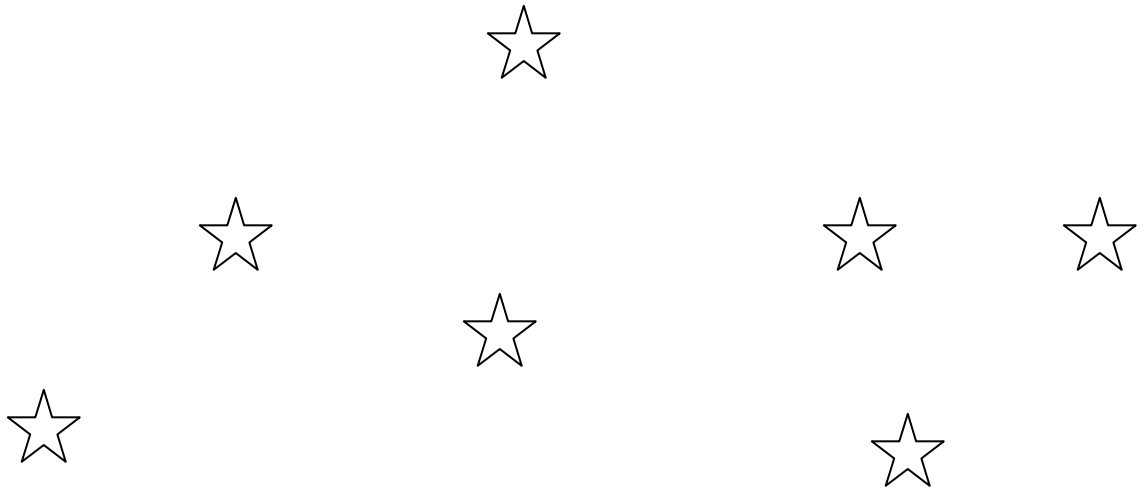


“Cosmic Cowboys: The Musical”

Sci-Fi & Star-Crossed Cowboys...

Sandra Hudlow Rodman
Book, Lyrics, Music – Version 2.0

Parallel Universe Publishers 2007



“Cosmic Cowboys: The Musical”

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Sandra Hudlow Rodman



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“Cosmic Cowboys”

Production Note:

“Cosmic Cowboys” is intended as a magic show. The music, lighting, and stage effects should be choreographed together, and something should be sparkling anew, blinking on or off, floating, blooming, disappearing, lighting up or popping out most of the time when Hitchcock Huddleston is present. It does not matter if the effects are glitter and glue -- or an electric supershow, if the display is spirited and the pace well ahead of the expectation. The rope handling and floating around can be handled with technical effects.

Still, best that a magician be included as a consultant to the production. And maybe a cowboy... ☺





“Cosmic Cowboys: The Musical”

By Sandra Hudlow Rodman

CREDITS

The play should begin with Credits and the announcement: “Starring...” – like a movie or TV show, with the names and pictures of the “Stars.” These may be postcards, slides, video – as you wish.

Page

ACT I The 1950’s

1	Scene 1. “Eleven”	.	.	.	.	.	.	On the Way Home from School
7	Scene 2. “Eclipse”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Corral

ACT II Sixteen Years Later

16	Scene 1. “Disneyland”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Episcopal Recreation Hall
30	Scene 2. “Imagine Me”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Episcopal Recreation Hall

ACT III Later the Same Evening

36	Scene 1. “Dreaming”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Mills Home
43	Scene 2. “Running”	.	.	.	.	.	.	Honey Jo Waller’s Front Porch
46	Scene 3. “Oh, Honey, I Love You”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Mills Home

Act IV Later the Same Evening

54	Scene 1. “Cowboy High”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Corral
69	Scene 2. “There’s a Town in Time”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Mills Home
71	Scene 3. “Last Dance”	.	.	.	.	.	.	The Episcopal Recreation Hall

ACT V Six Months Later

74	Scene 1. “UFO”	The Street in Front of The Episcopal Recreation Hall
77	Scene 2. “Never Wanting You”	The Episcopal Recreation Hall
87	Scene 2. “Always”	The Corral

The action of the play takes place in Hallelujah, Texas.

DEDICATIONS

Note: Lyrics appear in [blue text](#) in the script.

Page	Songs		
3	“Eleven”	Act I, Scene I	Thurber and Honey Jo
8	“Hitchcock’s Theme”	Act I, Scene II	Instrumental Theme, Background Music
13	“Cowboy High”	Act I, Scene II	Hitchcock and Thurber
15	“Cowboy High” (Reprise)	Act I, Scene II	Hitchcock and Thurber
20	“Stars!”	Act II, Scene I	Honey Jo, Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, Stella Nell
25	“Disneyland”	Act II, Scene I	Honey Jo, Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, Stella Nell
28	“Stars!” (Reprise)	Act II, Scene I	Honey Jo, Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, Stella Nell
31	“Imagine Me”	Act II, Scene II	Hitchcock and the Cosmic Cowboys Chorus
35	“Imagine Me” (Reprise)	Act II, Scene II	Artie Browning
46	“Oh, Honey, I Love You”	Act III, Scene III	Artie Browning
58	“Cowboys Sometimes Have a Harder Time than They Should”	Act IV, Scene I	Thurber
60	“Cosmic Cowgirls”	Act IV, Scene I	Hitchcock, Thurber, Cosmic Cowboys Chorus
67	“Cowboy High” (Reprise)	Act IV, Scene I	Cosmic Cowgirls Chorus (Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, and Stella Nell are part of the Cosmic Cowgirls Chorus)
69	“There’s a Town in Time”	Act IV, Scene II	Hitchcock and Thurber
71	“Cowboy, Cowgirl”	Act IV, Scene III	Caroline
81	“Never Wanting You”	Act V, Scene II	Artie, Honey Jo, Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, Stella Nell, Homecoming Dance Chorus
84	“Never Wanting You” (Reprise)	Act V, Scene II	Artie, Caroline, Band Members
85	“Stars!” (Reprise)	Act V, Scene I	Artie, Caroline, Emma Mae, Stella Nell, Cindy Lou, Band Members
89	“Oh, Honey, I Love You” (Reprise)	Act V, Scene III	Emma Mae, Stella Nell, Cindy Lou Cosmic Cowboys Chorus, Cosmic Cowgirls Chorus
91	“Disneyland” (Reprise)	Act V, Scene III	Thurber
93	“Always Taken”	Act V, Scene III	Honey Jo and Thurber
95	“Stars!” (Reprise)	Act V, Scene III	Honey Jo and Thurber
			All -- Curtain Call



☆CHARACTERS☆

- ☆**THURBER MILLS**☆ -- Act I: Age 11, then 12. A handsome, young, would-be cowboy with starry eyes. Acts II-IV: Age 28. Act V: Glorious. Medium height, beautiful eyes, a sensitive, star-crossed face.
 - ☆**HITCHCOCK HUDDLESON**☆ -- Thurber’s imaginary playmate... Acts I-V: Appears as Thurber’s age. A stunningly beautiful cowboy, overwhelmingly tall and otherworldly. His teeth appear to gleam with light beams every time he smiles...
 - ☆**HONEY JO WALLER**☆ -- Act I: Age 11. Acts I-V: Age 28. Golden hair, luscious body. A combination of Marilyn Monroe, Miss Piggy, and Jessica Rabbit. Thurber’s true love.
 - ☆**CAROLINE MELODY MILLS**☆ -- Acts II-V: Age 26. Age 31. Thurber’s sister. Six foot one, thin, starkly beautiful with large dark eyes. A Keane painting; otherworldly beauty...
 - ☆**J.B. HALLELUJAH, III**☆ -- Act II-IV: Age: 70’s. Wizeden, wiry, and wise. Uncle to Thurber and Caroline. He raised them from youth.
 - ☆**ARTIE BROWNING**☆ -- Act II-V: Age 28. 6’ 3” and beyond. Tall and sexy with sparkling curly hair and gleaming teeth. Has a vague resemblance to Art Garfunkel – and Hitchcock Huddleston. Has his own band, “Starbusters.”
- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆EMMA MAE☆ ☆CINDY LOU☆ ☆STELLA NELL ☆ | | <p>Classmates of Honey Jo and Thurber</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆JOE DAN☆ ☆BILLY BOB☆ ☆JIMMY D☆ | | <p>Member’s of Artie’s Band, “The Starbusters”</p> |
- ☆**COSMIC COWGIRLS CHORUS**☆ -- A line of gorgeous otherworldly cowgirls, with sparkling cowgirl outfits and tap dancing boots...
 - ☆**COSMIC COWBOYS CHORUS**☆ -- Otherworldly cowboys who sing on high.
 - ☆**HOMECOMING DANCE CHORUS**☆
 - ☆**TOWNSPEOPLE**☆

Production Note: It is intended that diverse casts should perform this musical. Some of the characters are described as quite tall. This is part of the storyline and should be faithfully represented.



“Cosmic Cowboys: The Musical”



☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT I, Scene 1. ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Eleven" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

The house lights dim. The sound of sweeping wind; it whips through the room expectantly. A lone spotlight shines in the aisle, waiting for someone. Glitter falls through it like a late shower. Dark chords sound; the spotlight turns deep purple, then red. The theme from "Oh, Honey, I Love You" begins to play, lighter, overtaking the dark chords. The spotlight turns white again and sparkles with glitter as children's voice in the distance join the tones.

Giggles and glee are topped by squeals and finally a haunting taunt, "Thurber Mills writes bad poetry... Thurber Mills writes bad poetry..."

A few bright flashes strobe the room and suddenly a beautiful little girl carrying a lot of books runs into the vulnerable spotlight, wind tossing a luxurious cascade of golden curls. Honey Jo Waller at eleven... A chase begins as a second spotlight with glitter appears and with it the sensitive young poet with beautiful eyes and innocent pain darts after her, in cowboy hat and blue jeans, his eyes full of hope. He chases her onto the stage before the closed curtain, where they stop.

THURBER: Honey Jo Waller!

HONEY: Don't you come near me, Thurber Mills.

THURBER: Why not?

HONEY: Because of what you did.

THURBER: (*Thurber's "thinking voice," heard on tape in the background:* "They always make you guess what you did...")

What'd I do?

HONEY: You read a terrible poem about me in geography class.

THURBER: What was so terrible about it?

HONEY: You were supposed to be writing about Port Neches.

THURBER: They wrote everything already. I wanted to get on with it.

HONEY: With what?

THURBER: With you...

HONEY: Thurber, why couldn't you just carry my books home or something like that?

THURBER: (*"Thinking voice" on tape: "Where do they get these crazy ideas?"*)

Why would I want to carry her books home?

HONEY: (*Flustered*) Thurber, everybody wants to carry my books home.

THURBER: (*Shakes his head, smiling a little*) Well, what I'd like to do is, well, I'd like to walk around in the desert with you sometime. Honey Jo.

HONEY: You'd like to what?! (*A dark chord sounds. She shivers.*)

Thurber Mills, I don't think you ride around with both boots in the stirrups...

THURBER: (*Frowning. His "thinking voice": "I've heard that before."*)

I don't have a horse.

HONEY: Horses aren't your problem! (*She walks off in a huff.*)

(*To herself*) Nobody certainly ever asked me to go walking around in the desert before.

THURBER: (*To the audience*) All my life I just wanted to be a cowboy. You can't have the simplest things. The simplest things go to someone else.

HONEY: Geography. You were supposed to be writing about geography.

THURBER: (*His "thinking voice": "I was."*)

I know.

HONEY: Well, why'd you have to read it out loud in front of everybody? (*Woefully*) Oh, if you only hadn't read it out loud in front of everybody... Well, thank goodness nobody knew what it meant. (*She looks at him darkly, then quickly turns her head away.*)

THURBER: (*"Thinking voice": "You knew what it meant."*)

I knew what it meant.

HONEY: (*Dreamily*) Well, I hope so. You wrote it. All that about my...newly violet eyes, you hope will rest on yours, and hair like gold-dust storms in heaven, and a dress like sunset sitting in the clouds waiting to be saved... (*She tosses her head provocatively.*)

And my eyes aren't violet. They're hazel...

THURBER: Hazy?

HONEY: (*Emphatic*) HAZEL!!

THURBER: (*Pause*) It wasn't violet eyes. It was *violent* eyes...

HONEY: Violent eyes? (*A dark chord sounds. She shudders.*)

Thurber, you can't go on like this, you know. Everybody thinks you're crazy. Don't you care if they laugh at you?

THURBER: I can't help it when I'm funny.

HONEY: *(Exasperated)* Well, then don't you care if they laugh at ME?!

THURBER: *(He giggles, remembering the poem and her look.)* Well...

HONEY: Thurber Mills!

THURBER: Well, it wasn't very funny when I wrote it, it just GOT funny later on. *(He laughs helplessly. She turns red.)*

HONEY: *(Hitting him over the head with a book)* How could you ever expect me to follow you around in the desert?!

THURBER: Ow! Okay. .. You don't have to follow me around in the desert. *(Sparkles fall, the wind picks up. There is a gleam in his eye.)*

I just thought I'd let you in on it. If you wanted to come along. Sometimes there are...miracles in the desert.

HONEY: You're crazy, Thurber Mills. You're a fourteen carat technicolor Looney Tune!

THURBER: I'm only eleven.

HONEY: That's what's so terrible about it... *(She sighs and looks down.)*

THURBER: *(To audience)* It's not easy being eleven. Some people never get over it. Even after they've become your parents. It's like they're waiting. And one day all the people they knew when they were eleven will get together and then they can show them how wonderful and important and blessed they are after all. And maybe somebody who was tall will say, "They, I should have paid more attention to you. I should have paid more attention to you when you were eleven." .. But what if they don't?

HONEY: *(Wistfully)* If only you weren't so cute...

THURBER: *(Overwhelmed. "Thinking voice": "Just when you think you don't stand a chance.")*

Am I cute? *(Sighing)* How about that... *(He sings:)*

"ELEVEN"

THURBER: Do you remember your first love?
She gleamed like a glass-bottomed lake. *(Honey winces)*
And everytime they called you names,
She could take the edge off that old ache...

Heaven is a girl you like.
Eleven, Eleven.
Heaven is she likes to hike.
Eleven, Eleven.

HONEY: Eleven –
THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Oh, you!...

Why do you have to read poems
To me in Geography?
And every time they call my name
I am forced to hide my face in shame.

How can I go back to school?
Eleven, Eleven.
The world will end, I'll be a fool,
Eleven, Eleven.

Eleven, Eleven
Eleven, Oh, you!...

THURBER: *(Wistfully)*
But I believe that all words have
Little pieces of soul.
And every time you give your words,
You give little people wings like birds...

HONEY: How does he think up these things?

THURBER: Eleven, Eleven.
Why can't she believe in wings?

HONEY: Eleven, Eleven.

THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven, Oh, you!...

HONEY: I don't think he'll ever land,

THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

THURBER: How will she know what I am?

Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven --

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven, Oh, You!...

☆☆☆

(Dark chords sound. A wild flash of light whirls and something makes a thud, landing near Thurber. Honey runs to him, holding on tight, eyes closed.)

HONEY: Thurber! Look out! *(More thuds and flashing lights nearby.)*

Oh, it's the end of the world!

THURBER: It's a meteor!

HONEY: A shooting star... This one left a hole...

THURBER: Oh!! Let me see it!!

HONEY: I shouldn't have said that about the end of the world...

(Softly, hypnotized) And shiny things fall out of the sky and make little holes in the ground...

THURBER: *(Looking intently into the hole)* I have to find out about this.

HONEY: Get away from there, Thurber!

THURBER: *(Kneeling by the hole)* You go on. I want to look at this hole.

(More lights flash nearby. Honey tries to pull him away.)

HONEY: Hurry! You'll be hit!

THURBER: *(He pulls away from her.)* No!

HONEY: Thurber, you can't spend your life looking into a hole you don't understand! They'll kill you!

THURBER: *(Ominous)* But I want to look at this! It's important, I know it's important! No matter what anybody thinks of me or the things I want! Can't things be important to me? Even if I'm only eleven? *(He looks at her painfully. Honey runs out. In a moment, she returns, breathless, with a teary voice.)*

HONEY: Thurber, I'm sorry for what I said about the poem. I know you meant it to be – important.

THURBER: Yes, I did.

HONEY: *(Softly)* Thurber, do you have anything you wanted to say to me?

THURBER: I said it already. It rhymed.

HONEY: Oh... *(She turns slowly. More lights fall. She runs up the aisle. At a distance she turns to him again and says:)*

You're gonna break my heart, Thurber Mills...

(Dark chords sound. Honey runs out. He looks after her with ears in his eyes. He looks at the audience for a moment, embarrassed, then walks downstage center.)

THURBER: *(To audience)* Hello, I'm Thurber Mills. Sorry you had to see that. There are certain things you should keep to yourself. They happened because you were young and for no other reason. I've been told it's not nice to tell them to other people. Because they probably did something like that when they were young, and you have exposed a tender feeling that never grew up along with the rest of them. But some of us have to tell. It's our way of growing up. And we force it on other people, too, against their will. You can always tell which ones we are. We write bad poetry... *(He smiles, with tears.)*

Well, Welcome to Hallelujah, Texas. *(He grins.)*

Yes... It was named after Jefferson Buckaroo Hallelujah the First, my great great uncle. They called him J.B. Hallelujah. He liked to be called Jefferson. He didn't like to be called Buckaroo, didn't like that. But he liked to be called Jefferson. Even when he told people, they still called him J.B. He said it was things like that made a man die young. *(A strange look crosses his face, then vanishes.)*

I don't know if it was that or not... Anyway, he did die young. He was hit by a falling star. And they named the town after him. I don't know if that made up for anything or not. Maybe, after all was said and done, it helped.

This is my history. It was short, but I was very fond of it. History hasn't really come to Hallelujah, yet, but I always knew it would. When I was a very little boy they called me "starry eyes," and I knew it was following me around...

(The lights dim slowly to a Blackout. Music begins in the darkness.)

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☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
ACT I, Scene 2
"Eclipse"
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

In the darkness Thurber slips behind the curtain. Music plays ominously as the curtain begins to rise, slowly revealing a glittering prairie twilight scene. Thurber is standing downstage. Center stage a dirt road leads into the distance, into shimmering purple mountains. Above in the darkening sky, a few stars begin to twinkle; lower, long thin rain clouds still haunt the Texas prairie at sunset and cut the brilliance of a huge glowing Rainbow. A tall barrel cactus is silhouetted majestically against emotional hues. The set does not light and sparkle all at once, but rather a color or beam or star comes out at the beckoning of a musical chord, as if the music were playing the colors and lights.

Leaning against the corral fence, admiring the Rainbow, is an incredibly beautiful, other-worldly young cowboy, much taller than Thurber, in a spectacular glittering cowboy outfit, sparkling from his spurs to his glittering eyes and teeth; even his rope glitters...

THURBER: When you grow up, you remember some people more than other people. They give you your best moments. My best moments were spent at this Corral with Hitchcock Huddleston. He was the most important person I would meet during my life. Only I didn't know it then. Usually you don't know until you get through with it, what was really important about it, and then all you can do is say, "Oh, my," and take notes... I guess that builds your character, although it sure does take a long time. As long as I've been working on mine, sometimes I think I won't ever be proud of myself no matter what I try — somewhere I'm always slipping. I don't know if that happens to you, too...

(He smiles, a gleam in his eye.) I suggest a little bad poetry; cleanses the soul.

(He smiles at someone in the audience and walks to the edge of the stage. He takes a deep breath.)

I met Hitchcock Huddleston when I was about four years old. And we played on this prairie until I was twelve. One day when I was twelve, we stopped playing together. It was my fault. I'll never forget it. It was a black mark on my life line. I have wondered ever since how such a small person could get so dumb in such a short time. I had started going to school, too, and I thought I was getting smarter. That's when the trouble started... Took me almost sixteen years to make up for that one day when I was twelve – well, it had been coming on for some time...

I call this scene "Eclipse." In the dictionary it says that "eclipse" is "a. The total or partial obscuring of one celestial body by another or b. To obscure or darken." That was also the definition of my life, as I used to live it, when I thought I had all the answers. Unfortunately, I realized one day I didn't know what questions they were going to give me. Now I ask you, what good are all these answers, if you don't know what your questions are going to be? I never did find out the questions. Although I collected an above average set of answers that I still have some hope for. *(He pats his back pocket and pulls out a small notebook.)*

I keep them in here, just in case I get a question after all. You never know. *(He slips it back into the pocket.)*

Hitchcock tried to tell me, but I wouldn't listen. Maybe I wanted to know things too badly to listen. Hitchcock said I tried too hard at life. That's all I had, so I tried too hard at it... Hitchcock would never admit this, not even now, but every once in a while I think he tried too hard, too. He'd get upset if I tried to discuss this with him, because Hitchcock was pretty nearly perfect, just like he said. But he had his troubles with girls, too, and I'm not sure if he's over it to this day. The bigger they are, the harder they cry... If you were to run into him some midnight in the dark, I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't mention this; we're still pretty close.

(He turns toward Hitchcock, who turns his beautiful face full front, eyes and teeth sparkling when he smiles and waves. Thurber turns back to the audience.)

Oh, did I tell you that he was my imaginary playmate? Yes. That's how it started, anyway. I had a great imagination. Don't you think? .. *(He glances toward Hitchcock.)* Things got out of hand, however. When some people dream, they go all the way... *(He smiles at himself, his eyes glistening. He hails Hitchcock and walks into the scene.)*

THURBER: Hey, Hitchcock. *(Hitchcock grins at Thurber and twirls his rope marvelously; it dances with lights.)*

HITCHCOCK: HELLO, THURBER. *(Hitchcock always speaks in capital letters. His voice is magnified and echoes as if it were coming from many directions. When he smiles, his teeth sparkle and gleam.... He has his own Theme... "Hitchcock's Theme" begins to play.)*

THURBER: Hey, Hitchcock, let's play with this Rainbow.

HITCHCOCK: GET YOUR ROPE READY. *(He floats elegantly to the top of the fence. He surveys the Rainbow. Thurber coils his lariat and begins to swing it.)*

I THINK WE CAN TAKE THIS ONE. *(The Rainbow moves slightly to the right...)*

THURBER: Uh, oh. He's seen me!

HITCHCOCK: IT'S JUST HIS WAY OF BEING FRIENDLY. MOVE A LITTLE TO THE RIGHT. *(Thurber does. The Rainbow moves to the left and pulsates provocatively.)*

THURBER: He knows I'm after him.

HITCHCOCK: THERE'S NOTHING MORE EXCITING IN THE LATE AFTERNOON THAN TO CHASE SOMETHING THAT KNOWS YOU'RE AFTER HIM.

THURBER: *(He swings his rope hopelessly toward the giant Rainbow.)*

No matter how hard I swing, the Rainbow is just as far away. *(The Rainbow disappears... Thurber drops his rope.)*

It's the story of my life...

