

DIRT

A Musical in Two Acts

Book, Lyrics & Music
by
Chuck Puckett

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Setting

A lake in North Alabama, then points west: Birmingham, New Orleans, Taos, Tahoe, Wyoming, San Francisco).

Time

1973-1993

Cast of Characters

Tara Loomis. Woman, 19-25. Loves adventure, or at least believes that she does. She wants to go somewhere, somehow. And preferably somewhere else. Nevertheless, her roots are definitely in her home soil. She is in love with Bracken.

Bracken Thomas. Man, 19-25. Tara's soul mate. A different ilk, though: he's a thinker, the weird one, who believes that The Answer is Out There Somewhere. Doesn't have a tie to his roots, and thus no staying power when times get rough.

Lois Mudd. Woman, 19-25. Tara's best friend, but of a decidedly different temperament. A stay at home, very country girl. Lois and Tara were in school together, might have been in the same sorority, certainly roomed together in college.

Clay Banks. Man, 19-25. Bracken's best friend, and Lois' soon to be newlywed husband, although he doesn't know it. A real nutcase, paranoid about the government and the Illuminati. Clay is NRA and hunting and fishing and beer.

Mose Jordan. Man, 40-60. A mysterious old man who shows up wherever Tara and Bracken go, and who always seems to know more than he possibly could.

Lissa. Woman, 14-17. Tara's eventual daughter, an extremely self-assured tomboy who is fearless and disarming. She has her mother's deep-rooted security combined with her father's almost cosmic curiosity. She should be played by a Creek Chorister.

Clay, Jr. Man, 15-17. Lois and Clay's son. Much like his father. Also played by a Creek Chorister.

Creek Chorus. 4-8 men and women (depending on availability) who become (at need) crowds, friends, perform scene changes.

Musical Numbers

Act I

Prologue.

"Dirt Prologue". Mose, Creek Chorus

"Further Down the Road". Mose, Tara, Lois, Clay, Bracken

Scene 1.

"Fools Jump In". Bracken, Tara, Clay, Lois, Creek Chorus

"Somewhere Else". Tara, Bracken

"The Other Side". Mose, Bracken, Tara, Clay, Lois, Creek Chorus

"Where Are We Going?". Bracken, Tara, Clay, Lois, Mose

"Further Down the Road (1st Reprise)". Mose, Creek Chorus

Scene 2.

"Where Are We Going? (Reprise)". Bracken, Tara, Clay, Lois

Scene 3.

"Nothing Like New Orleans". Tara, Bracken, Creek Chorus

Scene 4.

"Making Barbecue/ Making a Baby". Lois, Clay, Creek Chorus

"Traditions Die Hard". Bracken, Tara, Lois, Clay

Scene 5.

"More Than A Journey". Bracken, Tara

Scene 6.

"On Top Chant". Creek Chorus

"Suppose". Mose, Tara, Bracken, Creek Chorus

Act II

Scene 1.

"Further Down the Road (2nd Reprise)". Mose

"Deep Waters". Tara

Scene 2.

"Who You Gonna Blame?". Clay, Lois

Scene 3.

"Goodbye, Wyoming". Tara, Creek Chorus

"One Side or the Other". Bracken

Scene 4.

"Crossover". Mose, Creek Chorus

Scene 5.

"Dirt". Tara, Creek Chorus

Scene 6.

"Golden Gate". Bracken, Creek Chorus

"On Top". Creek Chorus

Scene 7.

"Go For Love". Lissa, Ensemble

Scene Synopsis

Act I

Scene 1. Big Bridge, on a lake near Bluff City in north Alabama, early September Friday afternoon, 1973.

Scene 2. Birmingham, the next day.

Scene 3. New Orleans, a day or so later.

Scene 4. Bluff City, months later, and a highway out west.

Scene 5. A highway near New Mexico/Colorado border, a few weeks later

Scene 6. Taos, New Mexico, a few days later

Act II

Scene 1. Lake Tahoe, the next March

Scene 2. Bluff City, a week or so later

Scene 3. Rock Springs, Wyoming, late that summer

Scene 4. Wyoming, San Francisco & Bluff City

Scene 5. Bluff City, months later

Scene 6. San Francisco, three years later

Scene 7. Big Bridge, late summer, 17 years later

Staging Notes

The Golden Gate bridge is stylized of course, but it needs to be constructed so that Bracken can fall backwards off of it, "into the abyss".

ACT I

I.P.1 "Overture"

PROLOGUE

**In lighting & thunder a man brings
a bundle to a dimly lit door, lays
it on the stoop, and sings to it**

I.P.2 "Dirt Prologue"

MOSE

YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR FATHER
DIED BEFORE YOU KNEW THEM
YOUR MOTHER LOVED THE SUNSHINE
YOUR FATHER SOUGHT THE NIGHT
NOW THERE'S ONLY ME TO TEACH YOU
ALL THE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW
BUT I CAN NEVER TEACH YOU
WITHOUT RISKING EVERYTHING
THAT YOU'LL NEED TO FIND THE LIGHT

YOU HOLD THE TRUTH INSIDE YOUR MIND
A SIMPLE TRUTH THAT NO ONE KNOWS
WILL TAKE A LIFETIME FOR YOU TO FIND
THE LONELY WAY YOUR STORY GOES
IN THE DARKNESS YOU MAY SEE
A GLIMPSE OF WHAT TOMORROW BRINGS
I COULD WARN YOU BUT THAT WOULD BE
A CHAIN UPON THE VERY THING
YOU'LL NEED TO SET YOU FREE

BECAUSE IT'S DIRT
THAT MAKES YOU WHAT YOU ARE
AND IN THE DIRT
WILL SHINE YOUR BRIGHTEST STAR
DOWN IN THE DIRT
THAT'S HOW YOU'LL LOVE THIS LAND
AND ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
ABOUT THE DIRT

MOSE (CONT'D)

Tara. I know the woman who will raise you,
Tara. She is a good woman. She'll teach you to
be strong and never satisfied. And I will
return. When you look to find your way, I will
return. When you're ready to look for me,
that's when you'll see me.

He sets the bundle by the door

THERE ARE SOME WHO CANNOT SEE
AND SOME FROM WHOM THE TRUTH WILL HIDE

BUT THE TRUTH WILL ALWAYS BE
A LIGHT IN YOU FROM DEEP INSIDE
THE LIGHT THAT SETS YOU

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

SETS YOU FREE

**He picks up a handful of dirt and
lets it fall on the blanket. CREEK
CHORUS steps from the darkness**

BECAUSE IT'S DIRT

MOSE

THAT GIVES YOU STRENGTH TO LOVE

CREEK CHORUS

YOU MAY GET HURT

MOSE

BUT YOU WILL RISE ABOVE

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

DOWN IN THE DIRT
THAT'S WHERE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
AND ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
YES, ONE DAY YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
ABOUT THE DIRT

I.P.3 "Further Down the Road"

**CHORUS retreats into darkness.
MOSE knocks on the door, steals
away to the edge of the stage. A
moment later, the door opens, and
a bright, warm light frames a
young woman, revealing only her
silhouette. She picks up the
bundle, looks inside, then goes
inside. MOSE steps downstage, with
the CREEK CHORUS flanking him.**

MOSE

YEARS WENT BY, LIKE THEY ALWAYS WILL
THE CHILD GREW UP, LIKE THEY ALWAYS DO
YEARS WENT BY TIL SHE WAS ALMOST GROWN
I WAITED, LIKE I SAID I WOULD
TO SEE WHAT KIND OF GIRL SHE WOULD GROW INTO
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

TARA enters

SHE WATCHED THE SKY AND SHE FELT THE EARTH
AND FELT HERSELF GROW STRONG AND BOLD

SHE FELT THE SUN AND SHE HEARD THE WIND
SHE GREW OLD ENOUGH TO REALIZE
THAT THE WORLD WAS STRANGER THAN SHE'D BEEN TOLD

TARA

THERE'S MORE TO THE WORLD THAN I CAN SEE
IN FRONT OF ME
THERE'S MORE TO KNOW THAN WHAT THEY SAY
EVERY DAY
EVERY DAY I WONDER WHAT'S BEHIND
THE CURTAINS OF MY MIND
THERE'S MORE TO FIND SOMEPLACE, SOME TIME
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

LOIS, CLAY, BRACKEN appear

MOSE

YEARS WENT BY, SHE FOUND HER FRIENDS
THE KIND OF FRIENDS WHO STICK AROUND
WHEN THINGS GET WEIRD AND YOU NEED SOMEONE
FRIENDS WHO ARE ALWAYS TRUE
WHO'LL STAND BY YOU WHEN YOU STAND YOUR GROUND
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

LOIS, CLAY, BRACKEN

WHEN YOU NEED SOMEONE, WE'LL BE HERE
HAVE NO FEAR
WHEN THE ROAD GETS ROUGH, WE'LL EASE YOUR MIND
YOU'LL BE FINE
WHATEVER COMES, WE'RE STANDING RIGHT BEHIND
WE'LL BE HERE EVERYTIME
AND OFFER UP SOME PEACE OF MINE
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

TARA, LOIS, CLAY, BRACKEN exit

MOSE

YEAH, YEARS GO BY, AND I WAIT AROUND
WAIT UNTIL I MIGHT SEE A SIGN
THAT THE CRUCIAL MOMENT HAS FINALLY COME
AND SHE'S READY NOW TO MAKE HER RUN
THERE'S THINGS THAT MUST BE DONE
AND SHE KNOWS THERE'S SOMETHING THAT SHE NEEDS TO FIND
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

BLACKOUT

SCENE 1

I.1.1 Scene Change - "Further Down the Road"

Twenty-one years later. Below Big Bridge on a lake in north Alabama, late August afternoon in 1973. TARA LOOMIS, LOIS MUDD and the CREEK CHORUS are lounging in the sun, some drinking beer, shooting the breeze.

BRACKEN

(offstage)

Watch this Clay! Yeehah!

SOUND: Big splash.

LOIS

I swear, if those idiots weren't already trying to kill themselves, I'd do it for 'em.

TARA

They're just trying to impress us, Lois.

LOIS

Look at 'em, jumping off a thirty foot bridge.

TARA

More like forty. There goes yours.

CLAY

(offstage)

Look out below, Bracken! Ah-ooo-gah! Geronimo!

SOUND: another splash.

TARA

(flinching)

Ow! That's gotta hurt. Landed on his side.

LOIS

As long as he didn't land on his head. Come to think of it, that'd be the safest way he could land.

BRACKEN THOMAS and CLAY BANKS enter in shorts and toweling off. CLAY is obviously sore on one side of his body. They grab a beer and receive applause and high-fives from CREEK CHORUS members. LOIS pointedly ignores them.

CLAY

Man, I am something else! That was beautiful!

BRACKEN

Everything but the landing.

CLAY

Any landing you can swim away from is a good landing.

BRACKEN hugs TARA from behind

BRACKEN

Did you see me, Tara? Leaping into the abyss?

CLAY

Bracken, you talk weird, you know that?

TARA

No, I didn't see you. I can't look when you do things like that.

BRACKEN

But when I'm on that rail, just about to jump, I feel like I'm sitting on top of the world. Was that awesome or what?

LOIS

Definitely "what". Bracken Thomas, as smart as you are, sometimes you're too stupid for words.

CLAY

Stupid? You call jumping off a fifty-foot bridge stupid?

LOIS stares at him.

TARA

It is a little scary, Bracken

BRACKEN

It's the stuff legends are made of.

CLAY

And extremely cool.

LOIS

Like hell it is! You scared us half to death, Clay. Why do you do things like that?

CLAY

Why? The girl asks why. To prove something, that's why!

TARA

Prove what? That gravity still works?

BRACKEN

Some people look at a fifty foot bridge and say, "What the hell?" I look at it and say, "Why the hell not?"

LOIS

I repeat, what kind of person does stupid crap like that?

I.1.2 "Fools Jump In"

BRACKEN

THAT'S A TRICKY QUESTION
YOU MUST BE PULLING MY LEG
WE DON'T NEED AN INVITATION

CLAY & BRACKEN

WE DON'T NEED TO BEG
NOBODY HAS TO PUSH US
WE'RE FULLY GROWN UP MEN
SO DON'T YOU TRY TO FOOL US
'CAUSE IT'S FOOLS THAT JUMP IN

FOOLS JUMP IN
WHERE THE WISE MAN WILL NOT GO
THIS JUST IN:
THERE'S A THING YOU DO NOT KNOW
FOOLS JUMP IN
DON'T SAY I DID NOT TELL YOU SO

CLAY

I'M COOL WHEN I SHOW OFF

TARA & LOIS

YOU ONLY SHOW YOUR ASS

BRACKEN

WHAT KIND OF FOOL AM I?

TARA & LOIS

WHAT KIND OF FOOL? FIRST CLASS!

ALL

FOOLS JUMP IN
WHERE THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT WADE
TAKE A SPIN
WHERE NO SANE MAN EVER STRAYED
FOOLS JUMP IN
THEN THEY THINK THEY'VE GOT IT MADE

TARA & LOIS
THEY JUST MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK LIKE FOOLS

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

CLAY & BRACKEN
AND WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?
WE KNOW WHICH WAY TO JUMP

TARA & LOIS
THEY THINK THEY'LL GO

**TARA, LOIS & CHORUS bounce on each
"boing"**

TARA, LOIS & CHORUS
BOING-BOING-BOING
BOING-BOING-BOING

ALL
FOOLS JUMP IN
AND THEY THINK THEY'LL JUST GET WET
SINK OR SWIM?
A FOOL WILL TAKE THAT BET
FOOLS JUMP IN
THEN THEY'RE SURPRISED BY WHAT THEY GET

TARA & LOIS
THEY GET A CHANCE TO ACT LIKE FOOLS

ALL
LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP?
WHAT WOULD BE THE POINT?
THEY KNOW WHICH WAY TO JUMP
THEY THINK THEY'LL GO

CHORUS bounces in sequence

BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING
BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING

BRACKEN, CLAY, LOIS, TARA
FOOLS JUMP IN
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)
WHERE THE WISE MAN WILL NOT GO
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)
THIS JUST IN:
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)
THERE'S A THING YOU DO NOT KNOW
(CHORUS: BOING-BOING-BOING-BOING)

ALL
FOOLS JUMP IN
DON'T SAY I DID NOT TELL YOU SO
DON'T SAY I DID NOT TELL YOU SO

CLAY & BRACKEN
DON'T SAY I DID NOT TELL YOU SO

LOIS
I'm telling you so. Somebody needs to.

