



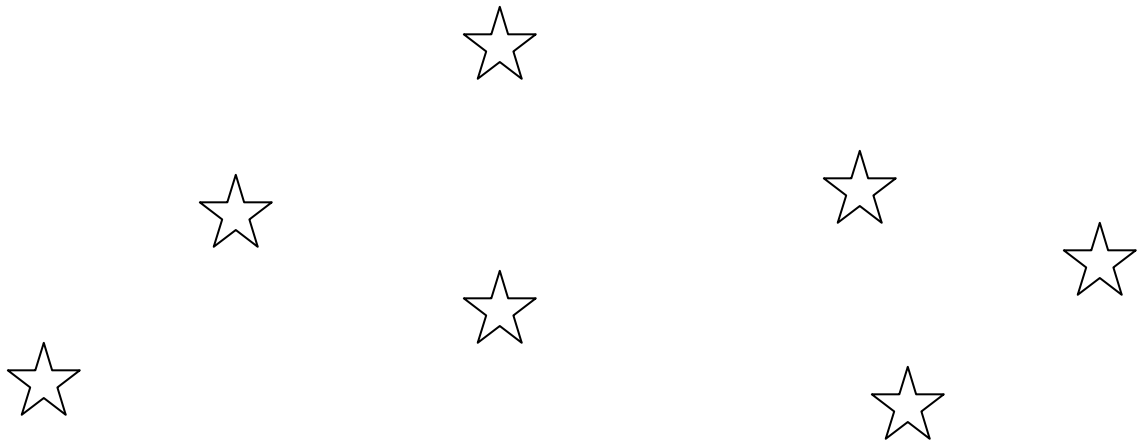
“Cosmic Cowboys”

Fantasy & Star-Crossed Cowboys...
A Musical Drama

Book, Lyrics, Music by
Sandra Hudlow Rodman



Parallel Universe



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Parallel Universe | Kirkland, Washington

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“Cosmic Cowboys”

Production Note:

“Cosmic Cowboys” is intended as a magic show. The music, lighting, and stage effects should be *choreographed* together. Something should be sparkling anew, blinking on or off, floating, blooming, disappearing, lighting up or popping out most of the time, especially when Hitchcock Huddleston is present. The set “responds” to what is going on; it has something to say... Think of the set as a character; in fact, the Rainbow and the Cactus can be played by costumed humans who could have a great deal of fun onstage... Now it does not matter if the effects are glitter and glue -- or an electric supershow, if the display is spirited and the pace well ahead of the expectation. If you can decorate a Holiday Tree with twinkling lights in sequence, you can create a great set for “Cosmic Cowboys.”

Still, good idea that a “magician” be included as a consultant to the production. And maybe a Cowboy... ☺





CREDITS

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

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

Page

**ACT I
Mid 1950’s**

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

**ACT II
Early 1970’s**

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

**ACT III
Later the Same Evening**

37	Scene 1. “Dreaming”	The Mills Home
42	Scene 2. “Running”	Honey Jo Waller’s Front Porch
45	Scene 4. “Oh, Honey, I Love You”	The Mills Home

Act IV
Later the Same Evening

53	Scene 1. "Cowboy High"	The Corral
66	Scene 2. "Town in Time"	The Mills Home
68	Scene 3. "Falling Star"	The Episcopal Recreation Hall

ACT V
A Year Later

70	Scene 1. "Peace"	The Episcopal Recreation Hall
82	Scene 2. "Always"	The Corral

☆☆☆



“Cosmic Cowboys”

☆CHARACTERS☆

☆**THURBER MILLS**☆ -- Act I: Age 11, then 12. A beautiful, young prairie poet; a would-be cowboy with starry eyes, learning how to love. Acts II-IV: Age 28. Act V: Glorious. Medium height, beautiful eyes, a sensitive star-crossed face.

☆**HITCHCOCK HUDDLESON**☆ -- Thurber’s imaginary playmate... Acts I-V: Appears as Thurber’s age. A stunningly beautiful cowboy, overwhelmingly tall and otherworldly. His eyes and teeth gleam with light beams every time he smiles...

☆**HONEY JO WALLER**☆ -- Act I: Age 11. Acts II-V: Age 28. Voluptuous and saucy. Bouncy hair, generously ample, curving body. The perfect size 12 idol of the 60’s, early 70’s. Thurber’s true love.

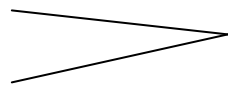
☆**ARTIE BROWNING**☆ -- Act II-V: Age 28. 6’ 2” and beyond. Tall and sexy with sparkling curly hair, gleaming teeth, and his own band, “Starbusters.” Resembles, admires, and sings like Art Garfunkel in the early 70’s. Also bears an otherworldly resemblance to Hitchcock Huddleston.

☆**CAROLINE MELODY MILLS**☆ -- Acts II-V: Age 26. Thurber’s sister. Six foot one, thin, with beautiful large dark eyes; doesn’t know her own beauty, can’t help her bitterness. Being tall is part of her plot. A Keane “eyes” painting -- otherworldly beauty and mystical voice.

☆**EMMA MAE**☆

☆**CINDY LOU**☆

☆**STELLA NELL**☆

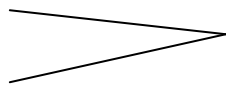


Classmates of Honey Jo and Thurber

☆**JOE DAN**☆

☆**BILLY BOB**☆

☆**JIMMY D**☆



Member’s of Artie’s Band, “The Starbusters”

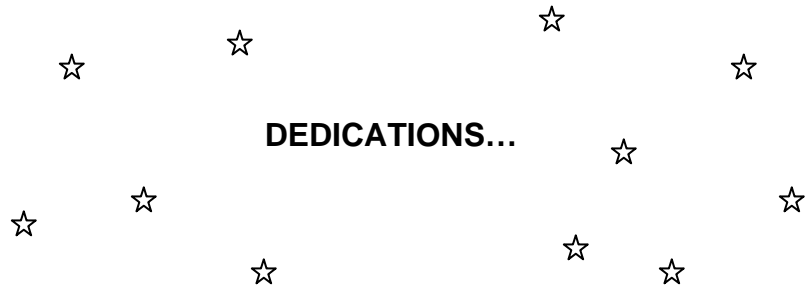
☆**COSMIC COWGIRLS CHORUS**☆ -- A line of gorgeous otherworldly cowgirls, with sparkling cowgirl outfits and tap dancing boots...

☆**COSMIC COWBOYS CHORUS**☆ -- Otherworldly cowboys who sing on high.

Note: Think of the set as a character; in fact, the Rainbow and the Cactus can be played by costumed humans who could have a great deal of fun onstage... ☺

Production Note: It is intended that diverse casts should perform this play. Hitchcock, Artie, and Caroline are described as quite tall. This is part of the plot and should be faithfully represented. Honey Jo is described as curvaceous and the perfect size 12. This is also part of the plot and should be faithfully represented...

☆☆☆



Thanks!

To Cosmic Cowboys and Cosmic Cowgirls ...

To all my teachers and many families everywhere....

And Dedicated to

with much gratitude for inspiration:

Ronald Hufham, Jehremy Stockwell, Lewis Friedman, Stephan Burns, Larry Haynes,

Art Garfunkel singing, and the special people of Hallelujah, Texas...

S.H. Rodman
Whidbey Island & Redmond, Washington
2008



"Cosmic Cowboys"

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT I, Scene 1. ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Eleven" ☆ ☆ ☆
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The sound of sweeping wind, whipping through the room expectantly. A lone spotlight shines in the aisle, waiting for someone. Glitter falls through it like a late shower. Dark chords sound; the spotlight turns deep purple, then red. The lighter theme from *"Oh, Honey, I Love You"* begins to play, overtaking the dark chords. The spotlight turns white again as children's voices in the distance join the tones. Giggles and glee are topped by squeals and finally a haunting taunt.

CHILDREN'S

VOICES: Thurber Mills writes bad poetry...! Thurber Mills writes bad poetry...!

(A beautiful young girl carrying a lot of books runs into the vulnerable spotlight, wind tossing hair and frills. Honey Jo Waller at eleven... A chase begins as a second spotlight and a sensitive young poet with beautiful eyes and innocent pain darts after her in cowboy hat and blue jeans, his eyes full of hope. He chases her onto the stage.)

THURBER: Honey Jo Waller!

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

THURBER: Why not?

HONEY: Because of what you did.

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

What'd I do?

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

THURBER: What was so terrible about it?

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

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

HONEY: With what?

THURBER: With you...

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

THURBER: *(Recorded "thinking voice": "Where do they get these crazy ideas?")*

Why would I want to carry your books home?

HONEY: Thurber, everybody wants to carry my books home.

THURBER: Well, what I'd like to do is, well, I'd like to walk around in the desert with you sometime, Honey Jo...

HONEY: You'd like to what?! *(A dark chord)* Thurber Mills, I don't think you ride around with both boots in the stirrups...

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

I don't have a horse.

HONEY: Horses aren't your problem! *(She walks off in a huff.)* Nobody certainly ever asked me to go walking around in the desert before.

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

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

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

I know.

HONEY: Well, why'd you have to read it out loud in front of everybody? Oh, if you only hadn't read it out loud in front of everybody... Thank goodness nobody knew what it meant.

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

I knew what it meant.

HONEY: Well, I hope so. You wrote it. All that about my...newly violet eyes you hope will rest on yours and hair like gold-dust storms in heaven and a

dress like sunset sitting in the clouds waiting to be saved... .. And my eyes aren't violet. They're hazel...

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

HONEY: Violent eyes? (*A dark chord*) Thurber, you can't go on like this, you know. Everybody thinks you're crazy. Don't you care if they laugh at you?

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

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

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

HONEY: Thurber Mills!

THURBER: Well, it wasn't very funny when I wrote it, it just GOT funny later on.

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

THURBER: Ow! Okay. .. You don't have to follow me around in the desert. (*The wind picks up and a few things nearby gleam as if in response.*) I just thought I'd let you in on it -- if you wanted to come along. Sometimes there are wonderful things in the desert.

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

THURBER: I'm only eleven.

HONEY: That's what's so terrible about it...

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

HONEY: If only you weren't so cute...

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

Am I cute? How about that... (*They sing.*)

"ELEVEN"

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

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

HONEY: Eleven.

THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Oh, you!...

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

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

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

HONEY: How does he think up these things?

THURBER: Eleven, Eleven.

Why can't she believe in wings?

HONEY: Eleven, Eleven.

THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven, Oh, you!...

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

THURBER: Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

THURBER: How will she know who I am?

Eleven –

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven --

HONEY: Eleven.

TOGETHER: Eleven, Oh, You!...

☆☆☆

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

HONEY: Thurber! Look out! *(More thuds and flashing lights nearby.)* Oh, it's the end of the world!

THURBER: It's meteors!

HONEY: Shooting stars... This one left a hole...

THURBER: Oh!! Let me see it!!

HONEY: I shouldn't have said that about the end of the world... *(Softly)* And shiny things fall out of the sky and make little holes in the ground...

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

HONEY: Get away from there, Thurber!

THURBER: You go on. I want to look at this hole.

HONEY: *(More lights flash nearby. Honey tries to pull him away.)* Hurry! You'll be hit!

THURBER: *(Pulling away)* No!

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

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

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

THURBER: Yes, I did.

HONEY: Thurber...did you have anything you wanted to say to me?...

THURBER: I said it already. It rhymed.

HONEY: Oh... You're gonna break my heart, Thurber Mills...!

(Dark chords. Honey runs out. He looks after her, longing.)

THURBER: *(To audience)* Hello, I'm Thurber Mills. Sorry you had to see that. There are certain things you should keep to yourself. They happened because you

were young and for no other reason. I've been told it's not nice to tell them to other people. Because they probably did something like that when they were young, and you have exposed a tender feeling that never grew up along with the rest of them. But some of us have to tell. It's our way of growing up. And we force it on other people, too, against their will. You can always tell which ones we are. We write bad poetry...

Well, Welcome to Hallelujah, Texas!

Yes... It was named after Jefferson Buckaroo Hallelujah the First, my great great uncle. They called him J.B. Hallelujah. He liked to be called Jefferson. Even when he told people, they still called him J.B. He said it was things like that made a man die young...

I don't know if it was that or not... Anyway, he did die young. 28 -- 28's a big age in our family. Hit by a falling star. And they named the town after him. I don't know if that made up for anything or not. Maybe, after all was said and done, it helped.

Jefferson Buckaroo Hallelujah the Third? Now that's my Uncle J.B. He raised me and my kid sister Caroline since we were real little. We've been thankful for him just about every day.

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

"ELEVEN" REPRISE

Heaven is that girl you knew.
Eleven, Eleven.
Heaven is she talked to you..
Eleven, Eleven.
Eleven, Eleven.
Eleven – Oh, you!...

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

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

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

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

THURBER: (*"Hitchcock's Theme, Part II" plays quietly in the background as he begins.*)
When you grow up, you remember some people more than other people. They give you your best moments. My best moments were spent at this Corral with Hitchcock Huddleston. He was the most important person I would meet during my life. Only I didn't know it then. Usually you don't know until you get through with it, what was really important about it, and then all you can do is say, "Oh, my," and take notes... I guess that builds your character, although it sure does take a long time. As long as I've been working on mine, sometimes I think I won't ever be proud of myself no matter how hard I try — somewhere I'm always slipping. I don't know if that happens to you, too... I suggest a little bad poetry; cleanses the soul. (*He smiles directly at someone in the audience.*)

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

Took me 16 years to make up for that one day when I was twelve – well, it had been coming on for some time...

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

Hitchcock tried to tell me, but I wouldn't listen. Maybe I wanted to know things too badly to listen. Hitchcock said I tried too hard at life. That's all I had, so I tried too hard at it... *(He looks at Hitchcock, who turns from the Rainbow to Thurber, his beautiful face beaming, eyes and teeth sparkling; he smiles and waves.)* Oh, did I tell you that he was my imaginary playmate? Yes. That's how it started, anyway. I had a great imagination. Don't you think? *(He glances toward Hitchcock.)* Things got out of hand, though. When some people dream, they go all the way... *(He hails Hitchcock and walks into the scene.)*

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

HITCHCOCK: HELLO, THURBER. *(Hitchcock always speaks in capital letters. It's how he is. His voice is magnified and echoes as if it were coming from far, far away. When he smiles, his teeth sparkle and gleam.... He has his own theme music. "Hitchcock's Theme" always introduces him.)*

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

HITCHCOCK: GET YOUR ROPE READY. I THINK WE CAN TAKE THIS ONE. *(The Rainbow moves slightly to the right...)*

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

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

THURBER: He knows I'm after him.