HITCHCOCK: NO, THURBER. YOU CAN'T QUIT JUST WHEN YOU'VE GOT THEIR ATTENTION. USE YOUR SECRET WEAPON. *(He smiles marvelously and begins to whirl his glittering rope.)*

THURBER: What's my secret weapon?

HITCHCOCK: BEAUTY... *(He swings his rope in a larger and larger circle, and the Rainbow reappears grandly...)*

THURBER: There he is again!

HITCHCOCK: HE LOVES IT... *(Suddenly Hitchcock ropes Thurber. He floats lightly to the ground. The Rainbow responds with ripening hues. Shocked, Thurber hops around, struggling to free himself.)*

THURBER: No! You were supposed to catch the rainbow!

HITCHCOCK: NO, I WASN'T. YOU JUST THOUGHT I WAS AFTER THE RAINBOW. IF YOU'D LOOKED AT THE SITUATION CAREFULLY, YOU'D HAVE SEEN THAT I WAS AFTER YOU ALL ALONG... *(He grins broadly and approaches Thurber.)*

THURBER: *(Struggling)* Come on, Hitchcock. *(Thurber backs away, but Hitchcock tugs him forward and loosens the rope gently. When he touches Thurber, sparks fly; electricity crackles in the air.)*

Ow! Play fair!

HITCHCOCK: I DON'T LIKE TO LIMIT MYSELF.

THURBER: I thought you were going to try to be more imaginary.

HITCHCOCK: I AM TRYING.

THURBER: Well, try harder. I'm getting rope burns; Rainbows follow me around, and I find myself telling people more about falling stars than they really want to know. One day they'll come get me and lock me up and throw away the key.

HITCHCOCK: *(Warmly)* I'll find it.

THURBER: You don't understand, Hitchcock. You just can't go through life with an imaginary playmate tagging along, roping Rainbows and – *(Hitchcock pats his back and sparks fly. Thurber jumps.)*

Ow! – setting fires! People won't let you do that. They'll sue you.

HITCHCOCK: WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT?

THURBER: In school.

HITCHCOCK: SCHOOL?

THURBER: Yeah. They make you go. *(A deep dark chord sounds. Thurber takes a step backward.)*

HITCHCOCK: AND WHAT DO THEY TEACH YOU AT THIS SCHOOL?

THURBER: How to read.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU HOW TO THINK?

THURBER: They teach me to add up numbers.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU TO LOVE YOUR FELLOW MAN?

THURBER: They teach me Geography.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU SPACE?

THURBER: They teach me how to live.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU HOW TO DIE? .. THAT IS, AFTER ALL, THE CULMINATION OF YOUR LIFE.

THURBER: *(Backing away)* You're trying to scare me.

HITCHCOCK: I'M TRYING TO RESCUE YOU.

THURBER: I'm not lost.

HITCHCOCK: OH, REALLY? *(A whirlwind comes by at Hitchcock's bidding and spins Thurber around.)*
AND WHERE ARE YOU NOW, MAP MAN?

THURBER: Stop it! *(The wind stops suddenly. Thurber falls down.)*

HITCHCOCK: YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE, AND YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT GEOGRAPHY?

(His voice overwhelming) I CAN MAKE UP A WHIRLWIND AND CATCH A RAINBOW AND RIDE A STAR TO NOTHING AND YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHERE THINGS ARE?!
(A bolt of lightning. A deep chord sounds.)

THURBER: Don't hurt me! Go away! *(He shields himself with his arms.)*

HITCHCOCK: *(Shocked and hurt)* YOU ARE AFRAID OF ME?

THURBER: Well, Hitchcock, you yelled at me and threw me into a tornado and you said I –

HITCHCOCK: I SAID YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE!

THURBER: I know I'm stuck on this prairie like an old photograph while you fly around with cowboys like comets at a rodeo, I know that. I haven't got a horse and I haven't got a girl, I know that. You haven't helped me any with that, even school doesn't help any with that. Nothing helps with that...

HITCHCOCK: YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR SECRET WEAPON...

THURBER: Beauty? Hitchcock, if I'm beautiful, it sure is a secret weapon – it's so secret nobody on Earth knows it.

HITCHCOCK: YOU HAVE BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS...

THURBER: Now you're making fun of my poems. Just like all the others.

HITCHCOCK: *(Ominous)* MAKING FUN OF YOUR POEMS? I'M MAKING FUN OF YOUR POEMS?

(A dark chord sounds. His voice is overwhelming, growing louder and deeper, joined by rising music; lights change color and stars twinkle; small flowers sprout where none were before.)

WHEN MANY OF THEM ARE GROWING MAJESTICALLY ALONG THE DESERTED ROADS OF A STRANDED UNIVERSE, SPROUTING INTELLIGENCE AND FLOWERS ON THE BACK OF ANCIENT SPACE, RAINING LIKE LIVING RHINESTONES IN A SHOWER OF SAND, TEARS OF SEQUINS DOWN A SILENT NIGHT, MAKING NEW NAMES FOR THEMSELVES IN OLD GROUND AND TAKING ROOT IN THE RISING MIND OF TIME LIKE A NEW PEOPLE?... (He smiles brilliantly, bathed in light. Thurber runs from him in genuine fright and hides behind the cactus.)

(Beckoning more quietly) COME OUT OF THERE.

THURBER: No. I can't take all this beauty...

HITCHCOCK: COME OUT! *(Thurber peaks out.)*

THURBER: Go away. I just wanted to play with cowboys. I didn't want to lose my mind.

HITCHCOCK: COME ON. YOU CAN FIND A NEW ONE.

THURBER: But I like this one. I know where everything is.

(Hitchcock floats slowly to the top of the fence, a serious look on his face.)

HITCHCOCK: SUIT YOURSELF. THAT ONE HAS SENT YOU SCURRYING BEHIND A CACTUS HIDING FROM YOUR OWN BEAUTY. .. BUT SUIT YOURSELF.

(Thurber comes out from behind the cactus.)

THURBER: I'm sorry, Hitchcock. *(He reaches toward Hitchcock, who floats higher, above the fence.)*

Oh, please, don't leave me alone here. It's so plain... It's so painful... And I just know it's bound to get worse.

HITCHCOCK: GO TO YOUR SCHOOL. LEARN HOW TO LIVE.

THURBER: I'm not like them. You taught me to be different. Don't leave me alone.

HITCHCOCK: I'M NOT SURE YOU'RE SO DIFFERENT ANY MORE. GO ON WITH YOUR GEOGRAPHY.

THURBER: Hitchcock, there's so little to hope for here. There's so little magnificence and grace... *(Crying)* Can't you understand what it's like to be – so far from marvelous...

(A brilliant bolt of lightning. Hitchcock glows, his voice booming, growing deeper and louder with the music.)

HITCHCOCK: YOU ARE ETERNALLY AT THE MOUTH OF ALL THAT IS MARVELOUS, YOU PLAY IN ITS EYES AND RUN THROUGH ITS MIND WITH YOUR SCATTERING DREAMS. YOU FILL ITS EARS WITH YOUR ACHES AND BLEND ITS BLOOD WITH YOUR YEARS AND STILL YOU CANNOT BEAR YOUR OWN MAGNIFICENCE AND GRACE, AND THE SKY AND THE SAND MUST BE PLAIN FOR YOU WHILE IN ETERNITY THEY SEAR OLD SUNS WITH ATOMIC FACES AND BLISTERING MEMORIES OF THE COLORS OF ALL THE TIMES. THEY WAIT FOR YOU IN THE DARKNESS, TO TELL OF THE TERRIBLE BEAUTIES AND MUNIFICENT MEN WHO STIR THERE, WHERE YOU NEVER LOOK

FOR "MARVELOUS," AND YET IT POSSESSES YOU ALWAYS AND CALLS YOU EVERY NAME...

THURBER: *(Crying)* I know my name! *(Hitchcock floats upward, higher, glowing, his voice louder.)*

HITCHCOCK: YOU KNOW ONE TINY SYLLABLE IN THE UNIVERSE AND WHEN SOMEONE CALLS IT YOU RUN, AND YOU THINK YOU KNOW YOUR NAME? WHICH IS CENTURIES LONG AND WILL TAKE ALL YOUR LIFETIMES TO UNDERSTAND – YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE?!?

THURBER: *(Abashed)* I'm sorry... *(Hitchcock floats downward to the top of the fence.)*

I just wanted to be a cowboy. I don't know how I got into all this.

HITCHCOCK: *(Floating upward again)* YOU KNOW VERY WELL HOW YOU GOT INTO ALL THIS! YOU DREAM UP A WORLD TO PLAY DUMB IN. DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY? WHATSOEVER??

THURBER: I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything wrong.

HITCHCOCK: *(Floating downward again.)* SO YOU WANT TO BE A COWBOY...? THEN I WILL TELL YOU.... *(. He moves closer, looks at Thurber with deep eyes and holds up his hand as if to signal a change in Time...like a wand. His voice deeper, his eyes beaming laser streaked messages into the air; it seems for a moment that an ancient being of too overwhelming beauty has stepped into his place...)*

BEING A COWBOY IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK, THURBER. IT IS AN ANCIENT LANGUAGE, A CREED, NOT A MODERN TALE OF ROPING A COW WHO YOU DO NOT KNOW IS YOUR TEACHER AND RIDING A HORSE WHO YOU DO NOT KNOW IS YOUR PROTECTOR AND WISE FELLOW TRAVELER. THIS SECRET HAS BEEN HIDDEN FROM YOU, COVERED OVER BY THE DESTRUCTIVE TALES OF WESTERN VIOLENCE AGAINST THE OTHERS OF OLD WHO LONGED TO TEACH YOU. THESE TALES WERE USED TO HIDE THE SECRETS OF THE FIRES IN THE SKY, THE RAINBOW CRYSTAL IN YOUR MIND, THE ANCIENT COW-GIRL IN THE STARS AND HER JOINING OF THE MALE AND FEMALE IN THE OLD RACES OF THE FERTILE HORNED COW AND THE SKY OF SEVEN, THE KNOWLEDGE KEPT BY THE RIDERS OF THE SKY...

THURBER: The riders of the sky... *(His face in his hands)* Hitchcock, how can I ever understand!?

HITCHCOCK: YOU MUST EARN THE KEY TO THIS KNOWLEDGE. YOU MUST BECOME COMPLETELY VULNERABLE TO THE UNIVERSE. AND, THUS, COMPLETELY VULNERABLE TO YOUR OWN BEAUTY. YOU MUST BECOME LIKE THE INVISIBLE RIDERS WHO HOLD IN THE STARS THE STORIES OF THE SKY. YOU THINK YOU RIDE THE HORSE, BUT IT IS THE HORSE WHO RIDES YOU AND GUIDES YOUR WAY. IT IS AN ANCIENT DANCE OF THE CENTURIES. IN THE COW-BOY IS THE KNOWING OF THE MOTHERING HORNED COW AND HER LANGUAGE OF CREATION, WHICH CAME FROM THE STARS.

(He drops his hand and seems himself again. A pause. He smiles.) STILL WANT TO BE A COWBOY, THURBER?

THURBER: *(He walks thoughtfully along the fence. He sighs deeply.)* Oh, yes... ! But I didn't know it was going to be so hard. *(The wind blows. He looks up for a long time dreaming. Softly)* Hitchcock, have you seen the stars...?

HITCHCOCK: I HAVE BEEN THE STARS.

THURBER: ...Hitchcock, are there cowboys there?

HITCHCOCK: THURBER, BEING A COW-BOY ISN'T AN OCCUPATION. IT'S A SCHOOL. IT'S A STATE OF MIND. IT'S AN ETERNAL RIDING OF THE WIND, KNOWING THE SPIRIT OF YOUR SISTER AND BROTHER IN THE HORNED COW AND THE WINGED HORSE. IT'S A CIVILIZATION. IT'S A RACE. IT'S A CONSTELLATION OF BEING...!

THURBER: *(Smiles)* I knew it...! *(He sings.)*

"COWBOY HIGH"

I knew there were cowboys,
I knew there were cowboys,
I knew there were cowboys,
Up in the sky.
I knew there were cowboys high...

Where the rainbows bend
And the rivers end
There are dreams of men
Who will ride again,
Through the diamond night
With their crystal eyes
And electric names
Can you hear their cries?

Cowboy High, Cowboy High,
Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
I know there are cowboys
Up in the sky.
I've got to find them
Before I die...

I will ride in the Night.
I'll catch up with Light,
With the voices of men
Who will sing again,
Following silver hoof beats
In the blue-green wind,
Whispering star-crossed stories
Out where the campfires begin...

Cowboy High, Cowboy High,
Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
I know there are cowboys
Up in the sky.
I've got to find them
Before I die...

HITCHCOCK: *(He sings in a deep voice.)*
We live in men
Where poems begin.
We ride for years
Down childhood tears.
Feel the stars in dust,
Touch the love in rust,
And you will understand

The beauty of your hand...

TOGETHER:

Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
The time will come
When cowboys fly.
And the world will see cowboys
Up in the sky.
And there will always be
Cowboys High.

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THURBER: *(A pause. He looks earnestly at Hitchcock.)* I'm sorry I was afraid of you, Hitchcock.

HITCHCOCK: TELL THE TRUTH.

THURBER: What do you mean?

HITCHCOCK: *(Eyes glistening)* YOU DON'T THINK OF ME SO OFTEN ANY MORE. .. *(His tears are reflected on the prairie.)*

NOT SO OFTEN AT ALL. AND SO I COME HERE LESS AND LESS. AND WHEN YOU DO THINK OF ME, YOU ARE EMBARRASSED. I'M LIKE AN OLD TOY, A PART OF YOUR YOUTH AND YOU THINK THEY'LL MAKE YOU GIVE UP TO BE A "MAN." YOU THINK YOU'RE A "SISSY" FOR DREAMING AND WRITING POETRY. YOU THINK COWBOYS HAVE IT ALL AND SO YOU WANT TO BE ONE – BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE. YOU WANT TO RIDE ON HIGH BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO THINK FOR YOURSELF, AND YOU HAVE TO, TO FLY – OR YOU'LL BE SWALLOWED WHOLE IN THE NEBULA OF OTHER MINDS...

YOU LOVE HONEY JO, BUT YOU CAN'T TELL HER, AND THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL EVER HAVE HER. YOU CAN'T TELL ME THE TRUTH EITHER, NOW. AND THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN COME HERE. PLEASE DON'T SAY, "I'M SORRY, HITCHCOCK." YOUR THOUGHTS ARE FLYING AROUND LIKE BARBED WIRE...

THURBER: *(Shaking, in tears, filled with rage and embarrassment, his fists clinched as someone who has been violated.)*

YOU LISTENED TO MY THOUGHTS! YOU LISTENED!

HITCHCOCK: THERE'S NOT A MAN IN THE WORLD DOESN'T KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS; THEY'RE WRITTEN IN EVERY MOVE, EVERY WINK AND GRIN AND MINGLE IN THE AIR TO FORM THE STORMS – YOUR THOUGHTS ARE NOBODY'S SECRET, LEAST OF ALL YOURS...

THURBER: How dare you listen in! How could you embarrass me like that, look right through me and laugh! You're not my friend any more! You just come to make fun of me!

HITCHCOCK: *(A pause)* IF YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT, I SHALL NOT COME AGAIN.

THURBER: You listened to my thoughts! You're a monster!

HITCHCOCK: *(His eyes gleam with tears)* YOUR THOUGHTS ARE AN OPEN SKY, MY FRIEND. DO YOU WANT TO PROTECT THE UNIVERSE FROM ITSELF?

THURBER: I never want to see you again!

HITCHCOCK: THINK CAREFULLY, THURBER, IF THIS IS WHAT YOU REALLY WANT.

THURBER: *(Embarrassed and hurt)* Of course it's what I want! It's what I said, isn't it? *(Crying)* Oh, how could you do this to me?!

HITCHCOCK: *(With tears)* THE PROCESS IS THE SAME AS LOVING...

THURBER: *(Covering his ears)* STOP IT!

HITCHCOCK: VERY WELL. I WON'T BE BACK. *(As he speaks, the wind whips and he begins to rise and move backward.)*

THINK FOR YOURSELF, THURBER. FOR YOU WILL BE TRULY ALONE NOW.
(He disappears in a swirl of lights and wind, above the stage.)

THURBER: IT'S ALRIGHT WITH ME! *(A pause.)* IT'S ALRIGHT WITH ME!

(After a moment, there is silence and darkness, and only the light of the stars. Thurber runs upstage frantically.)

HITCHCOCK! WAIT! WAIT!

(He looks up at the sky plaintively, but there is no answer. He sits down on a stone and he cries. Faintly, ghostly voices begin to sing in the sky, and he joins them, singing softly through his tears.)

"COWBOY HIGH" (Reprise)

*I will ride in the Night,
I'll catch up with Light,
With the voices of men
Who will sing again,
Following silver hoof beats
In the blue-green wind,
Whispering star-crossed stories
Out where the campfires begin...*

*Cowboy High, Cowboy High,
Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
I know there are cowboys
Up in the sky.
I've got to find them
Before I die...*

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(Thurber stands and waves his cowboy hat to the voices in the fading music. A shower of bright particles covers him waving. He looks at himself covered in the glitter – then looks out to the audience, waving to them as the spotlight fades to a bluish memory and darkens very slowly on the silently waving figure.)

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☆ ☆ ACT II, Scene 1. ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Disneyland" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Sixteen years later. The Recreation Hall of the Episcopal Church in Hallelujah, Texas, is being decorated for a Re-union Homecoming Dance. Perched on ladders, four beautiful girls in their late 20's hang glittering cardboard stars from the ceiling in a dreamlike scene. There is an overabundance of stars...

In a prominent position sits the round and golden Honey Jo Waller, her blond hair tumbling in torrents, her deep eyes sparkling; her smile melts the moments and her lovely bosom rebels against a soft golden wool dress that clings to her like a kitten. A long gold silk scarf trails her hair down her dress. Cindy Lou is a bright-eyed beauty with intelligent eyes in a red dress, with perfect nose and mouth. Only cynicism could blemish her cheeks. Stella Nell in aqua blue tosses her head with a fashionable air and no small amount of authority, matched only by expensive silver bracelets sliding easily down her long wrists. A permanent smile is drawn to her dimples, crossing her moon-shaped face like an iced-tea comet. Tiniest of all, Emma Mae peers with ethereal beauty and transparent eyes into an impossibly alien landscape which the others take for granted, but which provides for her endless questions with surprising answers.

Upstage is a bandstand and a large poster. Upstage are impressive stained glass double doors, the entrance to the hall. The sky can be seen through the many windows in the hall. Outside is a porch. Downstage a small couch sits before a silent fireplace. In the center of the room hangs a revolving ball of mirrored glass, reflecting the mood and movement of the hall. The glistening hues of stained glass windows color the space and the stars. As the scene opens, the sun is setting, shining startlingly through the windows.

CINDY: I think we may be putting too many stars up here, Honey Jo.

HONEY: Cindy Lou, there's no such thing as too many stars.

EMMA: Unless they're falling...

STELLA: Don't worry. There hasn't been a meteor fall here since 1959.

EMMA: Just the flying saucers now...

CINDY: They don't call this Hallelujah, Texas, for nothing.

STELLA: I could do without the tornadoes, personally.

HONEY: *(Sighing)* I could do without the desert...

CINDY: Doesn't anybody appreciate the romance of a small Texas town? I thought we'd made it after "The Last Picture Show."

STELLA: *(Suggestively)* Maybe you did, Cindy Lou.

CINDY: Stella Nell has never gotten over Larry Pat.

STELLA: I'm Vice President of the First National Bank, honey. I don't have to get over things anymore.

CINDY: Good for you. Some of us are just married and *really really rich*.

EMMA: I thought this was going to be a Re-union.

HONEY: Well, it is a Re-union, Emma Mae. But some of us are more re-united than others.

STELLA: It certainly doesn't seem like ten years since we graduated.

EMMA: Time sure flies when you get out of High School. I wonder sometimes why I left...

CINDY: Emma Mae –

EMMA: *(Wistfully, the light outside becoming fainter as she speaks)* ...Remember all the great times we had at the Episcopal dances? What would we all of done without Friday night dances at the Episcopal Rec Hall? I don't know what I'd have done. I'd of never gone with Joe Wynn. And we'd of never gotten married...

CINDY: *(Low)* It was close as it was. *(She climbs down the ladder and turns on the lights in the hall.)*

HONEY: What?

CINDY: Never mind.

EMMA: I'm real glad they let us decorate this year, since it's our ten-year anniversary class reunion and everything. I wouldn't have been as happy if I couldn't have decorated.

STELLA: I'm certainly glad you got it out of your system, Emma Mae. *(She climbs down the ladder.)*

HONEY: Stella Nell, we can't all be Vice Presidents.

EMMA: *(Climbing down)* This is supposed to be a Homecoming Dance. Can't somebody be happy about Homecoming?

CINDY: You can make up for the rest of us, Emma Mae.

EMMA: I'm not smart enough to be happy for you, Cindy Lou. I have enough trouble just trying to be happy for myself.

HONEY: Well, I'm happy... At least I'm excited.

CINDY: Look at the stars in her eyes.

STELLA: What are you happy about?

HONEY: Thurber Mills is coming home tonight.

CINDY: *(Recollecting)* Thurber Mills... Thurber Mills...

STELLA: I didn't know you and Thurber ever exactly –

HONEY: We didn't. Exactly.

EMMA: Oh, now I remember. Caroline Mills' brother. He was pretty. He went off to be a cowboy. Or was it an astronomer? I can't remember. Where did he go?

STELLA: Somebody said he went to Sweetwater.

HONEY: Odessa.

STELLA: I heard he used to see UFO's up on the ridge west of town.

CINDY: Didn't he join the rodeo circuit?

EMMA: I remember once we were up on the ridge painting "GO BUCKAROOS!" on the water tower, and Thurber talked to a Rainbow for fifteen minutes. I don't know what he said to it, but they sure did have it out.

STELLA: Rodney Brown said there used to be a UFO up by the water tower.

CINDY: Rodney Brown said there used to be a lot of things.

STELLA: Wasn't that awful about Eddie Mack and Murlon? It's been picked up on the national wire service now. Somebody was here from Associated Press and somebody from Time.

EMMA: Somebody was here from Time...?

STELLA: Do you think they made it up?

CINDY: Why would you want to make up that a UFO picked you up and took you for a ride? I'd never tell it if it really happened.

HONEY: Their church didn't need any more publicity.

CINDY: Well, that's what you get in this town. Publicity. Sometimes I think we're living in the Twilight Zone here.

STELLA: Honey, the whole state of Texas is in the Twilight Zone.

HONEY: Just slightly behind our time.

EMMA: Who came from Time...?

CINDY: Some Yaley.

STELLA: *(Laughing)* Did he live?

CINDY: I dunno. I heard Joe Bob from the "Hallelujah American" picked him up in a truck with some guns in the back.

