'D HAVE A GOOD
STORY TO
TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE
TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE
EVEN THOUGH I STUMBLE
EVEN THOUGH I FALL
YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME
CRUMBLE
YOU'LL NEVER SEE
ME CRAWL
IF YOU KNEW MY STORY

WOMEN AND MEN

IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
OOH...
IF YOU KNEW MY STORY
YOU'D KNOW HAVE A GOOD
STORY TO
TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE
TELL ME I'M NOT ALONE
I STUMBLE
OOH... I FALL
OOH...
YOU'LL NEVER SEE
AHH...AHH...
OOH...OOH...

WOMEN AND MEN

YOU'D HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL
YOU'D HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL

BILLY CANE

YOU'D HAVE A GOOD STORY TO TELL

*(The stage set spins. BILLY is
approaching home.)*

[TRANSITION TO:]

SCENE 3

(1945. MARGO'S BOOKSHOP.)

(MARGO runs a modest bookshop. There are a few customers in the shop. She hands a book to MAX, a young customer.)

MARGO

Here it is, Max. Since when did you become such an avid reader?

MAX

Since you took over the bookstore. When you stopped working at the soda shop I lost three pounds. Margo, would you like to go to the movies sometime?

MARGO

I don't want you to spend your money on me.

MAX

It would be cheaper than buying all these books!

(MAX sighs and leaves. BILLY enters.)

~~FLORENCE~~ Margo

Hi, Billy.

BILLY CANE

Margo. Sorry, it took me a while to make it in.

MARGO

I thought it might. How are things with Daddy?

BILLY CANE

He's doing better. It's strange. We both swear we can hear her call out to us sometimes.

MARGO

How are you doing?

BILLY CANE

I started writing again. And that brings me comfort.
(then, picking up a book from the counter)

A thesaurus? Are you writing now?

MARGO

No, Max just returned it. He thought it was a book about dinosaurs.

(then)

Oh, and Billy, I read the story you sent me.

BILLY CANE

I've been wondering about that. What'd you think?

MARGO

(teasing)

Well, it started out great...but...

BILLY CANE

Oh.

MARGO

Then it got better and better!

BILLY CANE

It did?

MARGO

Billy, you've grown up and so has your writing.

(She retrieves his stories from a shelf.)

Now, I caught a few typos and retyped it on heavy bond. In fact, I retyped them all!

BILLY CANE

(earnest)

Thank you. Thank you.

(then)

Margo, I've been thinking. What if...what if I submitted some of these stories to the Asheville Southern Journal?

MARGO

Oh, Billy! Yes. Yes. You were always so tentative about it. What made you decide that?

#3 BRIGHT STAR

BILLY CANE

I'M READY FOR MY LIFE TO BEGIN
I'M READY FOR IT ALL TO START
MY HEART'S ABOUT TO BUST
DON'T LEAD THE WAY I MUST
FOLLOW MY OWN BRIGHT STAR

MARGO

Edna, we still have that special delivery stamp I've been saving?

EDNA

We sure do.

BILLY CANE

I'm not mailing them, Margo. I'm going to hand-carry them to Asheville, and sleep like a dog on their doorstep until I get published.

FLORENCE

(exiting)

Good luck, Billy.

BILLY CANE

MANY A LONG COLD NIGHT
I HUDDLED DOWN IN THE DARK
I MADE A VOW IF I EVER MADE IT OUT
I'D FOLLOW MY OWN BRIGHT STAR

BRIGHT STAR
KEEP SHINING FOR ME
SHINE ON AND SEE ME THROUGH

BRIGHT STAR
KEEP SHINING FOR ME
AND ONE DAY I'LL SHINE FOR YOU

(BILLY hugs MARGO, and exits the bookstore.)

MARGO

For what's it's worth, I'll [miss you]...

(But BILLY is gone.)

(We begin a travel montage of him heading for Asheville.)

BILLY CANE

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT
LIFE WILL BRING
ONLY WHAT YOU BRING TO
LIFE
HOPES AND DREAMS AND
FINE IMAGININGS
THEY HAPPEN IN THEIR
OWN GOOD TIME.
I'VE SEEN A WEAK MAN
FIGHT
I'VE SEEN A STRONG MAN
CRY
I HAVE LEARNED THE
BRIGHTEST DAY CAN TURN
INTO THE DARKEST NIGHT

BRIGHT STAR KEEP
SHINING FOR ME
SHINE ON AND SEE ME
THROUGH
BRIGHT STAR KEEP
SHINING FOR ME
AND ONE DAY I'LL SHINE
FOR YOU

BILLY CANE

THERE'S ALWAYS A SONG
TO SING
A MELODY IN THE DARK
LIFTS MY SPIRITS EVERY
TIME I HEAR IT
COMFORTS MY ACHING
HEART

BILLY CANE

KEEP SHINING FOR ME

AND SEE ME THROUGH
KEEP SHINING FOR ME
I'M ON MY WAY

ENSEMBLE

OOH...

OOH...

OOH...

HAPPEN IN THEIR OWN
GOOD TIME

OOH...

AH...

OOH...

CRY...

BRIGHTEST DAY CAN TURN
INTO THE DARKEST NIGHT

BRIGHT STAR

SHINE ON SHINE ON

OOH...