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

THURBER: *(He swings his rope hopelessly toward the giant Rainbow.)* No matter how hard I swing, the Rainbow is just as far away. *(The Rainbow disappears.)* It's the story of my life...

HITCHCOCK: NO, THURBER. YOU CAN'T QUIT JUST WHEN YOU'VE GOT THEIR ATTENTION. USE YOUR SECRET WEAPON.

THURBER: What's my secret weapon?

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

THURBER: There he is again!

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

THURBER: No! You were supposed to rope the Rainbow!

HITCHCOCK: NO, I WASN'T. YOU JUST THOUGHT I WAS AFTER THE RAINBOW. IF YOU'D LOOKED AT THE SITUATION CAREFULLY, YOU'D HAVE SEEN THAT I WAS AFTER YOU ALL ALONG...

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

HITCHCOCK: I DON'T LIKE TO LIMIT MYSELF.

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

HITCHCOCK: I AM TRYING.

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

HITCHCOCK: I'LL FIND IT...

THURBER: You don't understand, Hitchcock. You just can't go through life with an imaginary playmate tagging along, roping Rainbows and – *(Hitchcock pats him on the back and sparks fly)* – ow! – setting fires! People won't let you do that. They'll sue you.

HITCHCOCK: WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT?

THURBER: In school.

HITCHCOCK: SCHOOL?

THURBER: Yeah. They make you go.

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

THURBER: How to read.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU HOW TO THINK?

THURBER: They teach me to add up numbers.

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

THURBER: They teach me Geography.

HITCHCOCK: DO THEY TEACH YOU SPACE?

THURBER: They teach me how to live.

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

THURBER: You're trying to scare me.

HITCHCOCK: I'M TRYING TO RESCUE YOU.

THURBER: I'm not lost.

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

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

HITCHCOCK: YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE, AND
YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT GEOGRAPHY? **I CAN MAKE UP A
WHIRLWIND AND CATCH A RAINBOW AND RIDE A STAR TO NOTHING
AND YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHERE THINGS ARE?!** *(A bolt of lightning.
A dark chord.)*

THURBER: Don't hurt me! Go away!

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

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

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

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

HITCHCOCK: YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR SECRET WEAPON...

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

HITCHCOCK: LET'S LOOK AT YOUR BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS...

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

HITCHCOCK: MAKING FUN OF YOUR POEMS?? MAKING FUN OF YOUR POEMS? *(His voice grows louder and deeper, joined by the rising music of his theme; lights change color and stars twinkle; small flowers sprout where none were before.)* WHEN MANY OF THEM ARE GROWING MAJESTICALLY ALONG THE DESERTED ROADS OF A STRANDED UNIVERSE, SPROUTING INTELLIGENCE AND FLOWERS ON THE BACK OF ANCIENT SPACE, RAINING LIKE LIVING RHINESTONES IN A SHOWER OF SAND, LIKE TEARS OF SEQUINS DOWN A SILENT NIGHT, MAKING NEW NAMES FOR THEMSELVES IN OLD GROUND AND TAKING ROOT IN THE RISING MIND OF TIME LIKE A NEW PEOPLE?...

(He smiles brilliantly, bathed in light. Thurber runs from him in genuine fright and hides behind the cactus.) COME OUT OF THERE.

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

HITCHCOCK: COME OUT!

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

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

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

HITCHCOCK: SUIT YOURSELF. THAT ONE HAS SENT YOU SCURRYING BEHIND A CACTUS HIDING FROM YOUR OWN BEAUTY. .. *(Thurber comes out.)*

THURBER: Sorry. *(He reaches toward Hitchcock, who floats higher.)* Come on, don't leave me alone here. It's so plain... It's so painful... And I just know it's bound to get worse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THURBER: I know my name!

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

THURBER: Gee, Hitchcock... I just wanted to be a cowboy. I don't know how I got into all this.

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

THURBER: I didn't mean anything wrong.

HITCHCOCK: SO YOU WANT TO BE A COWBOY...? *(He moves closer and holds up his hand as if to signal a change in Time and Space...like a wand. His voice deep, his eyes beaming laser streaked messages into the air; it seems for a moment that an Ancient Being has stepped into his place...)*

BEING A COWBOY IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK. IT IS AN ANCIENT LANGUAGE, A CREED. ITS SECRETS HAVE BEEN HIDDEN FROM YOU, DISTORTED IN DESTRUCTIVE TALES OF VIOLENCE IN THE OLD WEST AGAINST *THE OTHERS*, WHO LONGED ONLY TO TEACH YOU... COVER STORIES HIDE THE FACES OF THE FIRES IN THE SKIES, THE ANCIENT COWGIRL IN THE STARS JOINING MALE AND FEMALE IN THE OLD RACES, THE LOVING SACRIFICE OF EVERY ANIMAL WHO GIVES ITS LIFE FOR YOUR LIFE. THE ANCIENT RIDERS SHINE ON IN THE SKY OF SEVEN AND THE DIAMOND IN YOUR MIND HOLDS THE KEY TO ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE.

THURBER: Hitchcock, how can I ever understand!? I'm just a boy...

HITCHCOCK: **BECOME VULNERABLE TO THE UNIVERSE AND VULNERABLE TO YOUR OWN BEAUTY. BECOME LIKE THE LIGHT RIDERS WHO HOLD**

IN THE STARS THE STORIES OF ETERNAL NIGHTS... YOU THINK YOU RIDE THE HORSE, BUT IT IS THE HORSE WHO RIDES YOU AND TEACHES YOU HOW TO RUN. IT IS AN ANCIENT DANCE. IN THE COWBOY IS THE HEART OF THE MOTHERING DARKNESS AND HER LANGUAGE OF CREATION WHICH CAME FROM THE OLD STARS.

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

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

HITCHCOCK: I HAVE BEEN THE STARS.

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

HITCHCOCK: BEING A COWBOY ISN'T AN OCCUPATION. IT'S A STATE OF MIND. AN ETERNAL RIDING OF THE NORTH WIND, THE LIVING SPIRIT OF THE WINGED HORSE, THE CRYING CALL OF THE WILD CROW. IT'S A CIVILIZATION. IT'S A CONSTELLATION OF BEING...!

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

"COWBOY HIGH"

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

Where the rainbows bend
And the rivers end
There are dreams of men
Who will ride again,

HITCHCOCK: Through the diamond night
With their crystal eyes
And electric names
Can you hear their cries?

TOGETHER: Cowboy High, Cowboy High,
Cowboy High, Cowboy High.

THURBER: I know there are cowboys
Up in the sky.
I've got to find them
Before I die...

THURBER: I will ride in the Night.
I'll catch up with Light,
With the voices of men
Who will sing again,

HITCHCOCK: Following silver hoof beats
In the blue-green wind,
Whispering star-crossed stories
Out where the campfires begin...

TOGETHER: Cowboy High, Cowboy High,
Cowboy High, Cowboy High.

THURBER: I know there are cowboys
Up in the sky.
I've got to find them
Before I die...

HITCHCOCK: We live in men
Where poems begin.
We ride for years
Down childhood tears.
Feel the stars in dust,
Touch the love in rust,
And you'll understand
The beauty of your hand...

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

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THURBER: Oh, Hitchcock... I'm sorry. I didn't understand...

HITCHCOCK: *(Glistening eyes reflected on the prairie.)* YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T THINK
OF ME SO OFTEN ANYMORE.

THURBER: But, Hitchcock –

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

YOU LOVE HONEY JO, BUT YOU CAN'T TELL HER, AND THAT'S THE
ONLY WAY YOU'LL EVER HAVE HER. YOU CAN'T TELL ME THE TRUTH,
NOW. AND THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN COME HERE. PLEASE DON'T

SAY, "I'M SORRY, HITCHCOCK," WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS FLY AROUND LIKE BARBED WIRE...

THURBER: *(Filled with embarrassment, fists clinched.)* YOU LISTENED TO MY THOUGHTS! YOU LISTENED!

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

THURBER: How dare you listen in! How could you embarrass me like that, look right through me and laugh! You just come to make fun of me!

HITCHCOCK: IF YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT, I SHALL NOT COME AGAIN.

THURBER: You listened to my thoughts; you're not my friend! I never want to see you again!

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

THURBER: It's what I said, isn't it? Oh, how could you do this to me?!

HITCHCOCK: VERY WELL. I WON'T BE BACK. *(The wind whips. He begins to rise into the air and fade.)* THINK FOR YOURSELF, THURBER. FOR YOU WILL BE TRULY ALONE NOW. *(He disappears in a swirl of lights and wind.)*

THURBER: IT'S ALRIGHT WITH ME! .. IT'S ALRIGHT WITH ME!

(Silence and darkness, only the light of stars. Thurber runs upstage frantically.) HITCHCOCK! WAIT! WAIT! *(He looks up at the sky plaintively but there is no answer. He sits on a stone. Faintly, ghostly voices begin to sing in the sky and he joins them, singing softly through tears.)*

"COWBOY HIGH" (Reprise)

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

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

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ACT II, Scene 1.
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Early 1970's. The Recreation Hall of the Episcopal Church in Hallelujah, Texas, is being decorated for a Reunion Homecoming Dance. Perched on ladders, four beautiful girls in their late 20's hang glittering cardboard stars from the ceiling in a dreamlike scene. There is an overabundance of stars...

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

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

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

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

EMMA: Unless they're falling...

STELLA: Don't worry. There hasn't been a meteor fall here since the 1950's.

EMMA: Just the flying saucers now...

CINDY: They don't call this Hallelujah, Texas, for nothing, Honey. *(She tosses her a star. They are quite proficient at star juggling on their ladders... ☺)*

- STELLA: I could do without the tornadoes, personally.
- HONEY: (*Longing thoughts of Thurber*) I could do without the desert...
- CINDY: Doesn't anybody appreciate the romance of a small Texas town anymore? You know, I thought we'd *made it* after that "*Last Picture Show*" movie.
- STELLA: (*Suggestively*) Maybe you did, Cindy Lou.
- CINDY: Stella Nell has never gotten over Larry Pat.
- STELLA: I'm Vice President of the First National Bank, honey. I don't have to get over things anymore.
- CINDY: Good for you. Some of us are just married and *really really rich*.
- EMMA: I thought this was going to be a Reunion.
- HONEY: Well, it is a Reunion, Emma Mae. But some of us are more reunited than others.
- STELLA: Well, it certainly doesn't seem like ten years since we graduated.
- EMMA: Time sure flies when you get out of High School. I wonder sometimes why I left...
- CINDY: Emma Mae –
- EMMA: ...Remember all the great times we had at the Episcopal dances? I don't know what I'd have done without Friday night dances at the Episcopal Rec Hall. I'd of never gone out with Bill. And we'd of never gotten married...
- CINDY: I was close as it was. How's he doin'?
- EMMA: He might have to go to Viet Nam. He dropped out of college to go to work with the baby coming. What if they draft him? He says he wants to go...
- CINDY: Oh, Emma...
- EMMA: I tell him how much I love him – I'd do anything for him, even move to Canada. I just have to put it out of my mind and think about the baby. And these stars. Things that make me really thankful...
- CINDY: Well, I'm real glad they let us decorate this year, since it's our ten-year anniversary and class reunion and everything. I wouldn't have been as happy if we couldn't have decorated.
- HONEY: Well, *I'm* pretty happy about tonight...
- CINDY: Look at the stars in her eyes.

STELLA: What are you happy about?

HONEY: Thurber Mills is coming home tonight...

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

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

HONEY: We didn't. Exactly.

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

STELLA: Somebody said he went to Sweetwater.

HONEY: Lubbock.

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

CINDY: Didn't he join the rodeo circuit?

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

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

EMMA: Somebody was here from *Time*...?

STELLA: Do you think they made it up?

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

EMMA: I'd tell everybody...

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

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

HONEY: Just slightly behind our time...

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

EMMA: Where is it safe?

- STELLA: Somewhere with no tornadoes and no flying saucers.
- HONEY: No falling stars and men from Time...
- STELLA: Sun's almost gone. .. *(Glowing sunset hues can be seen through the windows. Perched high on their ladders, they look in unison as its rainbow hues throb in the room, as if alive.)*
- CINDY: Was Thurber Mills the one who read that crazy poem about you in geography class in the sixth grade?
- HONEY: Yeah, he was. *(She clasps the pink necklace she's wearing with a dreamy look... A present from Thurber.)*
- STELLA: *Real* cute, though.
- CINDY: What's the sense of being cute if somebody's crazy?
- HONEY: I honestly don't know...
- CINDY: *(Climbing down and walking to the bandstand)* I think we should put some more stars on the drums. What do you think, Stella Nell?
- STELLA: I think Artie Browning has enough stars in his eyes for the whole bandstand... That's what I think. *(They look up in unison at a large poster of Artie Browning and his band, "Starbusters." Artie is tall and handsome and looks a little like his hero, Art Garfunkel. His teeth fairly gleam through his smile and right out of the poster.)*
- EMMA: I like his band. They light up all the time.
- STELLA: I wouldn't touch that line.
- HONEY: What's wrong with Artie Browning's eyes...?
- CINDY: Ah hah! *(She hands off supplies to the others.)* There's some interest here in Artie Browning's eyes.
- STELLA: I wondered who you were dating since you stopped going with that guy at Cisco Junior College. What was his name?
- HONEY: I wasn't exactly "going" with him. I was "going" to college.
- CINDY: Honey, when you "go" to college, it's automatic that you "go" with somebody. It's included in the tuition.
- CINDY: Artie Browning, hunh...
- STELLA: I thought you were pining for Thurber Mills.

HONEY: I'm not pining for anybody. Don't try to marry me off. Maybe I won't even get married. No law says you have to get married.

STELLA: Brave girl.

CINDY: Teaching school is enough for you?

EMMA: What do you teach, Honey?

HONEY: *(Dreamily)* Geography...

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

EMMA: I like him. His smile is all shiny...

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

CINDY: *(A sigh.)* They may not of.

EMMA: I know which one he is. He's always singing really high. Like heaven...

STELLA: Do you think we have enough stars up here? *(They frown at her in unison as if she's crazy.)*

CINDY: I need more glitter. *(As they sing, they sway and dance on the ladders, hanging more stars.)*

"STARS!"

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

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

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

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

HONEY: *(Clasping her pink necklace and thinking of Thurber)*
Will he know which one I am?

EMMA: *(Looking at the poster of Artie)*
When he's playing in the band?

HONEY: *(Clasping her pink necklace)* All starry-eyed –
CINDY: *(Looking at the poster)* -- And full notes!
STELLA: His teeth are brighter than his hopes.

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

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

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

ALL: Stars! Stars!
EMMA: *(Stardust falling on her head)*
Stars are falling in my hair.
Is this too much!
CINDY: *(Shouting/speaking)* No!
ALL: We've just begun...
(Looking out the windows in unison)
Standing up here I can almost see Home...

