

Fallow

by

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Represented by:

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Cast of Characters

ELIZABETH Hazzard Hayes (late 40's) Well-healed, white woman.

HAPPY Lugo (early 40's) Cheerful and bright entrepreneur.

AARON Hayes (early 20's) Well-healed, young white man.

JANICE (early 40's) Waitress at a Perkins. Maine accent.

CHLOE (late teens) Smart, stout-looking Cornell Freshman. Queens accent.

JIMMY (early 50's) Large, burly man. Boston accent.

DANNY (early 20's) Young soldier, off to war. Texas accent.

Notes:

1 - "/" in the text indicates overlapping.

2 - "-" connecting words means that those words should run together as though they are one word.

3 - The action of writing has not been fully dictated in the stage directions. The actor playing Aaron should feel free to improvise, unless explicitly directed to write or cross out.

ACT ONE

SCENE I: A TINY AIRPORT/A LONELY TRUCK STOP

At rise: Mid-afternoon. It's hot and bright. ELIZABETH Hazzard Hayes (late - 40's) a handsome woman sits at a bus stop at an airport. She wears a crisp new tourist's t-shirt. She has khakis on. Comfortable shoes. She has a pocketbook, and no luggage. Her wool sweater sits folded next to her in a bag from the airport gift store. She has a folder open in her lap. It's full of hand-written letters. She reads one.

LIGHTS DIM on her and RISE on ...

AARON Hayes, (20) Elizabeth's Son. Handsome. No, beautiful. No, young. No, *alive*. He is dressed in a dirty Red Sox t-shirt and jeans. He doesn't wear socks. He writes a letter with a pencil in a spiral notebook. He stops writing and looks up.

AARON

May seventeenth. Blue Hill, Maine. Wild Blueberries.

Dear Mimsy,

He massages his writing hand. There is a blister on the palm. He resumes writing.

AARON (cont'd)

This is the fourth letter that I'm writing tonight and my hand hurts. I guess I don't write too much anymore. I type now. My hands don't remember how to do something as small as writing. I could send you an email. There's an internet cafe here. But, I know you like notes and I actually like the way this all feels. I wrote those other letters to Hannah, but then I realized that it was just kind of a reflex, and I decided not to send them. I think we're doing the right thing taking a little bit of time off.

He wrings his hands. Blister.

AARON (cont'd)

I'm in a truck stop and I'm sitting at a table at a Perkins, and I'm not wearing shoes.

He picks his feet off the ground and wiggles his toes.

AARON (cont'd)

Jimmy's sleeping in the truck and I was sweeping dead bees out of the trailer. I stepped in some honey. I washed my sneakers and now they're drying. Then I got hungry, so I decided to just come in here without shoes. No one noticed.

He presses his feet to the carpet.

AARON (cont'd)

The carpet feels good under my feet. I'm eating a fried filet of sole and broccoli. It's good. I'm going to get a shake for dessert. I was so hungry today.

He puts the pen down and fiddles with his blister.

JANICE (40's), the waitress at the Perkins enters. She wears an apron around her waist.

JANICE

(Maine accent)

You know, you keep pulling at that blister and it's going to break, right?

AARON

I'm sorry?

JANICE

I've seen you messing with that thing all night.

AARON

I think I'm going to have to pop it.

JANICE

Who told you that?

AARON

Well, that's what I saw people doing.

JANICE

You saw people yanking on their blisters like that.

AARON

Yeah.

JANICE

Who?

AARON

Uh, I don't know.

She takes some anti-septic wipes from her apron. She puts them in front of Aaron.

JANICE

From the first aid kit.

She unpins her name-tag and wipes the pin with an anti-septic wipe. She takes out a lighter. (She's a smoker.) She puts the point underneath the flame.

Janice (cont'd)

You can put a little hole in it and let it drain if it's bothering you, but you've got to leave the skin up there.

She holds the pin out to Aaron. He takes it.

Janice (cont'd)

The skin's like a natural Band-Aid.

AARON

Really?

JANICE

Trust me. My father was a doctor.

AARON

(as in "We have something in common.")

So is mine.

JANICE

Well, you should know better then.

AARON

Just stick it in?

JANICE

Go ahead. But, heat it up again.

Aaron heats up the pin and sticks it in his blister. Fluid oozes out of the blister.

AARON

Whoa.

Janice hands him a napkin.

JANICE

That's right. Just push down the sides. Yeah. Like that.

She unwraps one of the wipes.

Janice (cont'd)

Okay, clean it out.

AARON

Thanks.

Aaron wipes his hand. Janice takes a Band-Aid out of her apron and puts it in front of Aaron.

JANICE

If you pulled the skin off, your hands wouldn't be of any use to you tomorrow.

Aaron puts on the Band-Aid and Janice cleans her pin and puts it back on.

AARON

Thanks.

JANICE

You're welcome. You working in the blueberry fields, Hon?

AARON

I'm setting out bee hives in the fields. They're a little awkward. Can't get a grip, so they rub.