CLAY
Nobody's gonna tell me nothing, Lois. Too many people already trying to tell me what to do. Seriously, I think there's a conspiracy out there to brainwash me.

LOIS
That would require a brain, Clay.

BRACKEN
Anyway, the point is the jumping.

TARA
Jumping is pointless. Where does it get you?

CLAY
To the bottom.

LOIS
So why are you jumping? You're already there.

CLAY
Lois!

TARA
No, really, where does it get you? Nowhere. And I want to go somewhere.

LOIS
You and Bracken have been talking about going "on a journey" ever since y'all took old Lawson's philosophy course.

BRACKEN
You ain't heard nothing 'til you've hear a Southern Baptist preacher turned atheist trying to subvert the minds of naive college freshmen.

He holds an imaginary cup.

BRACKEN (CONT'D)
"Ladies and gentlemen, what you see here is a specific coffee cup. Plato says it is imperfect, but that somewhere there exists a *perfect* coffee cup, one that gives this cup its *cup-ness!*" Lawson the Apostate. He was a hoot but he made you think.

TARA

The only thing he ever thought about was how to lure the women in his class down to the Chukker and get 'em likkered up.

BRACKEN

Ha! He was mainly trying to get *you* in his evil clutches.

TARA

He had a good eye, what can I say? You should have taken his course, Lois.

LOIS

Me? I was lucky to get through Sociology 101.

CLAY

You didn't get much out of college, did you?

LOIS

Clay, you didn't get *anything* out of college.

CLAY

Got a degree, didn't I? Who cares what you get out of it. I got *through* it. That was all Daddy wanted me to do, and I dood it. Got a real fine degree in Bidness Administration.

LOIS

So you can run your Daddy's farm. Surprised you didn't go to Auburn.

CLAY

Bite your tongue! Anyway, it's a good farm. And I don't miss college one bit.

BRACKEN

Except when it turns football weather. Bama's first game's tomorrow!

CLAY

Woo-hoo! Roll Tide!

TARA

Who cares?

CLAY

Bite *your* tongue!

TARA

I still want to go some place different, do something different.

BRACKEN

You know something, Tara? I want to go somewhere, too. Somewhere far off, where they do things that mean something.

CLAY

Where would you possibly go?

TARA

I don't know. Somewhere. Somewhere else, mainly. I get so tired of this place, this town, this bridge. Same old thing, we come out here every summer and Lois and I lay out in the sun, and you and Clay jump off that damn bridge. There's got to be something else. Or at least *somewhere* else.

I.1.3 "Somewhere Else"

TARA (CONT'D)

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE THIS PLACE,
AFTER ALL, IT'S HOME
BUT WHAT IF THERE'S ANOTHER PLACE
A NEW PLACE I MIGHT FIT IN
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE YOU GUYS,
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE MY FRIENDS
IT'S ONLY THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE
SOME OTHER SIGHTS IN FRONT OF ME
THAT THERE'S SOME OTHER WAY TO BE
BEFORE MY STORY ENDS

SOMEWHERE ELSE, THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO GO
NOT TO STAY, BUT IF I DID, WELL THEN SO WHAT?
SOMEWHERE ELSE, THAT'S WHERE I WANT TO GO TO
HERE'S OKAY, BUT HERE'S NOT ALL THE WORLD HAS GOT
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE THAT WAITS IN STORE
OUT THERE'S A FAR HORIZON
SO MUCH TO SEE IN FRONT OF ME
IF I'LL JUST KEEP MY EYES ON

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEWHERE ELSE IS WHERE I'LL GO
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE I'VE NEVER KNOWN
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT DOES NOT KNOW ME
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER FLOWN

BRACKEN

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE WE'VE NEVER SEEN
FARAWAY, OR NOT SO FAR, JUST FAR ENOUGH
TO MAKE IT NEW, THE KIND OF PLACE YOU DREAM OF
DREAMS SO REAL, DREAMS MADE OUT OF STERNER STUFF
WHAT COULD BE WRONG WITH WANTING MORE?
OUT THERE'S A WORLD OF VISIONS
SO MUCH TO SEE, SO MUCH TO BE
IF WE MAKE THE DECISION

TARA

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEPLACE I'VE NEVER KNOWN
NOT TO STAY, BUT IF I DID, WELL THEN SO WHAT?

BRACKEN

SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT IS FOREVER NEW
HERE'S OKAY, BUT HERE'S NOT ALL THE WORLD HAS GOT

BOTH

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE IT'S GOT IN STORE
OUT THERE'S A FAR HORIZON
SO MUCH TO SEE IN FRONT OF ME
IF WE'LL JUST KEEP OUR EYES ON
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOMEWHERE ELSE IS WHERE I'LL GO
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE I'VE NEVER KNOWN
SOMEWHERE ELSE, SOME PLACE THAT DOES NOT KNOW ME
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER FLOWN
SOMEWHERE THIS BIRD HAS NEVER EVER FLOWN

**MOSE JORDAN appears. The CREEK
CHORUS members are the only ones
to notice him. They stand around
him, forming a coordinated group.**

BRACKEN

(pointing up)

We'll go somewhere, then. Where's that bridge
go? We'll go there.

TARA

Oh, great, the wilds of Walker county. Helluva
risk-taker, Bracken.

CLAY

You know something? I've never actually driven
across this bridge. I just jump off it.

BRACKEN

Well, it's got to go somewhere.

LOIS

Come to think of it, where does this bridge go?

MOSE

To the other side, of course.

LOIS

(startled)

Oh! What?

MOSE

All bridges go to the other side. That is their
function.

TARA

Excuse me, mister, but I don't think we've seen you here before, have we?

MOSE

No, you've not seen me before. Most likely because you weren't looking for me before. Now, apparently, you are.

BRACKEN

What makes you think we're looking for you?

MOSE

Because you see me. Seeing's the effect, looking is the cause. It's really quite simple.

CLAY

This guy's been spying on us.

TARA

Excuse me, Mister-?

MOSE

Jordan. Mose Jordan. Call me Mose.

TARA

Well, Mister Mose, I'm-

MOSE

Tara Loomis. And your boyfriend is Bracken Thomas, and that's Lois Mudd and he's Clay Banks. We've been through all that.

TARA

(taken aback)

When have we been through all that? We've never met you.

MOSE

Because you weren't looking for me, remember?

CLAY

Man, he *has* been spying on us! You're with the government, aren't you? What are you FBI? CIA?

BRACKEN

Who are you, Mister Jordan?

CLAY

Area 51! Gotta be, look at him! He's even dressed in black!

BRACKEN

Clay, man, will you shut up! We've never met you, and yet you know us. I'm not a schizo like Clay, but I gotta admit that's a little weird.

MOSE

I'm the man who's here to tell you what's beyond the bridge, just like you asked.

BRACKEN

So what's over there?

MOSE

Like I said: the other side.

I.1.4 "The Other Side"

THERE'S A RIVER IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE OCEAN OF YOUR LIFE
THERE'S A STREAM RUNNING DEEPER THAN A DREAM
THERE'S A BRIDGE RIGHT BEFORE YOU,
AND YOU'RE BALANCED ON A KNIFE
IF YOU FALL THEN THERE'S NOTHING BUT A SCREAM
YOU CAN TELL WHILE YOU'RE FALLING
THAT YOU'VE GOT A WAYS TO GO
WHEN YOU LAND, THERE'S A QUESTION TO DECIDE:
YOU'LL BE ASKED BY SOMEBODY
IF YOU THINK YOU REALLY KNOW
WHAT IS WAITING FOR YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE?

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?
WOULD YOU LIKE MAYBE GO FOR A RIDE?
IF YOU DON'T, WHAT IS LOST, IF YOU NEVER TRIED
TO FIND OUT WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?

MOSE

THERE'S A CHOICE WAITING FOR YOU
JUST A LITTLE DOWN THE ROAD
A DECISION THAT IS ONLY YOURS TO MAKE
YOU CAN CHOOSE WITHOUT KNOWING
WHAT'S THE BEST WAY YOU SHOULD GO
BUT CHOOSING SEALS YOUR FORTUNE AND YOUR FATE
IF YOU'RE BLIND WHEN IT'S OVER,
YOU'RE JUST LEARNING HOW TO SEE
IF YOU'RE NOT, THEN YOU HAVEN'T REALLY TRIED.
YOU'LL GET LOST WHILE YOU'RE LOOKING,
I CAN ALMOST GUARANTEE
BUT YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF UPON THE OTHER SIDE.

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?
WOULD YOU LIKE MAYBE GO FOR A RIDE?

IF YOU DON'T, WHAT IS LOST, IF YOU NEVER TRIED
TO FIND OUT WHAT WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE?

TARA

WHY SHOULD ANYBODY CARE WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE?
IT'S A BRIDGE, IT'S A RIVER, IT'S A WALL.

BRACKEN

WHY WOULD ANYBODY DARE TO TAKE THIS CRAZY RIDE?

BRACKEN, TARA, LOIS, CLAY

IF YOU DANCE, THERE'S A CHANCE YOU COULD FALL

MOSE

MAYBE SO, I DON'T DOUBT IT,
IT'S A SUCKER BET AT BEST
YOU'D BE MAD TO TRY AND WIN AGAINST THESE ODDS
THEN AGAIN, WHO WILL BARGAIN
WHEN THEIR SOUL IS PUT TO TEST?
ONLY MADMEN WANT TO TANGLE WITH THE GODS

ALL

YOU'RE A FOOL TO RAISE YOUR FIST AGAINST THE GODS!

DO WE KNOW WHAT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE?
DON'T WE WONDER WHAT LIES ON THE OTHER SIDE?
WILL WE WISH WE TOOK THE CHANCE
TO MAKE THAT LONELY RIDE?
WILL WE LAY AWAKE AT NIGHT,
OR TAKE IT IN OUR STRIDE?
WHEN WE'RE GONE WILL THEY SAY
WE WERE VICTIMS OF OUR PRIDE?
IF WE NEVER TRIED TO FIND THE OTHER SIDE?
IF WE NEVER TRIED TO FIND THE OTHER SIDE?

MOSE

So, when do you start?

LOIS

Start what?

MOSE

For the other side. There's the bridge. There's
your car. All you have to do is go, and there
you are.

TARA

Just get in the car and go?

CLAY

Hey! That's my car!

MOSE

What's to stop you? You were the one looking for someplace to go. Here's your chance.

LOIS

Why go anywhere?

CLAY

Lois is right, there's no reason to go anywhere. We got everything we need, right here in Bluff City. And we sure don't need to go traipsing off on the advice of some crazy government agent!

MOSE

But Clay, you're forgetting all the great tales of history, all the heroes of legend.

CLAY

I never studied "Heroes of Legend".

LOIS

He barely made a C minus in Western Civ.

MOSE

You don't need to take a course to know these people. Ulysses, Lancelot, Frodo Baggins—

BRACKEN

Frodo! He wasn't real, dude.

MOSE

Who's to say whether he was or he wasn't? Richard the Lion-Hearted, Pinocchio, Leif Ericson, Marco Polo—

TARA

Dorothy and Toto.

LOIS

Toto's a dog.

CLAY

Hey, what about those dogs and cats in "Incredible Journey."

Others look at him.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Well, they went on a journey, didn't they?

BRACKEN

Gilgamesh.

MOSE

Very good, Bracken.

LOIS

Gilgawho?

BRACKEN

Gilgamesh. Story about a Sumerian hero. It's from like 4000 BC, first story ever written down by humans.

MOSE

And the story was about a quest.

BRACKEN

(almost to himself)

A quest for power. A quest for fame. A quest for immortality.

CLAY

How do you know stuff like that, Bracken?

BRACKEN

Clay, you really should have taken at least one interesting course. Lemme tell you, Ancient History was—

CLAY

Ancient. And History. And useless.

MOSE

The point is, they were all heroes. And the fact is, they all went off on a quest, looking for something. Just like you.

CLAY

Who are you calling a hero?

TARA

What kind of quest?

BRACKEN

What are we looking for?

MOSE

What's on the other side. I should have thought that much was obvious.

CLAY

I'll tell you what's obvious. Somebody let you out of the nuthatch, that's what's obvious. A quest? Get real.

BRACKEN

No, wait a minute, Clay. Listen- Mose, is it? Listen, Mose, I don't see how this could be any kind of real quest. I mean, we get in Clay's car, we drive across Big Bridge, we're on the other side. Where's the quest in that?

MOSE

Because you really never know what will happen. Anytime you drive down a road, you don't know where you might end up. Because that road is connected to some other road, and that road is connected to yet another, and so on and so on and so on, and so when you think about it, every road everywhere is connected to every other road everywhere else. And so anytime you step out your door, it's always an adventure.

TARA

Maybe he's right, Bracken. Maybe we could take a little trip. I could sure use one.

MOSE

That's the ticket.

BRACKEN

Well- we sure got nothing doing here. And I've got a little cash saved up from working this summer. Maybe we will drive across this bridge.

MOSE

It might be dangerous.

CLAY

Dangerous. Ha!

TARA

It'll be fun! When do we leave?

MOSE

Now is a good time.

CLAY

Well I sure ain't going anywhere.

MOSE

"Don't wait until tomorrow to put off what you can put off today."

LOIS

Aw, Clay, I'd kinda like to go somewhere. Can't we go?

CLAY

We're staying right here, Lois. Bracken and Tara can go off wherever they want to. Long as they're back for the pig-cooking in October.

MOSE

"There's no time like the present." Literally.

BRACKEN

Hey, let's drive down to Birmingham. We might even get tickets.

CLAY

You're right! The game tomorrow!

LOIS

Then we can go, huh, huh?

CLAY

Maybe. Nothing weird about a football game.

TARA

(**chuckling**)

Unless we get caught in some "adventure."

CLAY

Wait a second. Let's see what Socrates here has to say about it. Well?

MOSE

"You decide which is right, and which is an illusion."

CLAY

Oh, Christ! Now he's quoting the Moody Blues!

MOSE

Okay, you got me. I did go a little overboard.

BRACKEN

Of course we're going. Thanks, Mose. This was a great idea!

MOSE

Fools jump in.

BRACKEN

What?

MOSE

Time's a-wasting! Get gone!

I.1.5 "Where Are We Going?"