AND ONE DAY
AHH...AHH...

ENSEMBLE

OOH...

OOH...

AHH...

ENSEMBLE

BRIGHT STAR BRIGHT DAY
BRIGHT LIGHTS BRIGHT
WAY
BRIGHT STAR BRIGHT DAY
I'M ON, I'M ON MY WAY

BILLY CANE (CONT'D)
BRIGHT STAR KEEP
SHINING FOR ME

SHINE ON AND SEE ME
THROUGH
BRIGHT STAR KEEP
SHINING FOR ME
AND ONE DAY I'LL SHINE
FOR YOU

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)
BRIGHT STAR BRIGHT DAY
BRIGHT LIGHTS BRIGHT
WAY

SHINE ON AND SEE ME
THROUGH
BRIGHT STAR BRIGHT DAY
CARRY ME FAR AWAY
I'M GONE I'M ON MY WAY

BILLY AND ENSEMBLE

BRIGHT STAR KEEP SHINING FOR ME
SHINE ON AND SEE ME THROUGH
BRIGHT STAR KEEP SHINING FOR ME
AND ONE DAY I'LL SHINE

BILLY CANE
FOR YOU

ENSEMBLE
AHH...AHH...

[TRANSITION TO:]

ALICE

I entered an essay contest in Raleigh. The first prize was five dollars, and I won it.

JIMMY RAY

What was it about?

ALICE

I wrote about how there should be a rebirth of Southern writers, all writing about the Southern way, and that's how we can make our voices known.

JIMMY RAY

I don't know how a group of judges from Raleigh could turn that down.

ALICE

They couldn't. I took that five dollars and put it toward my college fund.

JIMMY RAY

How much do you have in your college fund?

ALICE

Five dollars.

(then)

Want a biscuit?

JIMMY RAY

I wouldn't mind havin' a biscuit.

(ALICE takes one over to him. He reaches out for it.)

ALICE

Your hands are dirty! You don't want to eat a dirty biscuit.

JIMMY RAY

You better feed it to me then.

ALICE

Now, you and I were thinking the exact same thought.

(ALICE feeds him the biscuit.)

JIMMY RAY

~~You got a little wildcat about you, Alice Murphy.~~

ALICE

What's that book?

(ALICE grabs the book out of his toolbox.)

JIMMY RAY

Hey there!

(ALICE looks at the title.)

F. Scott Fitzgerald. He's a new writer.

ALICE

(reads)

I know who he is. "The Beautiful and Damned." Is that us, Jimmy Ray?

JIMMY RAY

Damned if I know, but you're sure beautiful. I finished it. You can keep it.

ALICE

If my daddy sees the title he'll kill me.

JIMMY RAY

Read it under the covers.

#5 WHOA, MAMA

ALICE

(looks at poster for dance)

So, who you gonna take to the Couples' Day dance?

JIMMY RAY

I don't know yet.

ALICE

Well, I'm standing right here in front of you.

JIMMY RAY

That's not proper, you asking me.

ALICE

I read in a book that sometimes you have to plant an idea
in a boy's head.

JIMMY RAY

Well, that might be a pretty smart book.

YOU'RE A YOUNG GIRL
AND YOU OUGHTA KNOW BETTER
THAN TO BE HERE
WHAT WOULD EVERYBODY THINK

WHOA MAMA, BETTER BACK UP SLOWLY
MAKE A QUICK GETAWAY AND HURRY ON HOME
WHOA MAMA AT THE RATE YOU'RE GOING
YOUR POP'LL GET A SHOTGUN HAVE TO RUN MEN OFF

THEY'LL HIDE IN THE SHADOWS FALL OUT OF TREES
WAIT BY YOUR WINDOW WHISPER BLESS YOU WHEN YOU SNEEZE
SOMEONE WILL LOOK AT YOU JUST LIKE THIS
SOMEONE WILL ASK YOU FOR A KISS

YOU'RE A SMART GIRL MAKE A FOOL OF SOMEBODY
I'M A SMART GUY AND I KNOW THAT IT WON'T BE ME

ALICE

We'll see.

JIMMY RAY (PLUS ENSEMBLE)

(WHOA, MAMA,) TAKE A SECOND
LOOK BEFORE YOU SET YOUR SIGHTS ON ME
(WHOA, MAMA,) I'M A RESTLESS SMALL TOWN BOY WITH A
HEART AS WILD AS A BIG CITY

(Dance break from JIMMY RAY.)

JIMMY RAY

SOMEONE WILL TAKE YOUR
HAND
JUST LIKE SO
SOMEONE WILL NEVER WANNA
LET YOU GO
SOMEONE WILL PUT YOU ON
A PEDESTAL
SOMEONE WILL TELL YOU
YOU'RE INCREDIBLE

ENSEMBLE

OOH...
JUST LIKE SO
OOH...
LET YOU GO
SOMEONE
OOH...
SOMEONE
OOH...