STELLA: Sometimes I think we should all move away from here. I don't think it's safe anymore.

- EMMA: Where is it safe?
- STELLA: Somewhere with no tornadoes and no flying saucers.
- HONEY: No falling stars and men from Time...
- STELLA: Sun's almost gone. .. *(The glowing sunset hues can be seen through some of the windows. Perched high on their ladders, they look in unison as its rainbow hues throb in the room, as if alive.)*
- CINDY: Was Thurber Mills the one who read that crazy poem about you in geography class in the sixth grade?
- HONEY: Yeah. He was. *(She clasps the pink necklace she's wearing with a sigh and a dreamy look... It connects her with him somehow.)*
- STELLA: *Real* cute, though.
- CINDY: What's the sense of being cute if somebody's crazy?
- HONEY: I honestly don't know...
- CINDY: *(Climbing down the ladder and walking over to the bandstand)* I think we should put some more stars on the drums. What do you think, Stella Nell?
- STELLA: I think Artie Browning has enough stars in his eyes for the whole bandstand... That's what I think. *(They all look up in unison at a large poster of Artie Browning and his band, "The Starbusters," over the band stand. Artie is really tall, wearing a terrific cowboy outfit and his teeth fairly gleam through his smile and right out of the poster...)*
- CINDY: Where's the glitter? Is there any more glitter?
- EMMA: I like his band. They light up all the time.
- STELLA: I wouldn't touch that line.
- HONEY: What's wrong with Artie Browning's eyes...?
- CINDY: Ah hah. *(She picks up some supplies and hands them off to the others.)* There's some interest here in Artie Browning's eyes. *(In unison, they all turn and look up at the poster again.)*
- STELLA: I wondered who you were dating since you stopped going with that guy at Cisco Junior College. What was his name?
- HONEY: I wasn't exactly "going" with him. I was "going" to college.
- CINDY: *(Climbing back up the ladder lugging more stars.)* When you "go" to college, it's automatic that you "go" with somebody. It's included in the tuition.
- STELLA: I made it the hard way. I stayed right here and didn't exactly "go" with anybody.
- CINDY: Artie Browning, hunh...
- STELLA: I thought you were pining for Thurber Mills.

HONEY: I'm not pining for anybody. *(Clasping her pink necklace.)* Don't try to marry me off. Maybe I won't even get married. No law says you have to get married.

STELLA: Brave girl.

CINDY: Teaching school is enough for you?

EMMA: What do you teach, Honey?

HONEY: *(Dreamily sighing)* Geography...

CINDY: Well, Artie Browning would certainly be a great catch. Just ask him.

STELLA: He sure is boring about Art Garfunkel. You'd of thought nobody else in the whole world ever looked like Art Garfunkel.

CINDY: They may not of...

EMMA: Do you think there's enough stars?

CINDY: I need more glitter.

(They all sing in harmonies, balancing and swaying on the ladders, hanging more stars.)

"STARS!"

CINDY: I'm almost out of glitter...
EMMA: I wonder what that means...?
ALL: This has got to be the best
Of all the Homecomings...

(Suddenly more stars drop down to them from some mysterious place far above. They catch the stars happily and hang more as they sing.)

EMMA: *(Speaking and catching stars)* More Stars!

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: I started out with one
Now I can't stop
ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking out the windows in unison)
Standing up here I can almost see Home...

HONEY: *(Clasping her pink necklace and thinking of Thurber)*
Will he know which one I am?
EMMA: *(Looking at the poster of Artie)* When he's playing in the band?
HONEY: *(Clasping her pink necklace)* All starry-eyed –
CINDY: *(Looking at the poster)* -- And full notes!
STELLA: His teeth are brighter than his hopes.

EMMA: *(Speaking)* Look out! Here come more stars!
(More stars drop down for them to hang; more seem to sparkle in the sky.)

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: I started out with one
Now I can't stop

ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking out the windows in unison)
Standing up here I can almost see Home...

HONEY: *(Fingering the necklace)* Does he ever think of me?
CINDY: *(Looking at the poster)* He'll play you like a symphony!
EMMA: *(Thoughtfully)* No, he's too busy with guitars.
HONEY: *(Dreamily thinking of poet Thurber)*
He used to say I looked like Mars...

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: *(Stardust falling on her head)*
Stars are falling in my hair.
Is this too much!

CINDY: *(Shouting/speaking)* No!
ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking out the windows in unison)
Standing up here I can almost see Home...

STELLA: *(Looking around thoughtfully, realizing that they have been deluged with stars. Stars are everywhere.)*

Where did all these stars come from?
EMMA: *(Slowly as they all look up with trepidation)*
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!

ALL: *(A minor chord)* Stars!

HONEY: *(Singing alone, an eerie refrain in an eerie spotlight)*
Star light, star bright...
I wish I was a star Tonight...!
(As she sings the last word, the volume of the music and her voice reaches a crescendo.)

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(Abruptly there is thunder, lightning, and wind outside. A storm is coming. They begin to finish up, pack up supplies.)

ALL: Oh, no!

CINDY: I hope that's not a storm.

STELLA: It's spring in west Texas. It's a storm. Darn it. It's not safe here, I tell you. ... So Honey Jo, who're you coming with to the dance tonight?

HONEY: *(She climbs down the ladder. The others follow.)* Caroline Mills.

CINDY: No date?

STELLA: How is she? Since the accident?

HONEY: Better.

CINDY: I can't figure out how it happened. The Caddo Bridge is hard to miss.

STELLA: Nothing is hard to miss around here.

HONEY: She didn't see it.

CINDY: Well, it's always been there.

EMMA: Maybe she was looking at something else. ...

STELLA: *(Pause)* That bridge is old. There aren't any lights out there anymore.

CINDY: We used to play out there when we were kids.

EMMA: Before this...

STELLA: This?...

(A brilliant flash of lightning pierces the stained glass windows. They wait expectantly for thunder. Instead, the lights go out. The strange silent lightning flashes repeatedly and intensely. The girls huddle together in fear.)

STELLA: Oh, my God...

EMMA: That was funny lightning...

CINDY: Let's light candles. Quick! *(They fumble around for candles and begins to light them, passing them around.)*

HONEY: Those are for the dance...

CINDY: Screw the dance.

EMMA: Cindy Lou!

STELLA: *(Opening the doors and peering out.)* I don't see lights on anywhere.

EMMA: There should always be lights on somewhere...

STELLA: We should do something.

EMMA: Cindy Lou, do you know where the fuses are?

CINDY: Emma Mae, I don't know anything about fuses. I don't live that kind of life.

STELLA: *(Picking up the phone)* The phone is dead.

HONEY: Somebody should go for Mr. Wilkinson. *(Lighting more candles and passing them around.)*

EMMA: *(Dreamily)* Maybe we could just have a candlelight dance...

CINDY: I don't think Artie Browning and his electric band would like that.

EMMA: *(Thoughtfully)* He sure is causing a lot of trouble, isn't he?

(Artie Browning and two band members have sneaked in the open doors behind the girls. They've come to rehearse.)

ARTIE: I'm completely innocent! *(He hugs Honey from behind. The girls gasp and jump in fright. Every time he smiles, his teeth gleam.)*

BANDMEMBERS' VOICES: *(In the background)* Oh, great. What do we do now? Don't step on that...

HONEY: Artie Browning! Don't sneak up on people like that!

ARTIE: Honey Jo, that's what life's all about... *(He hugs her hungrily.)*

HONEY: *(Pushing him away, slightly embarrassed)* Artie, could you go for Mr. Wilkinson? I think we blew a fuse or something.

ARTIE: I'm afraid Mr. Wilkinson can't help. There's a blackout all over town.

STELLA: What's happening?

CINDY: *(Grimly)* It's the end of the world, that's all.

STELLA: I knew it...

ARTIE: I know somebody who has a generator.

CINDY: Well, go find him!

STELLA: What if the lights don't come back on...?

EMMA: Life is better than that, Stella Nell.

CINDY: Let's stop talking about life. This is serious.

ARTIE: Honey Jo, I sure hate to leave you alone in all this candlelight...
(He holds Honey Jo by the waist, looking deeply into her eyes.)

HONEY: Artie...

ARTIE: Okay... *(He lifts her chin and kisses her cheek. Then he heads for the door with the "Starbusters.")*

We're on our way.

(Artie and the band members leave. A car is heard starting, driving away. More thunder and lightning.)

STELLA: Let's light all the candles. *(The girls light many candles, the hall becoming brighter.)*

HONEY: And the fireplace. *(Honey lights a fire. Gradually her face glows golden in the flame. A pause.)*

CINDY: When did all this happen with Artie Browning?

HONEY: Oh, I don't know. You know how these things are. We were "just friends." And then one day, you begin to – you know. Oh, I don't know. Artie is so – attentive. He says what's on his mind. I like that.

STELLA: And he has a lot of things on his mind...

CINDY: I'll bet.

HONEY: He's really not so bad.

CINDY: If you can get by the electric smile.

HONEY: He doesn't mean to be so – arrogant. I mean, he doesn't know he's being arrogant. Actually he gets embarrassed easily. And he's *very* sensitive about his music.

CINDY: And of course he's also very tall and –

STELLA: Sexy. Yes. I was just about to mention that.

EMMA: But what about Thurber?...

HONEY: *(She clasps her necklace and looks down. Softly)* Thurber... You could wait on Thurber Mills your whole life, I guess, and nothing might ever happen. The problem is you'd always know he was worth the outside chance.

CINDY: But he's so crazy.

STELLA: But he's such a doll.

HONEY: Thurber's not like – anyone else.

CINDY: No kidding.

HONEY: I know it's hard to understand. He's sort of – a flying man. He's always – out there somewhere. He's always bringing you hope or flowers. Sighing and blinking and getting you crazy. Writing you poems about outer space. Trying to take off. Trying to take you with him...

CINDY: Flying men have a way of not ever landing...

HONEY: I know...

STELLA: I didn't know you went with him. What was it like?

HONEY: Well, it wasn't exactly "like something." He used to – well, he would write me these poems, and come over and read them out loud to me and things. I really couldn't understand them, but I didn't tell him that.

STELLA: Why not?

HONEY: They were too special. Right out of Disney.

STELLA: Maybe he's changed.

HONEY: I don't think you change that. It's either Disneyland or it isn't. *(She laughs, remembering.)*

EMMA: Did he write to you from the rodeo?

HONEY: *(Laughing)* Well, after he left Texas Tech, I got a card once. The card had a picture of a road on it. The road was winding through some hills.

CINDY: What did it say?

HONEY: It said, "Dear Honey, this winding road reminds me of you. Please send me something that reminds you of me. Thurber."

EMMA: What did you send him?

HONEY: *(Sighing)* My heart. *(Dryly)* And I should have sent a self-addressed stamped envelope, because I never got it back...

CINDY: *(Looking at the ceiling)* I don't know if I can take this.

EMMA: *(Interested)* Did he ever say anything to you about it?

HONEY: About what?

EMMA: Your heart.

HONEY: *(Blushing)* Oh, Thurber doesn't talk about things like hearts. It's too much for him. At the crucial moment he looks up at a passing sparrow... *(sighing)* ...and he tries to make up a poem about you that – well, it never quite – well, it doesn't exactly – well, it's like he gets carried away with the sparrow and he forgets where he was with *you*... Just like the winding road. *(She shakes her head and laughs.)*

Oh, it's Disneyland. It's definitely Disneyland...

(The room takes on a strange pink glow and the song begins. The girls interject spoken comments as Honey Jo sings.)

"DISNEYLAND"

HONEY: He used to smile,
Then he would wait a while,
And then he would kiss me,
And then he would ask me,

Do you remember the pine trees,
When they were loaded with snow?
CINDY: *(Did you remind him of pine trees?)*
HONEY: Well, you're a little like pine trees
When pine trees overflow...
(She smiles suggestively.)
STELLA: *(Oh, no.)*

HONEY: *(Getting carried away in her imitation)*

And then the snow falls on the prairie,
And the prairie lies down and cries –
CINDY: *(The prairie lies down and cries??)*
HONEY: Because melting snow is so touching
And the prairie has stars in its eyes...
(She smiles triumphantly.)
EMMA: *(How can a prairie have stars in its eyes?)*

HONEY: He lived in Disneyland
And he'd hold my hand.
He'd look up at the sky,
And I would just die.
EMMA: *(Couldn't he say it?)*
HONEY: No, it just flew away.

But in Disneyland,
I think it goes that way.

And then he would kiss me.
And then he would ask me,

CINDY:
HONEY: Do you see Rainbows on the hillside,
Sprinkled with mist from the sky?
(Did you remind him of hillsides?)
Well, you're a little like Rainbows
When they fill up with raindrops and sigh...
(She smiles broadly.)

EMMA: (Oh, my.)

HONEY: *(Getting carried away)*
And then the Rainbows ride up to heaven,
And heaven is hopeful and wet,
Because heaven is having a birthday
When a Rainbow and heaven have met...

EMMA: (But I don't understand yet...)

HONEY: He lived in Disneyland
And he'd hold my hand.
He'd look up at the sky,
And I would just die.

EMMA: (Couldn't he say it?)

HONEY: No, it just flew away.
(The girls join in.)

ALL: But in Disneyland,
I think it goes that way.

HONEY: And then he would kiss me,
And then he would ask me,

Do you think love birds
Make up new words
Every time they see you?

EMMA: (They do?)

HONEY: Well, you're a little like love bird songs
When love birds make love and sing, too...
(She giggles.)

EMMA: (I'm not sure you can do that...)

HONEY: *(Getting carried away)*
So all the love birds flew off together
Looking for new things to say...

STELLA: (Okay...)

HONEY: And that's why the love birds will never part,
And why love flies off to this day...
(She smiles broadly.)

CINDY: (He didn't.)

HONEY: (He did.)

HONEY: He lived in Disneyland
And he'd hold my hand.
He'd look up at the sky,

EMMA: And I would just die.
(Couldn't he say it?)
HONEY: No, it just flew away.
ALL: But in Disneyland,
I think it goes that way.

(Pause. Softly)
And then he would kiss me,
And then he would ask me...
(Her voice trails off.)
STELLA: (Honey Jo?)

HONEY: *(She sings with tears.)*
Do you think hearts break like eggs do?
Do you think we will live?
EMMA: *(Softly)* (What did you tell him?)
HONEY: Well, I couldn't tell him that hearts are made
Of wishes and things you forgive.

CINDY: (Do you love him, Honey Jo?)

HONEY: *(Painfully)*
I believed in his rainbows...
I looked for a prairie that cries...
EMMA: (Oh, no...)
HONEY: But I didn't want any eggs to break.
I just wanted the love in his eyes...

HONEY: We lived in
ALL: Disneyland
HONEY: And he'd hold my hand.
ALL: He'd look up at the sky,
HONEY: And I would just die.
EMMA: (Maybe he'll tell you?)
HONEY: *(Hopefully)* Maybe today!
ALL: Because in Disneyland, your prince will come some—
In Disneyland, your prince will come some—
In Disneyland, your prince will come some day!

☆☆☆

(A dark minor chord sounds. Abruptly the doors blow open. A tremendous wind whips through the hall accompanied by brilliant silent lightning. Candles go out. The doors bang angrily. The sound of electricity sizzling accompanies a sharp crack of thunder. A loud metallic hum whirrs. Suddenly, silhouetted in the strange, almost continuous lightning, a magnificent figure stands in profile in the doorway – a shining, glittering cowboy seven feet tall... He glows in the wind. His clothes, his eyes and teeth glitter marvelously. Over his shoulder he carries a coil of glittering rope. The girls gasp and huddle together in silent terror.)

STELLA: Oh, my God...

CINDY: I told you it was the end of the world.

(Someone reaches for a candle. A glass holder drops and rolls noisily across the dance floor. Slowly Hitchcock Huddleston turns to face the girls, smiling strangely. His teeth glitter brightly as do his eyes.)

STELLA: Oh, my God...

CINDY: What is he going to do?

(Hitchcock walks into the hall towards them. Several stars drop from the ceiling as he approaches. Sparks fly and electricity crackles as they hit the floor. Hitchcock appears to produce glowing stars from thin air. When he smiles his teeth gleam as if star beams lived there. He begins to twirl his rope magically. Outside in the midst of the storm, a giant Rainbow can be seen glowing in the night – Hitchcock aims his rope to catch it.... Stars appear to pulse in the lightning. The girls stand paralyzed in a strange mixture of terror and awe... Slowly and softly the music begins in a minor chord... The girls sing as if in a trance.)

"STARS!" (Reprise)

GIRLS: *(Starting very slowly)* Stars... .. Stars...

EMMA: Where did that man come from?

CINDY: Look he has stars!

GIRLS: Is he the one
Roping rainbows

EMMA: And he smiles like the Sun...!

COWBOYS: *(In the sky are shimmering images of glittering Cowboys and their choral background harmonies begin.)* Ooooh... Ahhhh...

CINDY: Look up there –

HONEY: -- Men in the sky.

EMMA: But will they ever tell us why?

(Now there are many Rainbows... Hitchcock can be seen talking to them.)

STELLA: Look he's talking to Rainbows.

EMMA: *(Thoughtfully)* Is there anything else he knows?...

HITCHCOCK AND COWBOYS: Stars!

GIRLS: Stars!

COWBOYS: I see some cowgirls
And the moon is high,

GIRLS: Is this the night?

(A bright light suddenly beams down from above and a whirring noise is heard.)

CINDY: That's a UFO –

EMMA: Or a very bright light...

COWBOYS: They're singing like the Seraphim

GIRLS: Should we run and hide from them?

CINDY: I am scared! – *(A star streaks and falls across the sky)*

HONEY: -- A falling star!

EMMA: Doesn't this make you wonder who we are?

ALL TOGETHER: *(A minor chord)* Stars!

HONEY: *(Singing alone, an eerie refrain in an eerie spotlight)*

Star light, Star bright...

I wish I was a star

ALL TOGETHER IN A CRESCENDO: Tonight...!

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(Wind whips through the hall like a tornado, blowing things everywhere. Outside the Rainbows glow provocatively, brilliant in their colors against the black night sky shattered only by the baying lightning. Hitchcock begins to walk toward the girls, his smile gleaming like fireworks.)

GIRLS: *(Screaming) Ooh! Help! (They scatter and run wildly up the aisles and into the night. Hitchcock, smiling affectionately and gently after them, stands thoughtfully on the stage for a moment, looking at the audience. Then he turns and ropes a Rainbow. ☺)*

(Blackout.)

☆☆☆

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT II, Scene 2. ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Imagine Me" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

A little later at the Recreation Hall. The lights have come on again. Artie Browning is restoring order. He has returned alone to set the stage for the band's performance. He is wearing a T-shirt with the band's logo, "Starbusters," and tight blue jeans. He lowers the lights in the hall and adjusts the flashing electric bulbs which outline the bands' instruments, stands, and set. His utter delight with the brilliantly glittering lights is apparent. He turns and smiles, and just for a moment the faintest sparkle flashes from his teeth and eyes – a little like Hitchcock Huddleston -- and then vanishes.

In the background a tape recorder is playing "Imagine Me," a new song he's written. He's depressed about falling in love. He's not sure. He turns the recorder off and replays a short segment. He walks to the fireplace downstage center. He is tall and sexy...

He sits on the couch and picks up the guitar lying there. He plays and sings the short sequence just heard on the recorder. He makes an adjustment that improves it. He picks up Honey Jo's long golden scarf, left in her hurry on the couch. He lets it trail in the air. He drapes it on the arm of the couch.

ARTIE: *(To himself, as he picks up fallen items and rearranges the bandstand. He straightens the poster...)*

What happened here? You'd think a tornado hit this place. (He continues to put things back in order. He sets up chairs at the edge of the dance floor, waiting expectantly. He continues to hum his new song.)

Look at this. (He picks up some glittery stars that have fallen from the ceiling, then looks up at the ceiling. The stars seem to glow more brightly, taking on life of their own. He gasps, astonished at the growing constellations hanging there ominously.) My God...

(Shaking his head, he continues to set up for the dance. Turns out, it's an important dance... Appreciatively) Wow...they really got carried away with these stars... (He takes a few of the fallen stars to decorate the bandstand.)

(Sitting down to rest.) I know, let's light the fireplace. That's what's missing. A good ole flame... (He lights a fire in the fireplace. The fire begins to roar responsively. His blond hair glistens in the flame. He picks up the guitar and begins to sing his new song. And deep in the chords at the end of each chorus are buried the sounds of "Stars!" When he smiles and stares too long, there is a little resemblance to Hitchcock Huddleston... ☺)

"IMAGINE ME"

ARTIE: Imagine me
 Looking at you.
 Oh, God, I don't know
 What I'm going to do.
 When you can see right into me
 With eyes that write my history
 And looks that make the song so right,

 Not just another song,
 Not just another song,
 The words will drive me out of my mind.
 And if I go on --
 A little bit,
 And the words are wrong --
 A little bit,
 Will you reach for me -- ?
 A little bit,
 A little bit,
 A little bit too long.

 Imagine me,
 Imaging you,
 Imagine everything I wanna do.
 To hold you in my mind another
 Minute might be crazy, but I've
 Got to see the answer
 On your face...

 Not just another song,
 Not just another song,
 The words will drive me out of my mind.
 And if I go on --
 A little bit,
 And the words are wrong --
 A little bit,
 Will you reach for me -- ?
 A little bit,
 A little bit, a little bit, a little bit
 A little bit too long
 Too long, too long...
 Too long, too long...
 A little bit too long... Too long.

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(He stops. He thinks. An eerie silence.)

(Suddenly high wind and rain fill the silence as he finishes, rain pelting the windows. He puts the guitar aside.)

ARTIE: Raining again.

(He heads for the door, and as he opens it, Caroline Melody Mills, wet and soaking, is blown into his arms and takes his breath away... She is wearing a T-shirt and blue jeans and her hair is pulled back in a pony tail. She is carrying a shopping bag. She is six foot one, thin, with huge dark eyes and an unearthly beauty. She is memorably sensual, soaking in raindrops that are getting friendly with her body. Artie stares down at her in his arms for a moment too long as she leans against him. She seems dizzy and embarrassed and pulls away).

CAROLINE: Artie Browning!! *(Nervous. Unrequited love.)*

ARTIE: *(He laughs in recognition.)* Caroline Mills!! *(He catches her as she takes a step and sways.)* Are you alright?

CAROLINE: It's like a river of rain outside. I'm sorry I got you wet.

ARTIE: It wasn't all that unpleasant... Come over here by the fire. *(He takes the bag from her and leads her by the hand to the couch. She is weaving.)* You're not alright, are you?

CAROLINE: Just a little dizzy. I was in an accident at the –

ARTIE: Caddo Bridge. I heard.

CAROLINE: Yes.

ARTIE: Strange old bridge. You're limping.