TARA
WHERE ARE WE GOING?

BRACKEN
I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE

CLAY & LOIS
JUST GETTING ON THE ROAD?

MOSE
THEY'LL KNOW WHEN THEY GET THERE

BRACKEN
THERE'S NO WAY OF TELLING
WHERE THIS ROAD MIGHT LEAD

TARA
WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING

BRACKEN
WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING

BRACKEN & TARA
TIL WE FIND THE THINGS WE NEED
THE THINGS WE NEED

ALL
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WE DON'T KNOW AND WE DON'T CARE
JUST GETTING ON THE ROAD
WE'LL KNOW WHEN WE GET THERE
MIGHT LEAD US TO NOWHERE
WE MIGHT GO ASTRAY

BRACKEN & TARA
WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING
WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING
WHILE THE ROAD IS CALLING US TO TAKE THIS WAY
TAKE THIS WAY
WHILE THE ROAD IS CALLING US AWAY

TARA
C'mon, you guys! Let's cross that bridge!

**TARA, BRACKEN, CLAY & LOIS exit,
CREEK CHORUS and MOSE waving and
shouting "Goodbye".**

MOSE
Birmingham is not much further down the road,
but at lease it's a start.

I.1.5 "Further Down the Road (1st Reprise)"

THEY TOOK THE STEP, AND THEY STARTED OUT
NO IDEA WHAT THEY'RE GONNA FIND
THAT'S THE WAY STORIES OUGHT TO START
A LITTLE LIKE A MYSTERY
WITH HOPE THAT THE FUTURE ALL WORKS OUT
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

YOU ROLL THE DICE AND YOU WATCH THEM FALL
YOU TAKE A CHANCE YOU'LL HEAR THE CALL
AND IF YOU DO YOU RUN LIKE HELL
TO CATCH A GLIMPSE IF YOU CAN SEE
WHAT IS WAITING FOR YOU JUST BEYOND YOUR SIGHT
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

BLACKOUT

I.1.6 "Scene Change - The Other Side"

SCENE 2

Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama. Goalposts are upstage, and leaning against them, facing upstage, is a man in a hounds tooth hat and a crimson blazer. SOUND: crowd cheers and band noise. CLAY, LOIS, BRACKEN and TARA enter.

CLAY

Got tickets, man, we got tickets! Now this is what I call an adventure!

LOIS

We're playing the University of California, for Christ's sake. It's not like it was Auburn.

TARA

It's not even like it was a real game.

BRACKEN

It's a game, all right. First game of the season, and we're at it.

CLAY

You think we'll do any good this year?

BRACKEN

Do any good? This is the Crimson Tide you're talking about here, buddy! There's only one way we measure "good"— a national championship!

TARA

But have they got what it takes to win a national championship this year?

CLAY

Got what it takes?

BRACKEN

Oh, we've got it, alright. This year and any year, 'cause we got him!

BRACKEN points at man in houndstooth hat.

CLAY

Woo-hoo! Rol-l-l-l

ALL

Tide!

BRACKEN

See, Tara, I told you I'd take you someplace!

TARA

Birmingham is better than Walker County?

CLAY

What could be better than Legion Field, first game of the season? Football!!

TARA

Well, sure, this is fun and all. But we *have* been here before. I wanted someplace new, different. You know.

TARA looks upstage. Lights flash a random pattern on scoreboard, then coalesce into "LOOMIS". TARA rubs her eyes. MUSIC: spooky underscore

LOIS

Honey, you might as well forget it. Nothing in this world could get these boys out of this stadium on this day.

TARA

What the--! "Loomis?" Why is that up there?

LOIS

What up where?

Lights return to scoreboard data.

TARA

Didn't you see the scoreboard just now?

CLAY

Sure I see it. It says "zero to zero". Pretty much what it should say before the game.

BRACKEN

Unless somebody spotted California some points.

CLAY

That'd be the only way they'll get any. Ha!

TARA

You didn't see those words?

ALL turn to look at scoreboard, TARA looks out over audience.

TARA (CONT'D)

Look! Now the other one says "Go Further".

They all look out over audience.

TARA (CONT'D)

No, now it's gone back to normal.

LOIS

Tara, have you been drinking something?

CLAY

She's been smoking something, if you ask me.

TARA looks upstage. Lights flash again, resolve to "LOOMIS & THOMAS GO FURTHER", then back to normal

TARA

Now the other one's doing it again! No wait!!

BRACKEN

Tara, maybe you should sit down-

TARA

Listen to me. That scoreboard just flashed our names. "Loomis and Thomas Go Further".

LOIS

Further what?

TARA

Nothing. Just, "Go Further".

BRACKEN

Are you feeling okay, Tara?

TARA

Of course I'm okay. I just don't understand why the scoreboard had our names on it.

BRACKEN

I don't think it did, sweetie.

TARA

I saw it. Bracken Thomas, I saw it up there.

CLAY

Maybe she got a little too much sun yesterday.

BRACKEN

But, Tara, nobody else saw it. There's a whole lot of people here, somebody would have noticed, don't you think?

Lights flash and again coalesce into "LOOMIS & THOMAS", then "GO FURTHER". This repeats.

TARA

There! There it is again, look!

LOIS

What the—! Clay do you see that?

CLAY looks, then looks away

CLAY

No.

BRACKEN

What the hell is wrong with that scoreboard?

LOIS

Clay!

CLAY

I do not see nothing.

TARA

Maybe it's an announcement from the press box, maybe somebody needs to get in touch with us.

BRACKEN

They'd use the loudspeaker. Besides, what kind of emergency is "Go Further"?

TARA

I'm going to go find out.

TARA starts off

BRACKEN

Wait a second, Tara. Look at all those people.

TARA

What about 'em?

BRACKEN

Don't you see? Nobody's looking at the scoreboard, nobody even notices it. Don't you think that's a little weird?

LOIS

Clay won't look at it.

BRACKEN

But something as weird as that, nobody sees it? Except us?

TARA

But it's there to see, plain as day. Just as sure as I see you, just as sure as I see Lois and Clay, just as sure as I see him!

TARA points at figure beneath goalpost, who turns to face them. It is MOSE. He crosses down to them. Scoreboard returns to normal. MUSIC stops

MOSE

You're starting to see things pretty well, young lady.

CLAY

She's just seeing things, period.

TARA

Who are you?

MOSE

Who knows? Maybe I'm God.

CLAY

Now wait a minute, buddy, just because you dress up like Bear Bryant don't mean you can go around claiming to be God, too.

MOSE

Not claiming anything. Only pointing out possibilities. Maybe you're God, Clay.

LOIS

God help us!

MOSE

It's a strange universe, it's possible. In a big enough universe, everything is.

LOIS

No universe is that strange.

BRACKEN

What are you doing here?

MOSE

I came to watch the players.

TARA

They haven't come out yet.

MOSE looks at all of them

MOSE

Haven't they?

BRACKEN

How did you make the scoreboard do that?

MOSE

You mean the names and the message? I was just noticing that. Very interesting. But I didn't do it.

BRACKEN

Then who did?

MOSE

(pointedly)

You did, Mister Thomas. You and Miss Loomis.

TARA

Us?

MOSE

None other.

BRACKEN

But how? We were just standing here.

MOSE

And waiting to go there. You already knew that, and now you know what to do.

TARA

Waiting to go where?

CLAY

This guy is a nut case. Christ!

BRACKEN

Where?

MOSE

Same place as before: the Other Side. And only one way to go from here.

BRACKEN

(realizing)

Further?

MOSE

Further.

MOSE exits.

CLAY

That guy is just plain spooky. Come on, ya'll, let's go find our seats.

BRACKEN

Wait a minute, Clay, wait just one min-weet. This all means something, things like this don't just happen.

CLAY

Sure they do. They just did.

LOIS

Clay, sometimes I wonder about you.

BRACKEN

And when things like this happen, you don't just walk away like it was nothing.

CLAY

Sure you do. Watch me.

(starts off)

TARA

Wait a second, Clay. Bracken, what are you saying? Do you know what it means?

BRACKEN

No. But I think we have to go try and find out.

LOIS

Go? Go where?

BRACKEN

Like the sign said. "Further." And it was a sign, Tara. An omen, like an oracle or whatever. Like Delphi. We need to go further.

TARA

Further where?

CLAY

Now just you hold it one min-weet. Nobody's going nowhere. They're getting ready to kickoff. Only place we're going is our seats.

BRACKEN

Sorry, Clay, I got to go further. There's something going on, things like this happen for a reason. I've got to go find out what it is.

TARA

But where, Bracken? And how?

BRACKEN

Just hitch a ride I guess. Where? Wherever whoever picks me up is going. Further.

CLAY

You're nuts!

TARA

Then I'm going with you.

LOIS

What? You two—

BRACKEN

You sure, Tara?

LOIS

—but, wait—

TARA

It said Loomis and Thomas, didn't it?

LOIS

—you can't go gallivanting off and leave us—

BRACKEN

Yeah, it did. It sure did!

TARA

I even got top billing. C'mon, let's go.

LOIS

What are you doing!?

BRACKEN takes TARA'S hand and faces LOIS and CLAY.

BRACKEN

Don't worry, guys, we'll be fine. Somebody, or something, is looking out for us. So we're gonna go find whatever we need to find, we're gonna go mine the universe for pay dirt, follow a yellow brick road and the rainbow and find out what it is all about. We're going further!

CLAY

Bracken, you talk weird, you know that?

BRACKEN

Come on Tara. Highway's not far.

LOIS hugs TARA

LOIS

Tara, this is the craziest thing you've ever done, you know that? This is crazier than jumping off that damn bridge.

TARA

Maybe so, but it feels right, and I do want to find out what it all means. Hey! Why don't y'all go with us?

CLAY shakes his head no.

LOIS

Are you kidding? I'll never get Clay anywhere but to the well and the dinner table. Hell, Birmingham is a stretch for him.

I.2.1 "Where Are We Going? (Reprise)"

TARA

CLAY'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE
AND LOIS STAYS WITH CLAY
BUT BRACKEN AND I ARE HEADING OUT
THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW THE WAY

BRACKEN & TARA

THERE'S NO WAY OF TELLING
WHERE THIS ROAD MIGHT LEAD

BRACKEN

WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING

TARA

WE'LL KEEP TRAVELLING

BRACKEN & TARA

TIL WE FIND OUT WHAT WE NEED
WHAT WE NEED

ALL

WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WE DON'T KNOW AND WE DON'T CARE
JUST GETTING ON THE ROAD
WE'LL KNOW WHEN WE GET THERE
MIGHT LEAD US TO NOWHERE
WE MIGHT GO ASTRAY
JUST KEEP TRAVELLING
JUST KEEP TRAVELLING
WHILE THE ROAD IS CALLING TO GO THIS WAY
GO THIS WAY
WHILE THE ROAD IS CALLING US AWAY

LOIS

Oh, Tara, I can't believe this. Call me, okay?

TARA

I will, I promise. Bye, I love you. Bye, Clay.

CLAY

You guys are certified insane, and it's all probably just some CIA mind game, but listen: you be careful, you hear?

BRACKEN

We will, Clay. And we'll be back in time for the Pig-Cooking, you'll see.

BRACKEN and TARA exit.

CLAY

We'll probably never see 'em again.

LOIS

Don't say things like that! So, what do we do now?

CLAY

Do? We go find our seats and watch Alabama teach the University of Califor-ni-a how we play football down here in the Southland, that's what we do. Rol-l-l-l-l Tide!

BLACKOUT

I.2.3 "Scene Change - Nothing Like New Orleans"

SCENE 3

**Bourbon Street in New Orleans.
CREEK CHORUS are now street
performers, jugglers, etc.,
wearing masks and outrageous
costumes. Music continues
underneath as BRACKEN and TARA
enter, dancing to the shuffle.**

I.3.1 "Nothing Like New Orleans"

TARA

God, I love New Orleans! You start hearing the
music just the other side of Lake
Pontchartrain, like a echo out on the bayou.

BRACKEN

And by the time you hit the Quarter, it's
grabbed you and won't let go for love or money.
Being in New Orleans, and being here with you,
is just the best there is!

TARA

I've got no reason to disagree.

They hug.

BRACKEN

Man, there's nothing like New Orleans, not
nowhere, not no way!

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

IT'S A BACKBONE SHUFFLE LIKE A GATOR IN THE SWAMP
BOURBON STREET BOOGIE MAKE YOU JUMP AND MAKE YOU STOMP

TARA

IT'S MARIE LEVEAU WAKING UP BENEATH THE MOON
SCREAMING AND HOWLING TO A VODOO TUNE

BOTH

IT'S THE MISSISSIPPI CHURNING DEEP AND MOANING LOW
IT'S THE PUMPS AND THE WATER THAT'S GOT NO PLACE TO GO
IT'S THE MARKET AND MUSIC AND DRINKING AND FOOD
DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS WHERE EVERYTHING IS GOOD!

NOTHING'S LIKE NEW ORLEANS NOT A PLACE THAT'S EVEN CLOSE
NO ONE'S GOT THE PEOPLE, THE HIST'RY OR THE GHOSTS
NO ONE'S GOT THE CREOLE OR THE CAJUN HOT CUISINE
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE NEW ORLEANS
YOU KNOW JUST WHAT I MEAN

TARA

JAZZ IN THE QUARTER, PRESERVATION HALL AT NIGHT
CAJUN ON THE BAYOU, GATOR MUSIC'S GOT A BITE

BRACKEN

GOT THE MIGHTY TCHOUPITOULOUS, AND A BAPTIST GOSPEL CHOIR
DOWN AT TIPITINO'S THE MUSIC IS ON FIRE

BOTH

TAKE IT EASY, BIG EASY, TAKE YOUR TIME AND LET IT GO
IN THE QUARTER, OR THE GARDEN WHERE THE BOUGANVILLIA GROW
IT'S A PLACE YOU CAN VISIT, IT NEVER GROWS OLD
DOWN IN NEW ORLEANS LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!

CHORUS

NOTHING'S LIKE NEW ORLEANS, NOT A PLACE THAT'S EVER BEEN
NO ONE ELSE HAS GOT THE SAINTS, NO ONE ELSE HAS GOT THE SIN
NO ONE'S GOT THE FUNE'RALES WITH THE DANCING WHEN YOU DIE
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE NEW ORLEANS, IT ALMOST MAKES ME CRY

Conga line dance.