ALICE

I'M A YOUNG GIRL
AND I WANNA GO DANCING
WANNA DIP AND TWIRL
WITH THE HANDSOMEST BOY IN TOWN

ALICE

SOMEBODY BETTER COMB
THEIR HAIR
AND PUT A CLEAN SHIRT
ON
PICK ME UP AT EIGHT
SOMEBODY BETTER TAKE
ME THERE
GONNA HAVE A LOT OF
FUN ON OUR VERY FIRST
DATE

ENSEMBLE

SOMEBODY

SOMEBODY

SOMEONE WILL WANT FOR
YOU TO
WALK HER HOME
SOMEONE WILL WANT A
LITTLE
TIME ALONE
SOMEONE WILL WAIT
AS LONG AS IT TAKES
FOR YOU

OOH...

WALK HER HOME
OOH...

TIME ALONE
OOH...
OOH...
OOH...

JIMMY RAY

YOU'RE A SWEET GIRL WRAP A MAN AROUND YOUR PINKY
ON YOUR FEET GIRL GET GOIN' 'CAUSE IT WON'T BE ME

ALICE

SOMEBODY'S GONNA BUZZ
AROUND ME
LIKE A FUZZY BUMBLE BEE

ENSEMBLE

SOMEBODY

JIMMY RAY

WHOA, GO SLOW, MAMA
YOU'RE PRETTY AS A DAISY
SMELL LIKE A ROSE
MAKE A MAN CRAZY
BUT IT WON'T BE ME!

[TRANSITION TO:]

MAYOR

Who are you getting this from? Where's that book you were reading?

JIMMY RAY

I gave it away.

MAYOR

Good. Let the Jazz Age infect someone else.

STANFORD

Mayor, the Conklins.

JIMMY RAY

The Conklins? In Charlotte? What about them?

MAYOR

They've got a beautiful daughter. Ola.

~~STANFORD~~

~~Well, a daughter with resources.~~

~~JIMMY RAY~~

~~Stanford, what exactly isn't your business?~~

MAYOR

The Conklins are a family with produce trucks that drive across this state, and we are the second biggest purveyors of produce for three hundred miles.

JIMMY RAY

You want me to marry someone for her trucks?

MAYOR

That's an equation they don't teach in college.

JIMMY RAY

Where's the romance in that?

~~(The MAYOR looks over at STANFORD.)~~

MAYOR

Romance?

~~STANFORD~~

~~(aside)~~

~~I have no comment.~~

~~JIMMY RAY~~

(to Stanford)

~~No comment? What do you think that was?~~

MAYOR

Just have lunch with her.

JIMMY RAY

I couldn't do that. I know their daughter. She's a dumbbell.

MAYOR

Doesn't have to be her. The Wilsons in Winston-Salem have a daughter and a very active horse farm.

JIMMY RAY

I've met her. She is indistinguishable from the horses.

MAYOR

How about Naomi Weiss? The daughter of tobacco. And she plays the banjo.

(then)

All right, I know.

JIMMY RAY

Daddy, I couldn't carry on a conversation with any of them.

MAYOR

You don't have to carry on a conversation. You ever seen me carry on a conversation with your mother?

~~STANFORD~~ Mayor

It's not necessary.

JIMMY RAY

And that is a tragedy.

MAYOR

Son, the way it works is the business is handed down, and we marry conveniently. In order to live well.

#7 A MAN'S GOTTA DO

JIMMY RAY

Don't break the chain, right Daddy?

MAYOR

A MAN'S GOTTA DO WHAT A MAN'S GOTTA DO
WHEN A MAN'S GOTTA DO WHAT HE'S GOT TO
A WELL BRED WIFE WITH A SILVER SPOON AND KNIFE
WILL BUTTER YOUR BREAD TWICE AS GOOD AS YOU DO

I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE
THAT'S WHEN I WAS SETTLING DOWN
YOUR MOTHER AND I WERE ENGAGED
AND I OPENED UP A BANK ACCOUNT.

JIMMY RAY

YOU CAN'T EXPECT THE FUTURE TO BE JUST LIKE THE PAST
YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE SIR, PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND

MAYOR

WHEN I STOOD TALL SIDE BY SIDE WITH YOUR GRANDPA
THERE WAS JUST NOTHING AT ALL WE COULDN'T DO

JIMMY RAY

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT I OBSERVE AND I OBJECT
THERE'S NO RUSH FOR ME TO STEP INTO YOUR SHOES

MAYOR

YOU CAN'T WASTE YOU TIME ON FOOLISH THINGS
WHEN THERE'S REAL WORK TO BE DONE
THERE WON'T BE ANY STOPPING YOU AND ME
WHEN YOU DO WHAT I TELL YOU SON

You have no idea what I would do to protect this dynasty.

*(The MAYOR tears up the college
application papers.)*

JIMMY RAY

THE ROAD BEYOND THE RIVER LEADS RIGHT BACK TO THIS
HOUSE
I WON'T BE GONE FOREVER JUST LET ME GO NOW

JIMMY RAY

YOU CAN'T EXPECT THE
FUTURE

MAYOR

A MAN'S GOTTA DO WHAT
A MAN'S GOTTA DO

JIMMY RAY (CONT'D)
TO BE JUST LIKE THE
PAST.
YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE
SIR

PLEASE TRY TO
UNDERSTAND

MAYOR (CONT'D)
WHEN A MAN'S GOTTA DO
WHAT HE'S GOT TO
WHEN I STOOD TALL SIDE
BY SIDE WITH YOUR
GRANDPA
THERE WAS JUST NOTHING
AT ALL WE COULDN'T DO

MAYOR
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU CAN'T COMPREHEND
WHAT TO DO, WHY CAN'T I GET THROUGH TO YOU?