STELLA: *(Realizing they have been deluged with stars)*
Where did all these stars come from?
EMMA: *(They look up with trepidation)*
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!

ALL: *(A minor chord)* Stars!

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

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(Abruptly there is thunder, lightning, and wind outside. A storm approaches. They begin to finish up, climbing down the ladders, packing up supplies.)

ALL: Oh, no! Oh, no!

HONEY: I hope that's not a storm.

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

HONEY: Caroline Mills.

STELLA: How is she? Since the accident?

HONEY: Better.

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

STELLA: Nothing is hard to miss around here.

HONEY: She didn't see it.

CINDY: Well, it's always been there.

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

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

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

EMMA: Before this...

STELLA: This?...

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

STELLA: Oh, my God...

EMMA: That was funny lightning...

CINDY: It's another UFO.

STELLA: Let's light candles. *(They fumble for candles and begin to light them, passing them around – quickly candles are everywhere – as if by magic....)*

HONEY: Those are for the dance...

STELLA: Screw the dance.

EMMA: Stella Nell!

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

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

CINDY: We should do something.

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

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

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

HONEY: Somebody should go for Mr. Wilkinson.

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

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

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

(Artie Browning and his bandmembers – Joe Dan, Billy Bob, and Jimmy D -- have sneaked in the open doors behind the girls.)

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

BANDMEMBERS' VOICES: Oh, great. What do we do now? Don't step on that...

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

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

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

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

STELLA: What's happening?

CINDY: It's the end of the world, that's all.

STELLA: I knew it...

ARTIE: I know somebody who has a generator.

CINDY: Well, go find him!

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

EMMA: Life is better than that, Stella Nell.

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

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

HONEY: Artie...

ARTIE: Okay... *(He lifts her chin and kisses her cheek -- then heads for the door.)*
We're on our way.

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

HONEY: Let's light the fireplace. *(She does. Her face glows golden in the flame.)*

CINDY: When did all this happen with Artie Browning?

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

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

CINDY: I'll bet.

HONEY: He's really not so bad.

CINDY: If you can get by that electric smile.

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

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

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

EMMA: But what about Thurber?...

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

CINDY: But he's so crazy.

STELLA: But he's such a doll.

HONEY: Thurber's not like -- anyone else.

CINDY: No kidding.

HONEY: I know it's hard to understand. He's sort of -- a flying man. He's always -- out there somewhere. He's always bringing you hope or flowers. Sighing

and blinking and getting you crazy. Writing you poems about outer space. Trying to take off. Trying to take you with him...

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

HONEY: I know...

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

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

STELLA: Why not?

HONEY: Oh, they were too special. Right out of Disney.

STELLA: Maybe he's changed.

HONEY: I don't think you change that. It's either Disneyland or it isn't... *(She smiles a knowing smile.)*

EMMA: Did he write to you from the rodeo?

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

CINDY: What did it say?

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

EMMA: What did you send him?

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

CINDY: I don't know if I can take much more of this.

EMMA: Did he ever say anything to you about it?

HONEY: About what?

EMMA: Your heart...

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

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

(The room takes on a strange pink glow and the girls interject spoken comments – in parenthesis -- as Honey Jo sings.)

"DISNEYLAND"

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

Do you remember the pine trees,
When they were loaded with snow?
CINDY: (Did you remind him of pine trees?)
HONEY: Well, you're a little like pine trees
When pine trees overflow...
(She smiles suggestively.)

STELLA: (Oh, no.)

HONEY: And then the snow falls on the prairie,
And the prairie lies down and cries –

CINDY: (The prairie lies down and cries??)

HONEY: Because melting snow is so touching
And the prairie has stars in its eyes...!

EMMA: (How can a prairie have stars in its eyes?)

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

EMMA: (Couldn't he say it?)

HONEY: No, it just flew away.
But in Disneyland,
I think it goes that way.

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

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

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

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

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

EMMA: (Couldn't he say it?)

HONEY: No, it just flew away.

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

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

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

EMMA: (They do?)

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

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

HONEY: So all the love birds flew off together
Looking for new things to say...

STELLA: (Okay...)

HONEY: And that's why the love birds will never part,
And why love flies off to this day...!

CINDY: (He didn't.)

HONEY: (He did.)

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

EMMA: (Couldn't he say it?)

HONEY: No, it just flew away.

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

HONEY: And then he would kiss me,
And then he would ask me...
(Her voice trails off.)

STELLA: (Honey Jo?)

HONEY: *(Teary eyed.)*
Do you think hearts break like eggs do?
Do you think we will live?

EMMA: *(Softly)* (What did you tell him?)

HONEY: Well, I couldn't tell him that hearts are made

CINDY: Of wishes and things you forgive.
(Do you love him, Honey Jo?)

HONEY: I believed in his rainbows...
I looked for a prairie that cries...

EMMA: (Oh, no...)

HONEY: But I didn't want any eggs to break.
I just wanted the love in his eyes...

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

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

STELLA: Oh, my God... Help!

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

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

STELLA: Oh, no...!

CINDY: What is he going to do?

(Hitchcock walks towards them. Several stars drop from the ceiling as he approaches. Sparks fly and electricity crackles as they hit the floor. Hitchcock appears to produce glowing stars from thin air. When he smiles his teeth gleam as if star beams lived there. He twirls his electric rope magically. Outside in the midst of the storm, a giant Rainbow can be seen through the windows, glowing in the night – Hitchcock begins to twirl his rope.... Stars pulse in the lightning. The girls stand paralyzed in a strange mixture of terror and awe... Wind whips through the hall like a tornado, blowing things everywhere.)

Hitchcock begins to walk toward the girls, his smile gleaming like fireworks, his spinning rope whirring.)

GIRLS: *(Screaming) Ooh! Help! Help!*

(They scatter and run wildly up the aisles and into the night. Hitchcock smiles gently after them. He looks up thoughtfully at the poster of Artie Browning and the "Starbusters." Then he turns and ropes the Rainbow. ☺)

(Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT II, Scene 2. ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Imagine Me" ☆ ☆ ☆
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A little later at the Rec Hall. The lights have come on again. The candles have gone out; the fireplace has gone out. Artie Browning is restoring order – picking up things that have blown here and there, straightening the “Starbusters” poster. He has returned alone to set the stage for the band’s performance. He wears the band’s logo, “Starbusters” and around his neck a silver medallion – a Peace symbol. He lowers the lights in the hall and adjusts the flashing electric bulbs which outline the band’s instruments and set. His deep delight with the brilliant glowing of lights is vivid; his curly hair is long and glittering on its own. He smiles and just for a moment a sparkle flashes from his teeth and eyes – just like Hitchcock Huddleston...

He picks up Honey Jo’s long gold scarf left on the couch in her hurry. He lets it trail in the air, caressing it, then drapes it on the couch. He sighs deeply. He begins setting up chairs at the edge of the dance floor and retrieving fallen objects.

ARTIE: What happened here? You’d think a tornado hit this place. *(He picks up some glittering stars, fallen from the ceiling. When he touches them, the stars glow more brightly, taking on life of their own. He looks up at the ceiling and gasps at the growing constellations hanging there ominously.)* Oh, my God... Wow...! They really got carried away with these stars...! *(He picks up more stars to decorate the bandstand.)*

I know! The fireplace! That’s what’s missing. A good ole flame...

(He lights a fire and it begins to roar responsively, his curly hair sparkling in the flame – like his electric teeth... He sits at keyboards, plays, and sings.)

“IMAGINE ME”

ARTIE: Imagine me
Looking at you.
Oh, God, I don’t know
What I’m going to do.
When you can see right into me

With eyes that write my history
And looks that make the song so right,

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

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

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

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(High wind and rain fill the silence; rain pelts the windows insistently.)

ARTIE: Oh, no! Raining again...

(He heads for the door and as he opens it Caroline Melody Mills, wet and soaking and carrying a large shopping bag, is blown into his arms and takes his breath away...)

ARTIE: Wow... *(He beholds her six foot one beauty in T-shirt and jeans, hair pulled back in a pony tail, thin with huge dark eyes and unearthly beauty. She is memorably sensual, soaking in raindrops that are getting friendly with her body. Artie stares down at her in his arms -- a little bit too long -- as she presses against him. Dizzy and embarrassed she pulls away.)*

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

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

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

- ARTIE: It wasn't all that unpleasant... Come over here by the fire. (*She is weaving.*) You're not alright, are you?
- CAROLINE: A little dizzy. I was in an accident out at the -- the --
- ARTIE: Caddo Bridge. I heard. Strange old bridge. You're limping.
- CAROLINE: Am I? Something of a mess, aren't I?
- ARTIE: Not entirely... (*Her long hair has come loose and he helps pull it back from her eyes. She bursts into tears and covers her face, partly because she feels like a mess, partly because of his closeness. He puts an arm around her and moves her to the couch.*) Come on, sit down, let's get you dry.
- CAROLINE: Uh, no, Artie, I'll just sit down here on the rug so I don't get the couch wet. (*She looks up at him, breathing fast.*) You don't have to babysit. I'm sure you were busy or something.
- ARTIE: (*He disappears into another room and returns with a towel.*) Well, I wish I could offer you a change of clothes, but I'm afraid this is it. Here, dry off a little. (*He helps her, moving the towel across her body with some interest. She is anxious as he does. For the first time he becomes aware that he might be the cause. Puzzled.*) Relax, Miss Mills...
- CAROLINE: It's just that I wanted to bring the food over early so I wouldn't have to carry it with me to the dance. Dumb ideas grow on trees around here. (*He reaches into the bag and takes out a platter of cookies. He takes one for himself and gives one to her.*)
- ARTIE: Mmmm... Eat. (*She does.*)
- CAROLINE: Some Homecoming...
- ARTIE: The night isn't over yet. You have plenty of time to get ready for the dance. (*He straightens her hair gently.*)
- CAROLINE: I need more than time. (*Their hands touch as she tries to pull her hair back. She reacts. He stares.*)
- ARTIE: So! Caroline Mills, right out of a rainstorm. Pardon me for staring, but you must be -- uh --
- CAROLINE: Six one... And everybody does.
- ARTIE: Geez... You've changed a lot. Didn't recognize you at first.
- CAROLINE: I recognized you...
- ARTIE: You always wore your hair short.
- CAROLINE: I'm rebelling.

ARTIE: I remember you when we went to that Jr. High Halloween Dance together, dressed up like Batman and Robin.

CAROLINE: I remember that...

ARTIE: *(He pats her shoulder. She stiffens.)* You were taller than I was. You should have been Batman.

CAROLINE: Being tall isn't my favorite subject right now, Artie. *(Unconsciously she begins to wring her shirt dry and he finds himself staring at her exposed waist. Embarrassed he looks away and clears his throat. He offers the platter.)*

ARTIE: Here. Have another cookie.

CAROLINE: They're for the dance. *(She looks up at the Peace medallion hanging around his neck and reaches out to touch it.)* Is this new? I don't remember you wearing it before.

ARTIE: Yeah, it's new. I think about Peace a lot. *(Quietly)* I wonder what Art Garfunkel thinks about Peace.

CAROLINE: You really like him, hunh...

ARTIE: Yeah. Didn't you ever admire anybody like that?

CAROLINE: *(Looking up into his eyes)* Yeah, Artie, I sure did... Once... *(Catching herself dreaming, she breaks the moment and stands abruptly.)* I should go, shouldn't I?

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

CAROLINE: I'm pretty warm...

ARTIE: You know, I'm taller than you are now...

CAROLINE: Not much.

ARTIE: Come on. *(He reaches for her hand and pulls her up to stand. He looks at her eye to eye. Embarrassed, she looks down.)*

Yeah. You're right. Not much. Have you got on heels? *(He looks down to find her barefoot and whistles.)* Geez... Six foot one barefoot...! Why are you always looking down, Caroline? *(He touches her chin, trying to lift it in spite of his better judgment.)*

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

ARTIE: That does not apply to me. *(He raises her chin firmly. She looks up at him -- it looks like he might kiss her but she looks down again, embarrassed. She*

retreats to sit. He watches her body move. He sits next to her.) Hey, you sing, don't you, Caroline? I remember that. I remember your voice. Great voice. Why didn't you ever do anything with it?

CAROLINE: I teach music.

ARTIE: Do you? You used to come around when we first started the band years ago. But I haven't seen you in a long time.

CAROLINE: I came. You were just – always so busy. Haven't been in a while, though.

ARTIE: *(Charming)* Something I said?...

CAROLINE: *(She laughs.)* No. Just haven't. Since the accident. ..

ARTIE: Ever think of singing with a band?

CAROLINE: No.

ARTIE: And why not, Miss Mills?

CAROLINE: I'm the music teacher.

ARTIE: Miss Caroline, the music teacher.

CAROLINE: *(Smiling a little)* Caroline Melody...

ARTIE: Caroline Melody?!!

CAROLINE: Caroline Melody Mills, the music teacher. It couldn't have turned out any other way...

ARTIE: Why don't you try a song with me sometime maybe. Just for the hell of it. What do you think? Melody Mills... *(He's flirting now, looking at her -- a little bit too long...)*

CAROLINE: ...I don't tend to do things just for the hell of it, Artie.

ARTIE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be flippant. *(She has him confused. He's never seen a woman like this -- tall as he is and just as beautiful ...)* Who're you coming with to the dance tonight?

CAROLINE: I guess I'm coming with Thurber -- and Honey Jo Waller. I think they might come together, that's what Honey said.

ARTIE: *(He looks like he's been stabbed.)* Honey Jo Waller and Thurber Mills? Together? *(Crestfallen. Absently)* You don't have a date?