CHORUS (CONT'D)

NOTHING'S LIKE NEW ORLEANS NOT A PLACE THAT'S EVEN CLOSE
NO ONE'S GOT THE PEOPLE, THE HIS-T'RY OR THE GHOSTS
NO ONE'S GOT THE CREOLE OR THE CAJUN HOT CUISINE
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE NEW ORLEANS
YOU KNOW JUST WHAT I MEAN

NOTHING'S LIKE NEW ORLEANS, NOT A PLACE THAT'S EVER BEEN
NO ONE ELSE HAS GOT THE SAINTS, NO ONE ELSE HAS GOT THE SIN
NO ONE'S GOT THE FUNE'RALES WITH THE DANCING WHEN YOU DIE
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE NEW ORLEANS, IT ALMOST MAKES ME CRY
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE NEW ORLEANS, IT ALMOST MAKES ME CRY

BRACKEN

I always get confused here. We're standing at
the Café du Monde, the Mississippi River is
right past that levee there. But I always think
it's east of us. But it couldn't be, could it?
'Cause we haven't crossed it yet, so it's got
to be west of us. I think.

TARA

Then there's Uptown vs. Downtown, and I always
wonder which way the river is flowing.

BRACKEN

Whichever way, it's always right there.

(singing)

"MISSISSIPPI RIVER, SHE'S DEEP AND WIDE
YOU CAN'T GET TO THE OTHER SIDE
AND I'M SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD"

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

You can't get away from the Mississippi River,
not in New Orleans.

**MOSE takes off a mask and
approaches them**

MOSE

Trying to get away, Bracken?

BRACKEN

You! Here?

TARA

Are you following us, Mister Jordan?

MOSE

No, I'm not following you. More like I've been
waiting on you.

TARA

But we didn't even know where we were going.
Just wherever the first car that picked us up,
that's where we went.

BRACKEN

And here's where we got to.

MOSE

And here's where I am.

BRACKEN

And you don't think that's odd? I do.

MOSE

Bracken, you think too much. You always did.
Mose doesn't think it's odd. Mose doesn't think
at all. Mose knows.

BRACKEN

There's nothing wrong with wondering.

MOSE

I wonder.

BRACKEN

Lots of people— most people, probably, don't
wonder about anything. This whole world, the
universe, full of mysteries and magic—

MOSE

Mysteries and magic! Wonderful stuff!

BRACKEN

But they just see stuff. No magic. Just lots of stuff. More and more stuff. That is not what makes life worth living.

MOSE

But you're different, eh?

TARA

Of course he's different. Bracken's always been different. That's what I love about him. He's always been looking for something else, something different.

MOSE

Different stuff?

BRACKEN

No, not different stuff. Just- a different way of seeing stuff, maybe. Somewhere else. Maybe here. Is this the place?

MOSE

New Orleans? The place? You wish. No, even if there is a place, this is not it. The air's too thick, like trying to breath gumbo. No, you got to be higher up. Higher up and further in.

BRACKEN

Then maybe out west.

MOSE

Now that's different all right. And you're standing right at the continental divide. East back yonder, west is out there.

TARA

Mister Jordan-

MOSE looks at her.

TARA (CONT'D)

Mose. The continental divide is in Colorado. Or New Mexico, someplace like that.

MOSE

Maybe on some maps. On my map, it's this river. This river is what divides this country, slices it right in two. Cross that bridge, you might as well get a passport. Different territory out west. A different country, a far country. From whose bourne you can never return.

TARA

Don't be silly. You just drive right back
across the bridge.

MOSE

Once you cross the bridge, you can't come back.
Once you cross the bridge, you're different.
The bridge is different. The water's different.
Everything is different.

BRACKEN

Then let's don't waste time.

MOSE

Wasted time is lost time. Once it's gone, it's
gone. Time doesn't come back.

BRACKEN

What if we don't come back?

MOSE

You might not. I said it was dangerous.

TARA

Of course we're coming back. Right after the
adventure. But right now, it's adventure time.

MOSE

Nothing's certain but change. Now get going.
And this time, go somewhere further in.

TARA

And higher up. You got it, Mose!

BRACKEN

I guarantee it!

TARA & BRACKEN exit.

MOSE

Son, nothing is guaranteed. Ever.

BLACKOUT

I.3.2 "Scene Change - Nothing Like New Orleans"

SCENE 4

Bluff City and Out West Somewhere, a month later, in October. One side of the stage, CLAY and LOIS are drinking beer and barbecuing with the CREEK CHORUS. The other side of the stage is a western motif, maybe a cactus and sagebrush. LIGHTS: Full up on Bluff City, half down on Out West.

CLAY

Pig-Cooking Day. My favorite time of the year.

LOIS

Yes. Along with the start of football season, opening day of deer season, Fourth of July, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve—

CLAY

And New Years Day, don't forget that. A whole day of football!

LOIS

New Years Day, the Indianapolis 500, the Winston 500, the Daytona 500—

CLAY

It sort of adds up, don't it? That's at least fifteen hundred right there.

LOIS

Labor Day, your birthday—

CLAY

And your birthday. And Bracken's. And Tara's. There's always room for a birthday.

LOIS

Hmm. Clay, you celebrate more holidays than anybody I know. Your whole calendar is nothing but red-letter days.

CLAY

Redder'n these coals. Hotter'n a firecracker, and cooking pig. Soooy!

LOIS

You know, I've been thinking about another kind of celebration lately.

CLAY

Well, then I'm all for it. Celebratin's my middle name. Clay the Celebrator, that's me!

LOIS

I'd like to celebrate something new.

CLAY

That's fine with me, too. I like new stuff. As long as I've seen it before.

LOIS

Something we can make together.

CLAY

Better 'n better. How 'bout making whoopee, let's celebrate that! Whoo-hoo!

LOIS

That's close to what I had in mind. But instead of whoopee, I thought we might make a baby!

CLAY

Sure, anything you say— what did you say?

LOIS

A baby, Clay.

CLAY

But— but—

LOIS

You'd have another birthday to celebrate.

CLAY

But— but—

LOIS

Come on, Clay, can't we make a baby? Please?

CLAY

But Lois, honey, we're not even married yet.

LOIS

Alright, if you want to get married, that's fine with me.

CLAY

Lois!!

LOIS

What, Clay?

CLAY

Well, dadgum it, I- I guess I-

LOIS

Yes?

CLAY

I mean, I suppose, all things considered-

LOIS

And?

CLAY

(taking her in his arms)

Well, sure! Why the hell not? We can make a baby, heck that's easy enough. That'd be great! We'll even get married. But one thing-

LOIS

Yes, Clay darling?

CLAY

We can still make barbecue, too, can't we?

LOIS

Every Pig-Cooking Day, every year, for the rest of our lives.

CLAY

That's a good thing. Because I do love a celebration. And that means pig!

I.4.1 "Making Barbecue/Making a Baby"

CLAY (CONT'D)

MAKING BARBECUE, IT'S WHAT I DO
I MAKE IT JUST AS GOOD AS IT CAN GET
I'M A COOKING FOOL, IT'S WHAT MAKES ME COOL
AND I WOULDN'T TRADE IT, BUDDY, ON A BET
I TAKE SOME HICK'RY WOOD 'CAUSE THERE'S NONE AS GOOD
I BURN IT 'TIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT BUT COAL
THEN PUT ON THE MEAT 'TIL IT'S JUICY SWEET
IT'S MORE PRECIOUS THAN A PILE OF PURE GOLD

MAKING BARBECUE, HOLY BARBECUE
GIVE ME FIVE THOUSAND TO FEED
FEED 'EM BARBECUE, THAT'S WHAT I DO
A MAN CAN LIVE ON BARBECUE ALONE
I LIVE MY LIFE BY THAT CREED
STANDING NEXT TO YOU MAKING BARBECUE
WHAT ELSE COULD A MAN EVER NEED?

YOU GOT YOUR CHICKEN TYPE WITH THEIR CHICKEN HYPE
THINKING CHICKEN MEAT IS BARBECUE ENOUGH

MAYBE SOME LIKE BEEF, BUT IT'S MY BELIEF
THAT A COW OUGHTA STAY ON THE HOOF

CLAY & MEN
NO, IT MUST BE PIG, AND IT'S BETTER BIG
A PIG'S THE ONLY ANIMAL TO DO

CLAY
PUT A PIG ON THE SPIT, THROW IT IN THE PIT
THAT IS HOW A MAN SHOULD COOK HIS BARBECUE

CLAY & MEN
MAKING BARBECUE, HOLY BARBECUE
GIVE ME FIVE THOUSAND TO FEED
FEED 'EM BARBECUE, THAT'S WHAT I DO
"A MAN CAN LIVE BY BARBECUE ALONE"

CLAY
I LIVE MY LIFE BY THAT CREED
STANDING NEXT TO YOU MAKING BARBECUE
WHAT ELSE COULD A MAN EVER NEED?

CLAY & MEN
WHAT ELSE COULD A MAN EVER NEED?

LOIS
WELL GO AHEAD AND MAKE YOUR BARBECUE
IT'S GOOD TO BE GROOVING SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE LOVIN'
AND ME, I'LL BE MAKING SOMETHING, TOO

She pats her tummy.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE SOME LOVIN' GROWING IN THE OVEN

MAKING A BABY, IT TAKES TWO
MAKING A BABY, ME AND YOU
WORKING TOGETHER, YES WE COULD
WE COULD GET LUCKY, KNOCK ON WOOD,
ON WOOD
WORKING TOGETHER, CLOSER THAN EVER
CLOSER THAN WE'VE EVER HAD TO GET
WE'LL MAKE US BABY YET

MAKING A BABY RECIPE
PUT SOME OF YOU IN HERE WITH ME
STIR US TOGETHER, NICE AND TIGHT
PULL UP THE COVERS, TURN OUT THE LIGHT

CLAY
(spoken)
Right!

LOIS
TONIGHT!
MOVING TOGETHER, CLOSER THAN EVER

AS CLOSE AS ANY MAN AND WIFE CAN GET
WE'LL MAKE US BABY YET

MAKING A BABY, IT TAKES TWO
MAKING A BABY, ME AND YOU
IT'S SOMETHING WE CAN DO AT HOME
BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT I CANNOT DO
ALONE!
WORKING TOGETHER, CLOSER THAN EVER
CLOSE AS ANY MAN AND WIFE CAN GET
WE'LL MAKE US A BABY YET

LOIS & WOMEN
MAKING A BABY, IT TAKES TWO
MAKING A BABY, ME AND YOU
IT'S SOMETHING WE CAN DO AT
HOME
BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT I
CANNOT DO
ALONE!
WORKING TOGETHER
STANDING NEXT TO YOU

CLAY & MEN
MAKING BARBECUE, HOLY
BARBECUE
GIVE ME FIVE THOUSAND TO FEED
"A MAN CAN LIVE BY BARBECUE"
ALONE!
I LIVE MY LIFE BY THAT CREED
STANDING NEXT TO YOU

CLAY & MEN (CONT'D)
MAKING BARBECUE

LOIS & WOMEN
AND A BABY, TOO

LOIS & WOMEN (CONT'D)
WE'LL MAKE A BABY WAIT AND
SEE

CLAY & MEN
WHAT ELSE COULD A MAN EVER
NEED?

CLAY
WE'LL MAKE BARBECUE

LOIS
AND A BABY, TOO

BOTH
NOW THAT WE ARE GETTING MARRIED
WHAT MORE IS THERE LEFT TO DO?

LOIS
You still think they'll make it, don't you?

**TARA and BRACKEN enter other side
of stage, wearing backpacks and
checking a map. They're
hitchhiking, and they watch as
cars keep passing them by.**

CLAY

Bracken and Tara? Of course they'll make it. They've never missed a Pig-Cooking since we started having one.

LOIS takes a letter from her pocket and looks at it.

LOIS

What if they were far off someplace, and they couldn't make it?

CLAY

Ain't no place that far.

LOIS

Clay, I got a letter from Tara.

CLAY

So?

LOIS

So, it says- it says she doesn't think they'll be here, that's all. They're way far off, stuck in West Texas or somewhere.

CLAY

Lois, you're nuts! No way they'd be somewhere else. It's Pig-Cooking Day!

LOIS

They wouldn't *rather* be somewhere else, it's just that they *are* somewhere else, and they can't get back.

CLAY

My God, they've been abducted, right? Held in some secret government compound, pumped full of drugs or God knows what all.

LOIS

Clay-

CLAY

I knew it was a mistake to go gallivanting off. Wait, how far out west are they? Not Roswell?

LOIS

Clay.

CLAY

Probably the bad aliens got 'em. The Grays. Damn! What are we gonna do?

Clay! LOIS

What? CLAY

I.4.2 "Traditions Die Hard"

LIGHTS: As song begins, BRACKEN and TARA lights come to full; during song, they gradually fade out on CLAY and LOIS.

LOIS
They're just hitchhiking. Nobody's got 'em locked up. How do you think Tara sent me this letter? They're just not gonna be able to make it back, that's all.

CLAY
(disbelief)
But- but- it's *Pig-Cooking* Day.

TARA
I'D RATHER NOT BE HERE, JUST NOW
I'D RATHER BE BACK HOME
I'D RATHER HAVE MY FRIENDS WITH ME
THAN BE HERE ALL ALONE

BRACKEN
I'D RATHER BUILD A FIRE OUTSIDE
AND STAND BEFORE THE BLAZE
THAN STAND HERE BY THIS ROADSIDE
BENEATH THESE STRANGERS' GAZE

BOTH
TIMES WE'VE SHARED TOGETHER
WITH FRIENDS WE'VE HAD SO LONG
ARE TIMES WE WILL REMEMBER
AND TIES THAT BIND SO STRONG
EACH NEW SIGHT BRINGS EXCITEMENT
EACH SIGHT'S A POSTAL CARD
BUT MEMORY'S AN INDICTMENT OF THESE THINGS
TRADITIONS, THEY DIE HARD

BRACKEN
I WISH WE WERE BACK HOME TODAY
WITH FRIENDS WHO REALLY CARE

TARA
I WISH HOME WEREN'T SO FAR AWAY
AND WE WERE HEADED THERE

BOTH

BUT BEGGARS WISHING DON'T GET RIDES
OR SO THE SAYING GOES
AND NOW WE'RE BY THIS ROADSIDE
I GUESS IT'S WHAT WE CHOSE

TARA, BRACKEN, LOIS, CLAY
STILL, AT LEAST I HAVE YOU BY MY SIDE
WITHOUT YOU, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO
TRADITIONS, THEY DON'T EVER REALLY DIE
THEY'RE ALWAYS TURNING INTO SOMETHING NEW

TIMES WE'VE SHARED TOGETHER
WITH FRIENDS WE'VE ALWAYS HAD
ARE TIMES WE WILL REMEMBER
THE GOOD MIXED WITH THE SAD

TARA & BRACKEN
NOW EACH DAY BRINGS A NEW PLACE,
EACH PLACE A BRAND NEW START

TARA, BRACKEN, LOIS, CLAY
BUT MEMORY HAS AN OLD FACE, SAD TO SEE
TRADITIONS, IN OUR HEART
TRADITIONS, WE'RE A PART OF
TRADITIONS, TRADITIONS, THEY DIE HARD

**CLAY and LOIS exit. BRACKEN and
TARA flag down a truck, and exit
to get a ride.**

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

At night, in the back of the pickup truck, which shakes a little as they drive. They sit on some crates.