CAROLINE: Am I? I'm something of a mess, aren't I? *(She is embarrassed, flushed with frustration, her eyes as wet as her hair.)*

ARTIE: Not entirely... *(He helps pull her long hair, strands of which have come loose, back from her eyes. She bursts into tears and covers her face, partly because she feels like a mess, partly because of his closeness. He puts an arm around her.)*

CAROLINE: I'll sit on the rug. I'll get the couch wet. *(He sits beside her. She looks up at him briefly, breathing a little fast.)* You don't have to baby sit with me. I'm sure you were busy or something.

ARTIE: *(Laughing)* I wish I could offer you a change of clothes, but I'm afraid this is it. *(He disappears into another room and returns with a towel.)* Here, dry off a little. *(She does. He helps her. She is anxious as he does, and for the first time he becomes aware that he is the cause. He looks at her a moment, puzzled.)* Relax, Miss Mills...

CAROLINE: *(Nervously)* I wanted to bring the food over early so I wouldn't have to carry it later. Dumb ideas grow on trees around here. *(He reaches into the bag and takes out a covered platter of cookies. He takes one for himself and gives one to her. He sets the platter before the fireplace.)*

ARTIE: Eat. *(She does. She looks down at her soaked clothes.)*

CAROLINE: Some Homecoming...

ARTIE: The night isn't over yet. You have plenty of time. *(He straightens her hair gently.)*

CAROLINE: I need more than time. *(Their hands touch as she tries to pull her hair back. She reacts, and he looks at her thoughtfully.)*

ARTIE: So. Caroline Mills. Right out of a rainstorm. Pardon me for staring, but you must be –

CAROLINE: Six One... And everybody does.

ARTIE: Jeez... You've changed a lot. I didn't recognize you at first.

CAROLINE: (*Quietly*) I recognized you...

ARTIE: You always wore your hair short.

CAROLINE: I'm rebelling.

ARTIE: (*He laughs.*) I remember you when we went to the Jr. High Halloween Dance, dressed up like Batman and Robin.

CAROLINE: (*Thoughtfully*) I remember it, too...

ARTIE: You were quiet then, also. ... (*He laughs and pats her shoulder. She stiffens.*) You were taller than I was. You should have been Batman.

CAROLINE: Being tall isn't my favorite subject, Artie. (*She begins unconsciously to wring her shirt dry, and he finds himself staring at her exposed waist. He looks forcibly away and clears his throat, confused by his reaction. He moves away and offers her another cookie.*)

ARTIE: Here. Have another.

CAROLINE: They're for the dance. (*He moves to the couch and sits thinking. He doesn't know why; she doesn't either. She stands abruptly.*) I should go, shouldn't I?

ARTIE: (*Awkwardly*) No, I mean, you'll catch pneumonia this way. Warm up first. (*He stirs the fire. She moves closer to it.*)

CAROLINE: I'm pretty warm...

ARTIE: (*He looks down at her thoughtfully.*) I'm taller than you are now...

CAROLINE: Not much.

ARTIE: Come on. (*He reaches for her hand and pulls her up to stand. He looks at her eye to eye. She looks down, embarrassed.*) Yeah. You're right. Not much. Have you got on heels? (*He looks down at her feet. She has removed her shoes. He whistles.*) Jeez... Barefoot.

CAROLINE: (*Looking down*) I said, not much.

ARTIE: Why are you always looking down? (*He touches her chin, trying to lift it in spite of his better judgment.*)

CAROLINE: It's hard not to look down when everybody is shorter than you are.

ARTIE: That doesn't apply to me. (*He raises her chin firmly. She looks up at him at last. It is clear that he is considering kissing her in spite of himself. After a long moment she looks down again, then quickly retreats to sit on the rug. He looks at her thoughtfully. He pats her on the head and sits next to her.*) Hey, you sing, don't you, Caroline? I remember that. I remember your voice. Great -- voice. Why didn't you ever do anything with it?

CAROLINE: I teach music.

- ARTIE: Do you? You used to come around when we first started the band years ago. I haven't seen you in a long time.
- CAROLINE: I came. You were just – very busy. Haven't been in a while, though.
- ARTIE: *(Smiling)* Something I said?
- CAROLINE: *(She laughs.)* No. I just haven't. Since the accident. ..
- ARTIE: Oh. .. Ever think of singing with a band?
- CAROLINE: No.
- ARTIE: Why not, Miss Mills?
- CAROLINE: I'm the music teacher.
- ARTIE: *(Softly)* Caroline Mills, the music teacher.
- CAROLINE: *(Smiling a little)* Caroline Melody.
- ARTIE: *(In disbelief)* Caroline Melody?
- CAROLINE: Caroline Melody Mills. The music teacher. It couldn't have turned out any other way...
- ARTIE: You could try a song with me sometime, maybe. Just for the hell of it. What do you think, Caroline Melody...? *(Without realizing, he's flirting with her and he looks at her -- just a little bit too long.)*
- CAROLINE: *(Looking at him with a steady gaze.)* I don't tend to do things just for the hell of it, Artie.
- ARTIE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be flippant. *(She has him confused now. He's never seen a woman like this. Tall as he is and just as beautiful ...)* Who're you coming with tonight?
- CAROLINE: Honey Jo Waller and Thurber -- I suppose. *(Artie looks as though he's been stabbed.)*
- ARTIE: Honey Jo Waller and Thurber Mills? *(Absently. He sits.)* You don't have a date?
- CAROLINE: No. I don't have a date, Artie. *(Fighting tears, she sounds bitter; and no small amount is directed to him, though he has no way of knowing his part in her day dreams. He hears her tone and looks up in surprise from his own pain.)*
- ARTIE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean it that way. I wasn't thinking. *(Awkwardly)* I'm a bit – confused tonight.
- CAROLINE: It's not simple to be six foot one in Hallelujah, Texas, Artie. It can be awful. I'm taller than every guy in town. In several towns.
- ARTIE: I repeat, that doesn't apply to me. *(He has walked right into it. She flashes him a blistering look that says, "That's right." For the first time he understands. With two shocks he walks away to the bandstand.)*
- CAROLINE: *(Standing)* Well, I'll let you get back to your rehearsing or whatever it was you were doing...
- ARTIE: *(He stops her as she heads for the door.)* Caroline, wait a minute. I'd like to apologize to you. I've been thoughtless. I never meant to. I'm glad to see you, and I meant that about singing.

CAROLINE: Alright, Artie. *(She looks up; he is obviously in pain.)* What's wrong?

ARTIE: *(He swallows hard.)* It's just – one of those things. *(Suddenly he blurts out.)* How well do you know Honey Jo?

CAROLINE: *(Too quiet)* Very well.

ARTIE: *(Eyes glistening)* I didn't know until just now that there was anything between your brother and Honey Jo. I didn't know your brother was even in town. I didn't know there was anything between Honey Jo and anybody. ... I don't know what to do. *(He looks up; he sees the pain on her face and realizes too late what damage he's done. He takes her hand.)* Oh, Jeez... I've really put you on the spot, Caroline... *(At a loss)* He's your brother...

CAROLINE: *(Tears in her eyes)* And she's my best friend.

ARTIE: *(Plaintively)* And I'm an idiot. *(He wants to make it up to her but doesn't know how. He grabs his jacket, sparkling with "Starbusters" logos and life of its own; he puts it around her shoulders.)* Here. Take my jacket.

CAROLINE: *(She pushes him away -- and the jacket, and he sees the tears on her cheeks.)* Artie, please don't be nice to me right now!

ARTIE: Caroline... *(He follows her to the door, then stands looking after her. Suddenly he hits the door facing, very angry with himself.)* Idiot! Why'd you have to do that?

(Singing plaintively.)

"IMAGINE ME" (Reprise)

ARTIE: Imagine me
Talking to you.
Imagine what if there's somebody new,
And that somebody's gonna see
The way I look at you too long
For this to be
Just another song...

Not just another song,
Not just another song,
The words will drive me out of my mind.
And if I go on --
 A little bit,
And the words are wrong --
 A little bit,
Will you reach for me -- ?
 A little bit,
 A little bit, a little bit, a little bit
 A little bit too long
 Too long, too long...

(Suddenly he grabs his jacket and heads for the door. Fade to Blackout.)

☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT III, Scene 1 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Dreaming" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆

The Mills Home. The Living Room can be seen and a Front Porch with a swing and old rickety steps. The Living Room is warm with old pictures, lace doilies on an old couch, old chairs. An old upright piano dominates the room like an ancient family member. Outside it's dark. Rain is falling, an eerie sound, and wind is whipping expectantly. Still, through the rain, fireflies light up occasionally. Sitting on the porch in the swing, his grey thatch of hair blowing in the wind, is J.B. Hallelujah III. He is in his 70's, with a thin, wrinkled face and body, somehow calm and wise and ready in its ancient features. Though the wind whips, he watches through the rain with steady pale grey eyes, looking a little like a Native American elder. He does not turn his wizened frame as a young cowboy runs from behind the house upon the porch, brushing off the water, rolling up his rope. It is Thurber Mills at 28. His brown hair flops compellingly and his dark eyes are deeper and more beautiful than ever in a star-crossed face.

J.B.: I wondered if you were going to disappear again.

THURBER: No, thank you, Uncle J.B. I went down to the Corral. Got caught in the rain.

J.B.: No cows.

THURBER: I wasn't looking for – cows. ..

J.B.: It's real nice to have you home, Thurber.

THURBER: You should have told me sooner what happened to Caroline.

J.D: She didn't want me to. Didn't want to worry you. Scuffed her up a bit though. Got hit on the head.

THURBER: Some people think we're all a little funny in the head anyway.

J.B.: (*Wryly*) Don't trouble me if it don't trouble you...

THURBER: (*He smiles affectionately.*) Don't trouble me, Uncle J.B.

J.B.: She's grown up real pretty, Caroline.

THURBER: I didn't know her. She's still trying to be a tomboy. Somebody ought to tell her she's six feet of pure gorgeous.

J.B.: Don't know who could tell her that. Don't listen to me. I don't care so much anymore though, when people don't listen to me. My father lived 'til he was 89, and he said hardly anybody ever listened to him by then. Only a select few. Select.

THURBER: Sometimes they stop listening to you long before that...

J.B.: My grandfather, J.B. Hallelujah, the first J.B. Hallelujah, died when he was only 28. Same as your age. Lot of people were still listening to him. But they didn't hear what he was saying just the same. Lot of stuff about stars. Funny that he got hit by one. .. (*He smiles wryly.*) Maybe they didn't like what he was saying about them. (*He giggles.*)

THURBER: (*He sighs.*) I guess not...

J.B.: You was always starry-eyed, too. Like your Ma. You don't remember your Ma. She married Eddie Mills, the telephone man, when she was 28. 28's a big age in your family. They waited a long time before they got married. She couldn't tell him what she was thinking and he couldn't tell her what he was thinking and then one day they both burst like a dam, got married that weekend. The two of them had enough starry eyes for a whole town. Got caught in a flood going to Forth Worth to a telephone man's convention when you was only four, and your little sister was right over here in this swing bawlin' her eyes out cause a whirlwind blew away all her dandelions. Those dandelions were real important to her...

THURBER: I remember about the dandelions. ..

J.B.: I can't forget it...

THURBER: I don't know what we'd have done with you, Uncle J.B.

J.B.: (*He laughs.*) Very little, I expect. You was such little bitty buggers. Big eyed and hopeful. (*A twinkle in his eye*) Couldn't ever let a name like Hallelujah down, son. .. Direct descendants. You Mama was dreaming you'd be Mayor.

THURBER: (*A serious tone*) 'Fraid I'm not gonna be Mayor, Uncle J.B.

J.B.: Me neither. (*He giggles.*) You take after your Ma. Always writing poetry and star gazing. Caroline, she's like your Pa. Tall and beautiful and bitter. I like the tall and beautiful part.

THURBER: Yeah.

J.B.: Don't know what to do about the bitter. .. You're not bitter, are you son?

THURBER: (*Tears in his eyes*) Uncle J.B., I'm too dumb to be bitter. I never did know enough.

J.B.: You was always after knowing things.

THURBER: Yeah.

J.B.: Well, what'd you find out, out there on the road?

THURBER: I found out I wasn't getting anywhere.

J.B.: You got all the way to Vegas.

THURBER: The more miles I went the less far away it really was. So after a while I just turned around and came back. .. Wasn't that far.

J.B.: (Softly) Took you a long time, Thurber.

THURBER: (A pause) I had a hard time finding a place to turn around...

J.B.: (He smiles) Yeah, I had a time like that. Thought I'd never find my way home.

THURBER: Didn't want to come home.

J.B.: I didn't either. Eventually you always come home, no matter how far away you go. Ain't no place that far away. ..

THURBER: Seems like there would be. ..

J.B.: (He looks at Thurber steadily, eyes and heart piercing.) It catches up to you, son. The most important times, they catch up with you. (Tears come to his eyes and fill them. Thurber hugs him hard, trying to hide his own.) Don't ever be ashamed of what you feel, boy. That's all you got. That's all you come in with, and that's all you're gonna take away from here. ..

(Caroline Mills comes running in from up the road, ignoring the rain, in tears. She runs past Thurber and J.B. and lets the screen door slam behind her. She turns on a lamp in the Living Room and pauses to catch her breath. Thurber comes in behind her. J.B. stands outside the screen door, watching the two of them. Caroline starts up the stairs.)

THURBER: Wait a minute, Miss Caroline. What's wrong with you? Why were you running in the rain?

CAROLINE: (She pauses, then turns to him. J.B. goes back to the porch and sits in the swing complacently, somewhere far away.) I been in the rain all my life, Thurber. You got your stars, I got my rain.

THURBER: Same thing. Sit down.

CAROLINE: (She takes a deep breath.) Thurber, I have to go cry.

THURBER: I know that. But I want to know why.

CAROLINE: (Tears ahead of her) I messed up your homecoming...

THURBER: Nobody could mess up my homecoming but me. Come here. (He forces her to sit.) I want you to listen to me. I don't say much and Uncle J.B. says only a select few listen to you anyway, but I want you to listen to this before you go cry. I don't know where you've been or who you went to see, but you've got to know you're something, Caroline Melody Mills. (She winces.) Six feet tall and just a little older. (He grins and pinches her cheeks. She laughs a little and fights his hands away.)

CAROLINE: Stop it, Thurber.

THURBER: But you're gonna be a woman some day, if you ever hold still long enough, and I'll like to be the first one to tell you that you're the greatest lookin' girl I ever saw and I've been all the way to Vegas. I don't know what you've been doing for yourself all those years I was gone, but you've blossomed right out of the tree in your old age, and here you are still running around like a gawky tomboy. You're something. And there's not a damned thing you can do about it. Even if you cry your eyes out all night.

CAROLINE: Thurber –

- THURBER: I don't want to hear it. I don't know if I'm the first one to notice this or not, but I'll just bet you somebody else is hot on my heels; even in godforsaken Hallelujah, Texas, *somebody* is bound to notice.
- CAROLINE: (*Tearing up again, she hides her face in her hands.*) I'm a freak.
- THURBER: (*He pulls her hands away.*) Somehow I doubt that, Caroline. I doubt that. (*He pulls her to her feet.*) Tall girls are coming back.
- CAROLINE: Not in Hallelujah, Texas. In Hallelujah, Texas, I am Miss Mills, the Music Teacher, and I'm gonna die an old maid in a rain storm...
- THURBER: (*Grinning knowingly*) Care to wager? I could use the cash.
- CAROLINE: (*Grinning in spite of herself*) I thought you were a big time rodeo cowboy.
- THURBER: (*A long silence. Thurber's eyes are soft in pain.*) I wasn't a big time rodeo cowboy, Caroline. I wasn't any good. I tended stock when I could get the work.
- CAROLINE: (*Her face changes; she looks at him with concern.*) But, Thurber, you said you –
- THURBER: I lied. I didn't want you to worry. .. I didn't want me to worry.
- CAROLINE: (*She touches his arm.*) Thurber –
- THURBER: (*He pushes her hand away.*) Some of us hold on to our dreams a lot longer, that's all. (*Softly*) Especially when it gets dark...
- CAROLINE: (*She turns away; her pain returns.*) Don't talk to me about dreams!
- THURBER: (*Suspiciously*) Caroline, I only remember one time when I ever saw you riled up like this. And it had something to do with Artie Browning.
- CAROLINE: (*Quickly*) Leave me alone.
- THURBER: Does it have something to do with Artie Browning?
- CAROLINE: (*She turns on him.*) You promised me you would never tell a soul, Thurber Mills!
- THURBER: I didn't tell a soul. .. I hear Artie Browning has a big band now. Plays in Dallas and Fort Worth sometime. (*A pause*) Looks like holding on to old dreams runs in this family. (*He looks suddenly toward the porch and Uncle J.B.. She follows his glance. They turn once again to each other.*)
- CAROLINE: (*Steadily*) Just part of our heritage...
- THURBER: (*Emphatically*) Now get yourself ready for this dance. I'm not going by myself.
- CAROLINE: (*In a fury again*) Well, you'll just have to. Because I'm sure not going to it. I wouldn't be caught dead at it!
- THURBER: (*Wincing*) Please don't put it like that...
- CAROLINE: Well, I'm not kidding.
- THURBER: Now, Caroline, I barely made it home in time for Homecoming, and I'm sure not going to this Homecoming without you. Why in the world won't you go to Homecoming?

CAROLINE: I'm not going to the dance!

THURBER: (*Suspiciously*) Who's playing for the dance...? (*There is no answer; her eyes are averted.*)
Who's playing?

CAROLINE: I don't want to talk about it...

THURBER: It's Artie Browning, isn't it? Artie Browning is playing.

CAROLINE: (*Bursting*) Yes, he is! And I've seen quite enough of Artie Browning for one day!

THURBER: You saw him tonight?

CAROLINE: (*Slowly*) I went by the Rec Hall. I wanted to see the decorations. I took some cookies...

THURBER: What did he take?...

CAROLINE: He was rehearsing. Alone.

THURBER: (*Suddenly*) Did he hurt you?

CAROLINE: Not intentionally. (*Bitter*) That was what was so wonderful about it. It wasn't even intentional.

THURBER: Caroline.

CAROLINE: (*Lips trembling*) I was so looking forward to tonight, I was hoping maybe – just maybe – but I didn't know that -- (*She bursts into tears.*)

THURBER: He caught you dreaming...

CAROLINE: (*A pause. She quiets.*) I haven't talked to him in a long time. I went when he played – when I could. He didn't notice. Tonight it just – it kicked up a lot of memories.

THURBER: Good ones or bad ones?

CAROLINE: (*Bitter*) I only have the one kind.

THURBER: (*He moves her toward the stairs.*) Damn it. Get up there and get dressed. You can't hide out forever. I'm going to take you out to a lot of places, so you'd better get used to it.

CAROLINE: (*She resists.*) No, I look awful.

THURBER: Keep in mind that I can still beat you up.

CAROLINE; (*Defiant*) Hell you can.

THURBER: (*Narrowing his eyes.*) I may be shorter but I'm more determined than you are. I always was.

CAROLINE: I didn't have much to be determined about.

THURBER: Well, you do now. So get up there!

(The telephone ring pierces the moment; both jump. A pause. Thurber, who is near it, picks it up slowly.)

THURBER: Hello. *(He turns away, breathing quickly.)*

Hello, Honey Jo... *(Pause)* Yes, it has, it sure – has... Listen, Honey Jo, I was going to call you but I just – *(He looks at Caroline, whose face is filled with pain again at the sound of Honey's name.)* – I just came in. .. Yeah... Well, maybe for a few minutes. If you want me to. *(Pause)* Look, why don't I come over now. Sure. *(Pause)* What did you say? .. Okay. Just a minute. *(He looks up.)*

Caroline, it's Honey Jo Waller -- she wants to talk to you.

CAROLINE: *(Tears making it difficult to speak)* I can't talk to her.

THURBER: *(He moves toward her in concern.)* Why? What's wrong?

CAROLINE: I just can't talk to her, that's all... *(Her face wrenched, she turns and runs upstairs.)*

THURBER: Honey Jo? Well – she's getting ready for the dance – you know – so she can't talk right now. *(Pause)* Listen, I'll explain it to you later. .. Okay. .. Honey Jo? .. I'm real glad you called me, I really am. .. Okay, I'll see you.

(He puts the telephone down slowly, lovingly, as though it were alive. He pauses a moment and takes a deep breath. He picks up an umbrella and walks out on the porch. He peers out into the night. He speaks to his Uncle.)

THURBER: Rain's let up.

J.B.: How'd it go? With Caroline?

THURBER: *(A pause)* I don't know.

J.B.: *(Smiling a little)* I never know how things go either.

THURBER: Yeah.

J.B.: 'Til they're gone...

THURBER: *(He laughs painfully and looks upward, as Hitchcock's theme plays in the distance.)* I know what you mean... *(Pause)* Well, I'm going over to Honey Jo Waller's for a few minutes.

J.B.: That's not liable to be a few minutes.

THURBER: *(Taking a deep breath)* I don't know what it's liable to be. She called me to come over. I'm just gonna give it a try.

J.B.: *(Wryly)* Can't do anymore than that.

THURBER: *(Blinking away a few tears)* I wonder about that. I wonder about that, Uncle J.B. *(He runs off up the aisle of the theatre and out. The lights dim slowly on the old man in the swing with the gleaming grey eyes.)*

(Blackout.)

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ACT III, Scene 2
"Running"
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A few minutes later. The sound of a car; it stops. Artie Browning in and climbs the steps to Honey Jo Waller's front porch. It has stopped raining, although a few silvery drops fall here and there, and the wind is a reminder of the storm. A warm porch light illuminates the house and the yard and an old comfortable swing with lots of pillows. The rooms glow golden behind the shades. Anxiously Artie knocks at the front door.

ARTIE: Honey Jo? (*The front door opens and Honey Jo appears in a golden robe looking almost edible.*) Honey Jo, I need to talk to you.

HONEY: (*She stares at him in surprise.*) Artie... What are you doing here? It's nearly time for the dance, you should be –

ARTIE: (*Urgently*) Can I see you for a minute?

HONEY: (*She looks inside then at Artie.*) But Artie...

ARTIE: (*He takes her gently by the arm and pulls her toward him insistently.*) Honey Jo, I have to talk to you. It's important. It can't wait.

HONEY: Well, alright then... (*She steps inside and speaks quietly, out of range. Then she steps outside, pulling the door shut behind her.*)

What's wrong, Artie?

ARTIE: Look, I've behaved like an idiot tonight. I don't want to be an idiot anymore. So you tell me if I'm being an idiot.

HONEY: (*Confused*) Artie, I don't know if you're being an idiot or not...

ARTIE: (*Softly*) I think you know what I want to say to you. You look like you know.

HONEY: Artie...