[TRANSITION TO:]

*(He produces a folded piece of paper.
MARGO looks at it; opens it.)*

BILLY CANE

It's my new address.

MARGO

Oh.

BILLY CANE

In Asheville. I'm going to live there and write there.

MARGO

Are you sure that's...

(He shows her the check.)

Ten dollars? From the Asheville Southern Journal.

BILLY CANE

Not published yet, but...

MARGO

Oh Billy, that's so exciting! A real adventure.

BILLY CANE

I can still send you my stories. That all right?

MARGO

(gathers herself)

Of course. You're going to need someone to cash that check.

BILLY CANE

Are you kidding? I'm going to frame it.

MARGO

If you frame it, you can't cash it.

BILLY CANE

Hello and goodbye. Will you miss me?

MARGO

Like I miss trouble.

BILLY CANE

Did you ever think that you might be selling a magazine with one of my stories in it?

(She hands him the money.)

MARGO

Yes.

BILLY CANE

Oh Margo, I could almost kiss you!

*(He shakes her hand. BILLY disappears
down the road and is out of sight.)*

#8 ASHEVILLE

MARGO

WHEN YOU GET TO ASHEVILLE
WRITE ME IF YOU WILL
TELL ME HOW YOU'RE DOING
HOW IT'S TREATING YOU
DO YOU LIKE YOUR NEW JOB?
DID YOU FIND A NEW LOVE?
IS IT EVERYTHING THAT YOU WERE DREAMING OF?

MARGO

OOH...
IF IT DON'T WORK OUT
OOH...
IF IT DON'T WORK OUT
OOH...
YOU CAN TURN AROUND
AND COME ON BACK TO ME
COME ON BACK TO ME
YOU CAN COME ON HOME
TO ME

ENSEMBLE

OOH...
OOH...
OOH...
TURN AROUND

MARGO

IT WON'T BE THE SAME HERE
WITHOUT YOU I'LL BE FIGHTING TEARS
WHEN YOU WERE OVER IN THE WAR
I FOUGHT 'EM OFF BEFORE
I'LL JUST STAY ON THE LOOK OUT
AND I'LL LISTEN FOR THE SOUND
OF YOUR OL' 34 FORD

MARGO

COMIN' DOWN THE ROAD...
OOH...
IF IT DON'T WORK OUT

ENSEMBLE

COMIN' DOWN THE ROAD
OOH...
IF IT DON'T WORK OUT

MARGO (CONT'D)

OOH...
YOU CAN TURN AROUND
AND COME ON BACK TO ME
COME ON BACK TO ME
YOU CAN COME ON HOME
TO ME

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

OOH...
YOU CAN TURN AROUND
AND COME ON BACK TO ME
COME ON BACK TO ME

MARGO

WHEN YOU GET TO ASHEVILLE
WRITE ME IF YOU WILL
LET ME KNOW THAT YOU STILL THINK ABOUT ME

#9 PICNIC DANCE

[TRANSITION TO:]

MAYOR

Who's going to take care of me?

JIMMY RAY

I've arranged it.

MAYOR

You take care of me! The son takes care of the father the same way the father took care of the son!

JIMMY RAY

I'll be back.

MAYOR

What's in Chapel Hill? Business, I hope.

JIMMY RAY

What do you think?

MAYOR

That girl that almost ruined you? You stay away from her. Trouble once is trouble always.

JIMMY RAY

She and I are bonded, and we have a child out there somewhere.

(then)

Together maybe we can find him and lay claim.

MAYOR

(mocking)

Find him.

(JIMMY RAY starts to go.)

JIMMY RAY

Why not? You'd be surprised what can be accomp...

MAYOR

You will never find that child.

JIMMY RAY

What do you mean?

MAYOR

You're still holding that suitcase, Jimmy Ray.

*(JIMMY RAY puts down the suitcase.
Checks his watch.)*

That's better.

(then)

I took care of my son that night. I made everything right for you, so you could go into the world without encumbrance.

JIMMY RAY

That adoption should have been my decision.

MAYOR

There was no adoption.

JIMMY RAY

What are you talking about?

MAYOR

I cleansed you as sure as I was dipping you in baptismal waters.

JIMMY RAY

Is this the liquor talking?

MAYOR

Nobody knew the mayor on that train; I got on in Ryan County. I was just a businessman passing through. But not with papers in a briefcase...Something better. Something better to relocate.

JIMMY RAY

What? What'd you have?

MAYOR

Had me a baby in a suitcase.

JIMMY RAY

What do you mean? What did you do?

MAYOR

I walked toward the far end of the train where there was just me and the creature and the clatter of the tracks. I stepped out between the cars...

JIMMY RAY

No.

#16 HEARTBREAKER

MAYOR

...and as we passed over the river I flung it high into the air.

JIMMY RAY

I'VE HEARD OF EVIL IN THE WORLD
BUT YOU AND I ARE FLESH AND BLOOD
HE WAS JUST A BABY
HE WAS MY SON

MAYOR

I did it for you.