TARA

Damn! It's cold! I didn't think it was this cold in New Mexico.

BRACKEN

Night time in the mountains. It's cold no matter what time of year. You know, the Continental Divide, the real one, is not too far from here.

TARA

So after that, we start heading back downhill?

BRACKEN

I guess so. That makes sense.

TARA

Maybe it'll warm up. Or maybe you could help?

BRACKEN puts his arm around her

TARA (CONT'D)

Much better.

BRACKEN

Tara, I'm sorry we're having to sit in the back of truck. If I had a little money, maybe I could've bought a car. At least we'd be warm.

TARA

What? And miss all this? Heck, we'd've never got to meet people like Manuel there.

(points thumb at the cab; after a moment)

Bracken, where are we going?

BRACKEN

Going? I guess we're going to find out where we're going, Tara.

TARA

Do not try to go all Mose on me, Bracken!

BRACKEN

I'm not. Well, maybe a little. Look, I don't know where we're going. I just know we're going someplace.

(MORE)

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

Someplace where everything will finally be clear, someplace where I can understand what the world is all about. It's like Socrates said, the unexamined life is not worth living. Why would you want to live if you never understood why?

TARA

Bracken, don't talk like that. There are lots of reasons for living without getting to nirvana or whatever. And why does it have to be some particular place? Why do you need to go somewhere? Can't you find it wherever you are?

I.5.1 "More Than A Journey"

BRACKEN

Well, yes and no. Yes, because, like Mose would say, the one who's figuring it out is more or less the same person wherever he is. But no, because it's not just the person and where he is. It's the going that makes it all work.

TARA

Makes what work?

BRACKEN

WE'RE NOT OUT TO SEE THE WORLD
WE CAN SEE THAT ON TV
WE'RE OUT SEE WHAT MAKES
THIS WORLD A MYSTERY
THERE ARE SECRETS WE CAN'T SEE
THERE ARE CLUES WE CANNOT FIND
AND THE ANSWERS WILL NOT BE
MERELY PHANTOMS IN MY MIND

DID YOU SEE THAT SIGN UP IN THE AIR?
ARE GLOWING WORDS JUST WAITING THERE
FOR US TO COME AND LOOK AND STARE?
ARE WE EVER GONNA REALLY KNOW?

TARA

IS THE GOAL WORTH THE GETTING THERE?
IS WISDOM WORTH THE WEAR AND TEAR?
NONE OF THIS IS EVER CLEAR

BRACKEN

THE ONLY COURSE TO TAKE
IS PICK A COMPASS POINT AND GO

TARA

IS THIS MORE THAN A JOURNEY
THAT GOES FROM HERE TO THERE?

ARE WE JUST RIDING DOWN A ROAD
THAT GOES TO WHO KNOWS WHERE?

BRACKEN
IT'S MORE THAN A JOURNEY
WHEN YOU LAY IT ON THE LINE
AND THE ANSWERS CANNOT BE
PHANTOMS IN MY MIND
I SWEAR THE ANSWERS AREN'T
PHANTOMS IN MY MIND

TARA
(spoken)
Bracken, why do we need to go anywhere? Don't
we have each other?

BRACKEN
Of course we do. And that's important. But,
Tara, we're on a quest now.

TARA
A quest for what?

BRACKEN
To find out what it all means.

BOTH
WE'RE BOUND TOGETHER YOU AND I
ON THIS LONG AND WEARY RIDE
PUSHING HARD TO MAKE IT THROUGH
TO THE OTHER SIDE
THIS IS MORE THAN A JOURNEY
IT'S A QUEST TO SEE A SIGN
AND THE MEANING CANNOT BE
MERELY PHANTOMS IN OUR MIND

BRACKEN
I SWEAR THE MEANING'S NOT
A PHANTOM IN MY MIND

BOTH
SEE THAT SIGN UP IN THE AIR?
ARE GLOWING WORDS JUST HANGING THERE
FOR US TO COME AND LOOK AND STARE?
ARE WE EVER GONNA REALLY KNOW?
WAS THE GOAL WORTH THE GETTING THERE?
IS WISDOM WORTH THE WEAR AND TEAR?
NONE OF THIS IS EVER CLEAR
THE ONLY COURSE TO TAKE
IS PICK A COMPASS POINT AND GO
PICK A COMPASS POINT AND GO!

BRACKEN

(startled, pointing in the darkness)

Stop! Hey! Stop!

He pounds on the truck window

Mister! Stop the truck!

TARA

What are you doing? Why does he need to stop?

BRACKEN

Mister! Stop, we need to get out!

VOICE

(from the truck cab)

Okay, *senor*, I'm stopping. Hold your horse, *por favor*.

TARA

What in the world are we getting out for?

BRACKEN

Did you see that sign back there? This is Ratun Pass. That means we're almost in Colorado!

TARA

So? Colorado is a nice place. I think.

BRACKEN

But Taos, New Mexico is behind us. We gotta head back south.

BRACKEN helps TARA down

TARA

Taos? What's in Taos?

BRACKEN

Thanks for the ride, mister!

VOICE

Don't mention it. You kids stay safe. Lot of *loco hombres* out there.

BRACKEN

We will, thanks again! Let's go, Tara. Taos, here we come!

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6

I.6.1 "On Top Chant"

Taos, New Mexico, in November.
CREEK CHORUS, dressed in robes,
cross stage chanting (TUNE: "On
Top"). TARA and BRACKEN enter, a
chanter hands BRACKEN robes, and
makes a sign in the air. They form
a silent circle.

BRACKEN

Now, now we'll find out what's going on.

TARA

Are you sure about this, Bracken? This is all
really weird.

A CHORISTER hands them robes

BRACKEN

These people are having a genuine mystical
ceremony. And we're invited. This is Taos.
We'll never find a place further in or further
up than here.

TARA

It's the further up that worries me. Mushrooms
make me nervous.

BRACKEN

Look, we're on a path here, to enlightenment or
discovery or something. We have to go wherever
the path leads us. That's what Mose would say.

**MOSE leaves from chanter circle,
pulling back the hood of his robe**

MOSE

So, you think you know what I'd say, eh?

BRACKEN

Right on cue. Somehow, I knew you'd be here.

MOSE

Why here? Every here's the same as every there.
What's so special about this particular here?

BRACKEN

C'mon, Mose. Taos!? This is like the mystical
capital of the planet. Satori Central.

(MORE)

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

Nirvana Nexus. If you weren't waiting for us here, where would you be?

MOSE

Where indeed? So now you know what I'll say *and* where I'll be.

TARA

Maybe Bracken knows what you're gonna say, but I sure don't. Why can't you just talk like normal people, Mose?

MOSE

How do normal people talk?

TARA

They talk about their lives, what they want, what they're planning, what they've done.

MOSE

And when all is said and done, a lot more is said than done. What makes you think I don't talk about those things?

TARA

You never talk about those things. All you talk about is reality and existence and—

BRACKEN

That's what we're here for. Reality and existence, what they really mean. Right, Mose?

MOSE

Speak for yourself. I'm here for the dancing.

TARA

The dancing? What dancing?

MOSE

Didn't anybody tell you about the Opening of the Inner Eye? It's a dance. Pretty wild dance, from what I've heard.

BRACKEN

When I said "what we're here for", I meant "what we're here on the planet for". We're looking for the meaning of life. What makes life worth living.

MOSE

Well, I meant "here in Taos." I'm looking for the dancing. That definitely makes life worth living. You're looking for meaning?

(MORE)

MOSE (CONT'D)

You should be looking for the one who's doing the looking. Meaning is not what you think it is.

TARA

Why can't we once have a regular conversation, instead of a bunch of mystical innuendo?

MOSE

Innuendo, minuendo. It's just words, Tara. Look, they're starting.

I.6.2 "Suppose"

A slow, insistent drum beat begins. The leader of the CREEK CHORUS dispenses something to each participant, BRACKEN and TARA as well, with appropriate gestures to the Four Winds and Heaven.

BRACKEN

What do we do now?

MOSE

Do? There's nothing to do. A vision will come. Or not.

NOTHING SHOULD BE CLUNG TO
THAT'S I OR ME OR MINE
NO SONG SHOULD BE SUNG TO
A MISDIRECTED MIND
PIECES, WHEN THEY'RE PICKED APART
SHOW NOTHING OF THE WHOLE
GOING, THOUGH YOU NEVER START
SHOULD BE YOUR ONLY GOAL

BRACKEN

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
WHO AM I SUPPOSED TO BE?
WHEN YOU ASK ME QUESTIONS
WHAT ANSWERS DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

TARA

WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GO?
WHAT ROADS ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE?
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW
WHAT CHOICES WE SHOULD MAKE?

BRACKEN, TARA & CREEK CHORUS

WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?
(CHORUS: NOT ONE THING)
WHO ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE?
(CHORUS: NO-ONE)

WHEN YOU ASK US QUESTIONS
(CHORUS: DO NOT ASK)
WHAT ANSWERS TO YOU WANT TO SEE?
(CHORUS: IT'S NEVER CLEAR)
WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GO?
(CHORUS: NO-WHERE)
WHAT ROAD ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE?
(CHORUS: NO ROAD)
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO KNOW
WHAT CHOICES WE SHOULD MAKE?

CREEK CHORUS

ALWAYS, YOU GO FOR LOVE— (WILL KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO)
PRAY THAT LOVE— (WILL TAKE YOU BY THE HAND)
GO FOR LOVE, IT GETS YOU THROUGH, IT UNDERSTANDS
KNOW THAT LOVE— (WILL NEVER, EVER LEAVE)
KNOW THAT LOVE— (WILL NEVER, EVER DIE)
LOVE WILL STAY WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, AND NOT ASK WHY

MOSE

DON'T STAND IN YOUR OWN WAY
THEN YOU CAN BE ALL THAT YOU ARE
LET YOUR SELF HAVE ITS OWN SAY
AND YOU'LL TOUCH THE FARTHEST STAR
BUT AS FAR AS YOU MAY GO
WHATEVER YOU HAVE DONE
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW
THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAME FROM

ALL

THE PLACE WHERE YOU CAME FROM!
LOVE— (WILL OPEN EVERY DOOR)
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE— (WILL NEVER MAKE YOU PLEAD)
YOU KNOW LOVE— (WILL GIVE YOU MORE, IT'S ALL YOU NEED)
LOVE— (WILL ALWAYS MAKE YOU STRONG)
LOVE— (WILL NEVER, EVER FAIL)
LOVE WILL LEAD YOU EVER ON, THE HOLY GRAIL

I.6.3 "Taos Ballet"

Lots of lights, music becomes sinister. First part is swirling dancers. BRACKEN & TARA move in tandem, then separate into different movements. BRACKEN & TARA have visions. BRACKEN sees bridges (dancers form bridges) BRACKEN changes to gaudy sports coat, hands out sunglasses. He is raised up, TARA hoes an imaginary garden, sees a basket on the ground, the same basket from the Prologue. She lifts a baby, raises it up to BRACKEN.

BRACKEN rejects her & baby, she runs away, CHORUS splits, some following her, some him. BRACKEN, now dressed in ferocious black & red, terrifies TARA, who collapses. BRACKEN reassumes higher position, then leaps out (mosh-pit style) in triumph, TARA is helped to her feet, CHORUS, MOSE steps forward.

I.6.4 "Suppose (Reprise)"

MOSE

SUPPOSE THAT IT'S ALL JUST A GAME
A GAME WHERE YOU DON'T KNOW THE GOAL
SUPPOSE THERE'S A WAY YOU COULD WIN

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

BUT TO DO THAT YOU GIVE UP YOUR SOUL

MOSE

SUPPOSE THE WAY TO FREEDOM
WERE ENTIRELY UP TO YOU
WELL, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME
YOU DID WHAT YOU SHOULD DO?

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO?

ALL

LOVE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO
LOVE WILL TRY TO SET YOU FREE
LOVE WILL GIVE TO YOU ALL YOU COULD NEED
LOVE WILL ALWAYS BRING YOU THROUGH
LOVE CAN NEVER, EVER DIE
BUT LOVE WILL DIE FOR YOU, AND NOT ASK WHY

CURTAIN

ACT II

II.1.1 "Entr'Acte"

SCENE 1

MOSE enters.

II.1.2 "Further Down the Road (2nd Reprise)"

MOSE

MILES WENT BY, THEY WERE ON THE ROAD
NEVER SURE WHERE THEY SHOULD GO
DAYS PASSED BY LIKE A HIGHWAY SIGN
I WAITED, LIKE I ALWAYS HAD
TO SEE WHETHER THEY MIGHT SEE THE LIGHT
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

THE WESTERN WORLD WAS A BIG UNKNOWN
A DIFFERENT PLACE THAN WHERE SHE'D GROWN
BUT MOST THINGS END UP MUCH THE SAME
SOME ARE GOOD AND SOME ARE BAD
BUT MAYBE THINGS WILL TURN OUT ALL RIGHT
FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

MOSE exits. Lights come up on a street in Lake Tahoe, early next spring. CREEK CHORISTERS cross stage, dressed for snow and carrying ski gear. After a moment, TARA and BRACKEN enter. They too wear coats, but Tara has heels.

TARA

Hurry up, Bracken, we'll be late.

BRACKEN

Who exactly cares? Besides, you've got at least half an hour before your shift starts.

TARA

But you've only got a couple of minutes. You know the pit boss said he'd fire you if you were late again.