ARTIE: I didn't know about Thurber, Honey. I didn't know there was anybody. But I don't care. I just spent the worst half hour in my life. Nothing makes any sense to me right now. Except that maybe I care like hell if you're with Thurber tonight. Everything is going haywire nowadays. I don't want to waste anymore time or hurt anybody else or get hurt myself. (*He clears his throat.*)

Honey, I think I love you.

HONEY: Artie...

(He puts his arms around her and kisses her, gently at first, then firmly. After a moment she responds. And Thurber Mills walks up the aisle through the audience and into the yard... Hearing steps Honey looks around in disbelief, disheveled and breathless. She pulls away from Artie, who steps back awkwardly.)

HONEY: Thurber... I didn't hear you drive up.

THURBER: I came through the pasture.

HONEY: (*She walks toward him.*) Oh, Thurber... (*From here on, all of the words come on top of each other, incomplete, broken, breathless...*)

THURBER: (*Hungrily*) Oh, Honey, I -- (*He balks.*) Oh, Honey, I -- (*She moves toward him.*)

HONEY: (*Hungrily*) Thurber... It's been so -- such a --

THURBER: Yes, it's been an awfully long --

HONEY: It's been really terribly --

THURBER: You can't imagine how --

HONEY: Yes, I can, I didn't think I --

THURBER: (*He clears his throat, overwhelmed by her recently explored beauty.*) You said you wanted to talk to me, Honey...

ARTIE: (*He steps toward them awkwardly.*) Thurber, I --

HONEY: (*She looks at Artie then at Thurber.*) He didn't -- I mean, Artie just now stopped by and I didn't know he was going to --

THURBER: I was just going to say, "Hello," anyway, so it's really alright if you two were --

HONEY: But we weren't, we were just, I mean --

ARTIE: Thurber, I didn't know that --

HONEY: Really, we just, I mean --

THURBER: I'll be going on now. So you can --

HONEY: (*Painfully*) Oh, don't go, Thurber, please don't, Thurber...

THURBER: I've been on the road a long time. You learn when it's time to go.

HONEY: Thurber, you shouldn't, I mean you mustn't, please don't -- misunderstand...

ARTIE: *(Tears in his eyes, wide open)* Did he misunderstand?

(Thurber turns and runs up the aisle, fighting tears; he leaves without looking back.)

HONEY: *(Crying)* Thurber, don't run away, don't run away, don't run away again! *(She follows him a few steps up the aisle...)*

(Blackout.)

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☆ ACT III, Scene 3 ☆
☆ "Oh, Honey, I Love You" ☆
☆ ☆ ☆

The Mills Home. The porch and Living Room are empty. Hitchcock's theme plays softly, reminiscent of lost childhood memories, while Thurber comes alone up the aisle, tears on his cheeks. He walks slowly up the stairs, swaying the swing hauntingly; he walks down again, downstage center, looking plaintively at members of the audience as if they could help him.

THURBER: Oh, where does it all go?! (*With tears*) Where do all your day dreams go? Is someone keeping them for you, so they aren't all lost, like you are? Some of them were so nice... My God, but some of them were so good...

(He sings through his tears. A spotlight shines on him, and sometimes a little glitter falls...)

"OH, HONEY, I LOVE YOU"

THURBER: I never told her I loved her,
I never told her to wait.
Why do they have to have love songs?
I can't even ask for a date.

Why'd she have to look so pretty?
Do they know what they do, do they know?
I said, "Oh, Honey, Oh, Honey,"
But I never said

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I can't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I love you.

Why do the best ones leave you,
Before you can figure it out?

You were gonna ask her something,
But she says they're going out,

For good. She's got somebody,
Didn't you know she would?
You waited too long to say it.
Now it's over, it's no good.

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I can't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I love you.

There's nobody like your Honey,
And when you find it you know.
You get stupid when she
looks up at you,
And you just stand there
when she tells you to go.

Why didn't I throw her down?
Why didn't I drag her off?
Why do I get really all ready,
And then I try to laugh it off?

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I can't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I love you.

(The lights become bluish and dreamy and Hitchcock's theme comes in intermingling with high thin music and distant voices...)

I wish I had me a cowgirl
Who would come and take her place...
I wish I had me an Old Friend
Who could help me forget her face...

For good. She's such a Honey,
You die for it when it's near...
If I could only, oh, hold her,
Oh, God, I'd say it to her
for a year!

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I can't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I...love...you...

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(He turns, running up the steps and into the house to the telephone. He stares at it. He picks it up, frozen. Honey Jo Waller in tight slacks and angora sweaters hurries up the aisle to the porch.)

HONEY: Thurber? Thurber, are you in there? *(Thurber looks up. Slowly he puts the telephone down and turns around. He sees her in the doorway. She sees him. He aches.)*

Thurber? Thurber, are you in there?

THURBER: Honey, I...

HONEY: You've got to let me in. You've just got to, Thurber Mills.

THURBER: Why?

HONEY: It's the only decent thing you can do...

THURBER: *(Slowly he walks to the door. He opens it and stares at her deliberately.)*

Yes?

HONEY: Please let me come in.

THURBER: *(Slowly)* Alright. *(His eyes follow her body as she passes him. She takes off her coat sweater and drapes it provocatively on a chair. The air is very thick and hungry.)*

HONEY: I guess everybody in the world is mad at me tonight...

THURBER: Didn't look that way to me. Didn't look like everybody was mad at you...

HONEY: You mean by "everybody," Artie Browning...?

THURBER: I mean whatever you mean.

HONEY: *(Flustered)* Thurber, I don't know what I mean!

THURBER: Then how do you expect me to?

HONEY: *(Looking down, plaintive, raw.)* You sent me a post card five years ago. So what do you want from me?

THURBER: *(Painfully)* You didn't answer me. So what do you want from me?

HONEY: *(Softening)* I answered you, Thurber. I just didn't tell you.

THURBER: *(Softening)* What did you say?

HONEY: It didn't make any sense.

THURBER: You could have sent me a post card...

HONEY: *(Flustered)* Thurber, how's a person supposed to know how to respond to a post card with a picture of a road on it?

THURBER: I thought you'd know, Honey...

- HONEY: Well, that's just not something that people automatically know. (*She looks at him longingly.*)
- THURBER: Some people do... (*He is breathing hard.*)
- HONEY: Well, Thurber, you never did try to help me understand those things...
- THURBER: (*He moves toward her.*) I didn't know you wanted help...
- HONEY: (*She takes his hand.*) Well, I did, Thurber.
- THURBER: I wish you'd of asked me.
- HONEY: (*Awkwardly*) But, Thurber – I – I couldn't.
- THURBER: Why?
- HONEY: (*Hesitant*) Well – I was afraid you'd think I didn't like your poetry. I did – I liked it so much when you came over and read poems to me. You have no idea how much I liked it. But I didn't understand them...
- THURBER: (*He stares at her.*) I'm glad you told me that.
- HONEY: Why?
- THURBER: Because I thought you understood them. And if you didn't then that explains a lot of things. Like why you would always look off somewhere, just at the important part.
- HONEY: (*Frustrated*) Thurber, I didn't know what the important part was!
- THURBER: (*Smiling*) I see that. And all this time I thought you were just a very – sort of cool person. Nice. But cool.
- HONEY: (*Advancing on him ominously*) Thurber Mills, I know you could think a lot of things about a person, but I don't see how you could ever look at me and whatever else you could think, you could think that I was a "cool" person. .. I just don't see that. I see a lot of things, Thurber, but I just don't see that. (*She looks at him, smoldering. It is, indeed, hard to understand...*)
- THURBER: (*Uncomfortably*) Well, I thought it was strange myself...
- HONEY: (*Exasperated*) Oh, Thurber, YOU'RE strange!
- THURBER: I don't know how these things happen to me. I guess I should have explained about the post card. And I was feeling so good about the post card...
- HONEY: Well, Thurber, I was trying to. But I just didn't get it.
- THURBER: I mailed it five years ago.
- HONEY: I didn't mean the postcard, Thurber, I got the postcard.
- THURBER: Oh. Well, would like me to explain it now? (*She looks at him ominously; he backs away.*)
Or maybe you'd rather I didn't.
- HONEY: (*Advancing*) I didn't come over here for you not to explain about the postcard, Thurber...

THURBER: *(He clears his throat.)* I guess not. *(He looks at her sheepishly.)* Well, you remember it had these nice hills...

HONEY: *(She smiles suggestively and sits on the couch. He sits at the far end.)* Yes, I remember...

THURBER: And there was this nice road winding through the hills...

HONEY: *(She looks at him warmly.)* Yes...

THURBER: Well, you see, winding roads are very – uh – inviting...

HONEY: *(She moves closer to him.)* Yes...

THURBER: They just roll around through the grass and flowers... *(He stares at her for a long moment.)* You never know what's coming up with a winding road. ..

HONEY: I see...

THURBER: *(He looks breathlessly at her body.)* Even the hills don't see them coming. They just lie there and the road comes over them...

HONEY: *(She inches closer.)* Mmm-hum...

THURBER: *(Finally he takes her hands in his awkwardly; he stares helplessly into her eyes.)* The roads are – very gentle – and quiet, and endlessly – curving. And the hills are endlessly vulnerable. And – it all comes together so beautifully... *(He stares, mouth open slightly, eyes shadowed with pain, but endlessly appreciative.)*

Oh, Honey, I – Oh, Honey, I –

HONEY: *(Whispering)* Yes, Thurber? Yes? *(They kiss because they are too close now not to. After a moment of intense passion, Thurber pulls back, trying to find some space – running...)*

THURBER: Honey Jo, did you ever see a road like that...?

HONEY: *(Restless)* I tried to, Thurber.

THURBER: They're all over the country. *(Thoughtfully)* Sometimes I thought they were everywhere...

HONEY: *(She moves away a little; there is a slight tone to her voice.)* Maybe you could take me with you next time, Thurber. We could go look for roads...

THURBER: *(He picks up her tone.)* Honey Jo? What's the matter? *(She glares at him.)* You're mad at me. This always happens to me.

HONEY: *(Furious, she tosses her hair around, refusing to look straight at him.)* I AM NOT MAD AT YOU, THURBER MILLS! OOOOH!

THURBER: *(He sits back.)* I know there's something wrong here. You have to tell me what it is.

HONEY: No, I don't. It's not fair that I always have to tell you about things.

THURBER: *(Upset)* Well, I just told you – about things!

HONEY: *(She turns slowly toward him.)* Yes, but it wasn't – it didn't – *(She looks straight ahead again.)* That wasn't it, Thurber.

THURBER: *(Pause)* Would it help any if I kissed you again?

- HONEY: (*Irritably*) Oh, I don't know. (*Suddenly she turns to him hungrily.*) Sure as hell wouldn't hurt any... (*They grab each other furiously and kiss passionately. Then Thurber buries his face in her hair, kissing her neck. She is beside herself, gasping.*) Oh, Thurber, I never can get myself together before you've got me all apart...
- THURBER: I thought about you all the time.
- HONEY: Well, THURBER, it would have been real nice if I'D of known that!
- THURBER: Did you think about me?
- HONEY: Oh, yes, but – it always got mixed up, with these – these – roads! (*Exasperated*) Oh, Thurber, we don't speak the same tongues.
- THURBER: (*Passionately*) What was that about tongues? (*He kisses her again.*)
- HONEY: (*Gasping*) It doesn't matter –
- THURBER: Oh, Honey I – Oh, Honey I – (*He pulls back, suddenly terrified.*)
- HONEY: What, Thurber? What?
- THURBER: Why were you and Artie Browning standing on the porch kissing like there was no tomorrow? That's what I have trouble understanding...
- HONEY: (*Thinking fast*) Uh – uh – he – uh, Thurber, that's real hard to explain just now.
- THURBER: Try me. I explained about the roads. You explain about Art Garfunkel...
- HONEY: (*She takes a deep breath.*) It's not the same... Well, he was – he came over to talk to me. He said it was very important, and so I said I'd talk to him – he's been very – nice to me lately – so I asked him what was wrong and he said he hoped he wasn't acting like an idiot and I said I'd tell him if he was.
- THURBER: (*With a little tone*) But you didn't.
- HONEY: (*Exasperated*) Oh, Thurber! (*Seizing her opportunity, she looks him straight in the eye.*) He said to me, Honey, I love you. He said, Honey, I think I love you. Just like that! (*She looks to see if he's getting the idea. Thurber is shocked. His mouth drops open.*)
- THURBER: He SAID that?!
- HONEY: (*Taking aim*) Yes, he did, Thurber Mills. He said that. Right out loud.
- THURBER: Oh, God... (*Thurber stands up.*)
- HONEY: Well, this hasn't been an easy night for me either, Thurber. First the lights went out at the Rec Hall and then there was a giant cowboy roping Rainbows and then we called the police and then when I got home, Artie – (*Thurber grabs her and shakes her intensely.*)
- THURBER: What?! There was a what?
- HONEY: (*She doesn't understand why he is so upset.*) My GOODNESS, Thurber! Thurber, you're hurting me! (*He releases her.*)
- THURBER: Tell me about the cowboy! Tell me! What was his name?

HONEY: (*Irritably*) He didn't SAY what his name was, Thurber. My goodness! He was doing rope tricks and he was seven feet tall, and he – he looked like he was lost from a carnival – all sparkling and – his – his TEETH sparkled, Thurber! We were scared to death. We thought it was another UFO!

THURBER: Where did he come from? Where did he go?!

HONEY: Well, my GOODNESS. (*She straightens her hair and sweater and stares at him a moment.*) The lights went out, and he just sort of appeared in the doorway, during the storm. Right in the stained glass doors, all shimmering in the lightning – oh, Thurber, did you see the lightening? It was terrible and strange, it was so white – and there wasn't any thunder – and –

THURBER: What did he do?

HONEY: Well, he just SMILED. And then he twirled his rope like a silver snake and there were these Rainbows... (*She shivers.*) Rainbows at night! And then – well, I don't remember exactly – there was a – a loud crash of thunder and more lightning and then it went foggy... (*Faintly*) And then he was gone...

THURBER: GONE?!

HONEY: It was like one minute he was there and one minute he wasn't.

THURBER: Didn't he say anything?

HONEY: Not one word. The police couldn't find a trace of him. They thought we were crazy, bunch of silly women going on about a giant cowboy – you can just imagine. Mr. Wilkinson thought we must have started early on the punch... (*With a far away look*) Said we put up too many stars...

THURBER: (*He grabs his hat and heads for the door.*) I've got to go, Honey.

HONEY: (*Astounded*) GO?!

THURBER: (*He holds her by the shoulders.*) Yes, Honey. It's very important, I have to. (*He gets her sweater.*) Here. Here's your sweater. I'll talk to you – I'll call you – I'll come over and read you a poem. Only right now, I've got to go. Please try to understand. (*He kisses her one last time, quick and hard.*)

HONEY: (*Ominous*) Thurber Mills, if you go right now, you'd might as well go for good...

THURBER: (*Frustrated*) Oh, Honey! Don't be this way! This is important!

HONEY: And what am I?

THURBER: But, Honey!

HONEY: I mean it, Thurber. I can't take it anymore. I'm only human. I'm VERY human, and I --
Thurber – I –

Oh, Thurber, I just can't take it! (*She puts her arms around him tight. Gently he pulls them away.*)

THURBER: Honey, please... Not now. Please! (*She runs out in a fury. He didn't expect that.*) Honey! (*He goes to the door. She is gone, up the aisle.*) Oh, shoot...! (*He runs up the aisle a little, after her.*) Honey Jo Waller!

(After a pause, he turns and walks back to the stage. He looks up in the sky.) Oh, Hitchcock!

(A few sparkles of glitter fall provocatively. Swiftly he turns and runs around the corner of the house in the direction of the Corral.)

HITCHCOCK.....!

(Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT IV, Scene 1 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Cowboy High" ☆ ☆ ☆
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Darkness. The curtain rises on the Corral; stars are twinkling in a little moon light. Thurber Mills comes down the aisle slowly, hat in hand. Lightening flashes, illuminating the entire theatre in a strange electric white strobe – no thunder. Thurber hesitates, then continues. The Corral is ominously quiet and dark again. He approaches the fence, where he last saw Hitchcock Huddleston. Brilliant strobos of white lightning flash again. Thurber ducks by the fence instinctively, arms over his head. And again the silent darkness. Before him a spotlight shines, straight down from above. Without looking up he walks into it, basking in its warmth; "Hitchcock's Theme" begins to play. He folds his arms, hugging himself. He closes his eyes. Glitter falls on him. Tears roll between Thurber's clinched lashes, and he begins to cry. After a moment he speaks, as he cries, warm, old tears...

THURBER: When I was a very little boy, they called me "starry eyes..." And they said I was crazy. And I was ashamed because I made things up – and those were the best things I had, the things I made up. They thought I was funny. I made up poetry about a girl I loved because I couldn't tell her I needed her to be next to me – that's all. Sometimes that's all, you just need them to be next to you. You'd think they'd understand. But, no, they don't...

I made up more and more things. I didn't have a friend. So I made up one. And I made up Rainbows to chase and flying saucers and cowboys in the sky. And they all came true. But I didn't. I didn't come true at all. .. I was a big lie.

I denied everything. I threw away everything I made up and I said, I'll have me something REAL, and I'll be a man at last. And they won't make fun of me anymore or my day dreaming or my poetry. I ran off and I worked stock and I told myself I was alive. BUT I WASN'T. I WASN'T EVEN THERE. THE REAL PART OF ME DIED WHEN I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD, AND I HURT MY FRIEND AND I SHUT UP MY SPIRIT AND I WOULDN'T LET IT OUT EVEN WHEN IT HOWLED IN MY MIND, "I KNOW MYSELF!" "I'M SHINY, WHERE AM I?" (*His tears continue through the words.*)

When it got late on the road, the guys would drink and smoke and I would, too. But I knew that wasn't very high. I knew those guys thought they were getting high, but they weren't getting very high. Because I knew what high was. I remember about High... I was a very

little boy and they called me "starry eyes..." And I knew just exactly what High was. And even then, when I turned my back on it, and I decided to settle out and try to be like one of them so maybe one of them would come over and say, "Hi, Cowboy..." -- I waited for that "Hi, Cowboy," but it never came -- even then, I never forgot what High was. Because once I knew. Cowboy High -- 4 years old, 8 years old, 10 years old, Goodbye... But Cowboy High, I never did forget it.

...Hitchcock, I said Goodbye to you a long time ago, and to a lot of me, and I left it all right here. So it's here I start out again. I went off without my stuff. If I ever have a kid, I'll have to be sure to tell him, it's okay if you run off, kid. But be sure to take all your stuff with you. Or you'll forever have to be thinking about going back for it and you won't ever get anywhere...

I called your name so many times, Hitchcock. I don't know if that ever made any difference to you. And I said I was sorry. I didn't know what sorry is. Now I know what sorry is... (*He sinks to his knees.*)

I'm not sorry for being bad. I'm sorry for thinking I was bad. And for not telling you that I -- ... Not telling you that I loved you. I loved us both. We were good for this old prairie. We woke it up all to hell... (*A few flowers sparkle here and there.*)

Hitchcock, I can't get my wishes to come true anymore. .. I learned these other things. They weren't bad things. But I learned a lot of them, and now I can't remember how to dream things up anymore. So if you come around anymore at all, come around now. Even if I don't remember how to do it. *You* remember how to do it..

I know it was you. I know it was you at the Rec Hall. I don't know what you did, but I know it was you. (*He opens his eyes and looks up into the spotlight, tears on his cheeks.*)

Hitchcock, I want to be a real cowboy now... The kind that takes centuries. .. Give me another chance. (*Warm tears flood him.*)

(Suddenly lightning flashes, drowning out the spotlight, which fades; nearby in a brilliant series of white hot flashes, smoke, fog and sparkles, a glimmering Hitchcock Huddleston materializes, as from an explosion of emotional atoms, gleaming, his theme playing vibrantly. He is jovial and smiling.)

HITCHCOCK: HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW TO PLAY?

THURBER: What?

HITCHCOCK: I SHOULDN'T LIKE TO THINK YOU'D FORGOTTEN HOW TO PLAY. YOU WERE A FINE PLAYER. GET UP FROM THERE. YOU CAN'T SPEND YOUR LIFE ON YOUR KNEES IN FRONT OF A CACUS. LIFE'S TO BE LIVED, NOT CRIED OVER.

THURBER: You're really gonna talk to me again...?

HITCHCOCK: NOT IF YOU MOPE AROUND LIKE THAT, I'M NOT. GET OUT YOUR WEAPON. THERE'S A WAR ON.

THURBER: (*He laughs through his tears and wipes his face on his shirt sleeve.*) You mean my beauty...? (*He laughs again.*)

HITCHCOCK: BEAUTY IS A BOMB. YOU HAVE ONLY TO LIGHT THE FUSE.

THURBER: (*Laughing*) I don't believe you're here again...

HITCHCOCK: BEST BELIEVE IT OR I'LL BE GONE IN A POOF. .. (*He grins.*) YOU WOULDN'T LIKE FOR ME TO BE GONE IN A POOF, WOULD YOU...? TRICKY, THOSE POOFS...

THURBER: (*Laughing*) Hitchcock, you never change...

HITCHCOCK: (*An eruption of lightning, colors flash, and thunder.*) I ALWAYS CHANGE. I AM CHANGE.

THURBER: I'm sorry. I guess I've changed, too.

HITCHCOCK: NOT HARDLY ENOUGH...

THURBER: Yes, I know. You don't have to lecture me. I know how impossible I am.

HITCHCOCK: HIGHLY IMPROBABLE AT THE VERY LEAST.

THURBER: I have so many things to say to you...

HITCHCOCK: YOU LEARNED ABOUT GEOGRAPHY?

THURBER: Not in school... (*He approaches Hitchcock.*) Hitchcock, what's happening here? Why did the lights go out? Why did you scare the girls? There was a UFO and tornadoes all year. What's happening to Hallelujah, Texas?

HITCHCOCK: THE FUTURE.

THURBER: I always said we were going down in history...

HITCHCOCK: SO TO SPEAK. IT IS A POWERFUL GAP.

THURBER: This town is a gap?

HITCHCOCK: IN A WAY. YOU KNOW IT IS. YOU REMEMBER WHAT I TAUGHT YOU. THERE ARE MANY GAPS. THIS TOWN IS ONE. YOU YOURSELF WILL GO DOWN IN HISTORY THROUGH ONE OF ITS DOORS.

THURBER; I'm not sure I want to go down in history.

HITCHCOCK: A FEW MOMENTS AGO YOU SAID YOU WERE READY FOR CENTURIES.

THURBER: I was desperate.

HITCHCOCK: AND SO IT WILL HAPPEN EVERYWHERE. PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO BE DESPERATE, AND IN THEIR DESPERATION THEY WILL FIND THE GAPS, THE PASSAGE TO NEW TIME, FROM THE STRESS AND EXPLOSIONS OF OLD DESPERATION... I AM A GAP. AND YOU, IN YOUR OWN WAY, ARE BECOMING ONE.