(JIMMY RAY points for the MAYOR to leave. The Mayor slowly exits.)

JIMMY RAY

THERE GOES OUR CHANCE FOR HAPPINESS
AND ALL OUR HOPES AND DREAMS
I'LL NEVER GET TO SEE HIS FACE
OR KNOW THE BOY HE'D BE
I CAN NEVER GO SEE HER AGAIN
NEVER LOOK INTO HER EYES AGAIN
I CAN NEVER TELL HER WHY

HOW COULD SHE EVER LOVE ME NOW?
OOH, HEARTACHE!
HOW COULD SHE EVER LOVE ME NOW?
HEARTBREAKER!
HEARTBREAKER!

LOOK AT WHAT YOU DONE TO ME
YOU DESTROYED ME
I CAN NEVER GO SEE HER AGAIN
I COULD NEVER HURT HER WITH ALL THIS

JIMMY RAY (CONT'D)

I CAN NEVER TELL HER LIES

YOU MAY AS WELL HAVE MURDERED ME
WHEN YOU CAST HIM AWAY THAT NIGHT
ALL I HAVE TO LIVE FOR HAS DIED

I CAN NEVER GO SEE HER AGAIN
NEVER HOLD HER IN MY ARMS AGAIN
I COULD NEVER BREAK HER HEART

(JIMMY RAY, broken.)

[TRANSITION TO:]

SCENE 2

(SHINY PENNY CAFE AND BAR, ASHEVILLE.)

(A lively cafe-bar in Asheville.)

#16A THE SHINY PENNY

(1946. People are dancing - along with LUCY and DARYL - to a jazzed up version of Asheville. They separate from the dancers. Light music continues.)

DARYL

I gave Miss Murphy one of my humor pieces.

LUCY

Oh, great Daryl! What did she say?

DARYL

She said she really liked it and could I turn it into a humor piece.

(BILLY enters.)

Well, look who walked in. Does he know this place sells intoxicating beverages?

LUCY

(rising)

I say he's lonely. Let's find out.

(LUCY goes over to him.)

Well, boy meets girl. This calls for a sloe gin fizz.

BILLY CANE

It does?

LUCY

It does.

BILLY CANE

I'll have one.

LUCY

Have you had one before?

BILLY CANE

I've seen photos.

LUCY

So, you lonely since you've been here?

BILLY CANE

Every evening I have a date...with my typewriter.

LUCY

That's not company. This is what a real person feels like, in case you forgot.

(She takes his hand.)

BILLY CANE

That does feel real.

LUCY

There's more where that came from.

(She offers the other hand. He takes it - for a moment. DARYL delivers the two gin fizzes.)

DARYL

Don't drink 'em both, Lucy.

(DARYL exits.)

LUCY

Here you are.

(he tastes)

What do you think?

BILLY CANE

It's sweet and tart at the same time.

DARYL

Just like Lucy.

(BILLY takes another swig.)

LUCY

It's called a sloe gin fizz, but you don't have to drink it slow.

(She downs her glass, and helps BILLY down his.)

BILLY CANE

You are a modern woman, Lucy.

LUCY

~~bit~~

BILLY CANE

You want to be a writer?

LUCY

Better than that. I want to be a censor.

BILLY CANE

A censor? Why a censor?

LUCY

When I was twelve, I gave my father a Raymond Chandler mystery novel. I was watching him read it and suddenly, his face went the color of a rose. He set the book face down and called for my mother and took her into another part of the house and shut the door. I went over to the book to see what he had just read, and right there in the middle of the page was the word "brassiere." I thought, "this must never happen again." So now, a few nights a week, I take a manuscript home, fix myself a Manhattan, and search for hidden erotic content. Would you like to do that with me sometime?

BILLY CANE

~~Well...~~

LUCY

~~Well, what?~~ You got a girl back home?

BILLY CANE

Well, no...uh...I don't know.

LUCY

Well, don't bring her to Asheville.

BILLY CANE

Why not?

LUCY

(indicates her body)

Because country girls flatten out under the city lights.

(she calls to the waiter)

Another round!

#17 ANOTHER ROUND

BILLY CANE

Really?

DARYL

You heard the lady.

LUCY

Lady? Please! Not on a Friday night!

ALL WEEK LONG I'M UP TO MY ELBOWS
WORKIN' AWAY AT MY 9 TO 5
I'M NOT GONNA WASTE AWAY AT HOME
HITTIN' THE TOWN EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

(Short instrumental, 8 bars.)

LUCY (CONT'D)

HAVE YOU TRIED A RITZ OR A GREYHOUND
SO MANY DRINKS AND SO LITTLE TIME
I'VE DECIDED IT'S ONLY RIGHT I
TRY THEM ALL AND SEE WHAT I LIKE

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

ENSEMBLE

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

LUCY

BESIDES ALL THAT I LIKE A LITTLE BUZZ
IN ADDITION TO THAT I LIKE A LITTLE HIGH

LUCY (CONT'D)

I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY WHO DOESN'T
LIKE TO FEEL GOOD ALL OF THE TIME

LUCY

POUR ME
POUR ME
POUR ME
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME
POUR ME
POUR ME
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

ENSEMBLE

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

DARYL

MUSCADINE WINE MAKE ME FEEL SO FINE

LUCY

I LIKE HARD LIQUOR IT HITS ME QUICKER

LUCY AND DARYL

MUSCADINE WINE MAKE ME FEEL SO FINE
I LIKE HARD LIQUOR IT HITS ME QUICKER

LUCY

Come on, Hayes Creek!