CAROLINE: No, I don't *have a date*, Artie. *(Bitter and stung by his remark -- and the feelings he's kicked up. He looks surprised at her tone.)*

- ARTIE: I'm sorry, Caroline. I didn't mean it that way – I mean, I wasn't thinking. (*Awkwardly*) I'm a – a little bit confused...
- CAROLINE: It's not simple to be six foot one in Hallelujah, Texas, Artie. It can be awful. I'm taller than every guy in town. In several towns.
- ARTIE: I repeat, that does not apply to me. (*She flashes him a blistering look -- "That's right." He gets an inkling that this has something to do with him. With two shocks, he walks away.*)
- CAROLINE: Well, I'll let you get back to your rehearsing or whatever it was you were doing...
- ARTIE: (*He stops her as she heads for the door.*) Caroline, wait a minute. I'd like to apologize to you. I didn't mean to be thoughtless. I'm – really glad to see you. And I meant that about the singing.
- CAROLINE: It's okay, Artie. (*His face is in pain.*) What's wrong?
- ARTIE: (*Embarrassed*) Aw, it's nothing -- you know. It's just one of those things. (*Suddenly blurting.*) How well do you know Honey Jo?
- CAROLINE: (*Too quiet*) Very well.
- ARTIE: Well, I didn't know until just now that there was anything between your brother and Honey Jo. I didn't know there was anything between anybody and Honey Jo. And I thought she and I... Well, I just don't know what do to. (*He sees pain on her face and realizes too late that he's done real damage. He takes her hand.*) Oh, Geez... I've really put you on the spot, Caroline... He's your brother...
- CAROLINE: And she's my best friend.
- ARTIE: I'm an idiot. (*Trying to make amends, he grabs his jacket sparkling with "Starbusters" logos and life of its own, and puts it around her shoulders.*) Here. Take my jacket.
- CAROLINE: Artie, please don't be nice to me right now! (*She pushes him away; he sees tears on her cheeks.*)
- ARTIE: Caroline... I'm sorry...! (*She runs out. He follows her to the door and stands looking after her. Suddenly he hits the door facing, angry with himself.*) Idiot! Why'd you have to do that? (*He doesn't know what to do.*)
- (*He goes to the keyboards. Sighing deeply*) Aw, Honey Jo... (*He plays and sings.*)

"IMAGINE ME" (Reprise)

ARTIE: Imagine me
Talking to you.

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

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

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

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☆ ☆ ACT III, Scene 1 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Dreaming" ☆ ☆ ☆
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The Mills Home. The Living Room can be seen and a Front Porch with a swing and rickety steps. The Living Room is warm with old pictures, lace doilies on an old couch, old chairs with histories... An upright piano dominates the room like an ancient family member. Outside it's dark. Rain is falling, an eerie sound; wind whips expectantly. Still, through the rain, fireflies light up occasionally...

A young cowboy runs from behind the house up on the porch, brushing off the water, taking off his hat – he looks back at the Corral, kind of forlorn. Then he sits on the porch, rolling up his rope. It is Thurber Mills. His eyes are deeper and more beautiful than ever in a star-crossed face.

THURBER: *(Shaking his fist at the sky)* Hitchcock Huddleston, I thought maybe just this once – you might be at the Corral waiting for me. It's Homecoming, you know! I'm 28 years old and I've come back home again!

(Caroline Mills comes running in from up the road in tears. She runs past Thurber letting the screen door slam behind her. As she starts up the stairs, Thurber comes in behind her.)

THURBER: Hey, Caroline, wait a minute!

CAROLINE: *(She comes back down and seeing him, hugs him hard.)* Oh, Thurber...! I'm sorry I didn't see you there. I thought you'd be getting ready for the dance by now. It's so great to have you back home today, Thurber.

THURBER: Well, if you'd told me about your accident, I'd have come home sooner.

CAROLINE: Didn't want to worry you. *(Fighting tears, she starts up the stairs again.)* Thurber, let me get out of these wet clothes and I'll come back down, I promise.

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

CAROLINE: ...I been in the rain all my life, Thurber. You got your stars, I got my rain.

THURBER: Same thing. Sit down.

CAROLINE: Thurber, I have to go cry!

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

CAROLINE: I messed up your homecoming...

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

CAROLINE: Stop it, Thurber.

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

CAROLINE: Thurber, I –

THURBER: I don't want to hear it. I don't know if I'm the first one to notice this or not, but I'll just bet you *somebody* is hot on my heels -- even in godforsaken Hallelujah, Texas, *somebody* is bound to notice...

CAROLINE: *(Hiding her face in her hands.)* I'm a freak.

THURBER: *(Pulling her hands away.)* Somehow I doubt that, Caroline. Tall girls are coming back.

CAROLINE: Not in Hallelujah, Texas. In Hallelujah, Texas, I am Miss Mills the Music Teacher and I'm gonna die an old maid in a rain storm...

THURBER: *(Grinning)* Care to wager? I could use the cash.

CAROLINE: *(Grinning in spite of herself)* Oh, Thurber... I thought you were a big time rodeo cowboy, going out on the road.

THURBER: I found out a lot of things out there on the road. Found out I wasn't getting anywhere.

CAROLINE: But you got all the way to Vegas!

THURBER: The more miles I went the less far away it really was. So after a while I just turned around and came back. .. Wasn't that far. I just had a hard time finding a place to turn around... As Uncle J.B. says, eventually you always come home, no matter how far away you go. *Ain't no place that far away.* .. Seems like there would be. .. Bless Uncle J.B's heart. ...

...I wasn't a big time rodeo cowboy, Caroline. Wasn't any good. Tended stock when I could get the work.

CAROLINE: But, Thurber, you said you –

THURBER: I lied. Didn't want you to worry. .. Didn't want me to worry.

CAROLINE: Oh, Thurber...

THURBER: Some of us hold on to our best dreams a lot longer, that's all.

CAROLINE: (*Turning away.*) Don't talk to me about dreams!

THURBER: Caroline, I only remember one time when I ever saw you riled up like this. And it had something to do with Artie Browning.

CAROLINE: Leave me alone.

THURBER: Does it have something to do with Artie Browning?

CAROLINE: (*Turning on him*) You promised me you would never tell a soul, Thurber Mills!

THURBER: I didn't tell a soul. .. I hear Artie Browning has a big band now. Plays in Dallas and Fort Worth sometime. (*Pause*) Looks like holding on to old dreams runs in this family. (*Pushing her to the stairs*) Now you get ready for this dance. I'm not going by myself.

CAROLINE: Well, you'll just have to! Because I'm sure not going! I wouldn't be caught dead at it!

THURBER: Please don't put it like that...

CAROLINE: Well, I'm not kidding.

THURBER: Now, Caroline, I barely made it here in time for Homecoming and I'm sure not going to the dance without you. Why in the world won't you go to Homecoming?

CAROLINE: I'm not going to the dance!!!

THURBER: Who's playing for the dance...?

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

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

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

THURBER: You saw him tonight?

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

THURBER: What did he take?...

CAROLINE: He was rehearsing. Alone.

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

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

THURBER: Caroline...

CAROLINE: I was so looking forward to tonight. I was hoping maybe – just maybe – but I didn't know that – that -- (*Tears...*)

THURBER: (*Softly*) He caught you dreaming...

CAROLINE: Haven't talked to him in so long. I went when he played sometimes – when I could. He didn't notice. Tonight just – it just kicked up a lot of old memories.

THURBER: Good ones or bad ones?

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

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

CAROLINE: (*Resisting*) No, I look awful!

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

CAROLINE; Hell you can!

THURBER: I may be shorter but I'm a lot more determined than you are. I always was.

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

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

(The telephone ring pierces the moment. Both jump. Thurber picks it up slowly.)

THURBER: Hello. *(Breathing quickly)* Oh, Hi, Honey Jo... *(Pause)* Yes, it has, it sure – has... Uh -- Listen, Honey Jo, I was going to call you but I just – uh – *(He looks at Caroline, her face filled with pain at the sound of Honey's name.)* – I just got in. .. You do? Well, maybe for a few minutes -- if you want me to. *(Pause)* Look, I can come over now. .. Sure. *(Pause)* What did you say? .. Okay. Just a minute. *(He looks up.)*

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

CAROLINE: *(Voice breaking)* I can't talk to her.

THURBER: Why? What's wrong?

CAROLINE: I just can't talk to her, that's all...! *(She runs upstairs.)*

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

(He puts the telephone down slowly, lovingly, as though it were alive. He takes a deep breath. He walks out on the porch and peers into the night as if it had answers. Blackout.)

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

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

HONEY: *(Surprised)* Artie...! What are you doing here? It's nearly time for the dance, you should be –

ARTIE: Can I see you for a minute?

HONEY: But Artie --

ARTIE: *(Pulling her toward him insistently.)* Honey Jo, I have to talk to you. It's important. It can't wait.

HONEY: Well, alright then... *(She turns back, says something to someone inside, then steps outside and pulls the door shut behind her.)* What's wrong, Artie?

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

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

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

HONEY: Artie...

ARTIE: I didn't know about Thurber, Honey Jo. I didn't know there was anybody. But I don't care. I just spent the worst half hour of my life. Nothing makes any sense to me right now. Except that maybe I care like hell if you're with Thurber tonight. Everything is going haywire nowadays. You never know what's going to happen. I don't want to waste anymore time or hurt anybody else or get hurt myself. *(He clears his throat.)*

Honey, I think I love you. .. And I wanna know how you feel...

HONEY: Oh, Artie...

(He puts his arms around her and kisses her, gently at first, then hard. Surprised and groping, finally she responds to his insistence -- as Thurber Mills walks up the aisle through the audience and into the yard... Hearing steps Honey looks around in disbelief -- disheveled, dazed, and breathless. She pulls away from Artie, who steps back awkwardly.)

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

THURBER: I came through the pasture...

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

THURBER: *(Hunggrily)* Oh, Honey, I -- Oh, Honey, I –

HONEY: *(Hunggrily)* Thurber... It's been so – such a –

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

HONEY: It's been really terribly --

THURBER: You can't imagine how –

HONEY: Yes, I can, I didn't think I –

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

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

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

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

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

ARTIE: Thurber, I didn't know that –

HONEY: Really, we just, I mean –

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

HONEY: (*Painfully*) No! Oh, don't go, Thurber, please don't go...!

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

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

ARTIE: (*Eyes wide*) Did he misunderstand?

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

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

(Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ACT III, Scene 3 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Oh, Honey, I Love You" ☆ ☆ ☆
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The Mills Home. The porch and Living Room are empty. "Eleven" plays softly, reminiscent of lost childhood memories, while Thurber comes up the aisle alone, crestfallen. He walks slowly up the porch steps, swaying the swing hauntingly.

THURBER: *(Plaintively looking at the audience as if they could help him.)* Oh, Honey Jo, Honey Jo... Where does it all go!? Where do all your day dreams go? Is someone keepin' them for you, so they aren't all lost, like you are? Some of them were so nice... My God, but some of them were so good...

You hypocrite, Thurber Mills! You tell Caroline to go after her dreams and be that beautiful thing she is. But you can't say the one thing you know you have to say for yourself -- that will bring that woman you love into your arms forever! *(A spotlight shines on him, and sometimes a little glitter falls...)*

"OH, HONEY, I LOVE YOU"

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

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

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

Why do the best ones leave you,
Before you can figure it out?
You wanted to ask her something,
But she says they're going out,

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

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

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

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

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

*(The lights become bluish and dreamy; "Hitchcock's Theme"
intermingles with the tones for a moment with high thin music
and distant voices...)*

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

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

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

☆☆☆

(He opens the door and goes into the house to the telephone. He stares at it. He picks it up, frozen -- as Honey Jo Waller in tight slacks and sweaters hurries up the aisle and onto the porch.)

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

THURBER: Honey, I...

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

THURBER: Why?

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

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

HONEY: Please let me come in.

THURBER: *(Sighing)* Oh, alright... *(His eyes follow her body as she passes him. She takes off her sweater jacket provocatively and drapes it on a chair. The air is thick and hungry.)*

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

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

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

THURBER: I mean whatever you mean.

HONEY: Oh, Thurber, even I don't know what I mean!!

THURBER: Then how do you expect me to?

HONEY: *(Plaintive)* Thurber, you sent me a post card five years ago! So what do you want from me?!

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

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

THURBER: (Softening) What did you say, Honey?

HONEY: It didn't make any sense.

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

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

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

HONEY: Well, that's just not something that people automatically know.

THURBER: Some people do... (Breathing hard)

HONEY: Well, Thurber, you – you never did try to help me understand those things...

THURBER: (Moving to her.) I didn't know you wanted my help...

HONEY: (Taking his hand.) Well, I did, Thurber.

THURBER: I wish you'd of asked me.

HONEY: But, Thurber – I – I couldn't...

THURBER: Why?

HONEY: Um -- well – I was afraid you'd think I didn't like your poetry. I did – I liked it so much when you came over and read poems to me. You have no idea how much I liked it. But I didn't understand them...

THURBER: I'm glad you told me that.

HONEY: Why?

THURBER: Because I thought you understood them. And if you didn't then that explains a lot of things. Like why you would always look off somewhere just at the important part.

HONEY: Thurber, I didn't know what the important part was!!

THURBER: Oh, I see now... And all this time I thought you were just a very – kind of stand offish person. Really nice. But kinda' stand offish.

HONEY: (Advancing ominously) Thurber Mills, I know you could think a lot of things about a person, honey, but I don't see how you could ever look at me and whatever else you could think, you could think that I was a "stand offish"

person. .. I just don't see that. I see a lot of things, Thurber, but I just don't see that! (*Smoldering. It is, indeed, hard to understand...*)

THURBER: Uh - I don't know how these things happen to me. I guess I should have explained about the post card. And I was feeling so good about the post card...

HONEY: Well, Thurber, I was trying. I just didn't get it.

THURBER: But I mailed it five years ago.

HONEY: I didn't mean the postcard, Thurber, I got the postcard!

THURBER: Oh. Well, would like me to explain it now? (*She looks ominous; he backs off.*) Or maybe you'd rather I didn't.

HONEY: (*Advancing*) I didn't come over here for you not to explain to me about the postcard, Thurber...

THURBER: Uh - uh, I guess not. Well, uh -- you remember it had these nice hills...?

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

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

HONEY: (*Moving closer.*) Uh-hummm....

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

HONEY: (*Moving closer*) Yes...

THURBER: They just roll around through the grass and flowers... (*Aching*) You never know what's coming up with a winding road. ..

HONEY: I see...

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

HONEY: (*Inching closer.*) Mmm-hum...

THURBER: (*So close, staring helplessly into her beauty.*) The roads are - very gentle - and quiet and endlessly - curving. And the hills are endlessly vulnerable. And - it all comes together so beautifully... (*Staring, mouth open, eyes shadowed with pain but endlessly appreciative.*) Oh, Honey, I - Oh, Honey, I -

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

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

HONEY: *(Rebuffed)* Well, I *tried* to, Thurber.

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

HONEY: *(He didn't say what she wanted him to say. Irritated, she moves away.)* Is that all you have to say to me, Thurber Mills?! *(With irony)* Well! Maybe you could take me with you next time -- we could go look for some roads!

THURBER: *(Catching her tone.)* Honey, what's the matter? *(She glares)* You're mad. This always happens to me.

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

THURBER: I know there's something wrong here. You have to tell me what it is.

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

THURBER: Well, I just told you -- about things!

HONEY: Yes, but it wasn't -- you didn't -- *(Looking away from him.)* Oh, that wasn't it, Thurber.

THURBER: Would it help any if I kissed you again?

HONEY: Oh, I don't know... *(Turning to him hungrily.)* Sure as hell wouldn't hurt any... *(They grab each other furiously and kiss passionately. Thurber buries his face in her hair, kissing her neck. She is beside herself, gasping.)* Oh, Thurber, oh, Thurber -- I never can get myself together before you've got me all apart again...