JANICE

What do you mean, bee hives?

Aaron points.

AARON

You see that truck out there?

JANICE

Which one?

AARON

The tractor-trailer.

JANICE

Mm.

AARON

The white one.

JANICE

(sees it)

Mm.

AARON

It's full of bees. Well, it was full of bees this morning. Our job is to put out bee hives so the bees can pollinate the fields.

JANICE

I always thought those were farm bees doing that.

AARON

No. The guy I work for travels all over the country, from growing season to growing season, all the way from Maine to California.

JANICE

Just to put bees out?

AARON

Bees can improve a harvest by thirty percent.

JANICE

No kidding. What do you do with the honey?

AARON

Sell it, I think. I don't know. Today was my first day. But Jimmy, my boss, he says that the honey's going to be dark green, almost blue.

JANICE

I lived here all my life and never heard of such a thing.

AARON

He comes every year.

JANICE

Blue honey?

AARON

Well, I'll let you know if that's true in a week or so.

JANICE

You going with him all the way to California?

Beat.

AARON

Yeah. I think I'm going to.

JANICE

How old are you?

AARON

Twenty.

JANICE

I've got a son your age, he's in college.

AARON

Yeah. We'll see. I think I'm going.

JANICE

What does your mother think about all this?

Beat.

AARON

She thinks it's a great adventure.

JANICE

That's what she says. Anyway, I like a man with calloused hands. You'll fill into them really nice.

AARON

Thanks.

JANICE

Okay, first day, you want some ice cream?

AARON

(as in "You read my mind.")

I was just going to order a shake.

JANICE

Chocolate okay? It's the newest. Doesn't have that ice fuzz in it.

AARON

Yeah. I like chocolate.

JANICE

Alrighty. Put your shoes on. My manager's coming in an hour to empty the drawer, okay?

AARON

Okay.

JANICE

Chocolate shake. Be right back.

She picks up the remains of the first aid and exits.

Beat.

Aaron resumes writing.

AARON

Still, it feels good to be a part of something. We're all working so hard. Everybody helps each other. It's special.

Mimsy, I wanted to let you know that I'm not going back to Cornell in the Fall. I know this was just supposed to be a summer job, but I'm really happy right now and I'm seeing amazing things. Cornell will always be there and Jimmy says he can use me. Dad won't understand, but I know you will and I hope that you will talk to him. Tell him I'm seeing a thousand amazing things a day right now. I'm happy doing this for a while. I might write an article about it, right? Who knows? I'll submit it to The Atlantic. My best to Hommy and Humpa.

Your Beamish Boy,
Aaron - Late-Spring-Early-Summer.

P.s. Jimmy calls me "Ronnie." Just started calling me that. Did you and Dad ever think to call me that?

LIGHT OUT on Aaron

End of Scene

Seamless transition into:

SCENE II: A TINY AIRPORT

LIGHT come back up on Elizabeth. She's still reading.

HAPPY Lugo (40's) enters. Mexican. He is dressed smartly in a shirt, vest and tie. He carries a small cooler. He takes a Coke out of the cooler and presents it to Elizabeth.

HAPPY

(a Mexican accent)

You like a Coke?

ELIZABETH

What?

She folds the letter up and puts it away.

HAPPY

You look like you want a Coke.

ELIZABETH

Oh. No, thank you.

HAPPY

It's okay. I drive by. I see you look very hot. Like ...

He fans himself with his hand.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You change your shirt.

ELIZABETH

Oh, the gift shop. Yeah.

Happy looks off in the distance.

HAPPY

Everything close early. Sunday.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

You look like you want a Coke.

ELIZABETH

No, no. That's alright.

Happy wipes down the can with a clean, cloth napkin. He puts the Coke down next to her.

HAPPY

I see you here early today.

ELIZABETH

They ran out of rental cars. Can you imagine?

HAPPY

Small airport. It happens all the time.

ELIZABETH

I'm waiting for the bus.

HAPPY

Bus?

ELIZABETH

Yes. There's supposed to be a bus into town.

HAPPY

Not today. I don't think so.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

Happy looks at his watch.

HAPPY
Sunday, today. Today, no more.

ELIZABETH
I have a schedule.

Happy looks at the schedule. He points at the print.

HAPPY
Monday to Friday. No.

He flips it over.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Saturday and Sunday. Holidays. Today, Sunday.

ELIZABETH
Oh.

HAPPY
Where are you going? You can go with me.

ELIZABETH
What?

HAPPY
I'll take you. Where do you need to go?

ELIZABETH
Uh ... (as I'm "I'm not sure I want to go with you") I don't know.

HAPPY
Where you from?

ELIZABETH
Massachusetts. I transferred in Las Vegas.

HAPPY
No more flights out until tomorrow.

ELIZABETH
Tomorrow?

HAPPY
Yeah. Usually, I don't come back here at this time. Everything is closed. But, I come back to see if you're okay. Come, I'm Happy. I take you where you need to go.