BRACKEN

I hope he does. I'm sick of Lake Tahoe. We need to hit the road.

TARA

Oh, please. Don't start.

BRACKEN

What is today? The fifteenth, fifteenth of March? The Ides of March. Shouldn't we get an omen or something? A sign in the heavens? We've been here for three months.

TARA

But it's beautiful here. Just look at those mountains. And there's nothing prettier than that lake.

BRACKEN

Yeah, we're really sitting on top of the world. You're waiting tables all day. I'm dealing blackjack all night.

TARA

But today, we're on the same shift. Almost. We can do something tonight. Barney's having a party up at his chalet. Now come on.

BRACKEN

I really don't want to, Tara. I mean, I really, really don't want to. I can't face another day dealing aces and eights to these people.

TARA

The money's good.

BRACKEN

The money's great. The place sucks. We need to pick up stakes and go. This ain't the place, that's obvious. I mean, we haven't seen Mose since back at Taos.

TARA

I'd rather not talk about Taos.

BRACKEN

Oh, yeah. Sorry. But if Mose isn't here, then the place isn't here, right?

TARA

How do you know, Bracken? How do you know what place is the place? Or that there *is* a place? You don't even know what you're looking for.

BRACKEN

We. What we're looking for.

TARA

Yeah, we, sure. That's what I meant.

BRACKEN

It'll be like pornography. I'll know it when I see it. You will, too.

TARA

There's plenty of pornography here in Tahoe.

She opens her coat, revealing a skimpy waitress outfit

TARA (CONT'D)

I look pretty much like a centerfold.

BRACKEN

That's what I'm talking about! That ain't right. None of this is right. We've gotta go. We'll figure out something. We have enough money saved up, we'll take a bus.

TARA

A bus!

BRACKEN

I'm gonna go down to the bus station, check the schedules.

TARA

But where are we going? Where would you get a ticket to?

BRACKEN

(grinning)

How would I know? Maybe I'll throw the I Ching!

He exits.

II.1.3 "Deep Waters"

TARA

Might as well throw a dart at the map. Why can't we *stay* some place for once? We've been in Lake Tahoe three months and I've never even put a toe in the water! Anyway, that water is too cold. And deep.

I'M FAR OUT IN DEEP WATER
IT'S WAY ABOVE MY HEAD
MAYBE I COULD SWIM TO SHORE
BUT MY ARMS FEEL LIKE LEAD
I'M NOT SURE WHERE THE SHORELINE IS
IT'S FURTHER THAN I KNOW
AND NOW I'VE STARTED WORRYING
HOW DEEP THESE WATERS GO

I'M DROWNING IN DEEP WATER
I FEEL THE UNDERTOW
CLUTCHING AT MY HANDS AND FEET
I SHOULD JUST LET GO
A LITTLE SCARED, I KNOW I AM
I PRAY MY SOUL TO KEEP
I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE NEVER STAYED
IN WATER THAT'S THIS DEEP
IN WATER, WATER THAT'S THIS DEEP

MAYBE I HAD A VISION,
OR MAYBE THE LIGHT WAS FAR TOO DIM
BUT I'VE HAD THE HINT OF A REALIZATION
THAT THIS JOURNEY'S NOT FOR ME,
IT'S FOR HIM

I'M LOST OUT IN DEEP WATER
I CANNOT FIND MY WAY
MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP
AND NO WHERE I CAN STAY
I TRIED TO RISE ABOVE IT ALL
I NEVER WOULD LOOK DOWN
AND NOW THERE'S WATER EVERYWHERE
AND, GOD, I DON'T WANT TO DROWN

MAYBE I DID SEE SOMETHING,
AND IF I DID, THEN THAT'S A SIGN
BUT I'M PRETTY SURE THAT THE CULMINATION
OF THIS QUEST IS HIS,
NOT MINE

I'M LOST OUT IN DEEP WATER
I'M SINKING REALLY FAST
I'M TRYING HARD TO STAY AFLOAT
BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL LAST
I'M DROWNING IN DEEP WATER
THOUGH I'M RIGHT HERE NEXT TO HIM
I'M LOST OUT IN DEEP WATER
BUT I NEVER LEARNED TO SWIM

BRACKEN enters, waving two tickets

BRACKEN

Got 'em!

TARA

(hopefully)

You're kidding! Where to? Back home?

(covers her mouth, regretfully)

BRACKEN

Home? Are you kidding? Why would we go there?
There's no place less like The Place than Bluff
City, Alabama.

TARA

(**embarrassed**)

No, of course not. I don't know what I was thinking. But couldn't we at least get a little closer to home? Head back east a little?

BRACKEN

Aw, Tara, you don't miss that stupid little town, do you?

TARA

Bluff City? No. But I do miss Lois. I even miss Clay. A little.

BRACKEN

I miss that bonehead, too. But we've got to keep going, we've got to see this thing through, whatever it is. Right? You and me, right, Tara?

TARA

Yeah, right! Right on, like a barbecue bone.

BRACKEN

Come man, come, like a big truck tire.

TARA

So, where are we going?

BRACKEN

Wyoming!

TARA

Wyoming? That's not very far east. What the hell's in Wyoming?

BRACKEN

No idea, but that's where the omen said to go.

TARA

The I Ching said to go Wyoming.

BRACKEN

Didn't throw the I Ching.

TARA

Then what did you do?

BRACKEN

Threw a dart at the map.

BLACKOUT

II.1.4 Scene Change - "Making Barbecue"

SCENE 2

Bluff City, a week later, CLAY'S house. LOIS, now pregnant, sits in a chair reading a curletter. A sewing basket is on the floor beside her. CLAY enters, warming himself.

CLAY

Still a little chilly, but it's definitely spring time.

LOIS

I love the first little bit of green in spring.

CLAY

It's pretty all right. What'cha reading?

LOIS

Letter from Tara. Just came in the mail.

CLAY

No kidding! Where are they, now, Saskatchewan?

LOIS

Almost. Some place called Rock Springs, Wyoming. Tara says it's beautiful up there, too. But colder than hell. It was ten degrees below zero a couple days ago.

CLAY

Good God! They might as well be in Siberia. Why don't they come home?

LOIS

I think Tara wishes they would. She doesn't come right out and say it, but I can tell. But Bracken doesn't want to. That Bracken! Why does he do such crazy stuff?

CLAY

Don't worry about Bracken, he'll figure it out. He's the smartest fella I've ever known. Smarter than me, even.

LOIS

(rolls her eyes)

If he's so smart, why doesn't he realize that he doesn't know what he wants.

CLAY

Lois, for some guys, it's more important other people *don't* know what he *doesn't* know than that they *do* know what he *does*.

LOIS

Wow. That's the deepest thing you ever said.

CLAY

(beaming)

Even a root hog's bound to turn up an acorn every now and then.

LOIS

Hold that thought.

CLAY

What thought?

LOIS

Oh, forget it. One acorn is all you get. I just hope they're safe up there in Rock Springs, or wherever they are. I worry about them every day, traveling around like that. Anything could happen! Have a wreck, get caught in a blizzard. Murdered by some wacko in Wyoming.

CLAY

Now don't you worry. You're worrying for two, remember? Anyway, don't worry about wackos. Worry about the government. That's who'll to do something to them. Or us.

LOIS

Do something? Do what? What would they do them?

CLAY

Kidnap 'em. Trade 'em to the aliens. They've been entirely too close to all those UFO bases the Air Force has out west, in Nevada, Utah, places like that.

LOIS

Wyoming?

CLAY

Probably Wyoming. Any place with wide open spaces, where nobody can find you, that's exactly where they do all their secret stuff. You should read a little, Lois. This is all common knowledge.

LOIS

You read books? Since when?

CLAY

Since a long time. Bracken gave me a couple of books. There was one by this woman named Ayn Rand. "Atlas Shrunk". Really opened my eyes. There's only one thing we need to be worried about. Collectivism. That's the enemy, that's who's to blame for the mess. And the aliens. And the government.

LOIS

You have a fertile imagination, Clay, did you know that? Chock full of fertilizer.

CLAY

Don't blame me for being upset.

II.2.1 "Who You Gonna Blame?"

CLAY (CONT'D)

YOU MAY BE UPSET AND I AM SORRY
YOU KNOW HOW I'M SO SENSITIVE
BUT HERE'S A GOOD WAY FOR NOT TO WORRY
PLISTEN TO THE ADVICE I GIVE
SO HERE'S THE QUESTION, I NEED AN ANSWER
AND BABY, THERE IS NO "WHAT IF?"
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

WHO YOU GONNA BLAME, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
NO, IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
SO WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

I GOT MY RIGHTS AND SO WHAT I'M SAYING
AIN'T NOBODY GONNA MESS WITH ME
I'M NOT A GENIUS

LOIS
(spoken)

No kidding.

CLAY

BUT I'M NOT STUPID
THEY'RE COMING FOR US IT'S PLAIN TO SEE

Pulls revolver out of jacket

BUT I'LL BE READY WHEN THEY GET HERE
AND IF THEY DO, THEN IT'S WORLD WAR THREE
SO WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

I'M NO DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN

SO DON'T BLAME ME
I DON'T TIP MY HAT, I JUST SHOW MY GUN

Pulls another gun out

YOU CAN'T BLAME ME
I KNOW WHO I AM

LOIS

A BARBARIAN

CLAY

CLAY pulls out another gun

SO YOU CAN'T BLAME ME
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?

LOIS

(spoken)

How many guns have you got?

CLAY

Many as I need.

LOIS

SINCE HIS DIET CONSISTS OF MAINLY
PICKLED EGGS AND BALONEY MEAT
IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT HE'S SO CRAZY
AND SHOULD BE SENT TO A RETREAT
BUT HE'S MY CRAZY, AND I'M NOT WORRIED
BECAUSE I'M ALSO PACKING HEAT

Pulls revolver from sewing basket

BOTH

SO WHO YOU GONNA BLAME?
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
WHO YOU GONNA BLAME, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
WELL, IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
WHO YOU GONNA, WHO YOU GONNA BLAME
IT'S SHO' NOT ME!
WHO YOU THINK YOU GONNA BLAME?
WHO YOU THINK YOU GONNA BLAME?

BLACKOUT

II.2.2 Scene Change - "Who You Gonna Blame"

SCENE 3

Wyoming, late summer. TARA is a waitress, serving coffee to the CREEK CHORUS. BRACKEN enters.

TARA

Thanks, buddy. Ya'll come back to Rock Springs, you hear?

BRACKEN

Pouring it on pretty thick, aren't you?

TARA

Not as thick as this java. You'd be surprised how well it works.

She holds up the tip.

TARA (CONT'D)

(exaggerating)

"They just love it when little ol' me talks like little ol' this." Whatcha up to?

BRACKEN

I was just talking to this guy over by the gas pumps. Driving a huge Cadillac. The guy was loaded. He runs his own business, and he is pulling down a hunk of jack.

TARA

What kind of business?

BRACKEN

Not sure. I'm supposed to go talk to him later, after he finishes seeing a client here in town. I think he might offer me a job.

TARA

A job? You just met him, why would he do that?

BRACKEN

We talked a pretty good while, I could tell he thought I was on the ball. And Tara, we'd be going to San Francisco!

TARA

San Francisco?! But—

BRACKEN

We've never seen San Francisco. Chinatown. Jefferson Starship. Haight-Ashbury.

TARA

Living on the street.

BRACKEN

(not noticing)

The Grateful Dead! The Golden Gate Bridge! Now, there's a bridge, Tara. Makes Big Bridge look like Tinkertoys.

TARA

But, Bracken, I don't think we—

BRACKEN

This guy's got connections all over the country, says he's all the time traveling everywhere! Wouldn't that be the life?

TARA

Yeah, wouldn't it? Bracken—

BRACKEN

And man, I'd love to have a car like that! I'd be sitting on top of the world!

TARA

One car's pretty much the same as any other car. Long as it gets you from where you are to where you're going.

BRACKEN

Yeah, but as long as you're going, you might as well go in style.

TARA

I guess. Look, can we talk about this later?

BRACKEN

Sure. Right now. I'm going to find that rich guy. Back in bit, Tara.

**At a table, a man reads a paper.
He lowers the paper. It is MOSE.**

MOSE

Find that rich guy. Hmph! That's *not* who he should be looking for.

TARA

Mose! Where did you come from? No, don't tell me. It'd be the fifth dimension or somewhere.

MOSE

Didn't come from anywhere. Never go anywhere.

TARA

Same old Mose talk. But I'm glad to see you.

She hugs him

MOSE

And me you. Well, I must say, your boyfriend's certainly got big plans. I overheard what he was telling you.

TARA sits.

TARA

Oh, I know. And I don't. Have plans, I mean. Mose, I'm gonna tell you a secret. I don't want to go to San Francisco. I don't want to go anywhere. I'm tired of going.

MOSE

But— you're the one I— I mean, you can't— Are you saying you're not going with him?

TARA

I didn't say that. I'm just saying that I don't get it. What's the reason for all this?

MOSE

Tara, you remember when you saw that scoreboard in Birmingham?

TARA

Remember? I'll never forget it.

MOSE

You were the first one to see what it said.

TARA

So?

MOSE

It was meant for you.

TARA

But I'm not meant for this.

MOSE

It said "Loomis". It was talking to you.

TARA

No further. I've gone about as far as I can go.

MOSE

That was Oklahoma.

TARA

What about Oklahoma? Did we go through Oklahoma? I don't remember.

MOSE

No, you didn't. I guess you could go back—

TARA

No, God, no! I don't want to go back, I don't want to go anywhere, Mose. Except back home. I want to go home.

MOSE

Home.

TARA

Maybe this is where I serve notice. Maybe this is where I get off the bus. I'm tired, Mose. Tired of going to all these places, and never getting any place. And don't start with "it's the journey, not the destination."

MOSE

I won't.

TARA

'Cause the journey's is all we've been doing. Looking. For whatever it is we're looking for. Whatever Bracken's looking for. You know what just came into my mind? Ratun Pass. Ratun Pass in New Mexico. My God, we were freezing.