THURBER: I thought about you all the time...

HONEY: Well, THURBER, it would have been real nice if I'D of known that!

THURBER: Did you think about me?

HONEY: Oh, yes, but -- it always got mixed up, with these -- these -- roads! *(Exasperated)* Oh, Thurber, we don't speak the same tongues.

THURBER: What was that about tongues? *(He kisses her again.)*

HONEY: *(Gasping)* It doesn't matter --

THURBER: Oh, Honey I -- Oh, Honey I -- *(He pulls back, suddenly terrified.)*

HONEY: What, Thurber? What? What?

THURBER: Why were you and Artie Browning standing on that porch kissing like there was no tomorrow? That's what I have trouble understanding...

HONEY: Uh – uh – he – uh, Thurber, that's real hard to explain right now.

THURBER: Try me. I explained about the roads. You explain about Art Garfunkel...

HONEY: It's not the same thing...! *(Deep breath)* Well, he was – he came over to talk to me. And he said it was very important, and so I said I'd talk to him – he's been very very – nice to me lately – so I asked him what was wrong and he said he hoped he wasn't acting like an idiot and I said I'd tell him if he was.

THURBER: *(With a little tone)* But you didn't.

HONEY: *(Exasperated)* Oh, Thurber! *(Seizing her opportunity.)* He said to me, **Honey, I think I love you! Just like that!** *(She looks to see if he's getting the idea. Thurber gasps.)*

THURBER: He SAID that?!

HONEY: Yes, he did, Thurber Mills! He said that! Right out loud!

THURBER: Oh, my God...

HONEY: Well, this hasn't been an easy night for me either, Thurber. First the lights went out at the Rec Hall and then there was a giant cowboy roping Rainbows and then we called the police and then when I got home, Artie was – *(Thurber grabs her and shakes her intensely.)*

THURBER: What?! There was a what?!!

HONEY: My GOODNESS, Thurber! Thurber, you're hurting me! *(He releases her.)*

THURBER: Tell me about the cowboy! Tell me! What was his name?!

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

THURBER: *(Grabbing her again)* Where did he come from? Where did he go?!

HONEY: Well, my **GOODNESS**, Thurber! *(She yanks away, straightening hair and sweater.)* The lights went out and he just sort of appeared in the doorway during the storm. Right in the stained glass doors, all shimmering in the lightning – oh, Thurber, did you see that lightening? It was so terrible and strange!

THURBER: What did he do?!

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

THURBER: GONE?!!!!

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

THURBER: Didn't he say anything?!

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

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

HONEY: You've gotta **GO**?!!!!

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

HONEY: **THURBER MILLS, IF YOU GO RIGHT NOW, YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO FOR GOOD...!!!**

THURBER: (*Frustrated*) Aw, Honey! Now, don't be this way! This is important!!

HONEY: And what am I?!!!!

THURBER: But, Honey!!!

HONEY: I mean it, Thurber. I can't take it anymore. I'm only human, I'm **VERY** human, Thurber -- and I... .. Oh, Thurber, I just can't take it! (*She puts her arms around him tight. Gently he pulls them away.*)

THURBER: Honey, please, please... Not now. Please!! (*She runs out in a fury. He didn't expect that.*) Honey!! (*He goes to the door. She is gone already, running up the aisle.*) Oh, shoot...! (*He runs up the aisle a little, after her.*) Honey Jo Waller! (*Slowly he turns and walks back to the stage. He looks up in the sky.*) Oh, Hitchcock! (*A few sparkles of glitter fall provocatively. Swiftly he turns and runs around the corner of the house in the direction of the Corral.*)

HITCHCOCK.....! (*Blackout.*)

☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT IV, Scene 1 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Cowboy High" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆

The curtain rises on the Corral, dark and ominous; stars are twinkling in a little moon light. Thurber Mills runs up the aisle. Lightening flashes, illuminating the entire theatre in a strange electric white strobe – no thunder. Thurber approaches the fence where he last saw Hitchcock Huddleston. Another flash of lightning -- and Thurber ducks behind the cactus, arms over his head. Suddenly before him a strong spotlight beam shines straight down from above. He walks into it, basking in its warmth. "*Hitchcock's Theme*" begins to play. After a moment he speaks -- through warm, old memories...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hitchcock, I want to be a real cowboy now... The kind that takes centuries. .. Please give me another chance.

(Lightning flashes, drowning out the spotlight. Nearby in a brilliant series of white hot flashes, smoke, fog and sparkles, a glimmering and magnificent Hitchcock Huddleston materializes, as from an explosion of emotional atoms, gleaming. "Hitchcock's Theme" playing vibrantly.)

HITCHCOCK: HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW TO PLAY?

THURBER: **Hitchcock!!!**

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

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

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

THURBER: You mean my beauty...?!

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

THURBER: I can't believe you're here again...!

HITCHCOCK: BEST BELIEVE IT OR I'LL BE GONE IN A POOF. TRICKY THOSE POOFS.

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

HITCHCOCK: YOU LEARNED ABOUT GEOGRAPHY?

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

HITCHCOCK: THE FUTURE.

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

HITCHCOCK: IT IS A GAP IN TIME.

THURBER: This town is a gap in Time?

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

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

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

THURBER: I was desperate.

HITCHCOCK: AND SO IT WILL HAPPEN EVERYWHERE. PEOPLE ARE BECOMING DESPERATE AND IN THEIR WILDNESS THEY WILL FIND GAPS IN TIME, IN THE DEPTHS AND BURIED TREASURE OF OLD DESPAIR... GAPS THAT SPARKLE FROM A DIFFERENT FUTURE. I AM A GAP. AND YOU, IN YOUR OWN WAY, ARE ONE.

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

THURBER: I remember...

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

THURBER: I'm sorry, Hitchcock. But I was embarrassed and ashamed of them. I didn't want you to see my naked things. How grotesque it all seemed.

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

THURBER: You call it beauty. I call it exposure. .. Oh, Hitchcock, I'm so glad you're here... *(He extends his hand. Hitchcock walks to him and picks him up, and they hug joyfully as the prairie begins to sparkle all on its own. Embarrassed but happy)* I would have died before if I'd thought cowboys ever hugged...

HITCHCOCK: YOUR UNCLE GIVES YOU GOOD COUNSEL, THURBER. HE SAID DON'T BE ASHAMED OF WHAT YOU FEEL. IT'S ALL YOU BRING IN WITH YOU AND IT'S ALL YOU'LL BE TAKIN' AWAY...

NOW IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO START THINKING ABOUT WHAT YOU'LL BE PACKING...

THURBER: *(Catches his breath.)* Oh, no...! I was afraid of that... I won't get to have that kid, will I?

HITCHCOCK: THERE WILL BE OTHER TIMES.

THURBER: But not like this one. .. I regret so many things.

HITCHCOCK: NO, BE GLAD ABOUT THEM -- EXISTENCE HUNGERS FOR THEM, IT EATS YOUR DEPTHS AND YOUR JOY ALIVE AND IS NEVER SORRY OR LOSES A THING. NOT EVEN YOUR SORROW, WHICH IT SURRENDERS TO THE WILD EMOTION OF LIGHTNING STORMS AND SENDS BACK AS A MESSAGE TO YOU OF YOUR OWN FLASHES OF GLORY.

THURBER: ...It's the things for old time's sake that so call on you... How can you leave the things for old time's sake? Your cowboy hat and your rodeo dreams -- how can you leave it all behind?

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

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

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

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

HITCHCOCK: EVERY TIME YOU GOT ON A HORSE AND FELL BACK OFF AGAIN I RATTLED FOR YOU TO THE CORE. I SMILED, HOWEVER, AS WELL. FOR YOU WERE LEARNING.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HITCHCOCK: THE FEMININE BEING IS EVERYWHERE, THURBER, AND IN ALL OF US... IN SOME WORLDS YOU ARE ONE. BUT ALWAYS YOU WORK TO UNDERSTAND BOTH MALE AND FEMALE IN YOU AND IN OTHERS, TO JOIN THE ENERGIES IN OLD RIVERS, OLD TIMES...

THURBER: Are there really girls out there? (*He turns around in circles looking quizzically at the sky.*) Really, really, really?

HITCHCOCK: YOU HAVE A SOMEWHAT IDEAL NOTION OF WHAT'S OUT THERE, THURBER. ACTUALLY IT'S AS WILD AS IT IS WONDERFUL AND NOT AT ALL FOR THE FAINTHEARTED. COSMIC COWGIRLS CAN BE A LOT MORE THAN YOU BARGAIN FOR...

THURBER: Try me!

HITCHCOCK: I DON'T THINK YOU'RE READY FOR IT!

THURBER: Come on, I'm ready for it, I'm ready for it! Come on! Come on!

HITCHCOCK: BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR.

THURBER: It's not fair. You keep them all to yourself, like an old prospector who won't tell anybody where his gold mine is...

HITCHCOCK: ALRIGHT, COWBOY! (*With a wave of his arm stars gleam in heavenly cowgirl constellations; from the sky star dust begins to fall. Fog forms upstage and music begins in the distance.*)

THURBER: I'll bet I can guess what they look like -- my very best dreams!!

(Hitchcock conducts -- and the Cosmic Cowgirls in silver cowgirl outfits, sparkling and flashing from head to toe, begin to tap dance in, singing. Thurber is aghast, for they are truly stunning, provocative, breathtaking. But after a moment their ominous, dangerous quality is all too apparent. They advance toward Thurber, tap dancing, doing high kicks -- each sending out flashing sparks toward him to sting and surprise. He hops out of the way and crouches, genuinely frightened. Among them we see Cowgirls that look amazingly like Cindy Lou, Stella Nell, and Emma Mae...)

"COSMIC COWGIRLS"

COSMIC

COWGIRLS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

☆☆☆

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

THURBER: Oh, my...!! Oh, my...!! They are quite – dangerous, aren't they?!

HITCHCOCK: THEY CAN BE SWEETLY NURTURING AND SWALLOW YOU WHOLE IN THEIR WARMTH. OR WILDLY SOARING AND KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FEET!

THURBER: I know all about that kind of love...

HITCHCOCK: THE LOVE YOU CAN NEITHER UNDERSTAND NOR DENY...
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE... BUT NO MORE DANGEROUS THAN RAINBOWS
OR DAY DREAMS...

(The huge glowing Rainbow from Thurber's childhood reappears grandly. Thurber is ecstatic.)

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

HITCHCOCK: ...UNTIL THEY ARE READY...

THURBER: *(Pause)* What if I can't go through with it, Hitchcock? I'm not sure if I can – go now... I never did tell her, Hitchcock And I have to tell her. It's not time 'til I tell her. .. I don't know how I'm going to do that. I practiced. But I don't know if I practiced enough.

HITCHCOCK: PRACTICE CANNOT GO ON FOREVER.

THURBER: Mine seems to. But I'll do it. I know I have to.

HITCHCOCK: ...TONIGHT.

THURBER: ...So soon?

HITCHCOCK: YES.

THURBER: *(A deep breath.)* I was afraid of that. I thought about it today. I said to myself, it's all happening so fast. So desperately. And I held her, too, and she let me. And that was desperate, too.

HITCHCOCK: DESPARATELY WE TAKE ON THESE TIMES. TO BE EXTRAVAGANT TOGETHER IN THE UNIVERSE REQUIRES UNIMAGINABLE DESPERATION – YET WE MUST BE EVEN MORE DESPERATE BEFORE WE WILL BEAR THE ULTIMATE EXTRAVAGANCE OF AN EMOTIONAL BEAUTY COMING TO KNOW ITSELF AS INFINITE -- BARE OF THE LAST CHEAP TINSEL AND DRESS-UP DREAMS...

THURBER: Caroline always like to play dress-up... Now she's a for-real dream. God, she's so beautiful and so bitter and there's nothing I can do. *(Voice breaking)* Will she be okay?

HITCHCOCK: I WILL BE THERE...

THURBER: But how – no. I don't think I even want to know.

HITCHCOCK: ...I HAVE FOR SOME TIME BEEN NEAR HER.

THURBER: What do you mean? *(Suddenly)* The Caddo bridge? The accident?

HITCHCOCK: IT WAS NO ACCIDENT.

THURBER: *(Ominously)* What did you do to her?

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

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

HITCHCOCK: I AM ALWAYS THERE WHEN SHE NEEDS ME TO BE THERE.

THURBER: Oh, Hitchcock -- I should have known you'd only help her. But you frighten me sometimes. You're so --

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

THURBER: Another race.

HITCHCOCK: ANOTHER TIME.

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

HITCHCOCK: AM I SO ALIEN...?

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

HITCHCOCK: *(He smiles and touches Thurber's shoulder. Electric sparks)* DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT AS I WAS YOUR IMAGINARY PLAYFELLOW, SO YOU WERE MINE...?

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

HITCHCOCK: SO I'VE HEARD...

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

HITCHCOCK: ...SHE IS AN OLD FRIEND...

THURBER: Caroline Mills?!?

HITCHCOCK: TO ME SHE IS ANOTHER, A BELOVED OTHER.

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

HITCHCOCK: *(Smiling)* NOT IN YOUR TERMS, THURBER. BUT IN MY TERMS WE ARE KINDRED LOVING SPIRITS ACROSS MANY DIMENSIONS, WHERE WE HAVE LEARNED AND JOINED AS DEAR HEARTS IN MANY THINGS, AND WE HAVE BEEN MANY THINGS...

THURBER: But she's in love with Artie Browning! *(Hitchcock begins to shimmer, as Artie's song, "Imagine Me" begins to play, mixed with "Hitchcock's Theme".)*

HITCHCOCK: THE SINGER OF ELECTRIC LIGHTS? *(He glows and lights flash around him; strange similarities to Artie emerge.)* THE BAND OF MANY COLORS, FLASHING AND LEARNING IN ITS ELECTRICITY AND MUSICAL STARS?!!!! YES, "STARBUSTERS," A BAND FOR THE UNIVERSE!! .. QUITE A SPARKLING FELLOW, THIS ARTIE BROWNING...

THURBER: What in the world have you to do with Artie Browning?!?

HITCHCOCK: *(He laughs and beams.)* LET US JUST SAY THAT -- HE IS A FELLOW AFTER MY OWN HEART...

THURBER: Artie Browning?!

HITCHCOCK: DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE ME ALL TO YOURSELF? WE HAVE NOTHING TO OURSELVES. WE ARE MANY PEOPLE, TO MANY PEOPLE. SURELY YOU DO NOT THINK THE ONE WOULD BE ENOUGH? WE CROSS OVER MANY BRIDGES AND WATERS, CREATING CHANGING FIELDS AND FACES. WE EXPRESS OURSELVES IN SO MANY WAYS, IN SO MANY TIMES, AND YET ALWAYS, ALL AT ONCE!! *(He flashes and gleams; the phrase "Imagine me..." is heard as if in a tunnel, sung by Artie's voice.)*

THURBER; But that's impossible! I know you! I know Artie Browning, and I know --

HITCHCOCK: DEAR THURBER! THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH THAN YOU DREAM...! OPEN YOUR EYES...