He extends his hand. Elizabeth shakes it, carefully.

ELIZABETH
You're happy?

HAPPY
My name is Happy.

ELIZABETH
Oh. Elizabeth.

HAPPY
Elizabeth. Elizabeth Taylor.

ELIZABETH
Right. Happy.

HAPPY
Queen Elizabeth. Look, see?

He points.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Over there. That is my taxi cab.

ELIZABETH
Yes.

HAPPY
Best cab anywhere! I wash and clean it every night.

ELIZABETH
Yes, I saw you before. I wasn't sure you were a taxi.

HAPPY
Gypsy cab. But, my cab is much safer than those medallion cabs. This model used to be for police cars. (making an introduction) Queen Elizabeth. Crown Victoria. And wait, wait ...

Happy rushes off.

He returns with a binder. It's black with a big sticker of a smiley-face on it. He hands it to Elizabeth.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Look.

Elizabeth opens the binder. There are about ten letters on business stationary. They are held in plastic sleeves.

ELIZABETH
Yes.

HAPPY

Whenever somebody takes my cab, I give them my business card and I say to them, "After you get home you think about your ride with me today. If it is the best taxi ride you ever had, please send me a letter so I can show the next person." The man I just dropped off. He's from Monsanto. You know Monsanto?

ELIZABETH

Only a little.

HAPPY

Big shot. He says he's going to write a letter. He uses me every time.

ELIZABETH

It's very impressive.

Happy opens the cooler.

HAPPY

If you no like Coke, I have Sprite, Ginger Ale, Diet Coke.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HAPPY

If you want a hot drink, I have a thermos full of coffee my wife makes. I have hot water for tea and I have every kind of tea.

He points in the cooler.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I have also, horchata, sandwiches. Also my wife made it. Everything is no charge if I take you.

ELIZABETH

I-

HAPPY

Sorry, sandwiches I charge fifty-cents. But, is good meats.

Happy takes an iPod out of his pocket and begins to scroll through it.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I download every kind of music you like. What kind of music you like?

ELIZABETH

Uhm ...

HAPPY

Name your favorite.

ELIZABETH

(no hesitation)

Fleetwood Mac.

He searches through the iPod.

HAPPY

I have ... Greatest Hits ... mm ... just Greatest Hits.

ELIZABETH

Good enough. Let's go.

HAPPY

Yeah? Great. Okay. Where are you going?

ELIZABETH

San Bernardo.

HAPPY

San Bernardo ... sixty dollars.

Elizabeth stands up.

ELIZABETH

Okay.

HAPPY

Why are you going to San Bernardo?

ELIZABETH

That's where the prison is, right?

HAPPY

Oh, yes. You have business at the prison?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

HAPPY

You?

ELIZABETH

I'm going to see the men who killed my son. Are you ready?

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Let's go.

Elizabeth exits. Beat. Happy follows her out.

End of Scene.

SCENE III: AN ORCHARD

A buzzing bee hive.

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron. He is noticeably tanner. Perhaps more wiry. His hair seems longer. A thin moustache and beard grow on his chin.

He stands before a white industrial bee hive. It is a set of wooden boxes, one on top of the other.

He smokes a cigarette.

He sets some newspaper and some pine needles on fire with his cigarette and puts them in a smoker. He closes the lid and begins to spray smoke onto the hive.

The buzzing quiets down.

AARON

(cigarette dangling from his lip)

August Twelfth. Orleans, New York. Empire Apples.

Dear Mimsy,

I'm in New York today. Since it's staying warmer, one of the farmers is trying to harvest into November. We'll see if it happens.

He puts the cigarette out. He puts on a bee keeper's hat and veil. He pries the top off of the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

I stopped back at school last week, just to check out Orientation and see some people at the fraternity. The house had a big mixer with one of the new sororities. We never mixed with them before. I guess our Social's dating their Social or something. Some of the guys complained that we were "slumming it." Such asses! I thought it was nice.

He smokes the hive.

We hear the sound of a party off-stage.
A door closes on it.

AARON (cont'd)
I met a girl there. (Beat.) Really, *nice*, actually ...

CHLOE, 18, a freshman enters. She is a stout girl and she wears a dress that's just a little bit too fancy for a frat party. She's pretty and healthy, but not a conventional beauty. She from one of the boroughs of New York City, but she doesn't have the street smarts.

She enters wearing a helmet with horns on it. She has Jell-O shots in her hands.

LIGHTS RISE on a dirty, old couch. She walks over to it and flops down on it. She's drunk.

CHLOE
Hey!

Aaron stands. LIGHTS FADE on the beehive. We're inside his fraternity.

AARON
Hey.

CHLOE
I told you I'd come back.

AARON
Yeah.

CHLOE
You guys should clean the bathroom a little better.

AARON
(joking)
I don't live here, so you can't blame me.

CHLOE
Where are you living now?

AARON
I'm on the road.

CHLOE
Like study abroad?