II.3.2 "Goodbye, Wyoming"

TARA (CONT'D)

HEADING INTO RATUN PASS
IN THE BACK OF PICKUP TRUCK
JUST ABOUT TO FREEZE OUR ASS
AND WE WERE RUNNING OUT OF LUCK
NEW MEXICO WAS RIGHT BEHIND
COLORADO WAS RIGHT AHEAD
JUST ABOUT TO LOSE OUR MINDS
AND THEN WE LOST OUR HEADS
GOODBYE, WYOMING, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU GO
GOODBYE TO MY ROAMING, GAMBLING WAYS
GOODBYE, WYOMING, LORD, I'M LEAVING HERE FOR SURE
DON'T KNOW BUT I MIGHT BE BACK SOMEDAY

TAOS IN NEW MEXICO
WHERE THE AIR WAS FRESH AND CLEAN
BUT THAT'S A PLACE I WILL NOT GO,
THERE WAS BAD STUFF THAT DREAM
ALABAMA AIR'S ALRIGHT
AND I ALWAYS KNOW THE WAY

I'M SO TIRED OF SLEEPLESS NIGHTS,
I THINK I'M GOING HOME TO STAY
GOODBYE, WYOMING, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU GO
GOODBYE TO MY ROAMING, GAMBLING WAYS
GOODBYE, WYOMING, I'M LEAVING HERE FOR SURE
DON'T KNOW BUT I MIGHT BE BACK SOMEDAY

Dance

OUT UPON THIS WESTERN TRACK
THE STARS ARE COLD AS ICE
SOMEDAY I MAY BE COMING BACK
AND, LORD, THAT WOULD BE NICE
BUT HOME HAS GOT A HOLD OF ME
AND RUNNING IS OUT OF STYLE
IF THESE ROADS WILL LET ME BE
I'M GONNA GO BACK HOME AWHILE

GOODBYE, WYOMING, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU GO
GOODBYE TO MY ROAMING, GAMBLING WAYS
GOODBYE, WYOMING, I'M LEAVING HERE FOR SURE
DON'T KNOW BUT I MIGHT BE BACK SOMEDAY

TARA (CONT'D)

Listen, I love Bracken. If I didn't love him,
I'd have stopped all this a long way back. Taos
was as far as I needed to go. Mose, I saw
things at Taos.

MOSE

Did you, now? Would have been strange not to
see something, with whatever was percolating in
your brain.

TARA

No, I saw *things*. Things that frightened me,
things that scared me to death. But I also saw
myself, back at Bluff City, working in a
garden, lying in the sun. And I had a baby,
Mose. A beautiful baby. I was home.

(making a decision, taking off apron)

And I'm going home. Now, right this minute.

MOSE

What about Bracken? You not gonna say goodbye?

TARA

He wouldn't understand. I don't understand
exactly. You'll have to tell him. He won't
understand, but I have to go. Home!

**She breaks down. MOSE holds her,
strokes her hair.**

MOSE

I'll tell him, Tara. I understand.

TARA

How do you-?

MOSE

It will all be all right. I'll tell him, don't you worry. Just be careful.

TARA starts off.

MOSE (CONT'D)

You think you might really come back someday?

She stops, turns back

TARA

I might. All roads are the same road, right?

MOSE

That's right, Tara. It's all the same road.

TARA exits. MOSE stands in contemplation. After a moment, BRACKEN reenters, excited.

BRACKEN

Tara! Mose!? Mose, you old rascal, where have you been? We've been looking for you!

BRACKEN shakes his hand, slaps him on the back

MOSE

Were you? You should have seen me then. That's how it works, remember?

BRACKEN

Yeah, that's right. Maybe it's broke. Did you see Tara? Where is she?

MOSE

She stepped out. For some fresh air, I think.

BRACKEN

I've got some news. Big news!

MOSE

About your business deal?

BRACKEN

She tell you?

MOSE nods

Sweet, huh? You know, if we could make some money, some real money, we could go anywhere we want, wherever this quest is leading us.

MOSE

You think so?

BRACKEN

Sure! Traveling in a Lincoln or maybe even a Mercedes? There'd be no place we couldn't go.

MOSE

What if no place is where you need to go?

BRACKEN

Then we'd go no place. Don't try and give me that Mose-talk, Mose. This is serious, this is my future. This is business.

MOSE

I've never been one for business. Got to make too many choices when there's no good choice to make. You need to make a choice, Bracken.

BRACKEN

What kind of choice?

MOSE

Whether you're on the bus or in the Cadillac. One path, you're still looking, you've still got the magic. Another path, you're riding down the road, but you're not getting anywhere. You have to choose.

II.3.1 "One Side or the Other"

BRACKEN

Do I have to choose? Do I really?

THIS OR THAT OR HERE OR THERE?
GO IN STYLE OR GO THREADBARE?
I WON'T HAVE TO EVER LOSE
IF I NEVER CHOOSE
BEG FOR FOOD OR PAY THE RENT
GET SOME CASH OR ENLIGHTENMENT
BUDDHA MIGHT HAVE LIKED SOME WINE
AND THAT WOULD BE JUST FINE

DON'T CHOOSE ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER
ALL THAT DOES IS HEM YOU IN
NEVER CHOOSE ONE OR ANOTHER
THAT IS HOW YOU ALWAYS WIN

WHAT YOU CHOOSE NEVER COUNTS
WHAT YOU'VE DONE DON'T MEAN ONE OUNCE
YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY YOUR DUES
IF YOU NEVER CHOOSE
I DONT HAVE A MAGIC POTION
I DON'T HAVE A CRYSTAL BALL
BUT IF I LEAVE MY OPTIONS OPEN
I THINK I COULD HAVE IT ALL

BRACKEN does a soft shoe.

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Free will. Just another word for nothing left
to lose. That's what it's all about, Mose, free
will. That's the problem.

MOSE

Is it?

BRACKEN

Absolutely! Think about Adam and Eve and the
apple. They made a choice and— boom! Trouble.
Good, evil, right, wrong. Choosing's the
problem. The quantum paradox? Wave or particle?
Only a problem if you choose.

MOSE

I see.

BRACKEN

YOU'RE NOT LIMITED TO CHOOSING
JUST ONE PERSON, PLACE OR THING
BEST NOT TAKE A CHANCE ON LOSING
THEN YOU'RE REALLY FREE TO SING
FREE TO SING

THIS OR THAT, THESE OR THOSE?
WORN OUT JEANS OR NICE NEW CLOTHES?
GIVE ME A CHOICE THEN I REFUSE
SO I'LL NEVER SING THE BLUES
YOU'RE NOT LIMITED TO CHOOSING
JUST ONE PERSON, PLACE OR THING
BEST NOT TAKE A CHANCE ON LOSING
THEN YOU'RE REALLY FREE TO SING
FREE TO SING, FREE TO SING!
THEN YOU ARE COMPLETELY FREE TO SING

MOSE

And that's your choice, huh?

BRACKEN

Weren't you listening? I don't have to choose.
That's the secret!

MOSE

Oh, you have to choose, all right. You choose every moment of your life. Even if you choose not to choose.

BRACKEN

But I did choose. That's the news I need to tell Tara. I'm in with Meyer, he hired me!

MOSE

Congratulations. Bracken, about Tara. I need to tell you—

BRACKEN

You're gonna really love the business I'm in.

MOSE

I doubt it. What are you selling?

He takes out a pair of sunglasses and puts them on.

BRACKEN

Sunglasses!

BLACKOUT

II.3.3 Scene Change - "Goodbye, Wyoming"

SCENE 4

II.4.1 Crossover - "Travel Montage"

Cross-over scene. The three groups cross in a series of vignettes that show how they progress: TARA is hitch-hiking home; CLAY and LOIS having a baby, BRACKEN making deals. At end, TARA is back home with LOIS and CLAY, BRACKEN is in a suit, surrounded by CREEK CHORISTERS as yes-men, all wearing sunglasses. MOSE appears at times, then steps downstage

II.4.2 "Crossover"

MOSE

THERE'S NO ROAD THAT DOESN'T CROSS THIS ROAD
NO PATH THAT DOESN'T LEAD TO HERE
NO WORLD THAT IS COMPLETELY SAFE
NO LIFE THAT'S EVER FREE FROM FEAR
WHEN YOU WONDER WHERE YOU'RE GONNA GO
WHEN YOU TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND
DON'T EXPECT SOMEONE TO SHOW YOU HOW
TO GET TO SOLID GROUND

YOU NEED TO CROSS OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
WHERE THE ROAD IS STEEP
AND THE WAY IS DARK
CROSS OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE
WHERE THE WATER'S DEEP
AND THE PATH IS HARD
BUT UNLESS YOU GET ACROSS
YOU'LL NEVER FIND
WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR
THERE'S NOTHING ON THIS SIDE
THAT WILL GIVE A SIGN
THAT WILL MAKE IT CLEAR
YOU'VE GOT TO GET ACROSS

SHE COULD STAY AT HOME AND NEVER LEAVE
THAT WOULDN'T CHANGE HER DESTINY
SHE'LL ALWAYS HEAR THAT SIREN CALL
ONE DAY SHE'LL LOOK AGAIN FOR ME
AND IF BRACKEN NEVER SEES THE LIGHT
IT'S BECAUSE HE'S GONE COMPLETELY BLIND
THERE'S NO WAY TO EVER FIND THE TRUTH
UNTIL YOU LOSE YOUR MIND

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS

IT'S TIME TO CROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE

MOSE
WHERE THE ROAD IS STEEP
AND THE WAY IS DARK

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS
CROSS OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE

MOSE
WHERE THE WATER'S DEEP
AND THE PATH IS HARD

MOSE & CREEK CHORUS
BUT UNLESS YOU GET ACROSS
YOU'LL NEVER FIND
WHAT YOU NEED TO HEAR
THERE'S NOTHING ON THIS SIDE
THAT WILL GIVE A SIGN
THAT WILL MAKE IT CLEAR

MOSE
YOU'VE GOT TO GET ACROSS

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

Bluff City two months later. CREEK CHORUS is there. TARA, CLAY and LOIS enter. LOIS carries a baby.

LOIS

You hitchhiked all the way from Wyoming by yourself? You could have gotten yourself killed! What in hell were you thinking?

TARA

I don't know what I was thinking, I was just doing. Like Mose taught me.

CLAY

Mose is a lunatic, and you're lucky to get home in one piece and be rid of him.

LOIS

But what about Bracken?

TARA

Bracken's got a new life, some business.

LOIS

In San Francisco?

TARA nods.

LOIS (CONT'D)

It's been two months. Have you talked to him? Written him or anything?

TARA

The way I left, I don't think Bracken wants to talk to me anymore. But I had to, Lois! I had to get off that road. I had to get back here. Bluff City may be nothing but North Alabama red clay dirt, but it's my dirt.

II.5.1 "Dirt"

I'VE GOT ROOTS DOWN IN THIS DIRT
THE WINDS MAY BLOW, I'LL NEVER MOVE
I'VE PUT MY FOOT DOWN IN THIS DIRT
IT'S DEEPER THAN WHAT I NEED TO PROVE
I'LL WORK MY HANDS DOWN IN THIS DIRT
THOUGH I COULD LEAVE, I'LL STILL COME HOME
I LOVE THIS LAND, I LOVE THIS DIRT
IT'S STRONGER THAN MY NEED TO ROAM

'CAUSE IT WAS DIRT GOD CHOSE TO USE

SO IT'S THE DIRT THAT SINGS THE LOW-DOWN BLUES
IT'S ONLY DIRT THAT UNDERSTANDS
IT'S THE DIRT I HOLD IN MY HANDS, AND IT'S MINE

I CAN GROW THINGS IN THIS DIRT
LET THE RIVER RISE, I'LL NEVER LEAVE
I KNOW THINGS ABOUT THIS DIRT
IT'S UNDERNEATH WHAT I BELIEVE
I WAS RAISED UPON THIS DIRT
WHERE I WAS BORN, WHERE I'LL GIVE BIRTH
AND I WILL GROW STRONG ON THIS DIRT
IT'S HOLDING ME THIS, DEEP DARK EARTH

CHORUS & TARA
'CAUSE IT WAS DIRT

TARA
GOD CHOSE TO USE

CHORUS & TARA
SO IT'S THE DIRT

TARA
THAT SINGS THE LOW-DOWN BLUES

CHORUS & TARA
IT'S ONLY DIRT

TARA
THAT UNDERSTANDS
IT'S THE DIRT I HOLD IN MY HANDS, AND IT'S MINE

I'VE GOT MY SOUL DOWN IN THIS LAND
IT'S GOT A HOLD OF ME, IT UNDERSTANDS
THE WINDS MAY BLOW, THE RIVERS FLOOD
BUT DOWN BELOW, I FEEL MY BLOOD
IN THE DIRT

I'VE GOT ROOTS DOWN IN THIS DIRT
THE EARTH MAY SHAKE, I'LL NEVER MOVE
I'VE PUT MY FEET DOWN IN THIS DIRT
IT'S DEEPER THAN WHAT I NEED TO PROVE
AND I WAS RAISED UPON THIS DIRT
HERE I WAS BORN, HERE I'LL GIVE BIRTH
AND I WILL STAY HERE ON THIS DIRT
IT'S HOLDING ME, THIS DEEP DARK EARTH

CHORUS & TARA
'CAUSE IT WAS DIRT

TARA
GOD CHOSE TO USE

CHORUS & TARA

SO IT'S THE DIRT

TARA

THAT SINGS THE LOW-DOWN BLUES

CHORUS & TARA

IT'S ONLY DIRT

TARA

THAT UNDERSTANDS

IT'S THE DIRT I HOLD IN MY HANDS, AND IT'S MINE

CHORUS & TARA

'CAUSE IT WAS DIRT

GOD CHOSE TO USE

SO IT'S THE DIRT

THAT SINGS THE LOW-DOWN BLUES

IT'S ONLY DIRT

THAT UNDERSTANDS

THE DIRT I HOLD IN MY HAND, AND IT'S MINE

TARA

YES IT'S MINE!

CLAY

(calling to a CREEK CHORISTER)

Yonder's Tommy, he went hunting in Arkansas
last week. Tommy! You kill anything?

**They step aside and talk hunting.
TARA pulling LOIS aside**

TARA

Lois, there is one thing. It's my— oh, God, I
can't believe this!

LOIS

What is it, honey?

TARA

(whispering)

I'm late! I'm pregnant!

LOIS

(loudly)

Pregnant! How wonderful!

TARA

Shut up, will you?

LOIS

(whispering)

But this is wonderful. Clay Junior's gonna have a little best friend!

TARA

Lois, Tara Loomis doesn't have a little best husband. At least you have Clay.

They look at CLAY, who scratches his butt.