THURBER: But – but --

HITCHCOCK: TO DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE, WE ARE BLIND TO OTHER SELVES, WE CANNOT ALWAYS SEE THE WAY HOME. BUT WE LEARN SOMETHING NEW ABOUT WHO WE ARE EACH TIME WE ENTER THE DARKNESS... WE LEARN TO LIGHT UP THIS SHADOWY MAZE. WE COME TO KNOW OURSELVES AS NEW BEINGS IN NEW DAYS. WE ARE SPECTACULARLY BEAUTIFUL AND ENRICHED. AND WE ARE SUCH BEAUTIFUL *PRETENDERS...*

THURBER: Oh, Hitchcock... Are you saying that you – that my – that my Caroline is your true love...?

HITCHCOCK: WE GRAPPLE WITH OUR DELICATE HEARTS NO MATTER WHERE WE GO OR WHO WE ARE, FOR THAT IS HOW WE BECOME LIFE; IN THE END OUR HEARTS ARE DEARLY HELD IN THE ARMS OF THOSE WE MOST DEARLY LOVE AND WE COME TO TRUST THEM AS OUR OWN. YES, I, TOO, DO DEEPLY LOVE.

THURBER: ...Oh, Hitchcock... *(A pause)* I don't want to go!!! Must it be tonight?! Oh, God! I love her so much... I wanted so much to...

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW, I KNOW, MY FRIEND.

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

HITCHCOCK: YOU CAN'T GO BACK FOR THEM. BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS LOVE THEM AND BECOME PART OF THEM AND GROW UP WITH THEM. AND HOW FAR YOU'VE COME TONIGHT.

THURBER: Yes... But how far I still have to go.

HITCHCOCK: AS YOU SAID, IT'S NEVER THAT FAR FROM HOME... YOU WILL SEE. AND THERE WILL BE OTHERS. AND THEY WILL HEAR YOUR POETRY AS YOU FIRST MEANT ITS WORDS AND FOLLOW IT TO FIND YOU. YOU WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN...

THURBER: Will you – will you...

HITCHCOCK: I SHALL BE HERE, WAITING...

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

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW.

THURBER: Hitchcock, I – I --

HITCHCOCK: I KNOW... I KNOW, MY FRIEND.

"MY FRIEND FOR ALL TIME"

HITCHCOCK: You are my friend, my friend for all Time.
You say my name, I sing to Rainbows.
A golden testament to our words lives beyond
And your face lives always in my Windows.

You are my Home, my friend.
I live in your name and I do not end.
My spirit is born where yours is born.
If my Land does not end,
Then your Land is ever re-born.
And always I love you, my friend.
And always I love you, my friend.

You are my brother, my brother and my kin,
No farther away than you can sing walking all day.
A master of your times, you ride the road within,
Brotherhood will intersect our hearts on the way.

You are my Home, my friend.
I live in your name and I do not end.
My spirit is born where yours is born.
If my Land does not end,
Then your Land is ever re-born.
And always I love you, my friend.
And always I love you, my friend.

Your beauty is living and it welcomes you
No matter how far or how afraid you are,
You stand beside me on this prairie to renew;
With every word of courage, you go to meet that Star...

TOGETHER: You are my Home, my friend.
I live in your name and I do not end.
My spirit is born where yours is born.
If my Land does not end,
Then your Land is ever re-born.
And always I love you, my friend.
And always I love you, my friend...

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THURBER: You are my friend forever, Hitchcock....

HITCHCOCK: AS YOU ARE MINE. ..

THURBER: Well, I've got something real important to do now.

HITCHCOCK: DEATH IS THE MOST POWERFUL MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE...

THURBER: You want to get the important parts right. ... Even in West Texas.

HITCHCOCK: *(Beaming)* HALLELUJAH!!

THURBER: *(Grinning)* Yes!!

HITCHCOCK: HALLELUJAH, TEXAS...!!

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

HITCHCOCK: IT'S A NICE THING TO CRY FOR. ALL PRAIRIED AND FENCED AND CATUSED AND GLEAMING! *(The whole prairie, the mountains, the cactus, the fence — all begins to sparkle with colors and lights at his bidding.)*

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

HITCHCOCK: IT IS YOURS TO KEEP FOREVER. .. ONCE YOU WANTED ONLY TO LEAVE IT...

THURBER: I didn't know what it was...

HITCHCOCK: DRY YOUR TEARS. JOY IS PRICELESS.

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

HITCHCOCK: WHEN YOU CAN TELL HER YOU LOVE HER, YOU WILL FREE HER. ALLOW HER TO FIND HER OWN WAY IN THIS.

THURBER: I'll lose her forever.

HITCHCOCK: SHE WILL ALWAYS BE THERE.

THURBER: I wasted so much time. She was everything to me. .. But I know I must let her go. I waited too long. The longest you can wait is all the time. .. She will grow up now, too.

HITCHCOCK: YES.

THURBER: *(He bows his head.)* Hitchcock, what will -- will it be --

HITCHCOCK: I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, THURBER. THAT FUTURE TEACHES WHAT NOTHING ELSE CAN TEACH.

THURBER: Hitchcock, I'm afraid...

HITCHCOCK: BUT YOU HAVE YOUR BEAUTY NOW... *(He smiles gently.)*

THURBER: *(Finally smiling.)* Yes, I do, don't I? .. Well! I've got a dance to go to. ..

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

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

HITCHCOCK: YES... I'LL BE SEEING YOU -- COWBOY...

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

"COWBOY HIGH" (Reprise)

THURBER: I will ride the Night,
I'll catch up with Light,
With the voices of men
Who will sing again.

HITCHCOCK: Following silver hoofbeats
In the blue-green wind,
Whispering star-crossed stories
Out where the campfires begin...

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

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

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

The Mills Home. Down the stair case walks a radiant Caroline Melody Mills, ready for the dance. She is incredibly beautiful, her dark otherworldly eyes shimmering in extravagant lashes, her height soaring; the landscape a dream. Leaning against the wall is a large framed poster. Carefully she hangs it in a prominent place, a place reserved for it -- a poster of Artie's Band, "Starbusters." In Artie's eyes and about him is the aura of Hitchcock – gleaming teeth and eyes – the resemblance striking, the image shifting as if it were alive. She looks at the poster lovingly; it glows in response.. She dances a few steps around the room, hugging herself, enjoying for a moment her own beauty privately. She stops and looks up at the poster and as she does, a reflection of Hitchcock appears strangely in a mirror on the wall, watching her with eternal affection...

CAROLINE: Maybe Thurber's right. I have to find out once and for all. I should go to that dance.. *(She whirls around then stands looking dreamily at the poster.)* We're so alike, Thurber and I. Dreaming on a porch that lives somewhere in Time... That's Our Town... *(She sings.)*

"THERE'S A TOWN IN TIME"

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

Time gets lost forever,
Dreaming in the yard.
And you will always be my Sweetheart

My sweet, sweet heart.
My sweet, sweet heart.

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

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

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(She walks slowly to examine her image in the mirror...On seeing Hitchcock's image there, she jumps back and gasps in surprise. Slowly Hitchcock's beautiful form disappears. She looks for him for a moment, then turns back to straighten her hair and see if she really is what Thurber said: The greatest lookin' girl he ever saw.... She walks to the stairs.)

CAROLINE: Uncle J.B.? Uncle J.B., I've decided to go to the dance.. I want you to see my dress... I know you said people don't pay much attention to you, just a select few. But I want you to know that I'm listening now, and I've decided to give this old Town another try.

I can't find Thurber, Uncle J.B.! Have you seen him?! He's supposed to take me to the dance...

(Blackout.)

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☆ ☆ ACT IV, Scene 2 ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Falling Star" ☆ ☆
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The Homecoming Dance is drawing to a close. Decorations sparkle and glitter in the revolving globe, shimmering in the stained glass windows. It is a dream-like setting of pastels, wishes, and anticipation. Artie's band is playing their theme, "Starbusters" and the dancers are grabbing partners. Onstage are Cindy Lou, Stella Nell and Emma Mae -- and all of the participants in the Homecoming Dance; Caroline is nowhere to be seen. Near the bandstand Honey Jo Waller stands looking up at Artie Browning appreciatively as he is looking down at her appreciatively – but she is also watching the door, in a last hope that "someone" will come to the dance after all. All hope seems lost as Artie, sparkling from every conceivable stitch – so reminiscent of Hitchcock's glimmering tall form, bids adieu for the evening...

ARTIE: I'd like to say thank you from the "Starbusters" for letting us be with you for this Homecoming night and make friends with history. Now I'd like you to choose your favorite partners as we close with "Starbusters!"

(He motions Honey Jo up on the bandstand beside him. The people begin to dance to "Starbusters." Suddenly wind whips open the double doors. Lightning strikes nearby. The band stops playing abruptly. Standing there is Thurber Mills, his eyes flashing wildly. Thunder rumbles. In the distance the theme from "Eleven" plays faintly as Thurber looks up to see Honey Jo standing by Artie.)

HONEY: Thurber...!! *(She moves toward him as if sleepwalking, drawn by some unseen celestial magnet, looking neither right nor left...)*

ALL: *(All through the hall whispers and murmurs are heard.)* It's Thurber Mills! He's back after all these years. Look -- it's Thurber Mills. He's come back...!

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

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

THURBER: I should have said it to you the first time I ever saw you because it's what I felt the first time. And it's what I felt every time since. And it's what I feel now. No matter what you do, I'm going to say it.

HONEY: Yes, Thurber?...

THURBER: Oh, Honey... *(It isn't going to be easy, no matter how much he practiced.)*
OH, HONEY, I LOVE YOU....! I LOVE YOU, HONEY!

HONEY: *(Moving toward him)* Oh, Thurber...!!!!

THURBER: Well, you do what you want now, Honey. I'll understand. And I won't ever forget you...

(He turns and walks out the door and up the aisle. White lightning flashes magnificently and nearby loud thuds are heard. Honey follows him up the aisle. The others crowd around the door, looking out.)

HONEY: Thurber!!! Come back!!!

VOICES: Meteors!! It's the meteors!! Watch out!!!!

HONEY: Thurber, NO!! NO!!!

(Thurber has gone up the aisle. Honey sees him fall and screams.)

HONEY: OH, MY GOD!!!! THURBER!!!! NO!!!!!!!

(She stares in disbelief. Dark chords sound. Artie has come behind her and looks out of eyes that have the glow and compassion of Hitchcock Huddleston -- never did they seem more the same as tears roll down his cheeks and he tries to wipe them away. In the glare of a final brilliant flash the theatre is completely and suddenly dark; totally silent. Slowly, slowly the chorus of "Cowboy High" plays softly as the lights fade to a Blackout.)

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ACT V, Scene 1
"Peace"
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One year later. The Episcopal Rec Hall. The sun is trying to go down... The chairs are stacked informally around the hall. It's set up for rehearsal. No stars hanging from the ceiling, but a few are still roaming around here and there a year later, not wanting to leave...

Artie Browning is on stage at the keyboards, humming and playing. His hair is longer; he seems more thoughtful. He still wears the silver medallion of Peace around his neck. The "Starbusters" poster above the bandstand now bears a large Peace symbol as well, which seems to dominate the space. Things glitter on his clothes and onstage – he appears more and more like Hitchcock.

Loud gusts of wind are bleating outside, whipping and whining. Jimmy D, Joe Dan and Billy Bob burst in through the double doors, blown in, papers swirling around them, wind whipping through the hall and dislodging a few things – including a few errant sparkly stars...

BANDMEMBERS: Hey, Artie! Whooh! There's a tornado out there!

ARTIE: Hey, guys. Where's the sheet music?

JIMMY D: A tornado ate it.

JOE DAN: That's nothing I think a big UFO landed over at the golf course!

ARTIE: Geez. What a day. .. Okay. You guys set up. This place is a mess. Billy Bob, I can't get all the lights to connect. Would you see what you can do?

BILLY BOB: I bet I can. *(The Bandmembers set up the bandstand.)*

ARTIE: Jimmy D, see if you can track down that sheet music.

JIMMY D: Okay. *(He goes out again.)*

(Downstage Artie pick up a few things that have blown around the room, straightens a few chairs. His eye catches one of the stars that's on the floor. He picks it up slowly, a spotlight catching him as he stares at the star, hypnotized in Time. His hair, his eyes -- everything about him gleams as he seems to be shifting into Hitchcock's electric energy.)

(Suddenly Cindy Lou tumbles in the door with shopping bags full of stars and a floppy skirt blowing everywhere. She pushes the doors to behind her – then stops dead in her tracks when she sees Artie staring at the fallen star...)

BANDMEMBERS: Hey, Cindy Lou!

CINDY: Hi, guys. *(She walks to Artie where he stands frozen in the spotlight. She touches his arm gently)* Hi Artie...

ARTIE: *(The spell broken)* Hi, Cindy Lou. How're you doing? How's Jimmy Lee?

CINDY: Fine, he's just fine. *(Shivering)* It's so strange being here again. Seeing you holding that star... Hard to believe it's been a whole year since we were all here for that Homecoming night – you know – when -- when --

ARTIE: When Thurber died...

CINDY: So much happened this year. Emma Mae's husband – you know Bill – he went over to Viet Nam -- before he got to see his newborn son.

ARTIE: I'm sorry -- I didn't even know they had a son....

CINDY: Yeah. It's hard to think about, with so many people going over there now. And so many people back here, wishing they wouldn't go... I try to put it out of my mind but now it's so personal. *(She sighs. She hands him some stars from the bag, to cheer him.)* Hey, I brought you some of the stars, just like you asked.

ARTIE: Wow... Thanks, Cindy Lou, I really appreciate it. Seems kind of silly, I guess, with everything that's going on. *(His eyes light up, dreaming in a different universe.)* ...But I – I really like them. They remind me of beautiful things, the things that make you happy... *(They twinkle in response. He smiles – his teeth and eyes gleam brilliantly like Hitchcock's.)*

CINDY: Artie, how do you do that?...

ARTIE: Do what?

CINDY: Get your teeth to flash on and off like that when you smile...

ARTIE: I dunno... *(He shrugs and wanders far downstage, lost in the stars he holds, lost somewhere in the cosmos,)*

CINDY: *(She follows him downstage.)* Artie, have you seen Honey Jo – since... Have you seen Honey Jo lately?

ARTIE: *(Looking up)* No...

CINDY: Oh.