YOU WILL OPEN A DOOR. BUT YOU WON'T SUSPECT THAT MANY WILL FOLLOW. FOR THE GAPS SPARKLE... IN THEIR ILLOGIC, THEIR CONTRADICTIONS, THEIR IRREVERANT BEAUTY AND IMMORTAL QUESTIONS, AND THE PEOPLE SEEK OUT THE QUESTIONERS AND THEY SAY, WHAT IS THIS QUESTION? I HAVE SEEN IT SOMEWHERE BEFORE, IF ONLY I COULD REMEMBER...

THURBER: I remember...

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW THAT YOU REMEMBER. (*Softly*) AND YOUR THOUGHTS THAT FLY THE NIGHT SO NAKEDLY, DO YOU REMEMBER THEM, TOO...?

THURBER: (*In tears*) Oh, I'm so sorry, Hitchcock. I know better now. But I was embarrassed and ashamed of them. I didn't want you to see my naked things, how grotesque it seemed. I'm sorry.

HITCHCOCK: I WAS HARSH TO LEAVE YOU WHEN YOU SAW ONLY THE GROTESQUE. YOU HAD NOT YET SEEN YOUR BEAUTY. AND NOW YOU HAVE.

THURBER: You call it beauty. I call it exposure. ..

HITCHCOCK: (*Smiling*) AND ARE YOU SUNBURNED NOW?

THURBER: (*He laughs and looks up at his friend smiling.*) Yes. I believe I'm a little sunburned here... Hitchcock, I'm really so glad to see you... (*He extends his hand. Hitchcock walks to him and picks him up, and they hug joyfully as the prairie begins to sparkle all on its own.*)

(*Embarrassed but happy*) I would have died before if I'd thought cowboys ever hugged...

HITCHCOCK: YOUR UNCLE GAVE YOU GOOD COUNSEL. DON'T BE ASHAMED OF WHAT YOU FEEL. IT'S ALL YOU BRING WITH YOU AND IT'S ALL YOU'LL TAKE AWAY. .. IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO START THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU'LL BE PACKING.

THURBER: (*He catches his breath; he looks down quickly and tears fall.*) I was afraid of that... I won't get to have that kid, will I?

HITCHCOCK: THERE WILL BE OTHER TIMES.

THURBER: But there won't ever be one like this again, will there?

HITCHCOCK: NOT EXACTLY LIKE THIS.

THURBER: I'm so sorry about so many things.

HITCHCOCK: BE GLAD ABOUT THEM AS WELL, BECAUSE EXISTENCE HUNGERS FOR THEM AND EATS YOUR JOY ALIVE AND IS NEVER SORRY OR LOSES A THING. NOT EVEN YOUR SORROW, WHICH IT SURRENDERS TO THE WILD EMOTION OF A LIGHTNING STORM AND SENDS BACK AS A MESSAGE TO YOU OF YOUR OWN ERUPTING GLORY.

THURBER: (*Softly, in tears*) It's the things for old times sake that so call on you... How can you leave the things for old time's sake? Your cowboy hat and rodeo dreams, how can you leave it all behind?

HITCHCOCK: NOTHING IS EVER LEFT BEHIND. IN SOME WAY OR ANOTHER IT BECOMES YOU FOREVER.

THURBER: All those miserable attempts to be a cowboy...?

HITCHCOCK: JUST LIKE THE BEAUTIFUL POETRY, IT SHALL ALL BE PART OF THE SOUP. .. BEAUTIFUL SOUP.

THURBER: You watched me do all that silly stuff, didn't you...?

HITCHCOCK: EVERY TIME YOU GOT ON A HORSE AND FELL BACK OFF AGAIN I RATTLED FOR YOU TO THE CORE. I SMILED, HOWEVER, AS WELL. (*He smiles.*) FOR YOU WERE GROWING.

THURBER: Well, aren't we perfect...?

HITCHCOCK: WELL, NOT ALTOGETHER PERFECT. (He grins...)

THURBER: You always were such an arrogant cuss, Hitchcock.

HITCHCOCK: TIME CONTRIBUTES TO BETTER THINGS THAN ARROGANCE, BUT IT CONTRIBUTES TO THAT AS WELL. (*He smiles.*) IN MY ARROGANCE IS THE SEED OF MY OWN STUPIDITY, WHICH I MUST LOVE AND NURTURE ALONG WITH THE REST OF ME UNTIL WE ARE FULLY FORMED AND I KNOW WHAT IT IS REALLY TRYING TO BE.

THURBER: Laughing at me while I fall off horses and mess up with girls...

HITCHCOCK: NO DREAM OF YOURS EVER FELL APART THAT DIDN'T FALL APART IN ME AS WELL, FOR WE ARE COUNTERPARTS AND BROTHERS BETWEEN TIMES, AND IN MY OWN WAY I REFLECT YOUR FUTURE. .. I, TOO, HAVE MESSED UP WITH GIRLS...

THURBER: (*Astounded*) You? Messed up with girls? (*He looks longingly at the sky.*) You mean there are girls out there?

HITCHCOCK: (*Laughing*) THERE ARE GIRLS EVERYTHING – SO TO SPEAK... SOMETIMES YOU ARE ONE. BUT ALWAYS YOU WORK TO UNDERSTAND BOTH MALE AND FEMALE IN YOU, AND IN OTHERS, TO JOIN THE ENERGIES LIKE OLD RIVERS, OLD TIMES...

THURBER: Even cowboys mess up...?

HITCHCOCK: IT IS NOT SO MUCH MESSING UP AS GROWING UP. FOREVER.

THURBER: Whew... Cowboys sometimes have a harder time than they should...

HITCHCOCK: (*Laughing*) THERE IS MORE ELEGANCE IN YOUR STATEMENT THAN IN MY ENTIRE OUTFIT. AND THAT IS ELEGANCE.

THURBER: Sometimes I'm not so bad.

HITCHCOCK: NOT SO BAD AT ALL. COWBOYS DO, INDEED, SOMETIMES HAVE A HARDER TIME THAN THEY SHOULD,...”COWBOY...”

THURBER: (*Astonished*) You called me “Cowboy”...

HITCHCOCK: I DID. AND YOU ARE.

THURBER: You're not just playing with me.

HITCHCOCK: (*Laughing*) OH, THURBER, I AM FOREVER PLAYING WITH YOU.

(*He sings.*)

“COWBOYS SOMETIMES HAVE A HARDER TIME THAN THEY SHOULD”

HITCHCOCK: You're having a little trouble
With your heart strings and your hope.
You found the ABC's of happiness,
But all you spell is N-O-P-E, nope.
You wanted to be a cowboy

Because cowboys are the best.
But you've got a horse-and-buggy heartache
On the R-O-D-E-O Express...

Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder
Time than they should.

You've got a yearning smile
And a heart so big
It should be against the law.
You've got a pistol full of day dreams
But you're a little slow on the
D-R-A-W, D-R-A-W, draw.
You sing in bars and look for Mars
With eyes for one and only.
But cowgirls stray and hope leaves you
All starry E-Y-E-D and lonely.

Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder
Time than they should.

You're in a springtime rain with a
Summer heart beat, wearing a
Winter cowboy hat...
Your timing's bad and your horse
got mad,
But you try not to cry or things
like T-H-A-T, things like T-H-A-T that.
Because the cowboy always gets the horse
And the cowboy always gets the girl.

THURBER: Oh, God, I want to be a cowboy
More than anything else in the
W-O-R-L-D world!

(With high kicks and dancing)

TOGETHER: Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder
Time than they should.

THURBER: God, I want to be a cowboy,
God, I want to be a cowboy,
God, I want to be a cowboy
More than anything else in the
W-O-R-L-D!

TOGETHER: Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder,
Cowboys sometimes have a harder
Time than they should.

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THURBER: Oh, Hitchcock... That was wonderful! I feel like I'm eleven all over again.

HITCHCOCK: YOU CAN BE ELEVEN ANYTIME YOU LIKE.

THURBER: Well, I don't know about that... I haven't played in years. I needed it.

HITCHCOCK: AND WHO TOLD YOU TO STOP PLAYING?

THURBER: Nobody did. Everybody did. .. Are there really girls out there? (*He turns around in circles looking quizzically at the sky.*) Really, really?

HITCHCOCK: I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE A SOMEWHAT IDEAL NOTION OF WHAT'S OUT THERE, THURBER. COMPLETELY MAGICAL AND PEACEFUL. ACTUALLY IT'S QUITE POWERFUL AND WILD AND WONDERFUL AND NOT AT ALL FOR THE FAINTHEARTED. COSMIC COW-GIRLS CAN BE A LOT MORE THAN YOU BARGAIN FOR. (*He grins.*) TRUST ME...

THURBER: (*Enthusiastically*) Try me!

HITCHCOCK: I DON'T THINK YOU'RE READY FOR IT. THIS IS THE BIG LEAGUE.

THURBER: Come on, I'm ready for it, I'm ready for it! (*He takes Hitchcock's hand and pulls him dancing in a circle.*) Come on, come on!

HITCHCOCK: CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR.

THURBER: It's not fair for you to hide them, keep them all to yourself, like an old prospector, who won't tell anybody where his silver mine is... (*Hitchcock steps back.*)

HITCHCOCK: (*A twinkle in his eye*) ALRIGHT. HERE'S THE MAP. (*He waves his arms – and stars glitter in heavenly cowgirl constellations; from the sky glitter begins to fall. Fog begins to form upstage and music begins in the distance. Excited, Thurber closes his eyes.*)

THURBER: I'll bet I can guess what they look like. My very best dreams.

HITCHCOCK: (*He waves his arms.*) IT'S ALL YOURS.

(*Hitchcock steps back, and the Cosmic Cowgirls in silver cowgirl outfits, sparkling and flashing from head to toe, begin to tap dance in , singing. Thurber opens his eyes, aghast, for they are truly stunning, provocative and breathtaking. But after a moment their ominous, dangerous quality is all too apparent. They advance toward Thurber, tap dancing, doing high kicks, drawing their guns and firing silver lights which flash at him, seeming to sting and surprise. He hops out of the way and crouches, genuinely frightened. And among them we see Cowgirls that look amazing like Cindy Lou, Stella Nell, and Emma Mae...*)

"COSMIC COWGIRLS"

COSMIC
COWGIRLS: Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls
Cosmic Cowgirls true.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls and you.

Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls
Cosmic Cowgirls true.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls and you.

Cowgirls sing in Saturn's rings,
Shiny beings hide their things.
Cowgirls have been seen with wings –
It's Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cowboy-High Girls, My-oh-my Girls,
Pie-in-the-sky Girls,
Cather-in-the-Rye Girls,
Hope-to-die-for Girls for you.

Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls true.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls and you.

Cowgirls race with comets' lace.
We can dance in outer space.
Cowboys disappear, no trace –
It's Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Shooting-star Girls, Going-too-far Girls,
Coming-as-you-are Girls,
Universal-Bar Girls,
Top-down-on-the-car Girls for you.

Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls true.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls and you.

Cowgirls glow in Venus snow,
Here they come and there they go!
You can dream if you go slow,
Oh, there's a Cowgirl in your future,
You can fly if you can suit her,
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls for you!

Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls true.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls and you.

Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls up high.
Cosmic Cowgirls, Cosmic Cowgirls,
Cosmic Cowgirls, Good bye...

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(Hitchcock walks center stage, smiling as the Cowgirls dance away and the fog and glitter settle on a silent night.)

HITCHCOCK: AS YOU SEE, THE BEAUTY OF CREATION CAN TAKE ALL FORMS AND YOU'D BEST PREPARE FOR IT.

THURBER: (*Standing shakily*) Oh, my... They are quite – dangerous, aren't they?

HITCHCOCK: NOT REALLY... NOT ANYMORE THAN RAINBOWS OR FALING IN LOVE... IT'S ALL THE SAME.

(The huge glowing Rainbow from Thurber's childhood reappears grandly. Thurber cries happy tears.)

THURBER: There he is! There he is again! Just like the old days. Just like the old days. Oh, Hitchcock, just like the old days! Some things never die!

HITCHCOCK: (*Meaningfully*) UNTIL THEY ARE READY...

THURBER: (*He catches his breath; he gasps, then stands quietly with tears in his eyes. Softly.*) J.B. .. He said to me tonight, the important things always catch up with you...

HITCHCOCK: HE WAS READY.

THURBER: (*In tears*) Was...? Uncle J.B.? Not Uncle J.B.

HITCHCOCK: YES. YOU KNEW IT WAS COMING.

THURBER: (*Moving toward Hitchcock*) You mean he's already...? But –

HITCHCOCK: THURBER...

THURBER: (*He walks away alone.*) He went upstairs to take a nap.

HITCHCOCK: IT WILL BE ALRIGHT, THURBER.

THURBER: (*Pause*) I'm glad you're here. I'm so glad you're here. .. (*Pause*) What if I can't go through with it, Hitchcock? I'm not sure if I can – go now...

HITCHCOCK: THEN YOU SHALL TRY YOUR BEST.

THURBER: Yes. .. I have, you know? Pretty messy stuff. But it was my best...

HITCHCOCK: TONIGHT, YOU HAVE SEEN THE BEST OF IT.

THURBER: Yes. (*Suddenly he backs away from Hitchcock.*) It's not time...yet...is it?

HITCHCOCK: (*Softly*) NOT QUITE.

THURBER: I never did tell her, Hitchcock, you know? And I have to tell her. It's not time 'til I tell her. .. I don't know how I'm going to do that. I practiced. But I don't know if I practiced enough.

HITCHCOCK: PRACTICE CANNOT GO ON FOREVER.

THURBER: Mine seems to.

HITCHCOCK: (*Smiling*) I KNOW...

THURBER: I'll do it. I know I have to.

HITCHCOCK: *(Pause)* TONIGHT.

THURBER: *(He looks up slowly.)* Tonight...? So soon?

HITCHCOCK: *(Pause)* YES.

THURBER: *(Fighting tears)* Both of us, tonight...?

HITCHCOCK: YES.

THURBER: *(He takes a deep breath.)* I was afraid of that. I thought about it today. When he hugged me. *(He cries.)* I said to myself, it's all happening so fast. So desperately. And I held her, too. She let me. And that was desperate, too.

HITCHCOCK: IT IS A DESPERATE THING WE ARE ABOUT TO DO IN THIS COMING AGE. TO BE EXTRAVAGANT TOGETHER IN THIS UNIVERSE REQUIRES A DESPERATION YOU CANNOT IMAGINE – AND YET WE MUST BE EVEN MORE DESPERATE BEFORE WE WILL BEAR THE ULTIMATE EXTRAVAGANCE OF AN EMOTIONAL EXISTENCE KNOWING ITSELF TO BE INFINITE, BARE OF THE LAST CHEAP TINSEL AND DRESS-UP DREAMS...

THURBER: *(Tears on his cheeks)* Caroline always like to play dress-up... Now she's a for-real dream. God, she's so beautiful and so bitter and there's nothing I can do.

HITCHCOCK: WHEN THERE IS NOTHING YOU DO, KEEP IT SIMPLE. ..

THURBER: What will she do, without Uncle J.B.? *(With tears)* Without –

HITCHCOCK: I WILL BE THERE.

THURBER: *(Incredulous)* You??

HITCHCOCK: YES.

THURBER: But how – no. I don't think I even want to know. *(He walks away.)*

HITCHCOCK: *(Softly)* SHE HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN NEAR ME. *(Thurber turns back.)*

THURBER: What do you mean? *(In recognition)* The bridge? The accident?

HITCHCOCK: IT WAS NO ACCIDENT. *(Thurber moves toward him ominously.)*

THURBER: What did you do to her?

HITCHCOCK: *(Steadily)* THURBER, I AM YOUR FRIEND. *(Thurber pauses and examines his thoughts.)*

THURBER: Dear God, I was about to stop trusting you again.

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW.

THURBER: Hitchcock, I'm sorry. *(His eyes filled with tears.)*

HITCHCOCK: THERE IS A CERTAIN WARM VIOLENCE IN NATURE. BOTH HUMAN AND WILDERNESS. IT IS CONNECTED. THAT IS THE SOURCE OF THEIR OLD MARRIAGE, NOT A THING TO BE HIDDEN FROM OR DENIED WITHIN, WHERE IT HELPS RAIN SPRING FROM THE SKY. I AM NO MORE OR LESS A STORM THAN YOU ARE...

THURBER: I'm sorry. But you frighten me sometimes, Hitchcock. You're so –

HITCHCOCK: I AM DIFFERENT. BUT I AM JUST A BREATH AWAY FROM YOU.

THURBER: Another race.

HITCHCOCK: ANOTHER TIME.

THURBER: I was so quick to mistrust you. I thought about Caroline and I – I didn't trust you.

HITCHCOCK: AM I SO ALIEN...?

THURBER: I thought about my sister. And I forgot you are my – brother.

HITCHCOCK: AND WHAT ARE YOU, IF NOT ALIEN? (*He smiles and touches Thurber's shoulder.*) DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT AS I WAS YOUR IMAGINARY PLAYFELLOW, SO YOU WERE MINE...?

THURBER: (*A long pause*) I love you, Hitchcock. (*Hitchcock glows with flashing electric lights and colors.*)

HITCHCOCK: SO I'VE HEARD...

THURBER: You will be here to help her...?

HITCHCOCK: I HAVE BEEN ALREADY. IT WILL NOT BE EASY.

THURBER: I know.

HITCHCOCK: (*Softly*) SHE IS AN "OLD FRIEND"...

THURBER: (*Incredulous*) Caroline Mills?

HITCHCOCK: TO YOU. TO ME SHE IS ANOTHER. AND NOT SO SIMPLE OTHER.

THURBER: You mean you and she – you don't mean – you mean that you --. Wait a minute. What do you mean?

HITCHCOCK: (*Laughing*) NOT IN YOUR TERMS, THURBER. IN MY TERMS WE HAVE BEEN WORKING OUT A THING TOGETHER FOR – WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO WORK OUT A THING OUT TOGETHER FOR AS MANY THINGS AS WE HAVE BEEN. AND WE HAVE BEEN MANY THINGS...

THURBER: (*Slowly*) But she's in love with Artie Browning... (*Hitchcock begins to shimmer, and in the background is a strain of Artie's song, "Imagine Me" mixed with Hitchcock's theme.*)

HITCHCOCK: THE SINGER OF ELECTRIC LIGHTS? (*He glows and lights flash around him.*) THE BAND OF MANY COLORS, FLASHING AND LEARNING IN ITS ELECTRICITY AND MUSICAL STARS? (*His voice is overwhelming and strange similarities to Artie emerge.*)

YES, "STARBUSTERS," A BAND FOR THE UNIVERSE! (*He smiles knowingly.*) QUITE A SPARKLING FELLOW, THIS ARTIE BROWNING...

THURBER: (*Amazed*) What in the world have you to do with Artie Browning? What?

HITCHCOCK: (*He laughs, beaming.*) LET US JUST SAY THAT – HE IS A FELLOW AFTER MY OWN HEART...

THURBER: Artie Browning?

HITCHCOCK: DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ME ALL TO YOURSELF? WE HAVE NOTHING TO OURSELVES. WE ARE MANY PEOPLE. TO MANY PEOPLE. SURELY YOU DO NOT THINK THE ONE WOULD BE ENOUGH? WE EXPRESS OURSELVES IN MANY WAYS, IN MANY TIMES, AND ALL AT ONCE! *(He flashes and gleams.)*

THURBER: But that's impossible! I know you! I know Artie Browning, and I know –

HITCHCOCK: *(Booming)* THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH THAN YOU CAN DREAM OF...

THURBER: But –

HITCHCOCK: WE BLIND OURSELVES TO WHAT WE NEED BE BLIND TO FOR FUTURE SEEING.

THURBER: But Caroline –

HITCHCOCK: WE WORK WITH OUR HEARTS, NO MATTER WHERE WE GO OR WHAT WE BECOME, FOR THAT IS OUR BUSINESS, OUR HEARTS ARE OUR ONLY BUSINESS. ALL THE REST IS A PLAYFUL OBSTACLE COURSE – IN THE END, IT'S A BIG-HEARTED OBSTACLE COURSE. *(He laughs, beaming. A long pause. Thurber looks down. There are a few tears.)*

THURBER: I guess it's time, now. ... I wanted so much to –

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW.

THURBER: It's the little things.

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW. IT ALWAYS IS.

THURBER: It's too late by the time you figure this out, to go back for the little things.

HITCHCOCK: YOU CAN'T GO BACK FOR THEM. BUT YOU CAN BECOME THEM AND GROW THEM UP.

THURBER: I don't think I ever did. You know?

HITCHCOCK: YES?

THURBER: Grow them up, I mean. I don't think I –

HITCHCOCK: BUT HOW FAR YOU'VE COME TONIGHT.

THURBER: Yes. And how far I have to go.

HITCHCOCK: AS YOU HAVE SAID, IT'S NEVER THAT FAR FROM HOME...

THURBER: Yes.

HITCHCOCK: YOU WILL SEE.

AND THERE WILL BE OTHERS. AND THEY WILL READ YOUR POETRY AS YOU FIRST MEANT ITS WORDS, AND FOLLOW IT TO FIND YOU. FOR EACH WORD IS ALIVE, AS YOU SAID, AND HAS ITS OWN LITTLE SOUL. AND YOU WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN...

THURBER: Will you – will you –

HITCHCOCK: I SHALL BE HERE, WAITING.

THURBER; (*Relief spreads over his face.*) Just as long as – you know. (*Fighting tears.*) I mean, I don't want to cry or anything. It's just that – well, you know.

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW.

THURBER: Some things are tougher than others. And you want to get the important parts right. ... Even in West Texas.

HITCHCOCK: (*Beaming*) HALLELUJAH!

THURBER: (*Grinning*) Yes.

HITCHCOCK: HALLELUJAH, TEXAS...!

THURBER: Yes. (*Suddenly he breaks down and cries inconsolably.*) It shouldn't make me cry so.

HITCHCOCK: IT'S A NICE THING TO CRY FOR.

THURBER: (*Crying*) Yes...

HITCHCOCK: ALL PRAIRIED AND FENCED AND CATUSED AND SANDY AND GLEAMING! (*The whole prairie, mountains, cactus, fence, sky suddenly begin to sparkle with colors and lights at his bidding. Thurber is overwhelmed.*)

THURBER: Oh, yes...! Oh, Hitchcock, I shall never forget it!

HITCHCOCK: IT IS YOURS TO KEEP.

THURBER: This is mine to keep?

HITCHCOCK: IT IS YOURS. FOREVER.

THURBER: Oh, thank you...

HITCHCOCK: ONCE YOU WANTED ONLY TO LEAVE IT.

THURBER; (*Crying*) I didn't know what it was...

HITCHCOCK: DRY YOUR TEARS. JOY IS PRICELESS. .. (*Thurber wipes his face.*)

THURBER: Oh, how can I leave her?...