TARA (CONT'D)

Not that Clay's all that much. But he is yours. What am I going to do? I- I guess I should get a- get-

LOIS

Now you just wait one min-weet, Missy! Are you insane? I don't want to hear another word like that! You call Bracken up and get him here this instant. Uh, it is Bracken's, isn't it?

TARA

Yes, of course it's Bracken's! Whose d'you think it was, God's?

LOIS

(shrugs)

Clay would likely say an alien was the father.

TARA

Well, it's Bracken's. But Bracken's changed. He's not the same man you knew a year ago. I can't call him, not about this. I don't want to call him. I don't know what I'm want to do.

She starts to cry. LOIS hugs her.

LOIS

Well, I do. You're going to have this baby, you're gonna have it right here in Bluff City, and we're gonna take care of you. And nobody's gonna say one damn thing. And if they do, Clay'll just shoot 'em, right Clay?

CLAY

Huh?

TARA

You think so, Lois? You think I can do this?

LOIS

You're Tara Loomis, and you're absolutely still the same Tara Loomis I've known all me life. But something's different, too. Something happened to you on this quest of yours. And I'm pretty sure you can do anything you damn well want to— if you want it bad enough. And anyway,
(patting baby on the back)

This little baby's gonna need somebody to hang around with. Who better to be his best friend than the child of my best friend? Let's go home. Come on, Clay.

CLAY

Huh?

BLACKOUT

II.5.2 Scene Change - "Dirt"

SCENE 6

San Francisco three years later, Golden Gate Bridge is seen in the background. BRACKEN enters with a CREEK CHORISTER. Both wear suits and dark sunglasses.

BRACKEN

Get that shipment ready, we're way behind schedule. Five thousand pairs of designer sunglasses. An order like this will put this company on the map!

CREEKER

Yes, sir, Mr. Thomas. I'll take care of it.

CREEKER exits, as MOSE enters

MOSE

Nice sunglasses, Bracken.

BRACKEN

Hello, Mose. You're still showing up, I see.

MOSE

Do you? I'd think it'd be a little difficult to see, wearing those shades.

BRACKEN

I can see perfectly. Here, have a pair. These babies block out 90% of the UV, and 75% of the infra-red.

MOSE tries the glasses

MOSE

And 100% of the real thing.

BRACKEN

Don't start, Mose.

MOSE

I wonder what Professor Lawson would say about your sunglasses? "These shades partake of shadeness. The inhabitants of Plato's cave could only see their own shadows, but the ideal sunglasses would be perfect shades." How ironic. Here.

MOSE hands glasses back

BRACKEN

You don't like 'em?

MOSE puts his own pair back on

MOSE

Mine are fine. They don't block out anything.

BRACKEN

Whatever you say. But you wait six months, a year tops. Bracken Shades are gonna be the only thing anybody's wearing. The whole world'll be looking at the whole world through Bracken Shades, the way I do.

MOSE

A whole new way of looking at things. My, my. And you'll be rich.

BRACKEN

Sitting on top of the world.

MOSE

And you'll be able to get lots of stuff. All the stuff you need.

BRACKEN

All the stuff I want. Because people are looking at things through Bracken Shades. It's a whole new way of looking at things.

MOSE

Is it really?

BRACKEN

(ignoring him)

Hard to believe this all happened so fast. One day, broke as beans in Nowhere, Wyoming, and a couple years later, rolling in dough in San Francisco. There it is, the Golden Gate Bridge. You know, I told Tara this was the bridge-

He stops, looks down

MOSE

Haven't heard from her, have you?

BRACKEN

No. Not a word. Two years, no wait, it's been three. And not one word. You think she went back home?

MOSE

Mose doesn't think, Mose knows. She went back home. She had a vision at Taos, Bracken. Did you know that?

BRACKEN

Yeah, well I had a vision, too. Lots of people have visions, then what? They run home?

MOSE

Tara was heading back home from the moment y'all crossed over Big Bridge. Only reason she went as long as she did was because of you.

BRACKEN

A man's got to keep going, whatever happens. I could start across this bridge right here, but I might not make it to the other side. Anything could happen. The bridge might collapse. I might end up going down with it. Or maybe it holds up, I get across. Either way, I'm going, I'm moving. Up, down, who cares? Sounds like something you'd say, Mose.

MOSE

"Further down and further out." I guess that's one path.

BRACKEN

I thought it was further up and further in.

MOSE

There are lots of ways.

BRACKEN

What's across this bridge, Mose?

MOSE

You know very well, Bracken. The other side, what's always been there.

BRACKEN

You know what I think is over there? Nothing. There's never been anything on the other side except empty dreams and foolish hope.

II.6.1 "Golden Gate"

THE GOLDEN GATE MIGHT BE THE PEARLY GATE
TO SOME GUY WHO'S LOST HIS WAY
A GOLDEN ROAD TO NOWHERE
WHEN A MAN HAS GONE ASTRAY
BUT ME, I DON'T NEED NOTHING
LEAST OF ALL A GOLDEN GATE

I'VE GONE AS FAR AS I CAN GO
I'M MASTER OF MY FATE.

I AM STANDING ON THE TOP
OF A WORLD THAT I HAVE MADE
I CAN THANK MYSELF FOR THAT
I HAVE FINALLY MADE THE GRADE
WHY DOES THIS MOUNTAIN SEEM SO DARK?
ARE THE LIGHTS LESS BRIGHTER HERE,
IF I'VE FINALLY MADE MY MARK
WHY DID EVERYONE DISAPPEAR?

IT'S A NARROW ROAD, AND IT'S PAVED WITH GOLD
EVERY STEP OF THE WAY
IT'S A GOLDEN GATE AND IT LIES IN WAIT
AND IT TAKES ITS TOLL
AND IT MAKES YOU PAY AT THE GATE
IN GOLD

SHE WAS WALKING BY MY SIDE
ON A ROAD WE'D NEVER SEEN
WE WERE SEARCHING FOR A PLACE
WE HAD NEVER EVER BEEN
WHAT KIND OF PLACE? I HAD NO CLUE
BUT THIS IS WHERE I'VE COME
AND AFTER ALL THAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH
I FORGOT WHERE I CAME FROM

IT'S A NARROW ROAD, AND IT'S PAVED WITH GOLD
EVERY STEP OF THE WAY
IT'S A GOLDEN GATE AND IT LIES IN WAIT
AND IT TAKES ITS TOLL
AND IT MAKES YOU PAY FOR YOUR LIFE
IN GOLD, EVERY DAY

BRACKEN (CONT'D)
(spoken)

How'd I get here, Mose? I thought I was looking
for meaning. I thought I was looking for truth,
but I never found either one. And while I was
looking, I managed to lose the only person I
ever loved. Or whoever loved me.

MOSE
Did you really think you could find truth
without love?

BRACKEN
All I've got now are some dark sunglasses and a
bridge that goes nowhere. How'd that happen?

MOSE

It's dangerous taking that first leap. They say only fools jump without looking where they're going. Or where they're coming from. If you don't know where you come from, there's no way you'll ever know where you can go.

BRACKEN

(simply)

You can go to hell. It's easy.

IT'S A NARROW ROAD, AND IT'S PAVED WITH GOLD
AND SUCH GOOD INTENT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY
IT'S A GOLDEN GATE AND IT LIES IN WAIT
AND IT MAKES YOU PAY FOR YOUR LIFE
IN GOLD, IN GOLD, IN GOLD!

BRACKEN steps up on the railing

THE GIRL I LOVED IS GONE FOR GOOD
I MIGHT ONCE HAVE MADE AMENDS
TWO ROADS DIVERGED DEEP IN THE WOOD
BUT THIS IS WHERE THAT HIGHWAY ENDS
THIS BRIDGE GOES NOWHERE, NOR WILL I
THOUGH I WEAR A GOLDEN CROWN
I COULD TRY TO TOUCH THE SKY
OR SINK FOREVER DOWN
I TRIED TO TOUCH THE SKY
BUT ALL I GOT WAS THIS
I TRIED TO TOUCH THE SKY-

BRACKEN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Now I leap into the abyss.

BRACKEN spreads his arms and falls backwards of the bridge. TARA, LOIS, CLAY appear.

TARA, MOSE, CLAY, LOIS

No!

CREEK CHORUS

(a capella, adagio)

JORDAN RIVER IS DEEP AND WIDE
YOU CAN'T SEE TO THE OTHER SIDE
NOW HE IS GONE, NO NEED TO WORRY
HE'S SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

Bluff City, 17 years later. CLAY, LOIS and TARA lounge on lawn chairs beneath Big Bridge, wearing sunglasses and tanning. CLAY's reading a book. It is late summer.

LOIS
Nothing to do, all day.

CLAY
And I like it!

From offstage, there are shouts of "Geronimo" and then splash sounds.

LOIS
Why don't you jump off Big Bridge, Clay?
Pretend you're nineteen again.

CLAY
Why don't you take a flying leap up my-

LISSA
(**offstage**)
Move over! Let me go next!

LOIS
Tara, Lissa's jumping off Big Bridge!

TARA
(**unconcerned**)
So?

LOIS
She'll kill herself!

LISSA
Look out, Clay! A-oo-gah! Yee-hah!

Splash.

TARA
Did she kill herself?

LOIS
No, it was a perfect dive. But she damn near punctured Clay, Jr.

CLAY
Serves the idiot right for not getting out of the way.

**LISSA, CLAY JR. and other
CHORISTERS enter, toweling off.**

LISSA

You see me, Mama? A perfect swan dive. I looked like a cliff diver at Acapulco.

TARA

I saw you, honey. It was beautiful.

CLAY, JR.

What about me?

CLAY

Anything *but* beautiful.

LISSA

Clay, belly-flopping is not the same as diving into the abyss of being.

CLAY, JR.

My God, where does she come up with that stuff?

CLAY

She reads. Try it sometime, you might like it.

LOIS

Damn, sometimes she sounds just like-

TARA

I know, Lois, I know. Come on, let's go get some iced tea over at the café.

LOIS

Sounds great.

CLAY

I'll go with you.

TARA

Don't stay out in the sun too long, Lissa. We'll be back in a little bit.

LISSA

Okay, Mama.

TARA, LOIS and CLAY exit. From the other side, MOSE enters, as always, dressed in black.

CLAY, JR.

Lissa, where'd you learn to dive like that?

MOSE

You don't learn to dive like that. You're born to it.

CLAY, JR.

Who are you, mister?

MOSE

Sorry, didn't mean to interrupt. I was watching you kids jumping off the bridge. It takes a special kind of soul to make that leap.

LISSA

Not so special. It's a question of balance. Put all your fear on one side, your desire on the other. Then there's no thinking, just doing.

MOSE

Fear makes people tighten up, lose balance.

LISSA

If you've got your feet down in the dirt, there's no reason to tighten up.

MOSE

Learn that from your mother?

LISSA

I guess I did. But she never jumped off a bridge to test her theory.

MOSE

You got that from your father.

LISSA

You knew my father, didn't you?

MOSE

Very well. As well as I knew your mother. As well as I know you.

LISSA

Yes, and I know you, don't I? You're Mose.

MOSE

(startled)

You know who I am?

LISSA

You're practically a family legend. How could I not know you?

MOSE

And I thought I'd been looking for you.

LISSA

(**simply**)

But I've been looking for you, Mose. That's how it works, isn't it?

MOSE

Yes. Yes, it is. Nice to meet you, Lissa Loomis Thomas. Are you all ready to go?

LISSA

If you're waiting on me, you're backing up. Further up and further in, right?

MOSE

Or further down and further out.

LISSA

As long as you get to the other side?

MOSE nods.

LISSA (CONT'D)

Then let's go.

They start off, as TARA, LOIS and CLAY enter from the other side.

TARA

Lissa, where are you going? Mose!

CLAY

Oh, no, not him again.

LISSA

The other side, Mama. You knew I'd go someday.

TARA

But, Lissa—

LISSA

It's all right, Mama, I promise.

II.7.1 "Go For Love"

LISSA (CONT'D)

I'M LEAVING, MAMA, BUT DON'T YOU CRY
I'M LEAVING HOME AND YOU KNOW WHY
IT'S NOT BECAUSE I'M HURT OR SAD
IT'S AN ALMOST, SORT OF, KIND OF GLAD
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THIS DAY WOULD COME
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN I WAS THE ONE
BUT IT'S REALLY YOU I'M THINKING OF
AND WHEN I GO, I'LL GO FOR LOVE

GO FOR LOVE, AND I CAN'T GO WRONG
GO AND FIND WHAT MY HEART HAS ALWAYS KNOWN
GO FOR LOVE, FOR MY WHOLE LIFE LONG
LOVE IS REAL, LOVE IS HERE,
AND WITH LOVE I AM NEVER ALONE

MAMA, YOU KNOW THERE'S ANOTHER SIDE
JUST ONE ROAD I NEED TO RIDE
THERE'S JUST ONE BRIDGE THAT GOES BETWEEN
ALL THAT WILL BE, IS, OR EVER BEEN
JUST ONE PATH WE WALK ALONG
WE HAVE IGNORED IT FAR TOO LONG
JUST ONE THING THIS WORLD'S MADE OF
THIS WORLD IS MADE FROM OUR LOVE

ALL

GO FOR LOVE, AND WE CAN'T GO WRONG
GO AND FIND WHAT OUR HEARTS HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN
GO FOR LOVE, FOR OUR WHOLE LIFE LONG
LOVE WILL LAST, LOVE IS STRONG,
AND WITH LOVE WE ARE NEVER ALONE

TARA

(spoken)

As long as you never forget home, Lissa. And as long as you always go for love.

LISSA

I will, Mama. Forever further up.

TARA

(hugging LISSA)

And forever further in.

ALL

GO FOR LOVE— IT OPENS EVERY DOOR
GO FOR LOVE— IT'S WHY THE GAME IS PLAYED
LOVE IS WHAT WE'RE FOR, IT'S WHY WE'RE MADE
GO FOR LOVE— IT'S YOUNGER THAN THE SKY
GO FOR LOVE— IT'S OLDER THAN THE STONES
LOVE WILL TELL US WHY, IT'S ALWAYS KNOWN
GO FOR LOVE, WE'LL NEVER BE ALONE
GO FOR LOVE, NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE
GO FOR LOVE, AND WE WILL NEVER BE ALONE

II.7.2 "Curtain Call Music: The Other Side"

CURTAIN

CURTAIN CALLS