(Instrumental, 32 bar dance break.)

LUCY, DARYL AND BILLY

MUSCADINE WINE MAKE ME FEEL SO FINE
I LIKE HARD LIQUOR IT HITS ME QUICKER

BILLY CANE

SHOT OF WHISKEY GOT ME FEELING FRISKY

DARYL

HOW BOUT A RUM AND COCA COLA WITH THE
EXTRA-ADDED BONUS OF A SODA WITH A LITTLE KICK

LUCY, DARYL, AND BILLY

HOW BOUT A RUM AND COCA COLA WITH THE
EXTRA-ADDED BONUS OF A SODA WITH A LITTLE KICK

BILLY CANE

I WAS FEELING LONESOME AND HOMESICK
DOWN DEJECTED AND DUBIOUS

BILLY CANE (CONT'D)

I'VE DISCOVERED WHAT DOES THE TRICK
BARTENDER GIVE ME SO MORE-A-THIS!

ALL

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

(LUCY goes to the bar and picks up two more sloe gin fizzes. Delivers one to BILLY, who takes a drink. She picks up a carafe from the bar and pours DARYL a drink. He sips.)

(During the instrumental and dance, everyone swaps drinks.)

(LUCY sidles up to BILLY seductively, swings him around.)

ENSEMBLE

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND
POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

ALL

POUR ME ANOTHER ROUND

(LUCY smacks Billy on the lips with a big kiss. They separate, BILLY lingers, thinking, confused.)

#17A ANOTHER ROUND PLAYOFF

[TRANSITION TO:]

1. $\frac{1}{x^2} = x^{-2}$
2. $\frac{d}{dx} x^{-2} = -2x^{-3}$
3. $= -2x^{-3}$
4. $= -\frac{2}{x^3}$

~~JIMMY RAY~~

~~In a way. They're my sister's kids.~~

ALICE

You married?

JIMMY RAY

No. I never married. Close, a couple of times.

ALICE

I guess I would have heard. I followed you.

JIMMY RAY

I know you never married. I paid attention. You did well in Asheville. I had some trips there, looked up at your building, never went in though.

ALICE

Why not?

JIMMY RAY

You moved on. You published Carson McCullers, Eudora Welty....

ALICE

You have been paying attention.

JIMMY RAY

I always paid attention to you, Alice. If I didn't, I knew I was in trouble.

ALICE

We were so young.

JIMMY RAY

We were, but I wonder...often, was I old enough to have behaved differently, better.

ALICE

Yes. When I came to Raleigh today, it wasn't my intention to see you. I was at the hall of records. With the same woman who has been there for twenty years. And I asked if anyone else had looked for the whereabouts of our child. And she said not one. Not one person. Not you.

JIMMY RAY

I didn't, Alice.

ALICE

And you never came to see me. Why?

JIMMY RAY

Oh Alice. Is it better to hope or to know?

ALICE

Please.

JIMMY RAY

After my father died, we discovered it was he who had funded your scholarship.

ALICE

Why?

JIMMY RAY

To get you out of town.

(then)

Guilt.

ALICE

Guilt?

JIMMY RAY

Alice, on the train to Raleigh, somewhere in the night, my father took our son and threw him off the train and into the river below.

#18 I HAD A VISION

ALICE

I HAVE BEEN BLINDED
I CAN'T SEE A THING
I HAVE BEEN BLINDED
DARKNESS FELL ON ME

JIMMY RAY

I HAD A VISION
OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD BE
ROLLING LIKE A RIVER
PEACEFUL, WILD AND FREE
I HAD A VISION
OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD GO
A HAPPY LITTLE FAMILY
PLAYING ON THE PORCH

JIMMY RAY (CONT'D)

IF I COULD LIFT
THIS VEIL OF DARKNESS
IF I COULD SEE
MY WAY BACK TO YOU

JIMMY RAY AND ALICE

I HAVE BEEN BLINDED
ALL THE LIGHTS WENT DIM
BLINDED BY SOMEONE

JIMMY RAY

I CAN'T SPEAK OF HIM

JIMMY RAY AND ALICE

I HAD A VISION
OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD BE
FULL OF LOVE AND LAUGHTER AND SWEET HARMONY
I HAD A VISION OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD GO
ALL OF OUR KIDS SINGING

JIMMY RAY

WHILE YOU PLAYED PIANO

JIMMY RAY AND ALICE

IF I COULD LIFT THIS VEIL OF DARKNESS
IF I COULD SEE MY WAY BACK TO YOU
I HAD A VISION OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD BE
EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL, YOU WERE NEXT TO ME
I HAD A VISION OF HOW OUR LIFE WOULD GO
EVERYTHING WAS WONDERFUL AND I LOVED YOU SO

[TRANSITION TO:]

SCENE 6

(1946. HAYES CREEK. THE BOOKSTORE.)