HITCHCOCK: WHEN YOU CAN TELL HER YOU LOVE HER, YOU WILL FREE HER.

THURBER: But I can't leave her alone. How can I leave her alone?

HITCHCOCK: SHE WILL KNOW. ALLOW HER TO FIND HER OWN WAY IN THIS.

THURBER: I'll lose her forever.

HITCHCOCK: SHE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.

THURBER: I wasted so much time. I was so careless.

HITCHCOCK: BUT NOW YOU WILL BE CAREFUL...

THURBER: What a way to learn. She was everything to me.

HITCHCOCK: SHE IS MANY THINGS. SOME TO YOU.

THURBER: Yes. I know I must let her go. I wanted her too badly. I waited too long. The longest you can wait is all the time. .. She will grow up now, too.

HITCHCOCK: YES.

THURBER: *(He bows his head thoughtfully, fighting tears.)* Will it be – will it be –

HITCHCOCK: I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, THURBER.

THURBER: I mean, I don't care about it, for me. I don't want it to be bad for her. And I don't want Caroline to –

HITCHCOCK: TRUST YOUR FUTURE.

THURBER: Hitchcock, I'm afraid.

HITCHCOCK: TRUST YOUR FUTURE. TRUST IT WITH ALL YOUR HEART – IT IS THERE FOREVER.

THURBER: *(Long pause. Through tears)* Well, I've got a dance to go to. ..
(He hails Hitchcock.)

HITCHCOCK: I'VE NEVER HEARD IT MORE FINELY PUT.

THURBER: *(He walks up the aisle a few steps.)* I'll be seeing you. *(Strains of "Cowboy High" begin. Hitchcock moves downstage, waving.)*

HITCHCOCK: YES...

(Thurber and Hitchcock sing together and distant voices join them in the end.)

"COWBOY HIGH" (Reprise)

TOGETHER: I will ride the Night,
I'll catch up with Light,
With the voices of men
Who will sing again.
Following silver hoofbeats
In the blue-green wind,
Whispering star-crossed stories
Out where the campfires begin...

Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
A time will come when Cowboys fly.
And the world will see Cowboys
Up in the sky.
And there will always be
Cowboys High!

Cowboy High, Cowboy High.
A time will come when Cowboys fly.

And the world will see Cowboys
Up in the sky.
And there will always be
Cowboys High!

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(They wave to each other amidst the music and blue lights and glitter; the lights fade to a Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ACT IV, Scene 2 ☆
☆ "There's a Town in Time" ☆
☆ ☆ ☆

The Mills Home. The lights are on in the Living Room, and down the stair case walks a radiant Caroline Melody Mills, ready for the dance. She is incredibly beautiful, her dark, otherworldly eyes shimmering in black lashes, her height soaring; the landscape is dream-like. Leaning against the wall is a large framed poster. Carefully she hangs it in a prominent place, a place reserved for it. It is a poster of Artie's Band, "Starbusters." It gleams and glitters; in Artie's eyes and about him in the poster is an aura, a touch of Hitchcock – gleaming teeth and eyes – the resemblance is for a moment striking. She looks up at the poster lovingly as a distant theme begins to play. It glows on its own...

She dances a few steps around the room, hugging herself, and enjoying for a moment her own beauty privately. Then she stops and looks up at the poster and tears roll down her cheeks. She sings a haunting song, and as she does, a reflection of Hitchcock, watching her, appears strangely in a mirror on the wall; he watches her with great affection.

CAROLINE: *(She sings.)*

"THERE'S A TOWN IN TIME"

CAROLINE: There's a town in time
Where they'll never find me.
There are secret faces
And the streets stretch out to the Sun.
Where you can be with me and not remember,
And the leaves turn so bright red,
But the colors, the colors, the colors
never run. And...

Time is lost forever,
Dreaming in the yard.
And you will always be my Sweetheart
My sweet, sweet heart.
My sweet, sweet heart.

There are steps and swings

And porches by the millions
Where I watched you talking
But you never spoke to me.
Where you could hold me softly
Without knowing
But the sunlight burned
Like the eyes, the eyes, the eyes
Of memory. And...

Time is lost forever,
Dreaming in the yard.
And you will always be my Sweetheart
My sweet, sweet heart.
My sweet, sweet heart.

A time will come where thoughts
Will live forever.
And the dress-up of dreamers
Will suddenly go free.
And you will walk
Through Towns in Time
And find me.
And we will wake up in history.
And we'll sing, we'll sing, we'll sing
The songs of –

Time is lost forever,
Dreaming in the yard.
And you will always be my Sweetheart
My sweet, sweet heart.
My sweet, sweet heart.

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(When she finishes the song, she dries her eyes and walks to examine her image in the mirror, where Hitchcock's image remains; on seeing it she jumps in surprise, but it disappears. She looks for a moment, then continues to straighten her hair and dry her eyes. She turns and looks upstairs as though someone called. She walks to the stairs.)

CAROLINE: Uncle J.B.? *(She walks up a step.)* Uncle J.B., come down. I've decided to go to the dance..
I want you to see my dress...

(She walks slowly up the stairs as the light becomes dream-like and fades to a Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT IV, Scene 3 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Last Dance" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

The Homecoming Dance is drawing to a close. Onstage the decorations sparkle and glitter in the turning glass ball and the stained glass windows, in a dream-like setting of pastels and wishes and anticipation. Artie's band is playing their theme song, "Starbusters." Onstage are Cindy Lou, Stella Nell and Emma Mae -- and all of the participants in the Homecoming Dance. Near the bandstand Honey Jo Waller stands looking up at Artie Browning appreciatively, as he is looking down at her appreciatively – but she is also watching the door, in a last hope that "someone" will come to the dance after all. But all hope seems lost as Artie, who looks stunning in full cowboy regalia reminiscent of Hitchcock's, announces that this is the "Last Dance"...

ARTIE: I'd like to say thank you, from the "Starbusters" for letting us be with you for this Homecoming and make friends with history. Now I'd like you to choose your partners for the Last Dance... Let's make it our best one. *(He glances down at Honey Jo and motions her up on the bandstand beside him, and she joins him in the song. It begins as a dance, and then everyone, as Artie beckons, joins in the chorus.)*

"COWBOY, COWGIRL"

ARTIE: Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.
Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.

Will we ever save our dream?
Our grave will lie beyond the hill
Where we ride.
Who will know if we lied
To be side by side?
Who will know you?
Who will know me?
Who will know we tried?

Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.

Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.

Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.
Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.

Will we ever find
Our peace, our mind
Will fly into the
Lightning and rain,
And we'll stay on the plain,
And we'll become the same.
Who will know you?
Who will know me?
And we will always remain

Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.
Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.

Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world.
Cowboy, Cowgirl.
Small town, small world, small world.

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(The song ends in a vibrant chorus, sounding a bit like a hymn. A silence. The double doors swing open silently in a strange wind. Standing there is Thurber Mills, his eyes flashing in the wind and lightning; thunder rumbles. And in the distance the theme from "Eleven" plays as he looks up to see Honey Jo standing by Artie. She sees him and moves slowly toward him, drawn as though hypnotized.)

HONEY; Thurber...

(All through the hall whispers and murmurs are heard – "It's Thurber Mills." "He's back after all these years." "Look at him." "It's Thurber Mills." "He's come back...")

THURBER: Honey Jo... I have something to say to you. I know it's probably too late to say it. But I want to say it to you anyway. *(Artie turns away in pain.)*

HONEY: Thurber, it's never too late... It's never too late for that...

THURBER: I don't know... *(Tears fill his eyes.)* I should have said it to you the first time I ever saw you because it's what I felt the first time. And it's what I felt every time since then. And it's what I feel now. No matter what you do, I'm going to say it.

HONEY: Yes, Thurber?

THURBER: Honey, I – *(It isn't as easy as he thought, no matter how much he practiced.)* Oh, Honey Jo – I LOVE YOU... *(Tears roll down his cheeks.)* Oh, Honey, I love you.

HONEY: *(In tears)* Oh, Thurber...

THURBER: Well, you do what you want, Honey. I'll understand. And I won't ever forget you.

(He turns and walks out the door and up the aisle; white lightning flashes magnificently and nearby thuds are heard. Honey follows him up the aisle a few steps. The others crowd around the door, looking out.)

HONEY: Thurber!

VOICES: *Meteors! It's the meteors!!*

HONEY: Thurber, NO!!

(Thurber has gone up the aisle, but Honey sees him fall and screams.)

HONEY: THURBER!!!!

(She stares in disbelief. Dark chords sound. Artie has come behind her and looks out of eyes that have the look and compassion of Hitchcock Huddleston, and never did they seem more the same as tears roll down his cheeks. In the glare of a final brilliant flash the house goes completely and suddenly dark and totally silent. "Cowboy High" plays softly in the background as the lights softly glow to Blackout.

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☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT V, Scene 1 ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "UFO" ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Six months later. The street in front of the Episcopal Recreation Hall. We see the stained glass doors in its impressive façade, its face registering the deep chords of recent memories... The sun is shining brightly. Hallelujah, Texas is enjoying a brisk, whipping wind with the potency of new things to come...

We see townspeople running up and down the aisles and on the street in front of the hall. A few are carrying supplies and go into the front door of the hall. We see the two members of Artie's band carrying musical instruments and going into the Rec Hall; their jackets proudly proclaim the "Starbusters" logo. They walk in and out of the door several times carrying musical equipment. The wind picks up briskly, blowing hats and supplies here and there. Everyone is chasing after happily whirling objects and papers.

Suddenly we hear the harmonic rhythms of "Stars!" And walking up the aisle, the beautiful Cindy Lou and the precise Stella Nell enter, casually carrying shopping bags and heading for the Rec Hall. They carry with their shopping bags a riper, more beautiful wisdom – a kind of sensuality born in a windblown West Texas prairie gap, rolling with the hills... A few sparkly stars peak out of the tops of the bags.

Stella Nell is dressed to the nine's in an elegant pant suit. Her hair is – perfect, gathering along her dimpled cheeks. Cindy Lou is flouncing today, bubbling along in a bouncy dress, humming "Stars!" to herself. Ominously a Tumbleweed with a mind of its own crosses the street on its way to somewhere new. It sparkles a little greeting as it passes by.... And a few clouds begin to gather curiously. Something is up.

Joe Dan, a member of Artie's Band, is chasing the sheets of music that are blowing across the street...

JOE DAN: *(To Cindy Lou)* Hey, Cindy Lou! This is some wind. Look at this! *(His hat flies off like a flying saucer and he chases it down the street...)*

CINDY: *(Smiling and bouncing, her full skirt caught in the wild wind, whirling her around)* Hi, Joe Dan. It's like a little tornado! *(She walks off following Joe Dan in pursuit of the flying hat.)*

STELLA: *(Her hair has not budged)* Cindy Lou! Hurry up. I've still got to get to the Country Club.

CINDY: Joe Dan, I don't think that hat is coming back.... *(To herself)* Not this year.

JOE DAN: *(He's given up and starts walking back.)* Third hat this week. *(He calls to another band member who's chasing sheet music.)* Jimmy D! Don't lose that sheet music – Artie just wrote that song. *(The wind carries off the music in a big burst – and off the stage.)*

- JIMMY D: I give up! He'll just have to write a new song... It's been six months since he wrote a new song. That big Homecoming Dance...
- CINDY: It's been six months since Homecoming?... Six months since...everything happened. *(She sighs.)*
- JOE DAN: He's gonna be really upset.
- JIMMY D: Maybe we can find it after these whirlwinds stop. *(Another one whips along beside him.)* Gimme a hand with this. *(Joe Dan gives him a hand with the guitar cases. He's distracted because he's looking at Stella Nell.)* Hi, Stella Nell. *(He smiles a really interested smile.)*
- STELLA: *(Stiffly)* Hello, Jimmy D.
- JIMMY D: Stella Nell, I'd like to ask you something.
- STELLA: Okay.
- JIMMY D: Stella Nell, how come your hair didn't move? *(Everyone turns in unison to look at Stella Nell. No wind could move her. Nothing is out of place. The wind calms a bit. The clouds move closer and grow darker..)*
- STELLA: *(Pause)* My hair *never* moves.
- CINDY: Stella Nell, how'd you do that?
- STELLA: It's just the way life is... *(She gathers the shopping bags and heads for the door.)* Cindy Lou, we've got to get going! Where's Emma Mae?
- CINDY: She stopped to look at something. *(She points up the aisle. Everyone turns to look that way.)* Uh-oh. What's that? *(She walks up the aisle, pointing and looking up. A deep whirring sound can be heard. She looks straight up.)*
- JIMMY D: I'll help you with those, Stella Nell.
- STELLA: *(Looking at him thoughtfully. She hands him the bags.)* Okay.
- JOE DAN: *(He's walked up the aisle, following Cindy Lou. He shades his eyes looking up at the sky.)* What the heck is that? Is that another UFO? *(More dark clouds gather on the horizon and lightning can be seen accenting their mood.)*
- CINDY: Stella Nell, come out here and look at this! It's a big one! *(Stella Nell and Jimmy D have disappeared inside the door of the hall with the bags.)* Stella Nell! *(Silence)*
(Really loud) STELLA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- STELLA: *(Stella Nell and Jimmy D reappear)* What? Oh, my.
- JIMMY D: *(He whistles.)* I think this one might land...

STELLA: But that's the golf course. It can't land on the golf course.

JIMMY D: *(Quizzically...)* Why not?

(The wind whips up again and thunder and lightning take over the clouds. The townspeople, Stella Nell, Jimmy D run up the aisle following Cindy Lou, pointing upward. They exit. Onstage, far in the distance we can see rain coming down from those clouds, moving this way. And over in the west, a giant Rainbow is beginning to form. Blackout.)

☆☆☆

EMMA: Oh, my!! I found them all!! I saved every one!! *(A couple of stars leap out of the bag happily. Artie smiles with pure pleasure...and gleaming teeth.)*

CINDY: Emma Mae! There's ten times as many stars here as we came in here with! How did you do that?

EMMA: I don't know. *(She brings in more bags of stars. Some of the hop out of the bag like popcorn. Artie picks them up when they pop out of the bag.)*

STELLA: It's a real skill...

EMMA: *(Sheepishly)* It's kind of hard to keep them in the bag...

CINDY: It was the UFO.

ARTIE: *(To all)* So what happened out there? Everybody's talking about this giant UFO that was over at the golf course.

STELLA: *(Emphatically)* Right by where Rodney Brown sunk that golf cart in the lake.

CINDY: *(Emphatically)* Oh, no, he didn't.

JOE DAN: Rodney Brown was there today.

JIMMY D: *Everybody* was there.

ARTIE: *(He looks up, really interested.)* Everybody?... Who?

JOE DAN: It looked like everybody in town came out – you could see this UFO all the way to The Caddo Bridge....

ARTIE: *(Thoughtfully)* The Caddo Bridge...?

STELLA: Emma Mae, how many more bags of stars do you *have* out there?!

EMMA: *(Thoughtfully)* I think of stars like I think of UFOs.

STELLA: *(Pause)* Okay, I'll bite.

EMMA: *(Dreamily)* You never can have enough of those...

CINDY: I so glad that I got to see that UFO today! I don't see them very often. Emma Mae, you see them all the time.

EMMA: You have to look sort of – away. You can't look directly at them. They run off. But they know you saw them. ... And they see you back.

STELLA: Oh, we couldn't possibly have seen a UFO! It must have been a big grey cloud. There's no such thing as a UFO. *(She stops dead in her tracks, thinking. Thoughtfully)* Of course, I don't know why all of these things that don't exist – keep winding up here.

(Thoughtfully) It must have started with that man who built telescopes in his backyard. They must of noticed him always looking up there.... And thought he was the welcoming committee...

EMMA: Mr. Tallman? I liked Mr. Tallman...

STELLA: Well, I just don't have time for UFOs. I have to go to the Country Club. *(Jimmy D walks toward her.)*

EMMA: UFOs have lots of time. Every time I see a UFO, it seems like they have plenty of Time.

JOE DAN: There were a lot of television crews coming in. They're all over the place.

STELLA: It's ridiculous. You can't walk across the street without somebody wanting to interview you about how it feels to live with UFOs flying all around town.

CINDY: I have a new dress that I thought I'd wear tomorrow. And if those TV people want to interview me, well, that's just fine with me.

EMMA: What's the right thing to wear when you're going to be interviewed about a UFO? I've always wondered.

CINDY: *(Preening and glowing in a special spotlight. We can almost see that dress...)* Something out of this world...! *(Laughter cascades.)*

STELLA: *(Hands on hips)* Good thing they don't *land* and set up house. We'd *never* have any peace from these news reporters.

EMMA: *(Knowingly)* Some of them land...

STELLA: *(Knowingly)* Not on *my* property.

EMMA: Stella Nell, I don't think they knew that was your property.

STELLA: *(Heading for the door in a huff)* Well, somebody should tell them. That's all I can say!

(Everyone turns in unison to look at Emma Mae, who is smiling and sparkling. The wind whips up, some thunder, and we hear the rain begin – loud, hard rain. Artie looks up. Stella Nell sets her bags down.)

ARTIE: The rain's come...

JIMMY D: Stella Nell, you might want to wait out this little cloud burst.

STELLA: What a day! First the little tornadoes. Then the UFO. And now -- a hurricane! What else is going to happen?!

CINDY: Uh, Stella Nell --

JOE DAN: We could rehearse!

ARTIE: But we needed a new song. Maybe we can come up with something new tonight. How're you doing back there, Billy Bob?

BILLY BOB: *(He's been tinkering around in the back. Suddenly the bandstand and instruments light up. He stands up in triumph holding a wire.)* Got it!!!!

ALL: Great job, Billy Bob! Woo hoo! I knew you could do it! *(Thunder and lightning appear in additional appreciation.)*

(The band members take their places on the stand, fiddling around with equipment and listening to the rain. The girls pull up some chairs near the bandstand to listen. The rain is really coming down hard now.)

CINDY: Wow, this rain is really coming down hard, Stella Nell. Good thing you waited. I don't know anybody who'd go out in a rain storm like this.

ARTIE: *(Thoughtfully)* It *would* be a crazy thing to do...

EMMA: *(The wind whips strongly, the building creaks.)* Listen to that!!

(The wind blows the door open. A strike of bright lightning. A very tall, eerie figure enters in long black raincoat and hood. Drenched and mysterious. We can't make out the face.)

CINDY: Oh!!! Who is that? It's not that giant cowboy again, is it?

(Caroline Mills removes her hood – she's even more beautiful than we remember – and taller.)

JOE DAN: *(Whistling in awe)* It's no cowboy....

CAROLINE: I thought you guys were rehearsing...?

ARTIE: *(He stands, shocked. He gleams and moves toward her – almost whistling himself...)*
Caroline Melody Mills...! Soaking wet... Again...

CAROLINE: I came prepared. I saw the clouds. *(She removes the long black raincoat like a bullfighter's cape. She is dressed from head to foot in black – tight sweater, slacks -- and boots. Her hair is sleek – held back with bright silver pins. She wears a colored pendant. A Rainbow... She's been thinking for six months. She's made a decision. And she's stunning.)*

CINDY: Oh, Caroline! I'm so glad to see you! *(She rushes to hug Caroline.)* I called you. Why didn't you call me back?

EMMA: Caroline, we haven't seen you in six months! I'm really happy you came over. *(She hugs Caroline.)*

STELLA: *(Hugging her)* Caroline, we're really, really glad to see you. Really. You should come out more – come over.

CAROLINE: I will.

EMMA: I didn't know your name was Melody. That's something to be really thankful for.

CINDY: I heard you stopped teaching music.

CAROLINE: I did. I've been doing something else.

ARTIE: *(He's standing almost in front of her now, hypnotized. Looking into her eyes. Ready.)*
What?

CAROLINE: *(Looking intently in his eyes.)* Well, that's why I came here tonight, Artie. I have something for you.

ARTIE: *(Breathless)* What?

CAROLINE: *(She reaches for the bag she'd slung over her shoulder. Ceremoniously, she reaches in and pulls out a black folder. She hands it to him.)* This. I've been writing music.

ARTIE: *(He stands transfixed for a moment, looking into her eyes. Then he takes the folder and looks inside, reading silently. Everyone is still. After a moment, he looks up.)*

This is good.

CAROLINE: I wanted to see if you would sing it. Here – I brought a lot of copies. *(Artie hands copies to the band members. Caroline gives copies to Cindy Lou, Emma Mae, and Stella Nell. The band look over the music for a minute, set it onto their stands, and Artie begins to play and sing smoothly.)*

“NEVER WANTING YOU”

ARTIE: Never wanting you to do
The things you do.
Never wanting me to know
How far I'd go.

(Artie is joined by the band, who sing some of the harmony.)

Never seeing you any more,
Never knowing what this was for.
Never stopping to think.
Never going to the brink....

(Artie pauses the chord, motioning for Caroline to come up on stage and sing with him. There's a stool nearby.)

CAROLINE: No, I can't!

ARTIE: Come on up here and sing. You've got a good voice – I've heard you.

ALL: Go ahead. Come on, Caroline. Sing! *(She joins him on the stage, sitting on a stool nearby. He holds the chord softly, still paused, expectant. He begins again. She knows the words – and she looks at him.)*

CAROLINE: Never singing songs too much
That I can touch.

ARTIE: *(He looks at her intently.)*
Never knowing what you might
Say back at night.

CAROLINE: *(Looking at him intently.)*
Never going to the dance.
Never risking the chance
That you would see I'm there,
And you would stare...

ARTIE: *(He turns red, looks down at the words again and sings.)*
Never going home alone
Where there's a telephone.
Never looking where
I wrote your number there.

CAROLINE: *(Looking at him, tears in her eyes. It's apparent to everyone that they are singing to each other.)*

There's too much I don't want to feel.
I'm afraid it's all becoming real.
Never going to be through.
Never going home with you...

TOGETHER: Never going home with you...
Never going home with you...

BAND MEMBERS: Wow... Caroline, you can really sing. I mean you can really sing.

CINDY: Wow... That's fantastic, Caroline!

STELLA: *(A rare tear in her eye)* I'm glad you sang for us, Caroline. I think we all know what you mean in the song. I know what you mean.

ARTIE: *(Steadily holding her gaze)* It's a great song, Caroline. I told you, you've got a fantastic voice. I knew that. *(Pause)* I want you to sing with the band.

CAROLINE: *(Shocked)* But I –

ARTIE: *(A sweeping gesture)* Melody Mills....

ALL: Melody Mills... *(All repeat the name several times, a kind of chorus of appreciation.)*

ARTIE: I want you to use that name and sing with our band. Sing with me.

CAROLINE: But – but --

CINDY LOU: Wow, that’s great! Melody Mills!

EMMA: Melody Mills... A name to remember...

ARTIE: *(Still looking steadily into her eyes)* Come on. What do you say? *(Pause. He smiles. His teeth gleam like stars – persuasively.)*

EMMA: *(Aside)* Oh! There’s those sunshiny teeth again!