Kind of. AARON

Where? CHLOE

All over. (pointing at her horns) Who gave you those? AARON

Oh, one of your brothers. Nathan? CHLOE

Aaron's cell phone beeps. He has a new text message. He checks. The message makes laugh, then it makes him nervous. He deletes it.

He's your Big Brother, right? CHLOE (cont'd)

Uhm, my Big-Big. Yeah. AARON

Oh. CHLOE
("What's that?")

I don't know why he keeps coming around. He already graduated. AARON

Oh. CHLOE

He works for like Morgan Stanley or something. Hey, would you mind if I just, uh, I'm just going to, uh, bolt the door if you don't mind. AARON

Oh. CHLOE
(A little worried.)

I'm sorry. It's really easy to open from the inside. It's just a bolt, but if we, uh, by the end of the night, it's going to be a bunch of drunk frat boys in here ... AARON

Okay. CHLOE

Yeah? AARON

CHLOE
(flirty)
Just don't try anything.

AARON
Yeah.

Aaron goes off-stage and bolts the door. He re-enters.

AARON (cont'd)
Thanks.

CHLOE
I was doing shots with Nathan downstairs and he told me that no freshman has ever been able to keep up with him before. He said that as long as I wear these, you have to do whatever I say. 'cause I'm the Wildebeest, now, right?

AARON
Uh, yeah, that's right.

Another text message comes in. Aaron checks it.

AARON (cont'd)
Sorry.

CHLOE
It's okay.

He deletes it.

CHLOE (cont'd)
You're popular.

AARON
Yeah, sorry. So, uh, what do I have to do?

CHLOE
Well, first, you have to do these shots with me.

She hands him a Jell-O shot. They eat them.

CHLOE (cont'd)
Mm.

AARON
Good.

CHLOE
I can hardly taste any alcohol at all, right?

AARON

No. They're good.

CHLOE

And I like how they used champagne in these. Like when I was little, sometimes my dad would make Jell-o with seltzer for the bubbles.

AARON

I think it's vodka.

CHLOE

No, I'm talking about these.

She shows him another shot. He looks at it.

AARON

Oh, cool. That's a first.

CHLOE

(a command)

Eat it.

AARON

Okay.

Aaron eats it. Chloe eats hers too.

CHLOE

(a little dizzy)

Wow.

AARON

You like champagne?

CHLOE

Oh. Uh, I've never had it before.

AARON

Really? My dad bought a bottle of Dom Perignon on the day I was born.

CHLOE

Wow.

AARON

Yeah, we're going to drink it when I turn twenty-one.

CHLOE

Wow.

AARON

We're going to have a party at our house on The Cape.

CHLOE
Oh. That's so cool.

AARON
Yeah. You can come if you want.

CHLOE
Really?!

AARON
Yeah.

CHLOE
That would be amazing.

AARON
Sure.

CHLOE
I would really, really like that, actually.

AARON
Me too. Hey, so let's take a picture together, alright?

CHLOE
Okay.

AARON
You're the Wildebeest, so, you know ... *that's awesome!*

CHLOE
Yeah!

Aaron takes out his phone. Chloe
siddles up next to him.

Aaron holds his phone up. He presses a
button. The sound of a shutter
clicking.

CHLOE (cont'd)
Let me see.

They look at it.

AARON
Okay, let's try another one, but, let's do one where you're
like ... going to eat me or something.

CHLOE
Like a snarling beast!

AARON
Yeah, like a total Wildebeest!

Okay. CHLOE

They pose again. Aaron acts like he's scared. Chloe bares her teeth. Aaron takes a picture. They look at it.

Perfect. AARON

Yeah? CHLOE

Really. It's perfect. AARON

Cool. You want to kiss me? CHLOE

Beat. AARON

Okay. AARON

She kisses him. A soft, sweet, pure, perfect kiss.

How was that? (worried) CHLOE

Good. AARON

Tell me if it's not, okay? CHLOE

Yeah. AARON

Thanks. CHLOE

She kisses him again.

You're a good kisser. CHLOE (cont'd)

Thanks. AARON

Yeah. You know a Wildebeest isn't carnivorous, right? CHLOE

AARON
What?

CHLOE
No. Lions eat Wildebeest. Wildebeest eat grass.

AARON
Really?

CHLOE
Yeah.

She kisses him again. They move to the couch and begin making out earnestly.

CHLOE (cont'd)
Am I doing it alright?

AARON
Uh, yeah.

CHLOE
Don't freak out. You're like the second boy I've ever kissed.

AARON
Really?

CHLOE
Yeah. It's okay?

AARON
(truthfully)
Yeah. Yeah, it's ... you're really beautiful.

These words reach her soul.

CHLOE
Thanks.

She kisses him deeply.

CHLOE (cont'd)
(steamy)
Hey.

AARON
Hey.

CHLOE
I don't feel so good.

AARON
Oh. That's okay.

CHLOE
I really like you. I just ...

AARON
It's okay.