(MAX enters.)

MARGO

Hello Max, how can I help you?

MAX

Oh, I'm a little early. I'm walking Edna home after the bookstore closes.

(Seeing EDNA's anticipation.)

MARGO

Well, guess what. We just closed.

(MAX puts his arm out and EDNA takes it. They exit.)

(MARGO arranges books. BILLY appears at the door. The bell rings, MARGO's back is to him.)

May I help you...

(she swings around)

Well.

(She runs to him, they hug excitedly.)

BILLY CANE

Happy to see me?

MARGO

For a writer you're not very good at reading people. What are you doing here?

BILLY CANE

Margo, you're the first person I wanted to tell. I'm going to be published in the Asheville Southern Journal!

MARGO

What? Whoo hoo!

(MARGO goes crazy with celebration. She jumps around like BILLY did when he was

told the same information. Finally, she leans on the desk, exhausted.)

MARGO (CONT'D)

(out of breath)

That is some damn news.

BILLY CANE

...my, my.

(He steps back.)

MARGO

What is it, Billy?

BILLY CANE

I think I'm seeing you in a new way.

MARGO

What do you mean?

BILLY CANE

Margo, since I came back from the war many things have changed in my life.

MARGO

Of course.

BILLY CANE

And some things have remained constant. Family. This place, Hayes Creek. But one thing has been both constant and changing. And I wonder "how is that possible?"

MARGO

Anything's possible with people. What is it?

BILLY CANE

Us.

MARGO

There's an 'us?'

BILLY CANE

There is if you want there to be.

MARGO

I don't know. I've just never thought of you that way.

#19 ALWAYS WILL

BILLY CANE

WE'RE S'POSED TO BE TOGETHER I KNOW
I FEEL IT WAY DOWN DEEP IN MY SOUL
WE'RE NEVER MEANT TO BE APART
I KEEP YOU HERE INSIDE OF MY HEART
I ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL

BILLY AND MARGO

I ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL

MARGO

WE'RE S'POSED TO BE TOGETHER IT'S TRUE
I'VE HAD MY DOUBTS BUT NOT ABOUT YOU

BILLY CANE

WE'RE NEVER MEANT TO BE APART
I LOVE YOU NOW I HAVE FROM THE START

BILLY AND MARGO

I ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL
I ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL

BILLY CANE

Margo, I have a confession to make. While I was in Asheville, I kissed a girl.

MARGO

Oh? What was it like?

BILLY CANE

Have you ever kissed a chicken?

MARGO

(embarrassed, giggles)

Yes!

(BILLY walks over and kisses her.)

BILLY CANE

How long's it been since I kissed you?

MARGO

Twelve years. And that was on a dare. You ran like a rabbit.

BILLY CANE

Believe it or not, I'm shakin' now like I was that day.

BILLY AND MARGO

WE'RE NEVER MEANT TO BE APART
I LOVE YOU NOW I HAVE FROM THE START
I ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL

ENSEMBLE

THEY ALWAYS HAVE ALWAYS WILL
ALWAYS ALWAYS ALWAYS WILL

#19A SCENE CHANGE

[TRANSITION TO:]

ALICE

And Billy will be published in it next issue.

DADDY CANE

I heard! Mary Lee would have been awfully pleased to know that.

ALICE

Mary Lee?

BILLY CANE

That's my mother.

DADDY CANE

Billy, you've got clothes here, you know that? Good pants and some shirts. You ought to take 'em on over to your new place.

BILLY CANE

I could use 'em, Daddy.

(BILLY goes inside.)

ALICE

There must be some wonderful stories about your wife, Mr. Cane. Maybe Billy should write about her.

DADDY CANE

Oh, I don't think so. Better to pick from the whole town, with our array of cads and scoundrels.

(BILLY emerges from the cabin.)

BILLY CANE

Look at this! My old mail order plaid! Still good. And my old fishing vest.

DADDY CANE

Let me get you something to put them in. Miss Murphy...

(DADDY CANE goes inside.)

BILLY CANE

How do you like it here?

ALICE

It's lovely, Billy. Reminds me of Zebulon, in some ways.

*(DADDY CANE comes out with a valise.
Sets it down. BILLY goes inside.)*

You must find wonderful repose here, Mr. Cane.

DADDY CANE

I do.

*(ALICE glances at the suitcase.
Something familiar? But she gets
distracted.)*

Miss Murphy?

ALICE

I'm sorry, Mr. Cane.

(collects herself)

Your wife must have died young. Billy's only twenty-three.

DADDY CANE

Mary Lee died last year at sixty-five. She had Billy late in life. That's a rarity around these parts, where everyone's married and bearing kids before they can ride a bike.

*(ALICE still notices the suitcase.
Perhaps it starts to bother her.)*

(calling to BILLY)

Billy, there's a box full of your things in the shed.

*(He starts putting the clothes into the
valise.)*

BILLY CANE

(calling)

I don't want to take up Miss Murphy's time with that. But look what I found. A good pair of boots and my old baby sweater! I want to show this to Margo.

*(He holds up a blue baby sweater. ALICE
sees it, and stands in shock. Goes to
it.)*

#20A BABY SWEATER UNDERSCORE

BILLY CANE (CONT'D)

What is it?