ARTIE: *(Looking down at her.)* Thank you for bringing these, Cindy Lou. I mean it. *(Pause)* You know, Thurber's dying really hit me. I didn't expect it to hit me like that. It opened up something and I can't close it. I don't think I want to close it. You know, I thought I was in love with Honey Jo. And then I finally saw how much – how much she loved Thurber. And I realized that what I really wanted was for -- was for somebody to love me the way Honey Jo loved Thurber. *All the way... That was the look I saw in her eyes...*

CINDY: Sometimes love isn't what you think it's gonna be... *(Pause)* Have you seen Caroline since Thurber died?

ARTIE: No. I – uh -- I'm not sure she would wanna see me. Last time I saw her, she didn't seem too happy with me. Makes you think when people are unhappy with you. People die, you know. You don't want people to be unhappy with you.

JOE DAN: *(Calling out)* Hey Artie, I really like this new song.

ARTIE: Thanks.

CINDY: What's it about?

ARTIE: Oh, I'm writing some new stuff. I -- I used to write love songs. Now I just want to – I just want to sing something that really matters.

CINDY: Well, if I've learned one thing in all of this, Artie, one thing that really matters? It's that it really matters when you love somebody – and when they love you...

ARTIE: *(Staring into nowhere)* I'm done with love songs.

JIMMY D: Hey Artie. You didn't write any songs like this before.

ARTIE: I was thinking about it. I just didn't write it down.

JOE DAN: I think we need a new love song, too.

ARTIE: I dunno...

CINDY: I'm glad you like the stars, Artie...

ARTIE: I don't guess you have any Rainbows around anywhere...? *(A glowing smile. "Hitchcock's Theme" plays faintly in the background -- briefly. He looks into the bags)* Is this all?

CINDY: *(Laughing uproariously)* Oh, Artie, that's not nearly all!!

ARTIE: You have more stars?!?...

STELLA: *(The doors burst open.)* **We ALWAYS have more stars...!** *(Stella Nell enters grandly as Jimmy D holds the doors for her and helps her carry more bags of stars – grasping the sheet music he’s gathered.)*

(Stella Nell puts her bags down and opens the door wide in an ominous gesture. And through the door comes a spectacular Emma Mae... She seems to have become a star... Even her dress is sparkly. She’s carrying what appear to be hundreds of shopping bags of stars -- though that’s not possible. And they appear multiply at every turn. Jimmy D helps her carry more in from the porch.)

EMMA: Oh, my, I found them all!! I saved every one!! *(A couple of stars leap out of the bag happily. Artie smiles with pure pleasure...and gleaming teeth.)* It’s hard to keep them in the bag.

ARTIE: Oh, my God...!

CINDY: But there’s ten times as many stars as we had before. It must be the UFO...

ARTIE: I heard there was a UFO out by the golf course.

STELLA: Emma Mae, how many more bags of stars do you *have* out there?!

EMMA: *(Carrying in more)* I think of stars a little like I think of UFOs.

STELLA: Okay, I’ll bite.

EMMA: You never can have enough of those...

STELLA: Well, I say there’s no such thing as UFOs. *(She stops dead in her tracks.)* Of course, I don’t know why all of these things that don’t exist, keep winding up here... .. It must have started with that man who built telescopes in his backyard. They must of noticed him always looking up there.... And thought he was the welcoming committee...

EMMA: Mr. Tallman? I liked Mr. Tallman...

STELLA: Well, I just don’t have time for UFOs, I’m sorry. I have to get to the Country Club. *(She moves toward the door.)*

JIMMY D: Television crews are all over the place.

STELLA: It’s ridiculous. You can’t walk across the street without somebody wanting to interview you about how it feels to live with UFOs flying all over town.

CINDY: *(Laughing)* Well, I have a new dress that I thought I’d wear tomorrow. And if those TV people want to interview me, well, that’s just fine with me.

EMMA: ...What's the right thing to wear when you're going to be interviewed about a UFO? I always wondered about that...

STELLA: I don't think there's a dress code.

(Suddenly the wind whips up, we hear thunder and rain – loud, hard rain. Stella Nell sets her bags down.)

ARTIE: The rain's come... You better wait a while, Stella Nell.

STELLA: What a day! First the little tornadoes. Then the UFO. And now -- a hurricane! What else is going to happen?! *(A warning glance from Cindy Lou)*

BILLY BOB: *(Suddenly the instruments light up. He stands in triumph holding a wire.)*
I got it!!!!

ALL: Great job! Billy Bob! Woo hoo! *(Lightning appears in additional appreciation.)*

(The band members take their places on the stand, fiddling around with equipment. The girls pull up chairs nearby to listen.)

EMMA: ...Good thing you waited, Stella Nell. I don't know anybody who would go out in a rain storm like this... *(Artie looks up thoughtfully. He goes over to Emma Mae.)*

ARTIE: Emma Mae -- I wanted to say congratulations, I just heard! You have a new little son, that's great!

EMMA: He's a wonder...! I wish Bill was here. He went over to Viet Nam you know.

ARTIE: I heard. I'm -- I'm so sorry, Emma Mae.

EMMA: I didn't want him to go.

ARTIE: I don't want anybody to go. One day it could be your son -- or *my* son. I've been thinking about that...

EMMA: I just flat out told Bill -- don't go, please, don't go. I said I'd go to Canada with him. But I guess I couldn't kiss him hard enough or love him hard enough for him to understand me. *(Pause)* You have a Peace symbol on your poster, Artie.

ARTIE Yeah. .. Some people don't understand that.

EMMA: I don't know why peace is hard to understand. All you have to do is you don't kill anybody...

JOE DAN: But Emma Mae, what if somebody tries to kill you?

EMMA: What difference does it make about the reason? You don't kill anybody No matter what. Then you have peace.

JIMMY D: But what about –

EMMA: *(Crying out in tears -- emotions soaring)* **NO MATTER WHAT!!**

ARTIE: *(Softly, reaching out for her)* Emma, I'd really you to hear my new song. It would mean a lot to me if you'd tell me what you think. *(He finds a chair for her and she sits.)* It's called, "Is Peace Our Word for Home?"

"IS PEACE OUR WORD FOR HOME?"

ARTIE: My brother knows my reasons.
My sister knows my songs.
But we don't hate each other
When we think there's been some wrongs.

We sing something together.
We hit a word or two
Where we agree we're brothers.
What's the word, oh, man, what's the word?

Is Peace our word for Home?
Is Peace our word for Love?
Is Peace on Earth so wrong?
Why did we wait so long?

When we can see beyond this,
When we concede we knew
What she can say in one kiss: *(Looking at Emma)*
Don't go away, don't go away.

I want to go tomorrow.
I want to go today
To bring you back, my brothers –
Oh, my son! I can't wait.

Is Peace our word for Home?
Is Peace our word for Love?
Is Peace on Earth so wrong?
Why did we wait so long?

If I can't say my Peace now,
If I can't take these words
Into a field of killing
And not kill back,
What is my Word?

(Looking at Emma)
If I can't see my sister
In every eye against me,
How can I look inside me?
How can I free her? How can I be free?

Is Peace our word for Home?
Is Peace our word for Love?
Is Peace on Earth so wrong?
Why did we wait so long?

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(The group applauds slowly -- softly first, then loud, like unspoken words. Artie is looking directly at Emma Mae.)

EMMA: Artie?

ARTIE: What do you think, Emma?

EMMA: *(Pause)* I think you're beautiful and I hope you get to find your Peace...

ARTIE: *(He goes to hug her.)* Emma Mae, I hope Bill comes back home to you and your little son real soon...

JOE DAN: Artie, it's maybe your best song.

JIMMY D: It is your best.

JOE DAN: But I don't think you should give up writing love songs.

ARTIE: Why?

STELLA: *(Quietly)* I think it may have something to do with Peace...

CINDY: It's important, Artie...

ARTIE: *(Relenting)* Okay, okay, guys, I'll work on one. *(He smiles sheepishly.)*

STELLA: Now, I'm going to the Country Club, rain or no rain! Let's go, Cindy Lou!

(The wind blows the door open. A strike of bright lightning. A tall, eerie figure enters in long black raincoat and hood, drenched and mysterious.)

CINDY: Oh!!! Who is that? It's not that giant cowboy again, is it?

(Caroline Mills removes her hood – she's even more beautiful than ever – and taller.)

JOE DAN: *(Whistling in awe)* That's no cowboy....

ARTIE: *(Every part of him seems to gleam as he moves toward her....)* Caroline Melody Mills...! Soaking wet in a rainstorm... Again...

CAROLINE: This time I came prepared. I saw the clouds. I thought you guys would be rehearsing. *(She removes the long black raincoat like a bullfighter's cape. She is dressed from head to foot in black – tight sweater, slacks, boots. Her hair is sleek, held back with bright silver pins – the hair pins of the gods... She wears a colored pendant -- a Rainbow... She's stunning. She bores a hole looking through Artie with eyes he will never forget. He is mesmerized.)*

CINDY: Oh, Caroline! I'm so glad to see you! *(Hugging Caroline.)*

STELLA: Caroline, we miss you! You should come out more – come over.

CAROLINE: I will.

EMMA: I didn't know your name was Melody! That's something to be really thankful for, Caroline.

CINDY: I heard you stopped teaching music.

CAROLINE: I did. But I've been doing something else.

EMMA: Have you seen Honey Jo lately?

CAROLINE: Saw Honey Jo yesterday. We're really close. She's been just wonderful, encouraging me with what I've been doing.

ARTIE: ...What have you been doing? *(He stands before her, hypnotized. Looking into her eyes. Ready.)*

CAROLINE: *(She looks at him like there's no tomorrow.)* Well, that's kind of why I came over here tonight, Artie. I heard you were rehearsing and I have something for you. To sing... *(She reaches into her bag. Ceremoniously, she pulls out a black folder and hands it to him.)* I decided to try writing love songs...

BANDMEMBERS: *(Nodding affirmatively)* Un-huh... Love songs...

ARTIE: *(He stands transfixed looking into her eyes; then opens the folder and reads. Everyone is still. He looks up.)* This looks good.

CAROLINE: I have lots of copies. *(She hands them out to everybody.)*

ARTIE: Let's try this right now. *(The bandmembers set up the music and Artie begins to play and sing.)*

"NEVER WANTING YOU"

ARTIE: Never wanting you to do
 The things you do.
 Never wanting me to know
 How far I'd go.

(Artie pauses, motioning for Caroline to come up onstage.)

ARTIE: Sing with me.

CAROLINE: No, Artie, I want you to sing it.

ARTIE: Come on, you've got a good voice, Caroline. I've heard you.

ALL: Come on, Caroline. *(She joins him on the stage, sitting nearby. He plays while she sings to him. And he sees that look in her eyes....)*

CAROLINE: Never seeing you any more,
 Never knowing what this was for.
 Never stopping to think.
 Never going to the brink....

 Never singing songs too much
 That I can touch.
 Never knowing what you might
 Say back at night.

(Artie pauses again.)

ARTIE: Wow...

BAND MEMBERS: Wow... Caroline, you can really sing.

STELLA: I really like it, Caroline.

ARTIE: *(Holding her gaze)* Actually, it's kind of a great song. Okay, let's start from the beginning and you sing with the band.

CAROLINE: But don't you think --

ARTIE: Come on. Sing with us...

EMMA: Melody Mills! A name to remember...

ARTIE: What do you say? *(He smiles. His teeth gleam like stars – persuasively.)*

EMMA: *(Aside)* Oh! There's those sunshiny teeth again!

STELLA: *(Aside)* I don't think he can help it.

EMMA: Caroline, can we sing, too?

CAROLINE: *(Looking at Artie, taking everything in.)* Sure, Emma Mae.

(Artie steps over to the other players looking at the music with them. The girls move nearer the bandstand to sing along. Billy Bob stands up with a smile and triumphant gesture, flipping a switch. Now the entire bandstand and the whole room light up majestically.)

ALL: Ooohhh. Wow...

ARTIE: Okay. Here we go. *(They swing and sway in a kind of reverie, and as they do, the lights on the bandstand and the instruments pulse and sway as well... It is clear that Caroline and Artie are singing to each other -- things that could never be said before.)*

"GOING HOME WITH YOU"

CAROLINE: Never wanting you to do
The things you do.

ARTIE: Never wanting me to know
How far I'd go.

THE GIRLS: Never seeing you any more,
Never knowing what this was for.

THE BOYS: Never stopping to think.
:
Never going to the brink....

CAROLINE: Never singing songs too much
That I can touch.

ARTIE: *(Looking at her intently.)*
Never knowing what you might
Say back at night.

ALL: Never going to the dance.
Never risking the chance

CAROLINE *(Looking at Artie)* That you would see me there,
And you would stare...

ARTIE: *(Embarrassed)*
Never going home alone
Where there's a telephone.

CAROLINE: Never looking where

ARTIE: I wrote your number there...

CAROLINE: There's too much I don't want to feel.
I'm afraid it's all becoming real.

ARTIE: Never going to be through.

CAROLINE: Am I going home with you...?
ARTIE: Am I going home with you...?
ARTIE & CAROLINE: Always going home with you...
ALL: Always going home with you...

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(They applaud together and cheer Caroline. Artie and the others hug her.)

JOE DAN: Hey, Artie, I think you've got that new love song....

ARTIE: Maybe I do...

(Caroline and Artie talk alone together, his arm around her. The band members get together going over the music. Emma Mae, Stella Nell, and Cindy Lou move downstage as the slow rhythmic chords of "Stars!" begin to play in the background.)

EMMA: I think she's going to sing with Artie's band!

CINDY: I think she's going to do a lot more than sing with Artie's band... Stella Nell, you never made it to the Country Club.

EMMA: Sometimes you don't have to make it to the Country Club.

STELLA: *(Sighing, hypnotized by the stars)* Stars...!

TOGETHER: Stars...!

(More lights turn on and sparkle from everywhere on the bandstand, the instruments – the tableau of the new "Starbusters" with Artie Browning and Melody Mills becomes like a lighted poster... Little lights begin to outline the room, the chairs, little lights and new stars drop down from the ceiling... Emma Mae, Cindy Lou, and Stella Nell dance and sing "Stars!" as if in a dream. And as they reach up for stars, the stars seem to drop into their eyes...)

"STARS" (Reprise)

(The Cosmic Cowgirls Chorus and Cosmic Cowboys Chorus join in background harmonies and when all sing.)

GIRLS: Stars! Stars!

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

GIRLS: We've just begun...
(Looking up in unison)
Looking up there I can almost see Home...

CINDY: *(Holding stars in her hand)*

EMMA: No two stars ever look the same...
They always seem to know your name...
STELLA: They answer when you wish on them.
EMMA: They always start where you begin.

GIRLS: Stars! Stars!