CHLOE
Would you mind if I just put my head down for a second?

AARON
No. That's fine.

CHLOE
Thanks.

Chloe takes off the helmet and puts her head in his lap.

CHLOE (cont'd)
(half-conscious, a little
mournful)
So, you're not going to be here next week, huh?

AARON
Yeah. I'm on the road. I'm working as a bee-keeper.

He touches her hair.

CHLOE
That's cool.

AARON
Yeah.

CHLOE
Mm. That feels good.

AARON
Oh. Cool.

He keeps stroking her hair gently.

CHLOE
How's the bee-keeping going?

AARON
It's kind of awesome, actually. (Beat.) One of our hives swarmed this week.

CHLOE
Wow.

AARON

The bees left their hive to look for a new one. I guess it happens all the time. We had to look through all the trees to find them again and finally, Hector, this guy I work with spots them up in a tree and I had to climb up the tree and spray all the bees down with sugar water so they couldn't fly. Then we put a sheet under the swarm and shook the branch until all the bees fell down and then we just poured them back in the hive. But, the queen was gone, so we had to buy another one. She going to come in the mail tomorrow morning.

CHLOE

That's cool.

AARON

She's going to come in a little cage. 'cause if the workers in the hive could get at her right now, they'd kill her. They don't sting queens, but, they'd gather around her and smother her to death. That's interesting, right? So we need to keep her in the cage until they get used to her scent. The cage is capped with candy, so by the time she eats her way out, they should be used to her. (Beat.) The worker bees do everything for her. She's even coming with a few in the cage because they have to feed her. She can't even feed herself. (Beat.) Wouldn't you rather be the worker than a queen? I think I would.

CHLOE

If you had those kinds of thoughts, you wouldn't be a bee.

AARON

Guess not. I don't know why they do that. Swarm. I asked my boss if we needed to do anything to stop them from doing that, like was the hive too small? But, he says that it just happens sometimes. Wanderlust. Why do you think they do that?

CHLOE

'cause if they didn't, they'd never go anywhere. That's not good. Maybe there's a better place somewhere else? Nature wants us to take some chances sometimes.

AARON

Yeah.

CHLOE

Why did you come back?

AARON

I, uh, I broke up with my girlfriend and she has some of my things. I went to get them.

Oh. Was that weird?
CHLOE

Yeah. (Beat.) Yeah. It was weird.
AARON

Well, she's crazy. You're an awesome guy.
CHLOE

Beat.
AARON

Thanks.
AARON

Yeah.
CHLOE

She's in Pi Phi.
AARON

Oh, they have a pretty house.
CHLOE

Yeah.
AARON

My cousin's a Tri-Sig, so I guess that's probably what I'll end up being too.
CHLOE

Yeah. You have a good time tonight?
AARON

Are you kidding? It was like a party full of princes.
CHLOE

Chloe falls asleep.

LIGHTS RISE on Elizabeth. She sits on the bumper of Happy's cab. The hood is up. There is a Happy Face on the driver side door. Beneath it, is Happy's phone number.

The sun is starting to set. In her hand, she holds a piece of a cardboard FedEx box that has been folded into a card. One side of the card is stamped and addressed. She reads.

Gently, Aaron stands up and goes back to tending his beehive. He opens a FedEx box and takes out a little cage. It's the new queen.

AARON

(out to the audience, but, to
Elizabeth)

I found out that she won a Westinghouse Prize, like she invented some device that helps blind people read money or something. I thought that was really cool.

He puts the cage in the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

I hope they accept her ...

He puts the hive back together.

AARON (cont'd)

... the new queen. She's young and beautiful. We put a pale blue dot of paint on her back so we can find her.

From off-stage, we hear Aaron's fraternity brothers baying like jackals and pounding on the door.
"Wildebeest!" "Beware the beast!"
etc. He tries to ignore them.

AARON (cont'd)

I'm going to be in Orleans for a little while to see if they'll accept her and Jimmy is going to travel a bit around with the rest of his hives to the other New York orchards. He doesn't want to disturb my hive at this point. So, I'm going to hang around. I heard they still have some late-harvest dessert grapes to pick around Seneca Lake, so I might go make some pocket-money while I'm waiting for the new queen to take hold.

He flips open his phone and looks at the pictures. He looks at Chloe. The baying gets louder and louder.

AARON (cont'd)

Tell Dad I say, "Hello." And tell him I'm doing really, really well. Okay. I hope you're doing well too.

Aaron throws his phone at the door shattering it to pieces.

The baying stops for a moment. Then it starts up and becomes more hysterical.

He tears a piece of cardboard off of the FedEx box and writes on it.

AARON (cont'd)

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Late Summer.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

P.s. Don't forget to recycle.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

End of Scene.

Seamless transition into:

SCENE IV: THE SIDE OF A ROAD

Happy enters with a basket full of strawberries.

HAPPY

Fresh from the field.

He holds the strawberries out to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

She takes the basket. Happy takes a bottle of water out of his cooler.