*(She goes to the sweater. Takes it.
Holds it.)*

ALICE

I know this sweater.

(She walks to the suitcase.)

I know this suitcase.

DADDY CANE

How?

ALICE

My life was borne away from me in it.

DADDY CANE

You say you've seen this sweater before?

ALICE

I made it!

(DADDY CANE stands in shock.)

DADDY CANE

I knew this day would come.

ALICE

It's you who has a story, isn't it Mr. Cane? It's you.

BILLY CANE

What are you two talking about, Daddy?

DADDY CANE

Billy, one evening I was out frog gigging. I went a little farther down river than I usually go...

[LIGHTS CHANGE; THE SET CHANGES.]

*(1924. THE WOODS. MOONLIT NIGHT. A
TRAIN TRESTLE OVERHEAD.)*

(We hear the sound of frogs croaking. YOUNG DADDY CANE with a flour sack and a flashlight combs the brush. He points the flashlight at a spot near the bank.)

YOUNG DADDY CANE

Now where are you fat ones? Me and Mary Lee gonna have you for dinnah! There you are, Mr. Toad...

(Suddenly, there is the violent noise, clatter and clang of the train going by. Lights flare and streak. The whole effect is overpowering, and YOUNG DADDY CANE cowers from its frightening strength. A suitcase flies in from above, and gently lands on the tall soft grasses at the river's edge. The train is gone.)

Damn it! You made me lose Mr. Ichabod P. Toad!

(He keeps wandering. But faintly heard, mixed in with the sound of the croaks, is the tiny sound of a baby crying.)

I hear ya...over there.

(Another cry.)

Somebody there?

(stands)

Anybody there?

(He walks over to the riverbank, and parts the foliage. There is the valise. He opens it.)

(squats again)

Good Lord! Little Moses. Little Moses in the rushes.

(looks inside)

My Lord...

(looks firmly at the baby)

Bangs and bruises. You're in a heap o' trouble little...

(checks)

...fella.

(He stands, picks up the valise with the baby in it.)

(The three SPIRITS walk to center stage, perhaps behind a scrim. They sing quietly behind the dialogue.)

#21 I CAN'T WAIT (REPRISE)

YOUNG DADDY CANE (CONT'D)

(to the baby)

Come on. We got to get you fixed up. If you came from the sky, it's the Lord's will that we raise you....if you came from that train, then somebody didn't want you.

SPIRITS

MM MY MM MY MY BABY
OOH
MM MY MM MY MY BABY
OOH

(DADDY CANE rejoins the scene.)

#22 SO FAMILIAR / AT LONG LAST

ALICE

SO FAMILIAR
I COULD FEEL YA
WHEN YOU CAME THROUGH THE DOOR
SO PECULIAR
LIKE I KNEW YA
SOMEWHERE BEFORE
YOU'RE MY BABY
HOW CAN THIS BE
YOU'RE MY SWEET BABY
COME BACK TO ME

ALICE

SO FAMILIAR
I COULD FEEL YA
HERE IN MY HEART
SO PECULIAR
LIKE I KNEW YA
RIGHT FROM THE START

ENSEMBLE

SO FAMILIAR
I COULD FEEL YA
SO PECULIAR
LIKE I KNEW YA

BILLY CANE

I'm sorry Miss Murphy...but my mother is buried just beyond
this cabin.

(BILLY exits.)

BADDY CANE

Billy! Billy!

(DADDY CANE chases after him.)

ENSEMBLE

OOOH

LOVE IS COMING HOME

ALICE

AS THE SKY WAS DARKENING
THROUGH YEARS OF NIGHT
I FELT A DOOR WAS OPENING
TO THIS GORGEOUS MORNING LIGHT
AT LAST AT LAST AT LAST AT LAST
AT LONG LAST

THE ANSWER TO A MOTHER'S PRAYER
HEALING OF MY HEART'S DESPAIR
A BURDEN NO LONGER TO BEAR
AT LAST

FOUNTAIN IN THE SQUARE
FILLED WITH FLASHING COINS
WISHES IN THE WATER
OH TO FIND MY BOY
AT LAST

ALICE

LONELY MOMENTS NEARLY
BROKE MY WILL TO LIVE
SOMETHING ALWAYS TOLD ME
TO HOLD ON FOR THIS

HOLD ON
LOVE IS
COMING HOME
AT LAST
AT LAST
AT LAST
AT LAST

ENSEMBLE

AHH...
AHH...
AHH...

HOLD
ON
LOVE
OOH...
AHH...
AHH...
AT LAST

AT LONG LAST

ALICE (CONT'D)

A BLESSING UNEQUIVOCAL
TRULY IT'S A MIRACLE
FAITH RESTORED AND HOPE SECURED
AT LAST

HALLELUJAH

HALLELUJAH

IT'S THE DAY I'VE WAITED FOR
IT'S THE DAY I'VE WAITED FOR
IT'S THE DAY I'VE WAITED FOR
AT LAST

AT LONG LAST

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)

OOH...

OOH...

OOH...

AHH...

HALLELU, HALLELUJAH

OOH...

OOH...

OOH...

AH... AH, AH, AH...

LOVE IS COMING HOME

[TRANSITION TO:]