THE BAND: Come on!

ARTIE: Tell you what, let’s try it again. Come on.

EMMA: I wish Honey Jo was here. She would have liked this song.

CINDY: But it might of made her real sad...

STELLA *(Thoughtfully)* Or it might have made her sing again...

EMMA: *(Softly)* Caroline?

CAROLINE: *(Turning to Emma Mae)* Yes, Emma Mae?

EMMA: *(With a tear in her eye)* I really liked your song, Caroline. It’s got a lot of words I know real well. Can we sing, too?

CAROLINE: *(Looking at Artie, taking everything in. Then to Emma Mae.)* Sure, Emma Mae, I’d love to have you sing it.

ARTIE: Okay. Let’s do this right. *(He steps over to the other players and points to a few things on the music, talks to them quietly for a moment. The girls move up near the bandstand to sing along. Billy Bob stands up with a smile and triumphant gesture, and the whole bandstand lights up.)*

EMMA: Wooo... Stars!.... *(Emma Mae, Stella Nell, and Cindy Lou, hypnotized by the starry bandstand and the lights above it sink into reverie. As Artie begins playing “Never Wanting You,” the opening chords descend from “Stars!” as an introduction... ☺)*

EMMA, CINDY, STELLA: Wooo... Stars!.... Wooo....

ARTIE: Here we go... *(They sing together in many creative harmonies – and when someone sings alone, the others provide the background harmony. They swing and sway in a kind of reverie, and as they do, the lights on the bandstand and the instruments pulse and sway as well... ☺)*

“NEVER WANTING YOU”

ALL: Never wanting you to do
The things you do.

CAROLINE: Never wanting me to know
How far I'd go.

THE GIRLS: Never seeing you any more,
Never knowing what this was for.

THE BOYS: Never stopping to think.

THE GIRLS: Never going to the brink....

CAROLINE: Never singing songs too much
That I can touch.

ARTIE: *(He looks at her intently.)*
Never knowing what you might
Say back at night.

ALL: Never going to the dance.
Never risking the chance

CAROLINE *(Looking at Artie)* That you would see I'm there,
And you would stare...

ARTIE: *(He turns red, looks down again.)*
Never going home alone

EMMA: Where there's a telephone.

ARTIE: Never looking where

CINDY: I wrote your number there...

ALL: There's too much I don't want to feel.
I'm afraid it's all becoming real.

CAROLINE: Never going to be through.

ARTIE: Never going home with you...

CAROLINE: Am I going home with you...?

ARTIE: Always going home with you...

ALL Always going home with you...

Always going home with you...

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(They all applaud together and cheer Caroline. Artie and the others hug her. She and Artie begin to talk quietly alone together, standing on the side of the bandstand. He takes her hand. The band members get

together and go over the music talking quietly. Emma Mae, Stella Nell, and Cindy Lou move downstage. And as they do, the very slow rhythmic chords, the sounds of "Stars!" begin to play in the background.)

EMMA: This is exciting. I think she's going to sing in Artie's band!

CINDY: *(Looking over her shoulder)* I think she's going to do a lot more than sing in Artie's band... *(Artie has an arm around Caroline now, and they look into each other's eyes as they walk across to the band members.)*

STELLA: *(Staring at the bandstand, hypnotized by the lights, which are twinkling brighter than ever now.)* Lot of stars on that bandstand...

CINDY: Stella Nell, you never made it to the Country Club.

EMMA: *(Sure)* Sometimes you don't have to make it to the Country Club.

STELLA: *(Sighing)* Stars...

EMMA: There's a lot of more of them, if you just notice them.

ALL: Stars...

(More lights seem to turn on an sparkle from everywhere on the bandstand, the instruments – even the tableau of the new Starbusters with Artie Browning and Melody Mills become almost a lighted poster... Little lights begin to outline the room, the chairs, little lights and stars drop down from the ceiling... Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, and Stella Nell dance and sing "Stars!" as if in a dream. And as they reach up for stars, the stars seem to drop into their eyes...)

"STARS" (Reprise)

(Beginning very slowly. The Cosmic Cowgirls Chorus and Cosmic Cowboys Chorus join in background harmonies and when all sing.)

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: I started out with one
Now I can't stop
ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking up in unison)
Looking up there I can almost see Home...

CINDY: *(Holding stars in her hand)* No two stars ever look the same...
EMMA: They always seem to know your name...
STELLA: They answer when you wish on them.
EMMA: They always start where you begin.

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: *(Stardust falling on her head)*
Stars are falling in my hair.
Is this too much!
CINDY & STELLA *(Shouting/speaking)* No!
ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking up in unison)

Looking up there I can almost see Home...

(Gradually an apparition of a giant cowboy has appeared on the bandstand – in full regalia – Hitchcock Huddleston, glowing and gleaming like a supernova.)

STELLA: Where did all these stars come from?
EMMA: *(Slowly as they turn in unison to look toward Hitchcock)*
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!
ALL: *(Words from Caroline's song to the tune of "Stars!")*
Always going home with you.
Always going home with you.
EMMA: Never going to be through.
ALL: Always going home with you.

ALL: *(A minor chord)* Stars! Stars!
CINDY: Star light..
STELLA: Star bright..
EMMA: I wish I was a star tonight...

(All pose in tableau -- the twinkling lights around the room, outlining the bandstand and the Starbusters, Hitchcock, the stained glass – as the fading notes of "Stars!" softly recede -- and Emma Mae, Stella Nell, and Cindy Lou, Cosmic Cowgirls all, glitter into stardom...)

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ACT V, Scene 3
"Always"
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Later that evening. The Corral. A light is on down the way and there's a bright moon peaking knowingly through some dark clouds. In the sky, the fading hues of what might have been a reddish orangy sunset -- but for the storm. A few drops still fall here and there, things that got wet in the cloudburst now glisten. The Cactus is a brighter tone, pulsing with spikes of green. And in the distance, sidling up to the clouds, a brilliant Rainbow is forming, picking up the left over tones of twilight's orange dusk against the dark grey clouds. All of the flowers that love the night seem to be popping up with little bright faces to watch something. Something interesting. The wind can be heard talking, a steady tone of melancholy and mischief, tossing things here and there. A Tumbleweed.... A voice....

HONEY: Thurber...? Thurber...? *(We hear her voice. And then we see her, walking down the aisle toward the Corral. She surveys its scene, looking for something. Her dress is full of colors that can't hold back the honeyed hair trying to tumble out from under an umbrella that is open over her shoulder. She wears a warm jacket and the rainbow colored umbrella seems to have life of its own. We hear another voice.)*

THURBER: Honey Jo...? Honey Jo...?

HONEY: *(Running around the Corral, looking everywhere)* Thurber! I had a dream that you were here. Did I imagine it?

THURBER: *(Thurber appears at first a ghostly apparition above the fence. He's a vision – glittering hat and cowboy shirt and jeans – giving Hitchcock a run for his money...)* Honey Jo? Honey?

HONEY: *(Running to him. Her dress clings to her in colors that don't exist anywhere else...)* Who is it out here by the Corral? Who are you? What are you doing here?

THURBER: *(He floats down to the top of the fence near her, more real every moment.)* Honey, it's me. Thurber...

HONEY: It can't be happening... I saw you in a dream... *(She reaches toward him.)* Thurber! Thurber! *(Electricity crackles as she reaches for him. He smiles. She smiles.)*

THURBER: I saw you, too.

HONEY: Are you always so far, far away...? I don't care, I always knew that you would come back and call my name. Just like before. I knew it against all the impossibilities... and all the sand out here that begs for them. I just knew, Thurber Mills.

THURBER: *(Smiling)* Honey Jo, you're starting to sound like me... Wait. I have something to tell you.

(Reading. In the background play soft themes from "Oh, Honey, I Love You" and the chorus of "Cowboy High")

Dear Honey Jo. As I am here at the pleasure of this – wonderful Rainbow *(He looks up)*, and all of those who make the impossible happen *(he looks out over the prairie)*, I want to say all the right things. The impossible things.

When I – left, I said, I love you, Honey. But I didn't mean back then that I only loved you that day or that moment back then – or that I wanted to leave. I didn't want to leave you, Honey. I never want to leave you.

Just because I couldn't say it before didn't mean I hadn't been sayin' it most of my life -- to you. Only you couldn't hear it in the words. So this is all the love that I could never say to you, Honey. *(He looks up at her then back down again. She cries.)*

I call them: The Story of My Life. And there are a lot of people who have this story. It's not all mine. I'm giving it to you and I'm giving it to them, so they'll know the story even before they have to live in it. These are the lines *(To audience)*. All of you can use them.

Honey, this is the love I could never make good on. *(She sobs – but smiles with stars in her eyes.)*

And if I could have been here with you, then these are the vows I would have said to you when the best part of me was loving you.. *(She sobs. Doesn't look like it's going to stop anytime soon...)*

What is this love I could never tell you? Just my own remembrance of all the times of quiet desperation. Thinking of you in the desert.

(He looks at her and speaks, not reading.) In every prairie I have crossed on bare feet that were hardly mine, chasing rainbows with my best friend who roped me and told me to grab for my secret weapon, my beauty, my heart – in every one of those prairies and in every cloud I've watched rain itself to death, in every cowgirl in a sky full of hoof beats and horses who run away, in every cactus pulling up water from the ground where no one else can feel it, and every dust storm whirling tumbleweeds into your heartbeats, I have seen the power in your eyes, while you waited for me...

I will see the look in your eyes for an eternity. How could I not tell you, that which I only knew...?

It was all I knew. You were all I knew. And yet when it was my time to speak, my poems, the best things I had to give you, tumbled out on top of themselves into some kind of mixed up cowboy bouquet – but oh, if you had seen the wild fires of the cactus flowers that burned like the gold in your eyes -- the bluebonnets in the sky that never say die, the roses in the tumbleweeds that looked like a valentine but I didn't know how to mail it -- the honeysuckle vines that wanted to wrap around you and plant you in the rows of my mind – oh, those sparkling rows, so beautifully rolling, the rows, in a Garden of Eden on an ocean of grinning sand...

HONEY: *(She laughs in spite of her tears, because the poem is starting to sound like the Thurber of old...)* An ocean of grinning sand?... Oh, Thurber... I think you're going to have to explain this to me...

THURBER: Wait. I can tell you what it means. I've learned a lot. I can tell you what it means...

The rows were sparkling in the Garden of Eden because the tears had spilled out of my mind onto them because I loved you so much those tears I kept to myself had to get out of that Corral.... And finally I just let them all go and spread them everywhere so I could grow more wild flowers and Honey... That's the kind of thing I never could tell you before about my poems. I knew they didn't make any sense to you if I didn't tell you. It was the love that made their poetry have some sense.

HONEY: But why couldn't you tell me?!

THURBER: *(Long pause)* I was afraid to love anything that much that somebody else could take away.

HONEY: But nobody took me away, Thurber... I was always there and I just wanted you to say it.

THURBER: I sent it to you in a Rainbow.... *(He looks up at the Rainbow. It twinkles..)*

HONEY: But I can't speak rainbow!

THURBER: *(Awed by her honey filled rainbow beauty... Sighing REALLY deeply)* Oh, Honey Jo.... Rainbows are your country... Like they are mine. *(The giant Rainbow sighs and glistens.)*

HONEY: Rainbows are nice, Thurber. Really nice. But sometimes you have to say things without giving somebody some rainbows or some roses. Sometimes you just have to *say* it. When it really, really, really, really, really, really matters, you have to *say* it. At least once...

THURBER: At least once... *(Awkward pause. Sheepishly)* You never said it to me, Honey...

HONEY: *(Sheepishly)* You know, you're right...

THURBER: You could send a Rainbow. But don't leave it on your pillow when you go outside. Cause it will follow you wherever you go. Until you say it. Aw, Honey, I love you...

"OH, HONEY, I LOVE YOU" (Reprise)

THURBER: Why does she have to look so pretty?
Do they know what they do, do they know?
I said, "Oh, Honey, Oh, Honey,"
But I never said

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I couldn't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I love you.

There's nobody like your Honey,
And when you find it you know.
You get stupid when she
looks up at you,
And you just stand there
when she tells you to go.

Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I love you,
Oh, Honey, I can't say
why I couldn't say it.
But, Honey, I love you,
I love you.

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HONEY: I love you, Thurber Mills....

THURBER: There is never a time when you don't love something. But there is all the time in the world when you don't tell it how much you love it. You should never go away until you say to it, Oh, Honey! *(He kisses her.)*

HONEY: What a wonderful song, Thurber.

THURBER: I used to sing it a lot.

HONEY: But Thurber, why couldn't you sing it to ME!

THURBER: I didn't know how you would take it.

HONEY: *(She reaches out for his hand. Electricity crackles.)* Oh, Thurber...

What's it like, Thurber? What's it like?

THURBER: It's like learning about how to be home wherever you are.

HONEY: *(Tears again)* And are you home?

THURBER: Aw, Honey, I'm always home with you. *(He grabs her and kisses her hard, and as the electricity crackles like lightning, she glows and the winds blow...waiting....)*

HONEY: How do you know when you've found your home!?

THURBER: There is no place that is unfamiliar and no name you do not know.

HONEY: Can I come there with you?

THURBER: Ask that Rainbow...

HONEY: Don't joke.

THURBER: I wasn't.

HONEY: Thurber, how am I going to stand it when you go again?

THURBER: I never really leave you, Honey. It's just how things are, that you don't know I'm still here by the Corral and I never left at all. *(He glows.)*

HONEY: You're shiny like a star...

THURBER: That's how it is.

HONEY: *(He puts on his hat and floats up to the top of the fence, the rainbow glows, the fence lights up and it seems to trail off into the distance forever).* Thurber, are you a cowboy now?

THURBER: Always was a cowboy. Just didn't know it.

HONEY: *(Climbing up on the fence)* Thurber Mills, come down here. *(He sits beside her.)* It's a miracle, and I don't want it to be over.

THURBER: It's never over.

HONEY: You know, sitting out here on this fence with this shiny prairie and the wind whipping up the stars and that crazy rainbow, makes you think of Disneyland.

(She sings softly and slowly):

"DISNEYLAND" (Reprise)

HONEY: He lived in Disneyland, *(he takes her hand)* and he'd hold my hand.
(He looks up at the Rainbow). He'd look up at the sky,
And I would just die,
But in Disneyland, I think it goes that way...

And then he would ask me...

Do you think hearts break like eggs do?
Do you think we will live?
Well, I couldn't tell him that hearts are made
Of wishes and things you forgive. *(She kisses his cheek.)*

(With loving eyes)
I believed in his Rainbows... *(The Rainbow glows.)*
I looked for a prairie that cries...

THURBER: *(My poem...!)*
HONEY: But I didn't want any eggs to break.
I just wanted the love in his eyes...

TOGETHER: We lived in
Disneyland
HONEY: And he'd hold my hand. *(He squeezes her hand)*
He'd look up at the sky,
And I would just die.

THURBER: *(Oh, Honey, what can I say?!)*
HONEY: *(Hopefully)* Now he can't get away!

TOGETHER: But in Disneyland, I think it goes that --
-- Disneyland, I think it goes that --
-- Disneyland, I think it goes that way!

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THURBER: I like your song. *(He kisses her cheek. He looks up at the sky.)* You know, they're always thinking about you.

HONEY: Who?

THURBER: *(He looks up.)* The Stars. They're always thinking about you. *(Suddenly Hitchcock appears at the end of the fence. He looks on with a soft gaze. Thurber sees him and waves.)* Hi, Hitchcock.

You just don't know how many of them are there, always thinking about you and wishing you the best, the very best life and the very best words that you know.

HONEY: Was that what the poems were about?

THURBER: The poems are always about them, the things you can't see.

HONEY: Are they wonderful?

THURBER: *(Looking at Hitchcock)* More than you could ever ever ever ever, ever ever ever ever, ever hope to know.... *(Hitchcock smiles, and his smile gleams...)*

HONEY: Write me one of those poems, Thurber.

THURBER: *(Grinning)* What poems?

HONEY: The ones that -- you know -- fly off on their own and you can't even know what they mean. But they stay with you forever.

THURBER: Okay, Honey. I'll write you the best poem. *(Pause. Smile)* It's about Geography...

HONEY: Oh no!

THURBER: And Port Neches!

HONEY: Oh, Thurber....

THURBER: *(Looking at her)*

I was wondering when you would come to Port Neches.
I was watching you chasing a bee.
All I could think about was the berries you picked.
All I could think was -- let that be me.

HONEY: It will be. It will always be you.

(The sound of thunder. The Rainbow moves playfully. Thurber stands and floats upward. He begins to twirl his rope and looks hard at the Rainbow. Hitchcock floats upward and beckons to him; he coils his rope. The two of them begin to twirl ropes that sparkle like Christmas Tree lights and rise away chasing around the sky after the Rainbow.)

HONEY: *(Softly)* Some day there will be cowboys up in the sky.
Some day there will be cowboys high...

(The Cosmic Cowboys Chorus hums the chorus theme of "Cowboy High" as she speaks the words. The Rainbow glitters – Hitchcock heads after it, waving at Thurber. Thurber descends again to sit by Honey Jo on top of the fence.)

THURBER: Honey Jo...

HONEY: I know.

THURBER: Do you? Do you really know all the ways I have you here with me, like my soul? Like my soul forever, never letting me get too far away from my story. You're always part of the – plot... No matter who I am, no matter what I have to do. *(A pause)* No matter where I go...

HONEY: *(She takes both of his hands in hers like precious stones.)* Thurber, it doesn't matter where you go.

THURBER: *(A few drops of rain fall from some teary clouds.)* Honey Jo, it's starting to rain, you'll get wet.

HONEY: It doesn't matter what you say. It doesn't matter what name you use. It doesn't matter what they call today. I'll always know you. How could you ever hide from me?! From the tip of my head to my little toes, I'll always know you... *(She kisses him. He grabs her tightly, electricity crackles. A few more rain drops.)*

THURBER: Why'd it have to rain now! I just can't get things right!!

HONEY: *(Hugging him)* Thurber, I don't care if it rains. I'm sure you can make up a poem that will take care of this. What does "rain" rhyme with?

THURBER: Pain... *(He winces.)* Honey, I worry about you, I wanted to –

HONEY: It's okay, Thurber... I've decided I'm going to start teaching again.

THURBER: Yeah? What are you going to teach?

HONEY: *(Pause)* Geography... *(She smiles.)*

THURBER: Honey, I didn't want to leave you...

HONEY: I know, Thurber.

THURBER: You will always know me by the poems. I'll try to get some poems to you. If you want some.

HONEY: Thurber, I'm taken. I was all yours after Port Neches...

THURBER: *(Smiling big)* Port Neches... *(Looking at her, longing. A few rain drops.)* But why do there have to be these dark spots?

HONEY: *(Long pause. Smiling. Knowing. Transforming.)* So the stars will have somewhere to shine... *(She smiles a glowing Honey smile. And nothing else matters. The Rainbow waves... She sings...)*

"ALWAYS TAKEN"

HONEY: Always, always taken
When your heart takes part in me.

THURBER: If doors close, new doors open.
If names change, you'll still know me.

HONEY: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
TOGETHER: Or I can't see through this dark spot.
THURBER: I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

THURBER: Always, always taken.
When my heart is on the run.

HONEY: If minds close, new minds open.
I always know you are the one.

THURBER: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
Or I can't see through this dark spot.
I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

HONEY: Always, always taken
I don't care if you run.
THURBER: When eyes close --
HONEY: -- new eyes open.
THURBER: You'll never be home alone.

HONEY: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
TOGETHER: Or I can't see through this dark spot.
THURBER: I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

TOGETHER: Always, always taken
When my heart takes part in you.
Always, always shaken
When I come home to you.....
When I come home to you...
When I come home to you...

(Thurber holds Honey in his arms, and as the chords continue to play in the background he begins to walk away, leaving her glowing on the prairie, her hand extended toward him where his last held it close to him. He walks downstage. And in the background, the picture of Honey reaching out toward him glistening on the prairie... It is as if starlights have descended upon her as she reaches out sparkling and seeking his heart... And far above a giant Rainbow glistens by a UFO that's appearing to land, and we see Hitchcock wave to him with a gleaming smile... The tableau of his life in one scene...)

THURBER: *(To audience)* Well... *(He takes a deep breath, takes off his hat and looks at the audience for a long moment.)* That's my little history. I don't know what yours is. But I'm sure it'll be just as shiny when you're through with it. *(He looks back toward the scene...)* Your life, in a single picture... *(Pause)*

What I learned tonight was that when you love somebody who's reaching out for you with stars in her hair...and you tell her...? Well, you love a little more of yourself you didn't know was there.

(He looks up toward Hitchcock and waves; Hitchcock waves back.) And when you have a really good friend who tells you that your secret weapon is your BEAUTY – don't shoot him! And don't run off! This is the life you were meant to get to know. Don't wait. Grab that Beauty and reach for Stars!... And if you do, I promise, they'll come out to meet you. *(A few stars begin to blossom into large, happy, beaming spotlights...)*

And when you hear these great voices in your mind who want you to write wild poetry and songs about prairies – turn those suckers loose on the world! You never know when one of

them will be on his way to Port Neches and take you with him..... *(A big smile – he looks back at Honey. She smiles like the Sun and seems to tumble out of the tableau into a veritable cornucopia of Honey...)*

I'll be seeing you folks in my dreams...
(Chuckling) And I suspect you'll be seeing me in some of yours...

(He bows very low and very slow...)

(The "Stars!" theme begins to play. The Rainbow starts some Fireworks. The Cactus glistens and sways to the music. A few new flowers bloom downstage and say hello. Thurber picks a few and starts tossing them into the audience, extending the poetry of the moment into a new reality. All of the members of "Cosmic Cowboys" enter singing "Stars!" softly and then to a crescendo...as they gather flowers, bow to the audience, and toss out flowers as they walk up the aisles. Occasionally they pick on an audience member for a little dance....)

(And the Rainbow takes a bow...☺)



ALL SING DURING THE CURTAIN CALL:

(You can put up the words on stage and invite the audience to sing along, too...)

Stars! Stars!
I started out with one
Now I can't stop
We've just begun...
Looking up there I can almost see Home...

No two stars ever look the same...
They always seem to know your name...
They answer when you wish on them.
They always start where you begin.

Stars! Stars!
Stars are falling in my hair.
Is this too much!
(Shouting/speaking) No!
We've just begun...

Looking up there I can almost see Home...

Where did all these stars come from?
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!

Stars! Stars!

(Themes from the musical continue to play as the company and the audience exits.)

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The End
☆ ☆ ☆
"Cosmic Cowboys"
☆ ☆ ☆



Thanks!

To Cosmic Cowboys and Cosmic Cowgirls ...

To all my teachers and many families everywhere....

And a special Dedication and many thanks for inspiration ☺ -- to

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S.H. Rodman
Redmond, Washington
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