HAPPY

You should wash them before you eat them.

ELIZABETH

Alright.

She takes the bottle and pours it over the strawberries.

HAPPY

(as in "You should wash it better than that.")

I ... wash it better than that.

She pours more water.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Better.

Happy looks in the engine.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Ah! I can't believe it.

ELIZABETH

It's very hot today.

HAPPY

I never have any problems with this car.

ELIZABETH

When I was a kid, my father had a car with such a bad radiator, we had to turn the air conditioning off when we were driving up hill. His first car. He just loved it.

HAPPY

I had a tune-up fours days ago.

Elizabeth takes a bite out of a strawberry.

ELIZABETH

It's hot.

HAPPY

Hm?

ELIZABETH

It's a hot strawberry. I've never ever had a strawberry fresh from the sun.

HAPPY

Good, no?

ELIZABETH

It tastes like ... like ... leather.

HAPPY

Leather?

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HAPPY

I don't think I ever hear of someone describe a strawberry like that.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. That's what it is to me. You ever ride a horse?

HAPPY

Me? Oh yeah. When I was a kid. All the time.

ELIZABETH

So you know. Imagine you are riding through an orchard, and your horse's hooves are smashing rotten apples and you come to a stream and you stop and smell your hands. Isn't that it?

HAPPY

Hm, when I was riding a horse I was carting rubber that I found on the side of the road in my country. Old tires. (Beat.) My hands ... smelled like rubber.

ELIZABETH

Do your strawberries taste like rubber?

Happy laughs.

HAPPY

Definitely no.

Elizabeth eats another strawberry.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HAPPY

I am very sorry. I'm so sorry. I cannot believe this happened.

He looks down at his watch.

HAPPY (cont'd)

My cousin will be here any minute.

ELIZABETH

That really is a damn good strawberry.

HAPPY

I'm glad you like it.

She takes another bite.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

She points in the distance. Happy looks out.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I've never seen anything like this.

HAPPY

What?

ELIZABETH

Last time we were here all I saw was the shoulder pad of a black, wool suit. Just crying. Crying. Now, look at all those people.

HAPPY

It was the rainy season, I think, no? Maybe nobody out here.

ELIZABETH

No. It was this time of year.

HAPPY

Really?

ELIZABETH

Last summer. Yeah. It was hot. I just didn't see anything. Now look at all these people. When we were first driving up, I mean, like from a distance, they looked like ... I thought, "What colorful sheep!"

HAPPY

No, it's people. Crawling.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Strawberries is to the ground. They got to bend.

ELIZABETH

Shouldn't there be a machine to do that?

HAPPY

Body's a machine.

ELIZABETH

You think so?

HAPPY

Definitely. Machine-machine breaks the skin of the strawberries. That's why people-machine is still the best. (Beat.) I'm very sorry about the car.

ELIZABETH

Don't worry about it. Don't know that I'm in such a rush to see them today. This whole thing was ... was not very well planned.

HAPPY

Hm.

ELIZABETH

I woke up this morning, early, black morning, and I wanted my husband to wake up too, but he didn't, and I just lay there in bed. And then I got up, and it was cold and I put on a sweater, and before I know it, I'm in California, sitting outside in a wool sweater in sun that turns strawberries to leather. (Beat.) I did not like my taxi driver nearly so much in Massachusetts.

SILENCE.

Happy points.

HAPPY

That was me when I first come.

ELIZABETH

Picking strawberries?

HAPPY

Bend to the ground with the knife.

ELIZABETH

Sounds miserable.

HAPPY

Oh yeah. It puts rust on a body.

ELIZABETH

Did you hate it?

HAPPY

Then, I was young. I talk to myself to pass the time. I talk to the strawberries.

ELIZABETH

What did you say?

HAPPY

I say, "Where are you going, Strawberry?" Then, I was really into the baseball. So, I would think that maybe a strawberry would go from my hand to maybe Ken Griffey, Jr., Tony Gwynn. "What if Ken Griffey ate my strawberry the morning he hits the home run?" That's what I thought. Everybody eats strawberries. They could go from my hand to anybody.

He points to the strawberry in Elizabeth's hand.

HAPPY (cont'd)

See, that one gets to go to a Senator's daughter. Not bad.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Congressman.

HAPPY

Oh, sorry. Congressman. Is Congressman better?

ELIZABETH

(as in "it depends")

Who are you asking?

Beat.

HAPPY
(decides Congressman is best)
Congressman.

Beat.

ELIZABETH
You guys follow the story out here? (Beat.) My story?

Beat.

HAPPY
Oh yeah. I didn't recognize you when I pick you up, but now
... I remember you from the tv.

ELIZABETH
Good.

HAPPY
Everybody follow.

ELIZABETH
Good.

Pause.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)
That was a horrible thing they did to my son, wasn't it?

HAPPY
Yes, of course.

ELIZABETH
You all thought it was horrible, right?

Beat.