STELLA: Where did all these stars come from?
(A magnificent apparition of Hitchcock appears above – and the vision of him and the vision of Artie onstage are glowing, iridescent, almost as one...)

EMMA: *(Slowly they turn in unison to look toward Hitchcock.)*
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!

GIRLS: *(A minor chord)* Stars! Stars!

EMMA: *(Wistfully)* But what about Honey Jo? I wonder where she is?

CINDY: Star light...
STELLA: Star bright...
EMMA: I wish I was a star tonight...

(All pose in tableau -- the twinkling lights of the room, outlining the bandstand and the "Starbusters," as the fading notes of "Stars!" recede -- and Emma Mae, Stella Nell, and Cindy Lou, Cosmic Cowgirls all, glitter into stardom...)

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☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ACT V, Scene 2 ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ "Always" ☆ ☆ ☆
☆ ☆ ☆

Later that night. The Corral. A light is on down the way and there's a bright moon peaking knowingly through some dark clouds. In the sky, the fading hues of what might have been an orangy sunset -- but for the storm. A few drops still fall here and there; things that got wet in the cloudburst now glisten. The Cactus is a brighter tone, pulsing with green. In the distance, sidling up to the clouds, a brilliant Rainbow is forming, picking up the leftover tones of twilight's orange against the dark grey clouds. All of the flowers that love the night seem to be popping up with little bright faces to watch something. Something interesting. The wind can be heard talking, a steady tone of longing and mischief, tossing things here and there. A tumbleweed.... A voice....

HONEY: Thurber...? *(Walking down the aisle toward the Corral, she's looking for someone. She runs around the Corral, searching frantically.)* Thurber...? I had a dream that you were down here. Did I imagine it?

THURBER: *(Thurber appears at first a ghostly apparition above the fence -- a vision with glittering cowboy outfit -- giving Hitchcock a run for his money...)* Honey Jo? Honey?

HONEY: *(She runs to him. Her dress clings to her in colors that don't exist anywhere else...)* I saw you in a dream. *(Floating down to the top of the fence near her, more real every moment. She gasps and reaches toward him -- electricity crackles loudly.)*

THURBER: I saw you, too...

HONEY: Oh, Thurber, are you a ghost? Well, I don't care anymore. I always knew that you would come back and call my name and here you are -- just like a miracle!

THURBER: Honey Jo, I want to get this right, now. I wrote this down so I could say everything I wanted to say to you... *(Reading. In the background soft themes play from "Oh, Honey, I Love You.")*

Dear Honey Jo. When I – left, I said, oh, Honey, I love you. But I didn't mean that I only loved you that day or that moment. Just because I couldn't say it before didn't mean I hadn't been sayin' it to you most of my life. Only you couldn't hear it in the words. So this is all the love that I never could say to you, Honey.

I call it: The Story of My Life. And there are a lot of people who have this story. It's not all mine. I'm giving it to you and I'm giving it to them, so they'll know the story even before they have to live in it. These are the lines *(To audience)*. All of you can use them.

Honey Jo Waller, if I could have been here with you, then this is what I would have said to you when the best part of me was loving you.. Thinking of you out in the desert.

(Speaking from the heart, no longer reading) In every prairie I have crossed on bare feet that were hardly mine, chasing rainbows with my best friend who roped me and told me to grab for my secret weapons, my beauty and my heart – in every one of those prairies and in every cloud I've watched rain itself to death, in every cowgirl in a sky full of hoof beats and horses who run away, in every cactus pulling up water from the ground where no one else can feel it and every dust storm whirling softly into your heartbeats, I have seen the power in your eyes, while you waited for me... I will see that look in your eyes for an eternity. How could I not tell you, that which I only knew...?

It was all I knew. You were all I knew. And yet when it was my time to speak, my poems, the best things I had to give you, all tumbled out on top of each other into some kind of mixed up cowboy bouquet – but oh, oh, if you had seen the wild fires of the cactus flowers that burned like the gold flecks in your eyes -- the bluebonnets in the sky that never say die and the roses in the tumbleweeds that look like a cowboy valentine but I didn't know how to mail it -- the honeysuckle vines that wanted to wrap around you and plant you in the rows of my mind – oh, those shining rows, so beautifully rolling, the rows, a Garden of Eden in an ocean of grinning sand...

HONEY: An ocean of grinning sand?... Oh, Thurber... I think you're going to have to explain this to me...

THURBER: Wait. I can tell you what it means now. The rows were shining because the tears had spilled out of my mind onto them because I love you so much that those tears I kept to myself had to get out of that Corral.... And finally I just let them all go and spread them everywhere so I could grow more wild flowers...and more Honey... That's the kind of thing I never could tell you before about my poems. I knew they didn't make any sense to you if I didn't tell you. It was the love that made them have some sense.

HONEY: But why couldn't you tell me?!

THURBER: ...I was afraid to love anything that much that somebody else could take away.

HONEY: But nobody took me away, Thurber... I was always there and I just wanted you to say it.

THURBER: I sent it to you in a Rainbow.... *(He looks up at the Rainbow. It twinkles..)*

HONEY: But I don't speak rainbow!

THURBER: *(Awed by her honey filled rainbow beauty...)* Oh, Honey Jo...! Rainbows are your *country*, Honey... Just like they're mine. *(The giant Rainbow sighs and sparkles.)*

HONEY: Well, rainbows are nice, Thurber. Really nice. But sometimes you have to *say* things without giving somebody some rainbows or some roses. Sometimes you just have to say it. When it really, really, really matters, you have to *say* it, Thurber. At least once.

THURBER: *(Sheepishly)* ...You know....you never said it to me, Honey Jo...

HONEY: Uh-oh... *(Thinking fast)* Um – uh -- uh – Thurber, why don't you write me one of those poems -- right now?

THURBER: What poems?

HONEY: You know, the ones that that fly off on their own and you can't even know what they mean. But they stay with you forever...

THURBER: ...Okay. .. Well -- it's about Geography... And Port Neches!

HONEY: Oh, no...

THURBER: I was wondering when you would come to Port Neches.
I was watching you chasing a bee.
All I could think about was the berries you picked.
All I could think about was -- let that be me...

HONEY: Thurber, it will always be you... *(She takes a deep breath and stands hands on hips.)*

Okay, Thurber Mills. You had your say. Now I'm gonna have *my* say.

THURBER: What? But, Honey –

HONEY: No. I'm gonna have *my* say. You scared me right out of my skin tonight. And now you're gonna listen.

You're right, I never did tell you I loved you. And I should of... I shouldn't of waited for you to do it. I could see it in those eyes, Thurber, you just couldn't get it out; you were never gonna get it out. So I should of told you, and not in any post card. Blunt and steamy. Should have told you the first day you were back even if I bawled my eyes out doin' it. I was punishing you, because I was so hurt. But damn it –

THURBER: Honey Jo! –

HONEY: Thurber Mills, a miracle happens out here on the prairie and I get my chance to say it to you -- and by God, you're gonna let me finish!!!

THURBER: Okay...

HONEY: I'm sorry I didn't tell you the truth. And I'm sorry I didn't tell Artie the truth. It wasn't fair to you and it wasn't fair to him. He had to find out the hard way and all he ever did was tell me that he loved me.

THURBER: Oh, God...

HONEY: But now I get to... Oh, Thurber, I wanted you forever, with all your poems and fumbling around and looking up at the sky and not understanding a thing I said -- I just didn't give a blip about all that. I loved you full out, all the time, I thought about you every minute and I wanted you.

We're supposed to keep quiet about how much we love, you know, when we're women. We're supposed to just wait in silence and pretend to be dumb and sweet while our hearts break and not say anything when the man we love goes walking out into the desert without us or walking off into some kind of war and we don't stop him. Well, I love you, Thurber, and it's not anybody's fault but mine if I didn't tell you.

THURBER: Aw, Honey... I didn't want to leave you and die!

HONEY: It's nobody's fault that people die, Thurber, they just die, that's all there is to it. And when you have plenty of time to tell them everything you want to tell them and you don't? – well, that's that "hell" that people are always talking about... And I'm just not having anymore of it!

THURBER: Honey Jo --

HONEY: Now, I don't know if I'll ever get another chance with you, Thurber Mills. I don't know if you get second chances with things like this. But next time I'm gonna tell you right out, in public. And I won't care if it's lady like and I won't even care if you send me packing! I'll get down on one knee and I'll ask you to marry me, if that's what it takes!

THURBER: What?!? Honey!!

HONEY: I'm tired of trying to be sweet when I'm a grown woman and I want and I love and I don't get to say it without being called loose and fast. Well I'm

not a loose woman. I'm a good, loving woman. And I'm damned tired of not ever getting to be anybody's sweetheart when it's somebody as good as you, Thurber, because I shut up about it and I let you hang in the wind miserable – and then I blame *you*... Next time, you might have a heart attack, Thurber Mills, but I'm gonna put it on a billboard right downtown, I'm gonna announce it to the world!

THURBER: I'm having a heart attack right now...!

HONEY: I hope you're not too shocked, honey, but I just can't waste any more time being sweet.... *(Ominously approaching him.)* So you watch out. You've never seen anything like what's coming.. *(Hands on her hips)* And that's what I have to say!!

THURBER: *(He grabs her and bends her back kissing her for all he's worth and she kisses him right back. Breathless.)* I'm not ever gonna die again, Honey, I promise. I'm just gonna give up dyin'!

HONEY: Oh, Thurber, honey, it's not the dying that's the problem! It's the living! *(She grabs him and kisses him hard.)*

THURBER: Next life...

HONEY: Next life, Thurber Mills! I'll just tell them I'm already taken. .. But I'm not done with this one yet. I'm Honey Jo Waller *(tossing her hair)* – and I can do anything I want to!!

THURBER: *(Breathless)* Oh, you're not ever gonna get rid of me...

HONEY: I know – and I'll be loving you right back, sweetheart... *(She kisses him with a big smooching sound.)* So what've you got to say to that, now, Cowboy?

THURBER: Cowboy?!? *(It starts to rain. Electricity crackles in the air)*

Oh, no!... Dark and rainy at just the wrong moment. And I wanted this to be perfect.

HONEY: It is. And you are. And I don't give a damn if it's raining. *(She grabs him)*

THURBER: But, Honey --

HONEY: Shut up... *(She kisses him.)* Thurber, I'm taken. I was all yours after Port Neches... *(Thurber smiles forever... They sing.)*

“ALWAYS TAKEN”

HONEY: Always, always taken
When your heart takes part in me.

THURBER: If doors close, new doors open.
If names change, you'll still know me.

HONEY: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
TOGETHER: Or I can't see in this dark spot.
THURBER: I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

THURBER: I am always, always taken.
When my heart is on the run.
HONEY: If minds close, new minds open.
I always know you are the one.

THURBER: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
Or I can't see in this dark spot.
I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

HONEY: I am always, always taken
I don't care if you run.
THURBER: When eyes close --
HONEY: -- new eyes open.
THURBER: You'll never be home alone.

HONEY: I don't care if it's raining a lot.
TOGETHER: Or I can't see in this dark spot.
THURBER: I will always be part of your plot.
TOGETHER: I remember more than I ever forgot...

TOGETHER: I am always, always taken
When my heart takes part in you.
Always, always shaken
When I come home to you.....
When I come home to you...

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(Thurber holds Honey in his arms, and as the music continues to play in the background he walks away, leaving her glowing on the prairie, her hand extended toward him where his last held it close to him. He walks downstage. In the background, the picture of Honey reaching out toward him glimmers on the prairie -- as if starlights have descended upon her as she reaches out sparkling and seeking his heart... Far above a giant Rainbow glistens by a UFO that's appearing to land... and we see Hitchcock grinning and waving to Thurber with a gleaming smile... The tableau of his life in one scene...)

THURBER: *(To the audience)* Well, that's my little history... *(He looks back toward the scene...)* My life, in a single picture...

What I learned tonight was that when you love somebody who's reaching out for you with stars in her hair -- and you finally tell her -- well, you love

a little more of yourself that you didn't know was there. And you might find out – you didn't really know her at all...! Whoa...!

(He waves at Hitchcock and Hitchcock waves back.) And when you have a really good friend and he tells you that your secret weapon is your BEAUTY? – don't shoot him down, and don't run off! This is the life you were meant to get to know. Don't wait. Grab that Beauty and reach for Stars!... And if you do, I promise, they'll come out to meet you. *(A few stars begin to blossom into large, happy, supernovas...)*

And when you hear these great songs in your mind and you want to write poetry to her -- turn those suckers loose on the world! You just never know when one of them will be on his way to Port Neches and take you with him..... *(He looks back at Honey. She smiles like the Sun and seems to tumble out of the tableau into a veritable cornucopia of sparkling Honey...)*

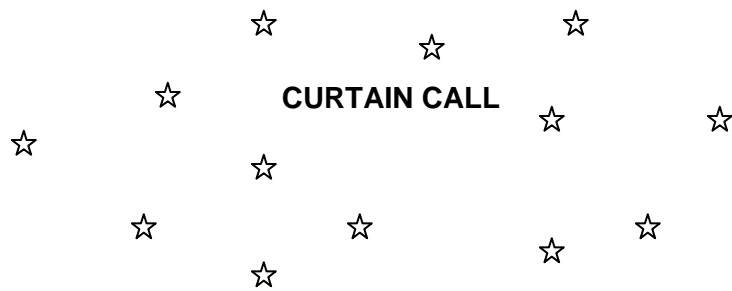
I'll be seeing you folks in my dreams... *(Chuckling)* And I suspect you'll be seeing me in some of yours...

(He bows low and slow... as the Curtain Call begins.)

(The "Stars!" theme begins. The Rainbow starts some Fireworks. The Cactus glistens and sways to the music. A few new flowers bloom downstage and say "hello." Thurber picks a few and tosses them into the audience, extending the poetry of the moment into a new reality. The cast of "Cosmic Cowboys" enter singing "Stars!" softly and then to a crescendo...as they gather flowers, bow to the audience, and toss out flowers as they walk up the aisles. Occasionally they pick on an audience member for a little dance....)

(And the Rainbow takes a bow...☺)

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"STARS" (Reprise)

ALL SING DURING THE CURTAIN CALL:

(A sign should appear with the words on stage and the audience should be invited to sing along...)

Stars! Stars!
I started out with one
Now I can't stop
We've just begun...
Looking up there I can almost see Home...

No two stars ever look the same...
They always seem to know your name...
They answer when you wish on them.
They always start where you begin.

Stars! Stars!
Stars are falling in my hair.
Is this too much!
(Shouting/speaking) No!
We've just begun...
Looking up there I can almost see Home...

Where did all these stars come from?
I...don't...think...we're...doing...this...alone...!

Stars! Stars!

(Themes from the musical continue to play as the company and the audience exit.)

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The End
"Cosmic Cowboys"
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