HAPPY
We were scared. That's what we say to each other. We have
never been more scared in our whole lives.

ELIZABETH
Yeah.

Elizabeth starts to cry. She sobs.
Happy looks off in the distance.

Elizabeth stops crying. She wipes away
her tears.

Beat.

HAPPY
Why you come?

Beat.

ELIZABETH

To ... see him. Them.

She looks around.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

This.

HAPPY

Why you want to see them?

ELIZABETH

One of the ones in San Bernardo. He has a daughter. And that young one, that thirteen year old boy ... I don't know. I wanted ... I don't know. I just don't know ...

HAPPY

We no going to get there today. Getting late. My cousin will tow us, but we can't get you there on time.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Going to be night soon.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

It's my fault you don't make it. I'm sorry. I pay for your hotel tonight.

ELIZABETH

No. That's alright.

HAPPY

I am happy to pay.

He points to his car.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I find someone to take you tomorrow.

ELIZABETH

It's that bad?

HAPPY

Hard to say. I find you another cab.

What about you?
ELIZABETH

Me? I'm okay.
HAPPY

But, I want you to drive me.
ELIZABETH

Beat.
HAPPY

Yeah. I think, maybe no is possible.
Beat.

How much is the hotel?
ELIZABETH

Beat.
HAPPY

Not so much.
ELIZABETH

How much for the tow? Repairs.
HAPPY

I'm a business. This is the cost of doing business.
ELIZABETH

The hotel will charge you full price. How many fares will you need to make up the difference?
HAPPY

Business.
ELIZABETH

Bad business. I'm sure you've got better bills to pay. You've got a place?
HAPPY

Me?
ELIZABETH

You have a room?
HAPPY

A room.
ELIZABETH

I'm sure your wife keeps a tidy house. (as in "judging from your looks") Look at you.
(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I'm sure there's something on the stove. I'll call it square for a room tonight. You got good strawberries.

HAPPY

I don't think-

ELIZABETH

And I'll pay for your repairs and you'll take me to San Bernardo.

HAPPY

I'm sorry?

ELIZABETH

I like sitting in your cab, Happy. It makes me feel safe.

Beat.

HAPPY

It will be good for my daughters to meet the daughter of a Congressman.

ELIZABETH

That's right.

HAPPY

Sure. We have a room. I call my wife. Tell her you're staying. Make up the room. But, you no pay for repairs, okay? Tonight, I fix.

ELIZABETH

If you insist.

Happy begins to make a call on his cell phone.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

How many daughters do you have?

HAPPY

I have two.

ELIZABETH

How old are they?

HAPPY

One is nine. One is eleven.

ELIZABETH

Nice.

HAPPY

Very nice.

ELIZABETH

Do they like strawberries?

HAPPY

I think so.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

You tell them not to be like me. I haven't worked a day in my life.

LIGHTS OUT on Elizabeth and Happy.

End of Scene.

SCENE V: A SCRAPPY PIECE OF LAWN

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron.

He is very tan. He hair is long. He has a beard. His skin is dusty and worn.

There are cups of paint and paintbrushes beside him. He is painting the top of a beehive white. There are empty combs racks lying beside him.

AARON

February eight. Weslaco, Texas. Cantaloupes.

He paints a bright yellow sun on the side of the box.

AARON (cont'd)

Dear Mimsy,

When I was little, Hommy bought me a book of jokes, and there was a picture of two melons talking to each other, and one of them said to the other, "Honey-Dew, be mine." Then the other melon said, "I'm sorry ... I Cantaloupe."

He paints sunglasses on the sun.

AARON (cont'd)

I didn't get that joke until I was about seventeen.

He paints a smile on the sun's face.

AARON (cont'd)

Now I think it's hilarious.

He starts to paint grass.

AARON (cont'd)

I think it's funnier if you take out any of the wordplay and it's just one melon saying to an other, "I can't marry you. You're a Honey-Dew, I'm a Cantaloupe."

He paints flowers on the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

But, she says it like she's Tarzan, like "Me Cantaloupe," because ... because ... well, she's just a melon.

This cracks him up. He laughs silently and heartily. He wipes his eyes.

AARON (cont'd)

I mean, Jesus. Come on.

He paints little bees on the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

Let's get some perspective.

He sticks the paintbrush in a jar of water and rinses it out.

AARON (cont'd)

(no laughing)

And of course the cantaloupe can't marry the honey-dew. What kind of freak-melon are they going to have together? (Beat.) Of course they can't get married.

Beat.

AARON (cont'd)

No.

Aaron takes a notebook out of his pocket and begins to write in it. He looks up.

AARON (cont'd)

I quit working with Jimmy this week.

JIMMY, (early - 50's) bustles onto stage. He's a thick, burly man. Jeans and shirt.

He points at Aaron's hive.

JIMMY
(Boston accent)
That one empty too?

AARON
Pretty much.

JIMMY
Damn!

AARON
Sorry.

JIMMY
Anything left?

AARON
They're all dead. There was barely any honey. Queen's dead.
I cleaned it all out.

JIMMY
Shit.

AARON
Sorry. You think it's the mites.

JIMMY
I think it's the everything. Shit fucking farmers spraying
their shit everywhere. That's what I think.

AARON
Yeah. Shit.

Beat.

JIMMY
I'm sorry, but I got to let you go, Ronnie.

AARON
Oh. (Beat.) Really?

JIMMY
Got to do it. This is the second hive I've lost this month.

AARON
Yeah, I know.

JIMMY
I keep losing hives like this, I'm going to have to close up
shop permanent.

AARON
I know.

JIMMY

I don't like to do it, but I've got to.

AARON

Yeah, it's alright. (Beat.) Hector too?

JIMMY

Hector's been with me for a long time, Ronnie.

AARON

No that's good.

JIMMY

And, he's got a family.

AARON

Right.

JIMMY

I'm real sorry.

AARON

I'll work for half.

JIMMY

Nah, you got to go back for school. Winter term start yet?

AARON

Probably.

JIMMY

They'll get you in, your dad the big shot. You can look Old Jimmy up next summer.

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

(laughing)

That's if I'm even still doing this shit.

AARON

Yeah.

Beat.

JIMMY

What, you're going to let some girl stop you from going back to school?

AARON

No.

JIMMY

Fuck no. That's right. You're in school. Before you know it, you're going to have one on each arm.

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

You can bet on it.

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

That's right. I'm telling you. We've all been there brother. Okay, not everybody's girl leaves him for a dot head. But, still, got to get back on the horse.

AARON

Yeah. (Beat.) I'll stay for free.

JIMMY

What?

AARON

I'll call it an independent study. I'll get class credit.

JIMMY

Sorry, Ronnie. I've got my liabilities. Listen, me and Hector, we know a girl that hangs around the rest stop up the highway. Little red-head thing. She works the truckers. We'll send you off tonight, make you forget that girl, and tomorrow, you'll get on a plane and go home, alright? That'll make your mom happy.

AARON

Yeah. Where you guys going next?

JIMMY

California.

AARON

That's what I thought.

JIMMY

Yeah. It's for the best. You'll see. Okay, come on, Man.

Jimmy extends his hand.

Beat.

Aaron shakes it.

JIMMY (cont'd)

You did good work for us this year, Ronnie. Even Hector likes you and he don't like anyone.

Jimmy slaps Aaron on the shoulder.

JIMMY (cont'd)

I'm proud of you, Son.

AARON

Thanks.

Jimmy tussles Aaron's hair and begins to exit.

AARON (cont'd)

I'm staying, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Aaron, look, I-

AARON

I'm not going back East. I was thinking about this for a while now. I made some friends at the bracero market. I can sell honey there.

JIMMY

This is no place /to stay.

AARON

/I already made up my mind.

He points at the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

Will you leave me these supers?

JIMMY

Honestly, I can't keep you 'cause the bees are dying.

AARON

Yeah, 'cause you're working them to death. They're supposed to rest in winter, but you're going to kill them, slaving them away out there in the almond fields! You wonder why bees are dying.

JIMMY

I'm sorry, Man.

AARON

Just leave me the supers, okay? I got bees coming in the mail already.

JIMMY

Sure. Sure, you can have them supers. But, Ronnie, you got to go back-

Aaron goes back to the hive.

AARON

Thanks, Jimmy. I appreciate it.

JIMMY

Alright, man. Alright.

LIGHTS FADE on JIMMY. He exits.

AARON

(out to the audience, but to
Elizabeth)

So, that was it. I just quit. Jimmy and Hector went off to California and I'm going to stay in Texas for a bit. I made some good friends and I'm going to be working the fields with them for a while. We're planting the seeds right now. Seed by seed. Don't you think that's amazing? We have to put each seed in the ground. Every melon you find in the store was put into the ground by hand. It's hard work, but, that's okay. There's a skill to it. Nothing is easy until the body learns it. Then it becomes easy, like it's programmed in.

I'm living with my friends now. I like it. Things are cramped, but we make due, and it's lots of talking and cooking and laughing together. It's good.

Everyone has pets. Chickens, pigs, goats. Something you can sell or eat if you have to. But, they call them pets. I think I'm going to get a kitten. I found a kitten in a rainstorm once in Ithaca. At first it was so scared of me, but the second, and I mean second because it was so fast, the second I held it in my hands it fell asleep. It must have been so tired from the rain. I just sat in the bathroom in my wet clothes and watched it sleep. My room-mate was allergic and I couldn't keep it. But, somehow, I feel like I should have kept that kitten.

He takes the hive apart and begins to insert the empty comb racks.

AARON (cont'd)

Everyone grows things too. Aside from what we grow in the field, everyone has a little garden and they grow things that they can take to some of the little bracero markets around here. I'm going to sell honey. They've never had a bee-keeper. Everyone is very excited.

You know they had bee-hives on the Mayflower, right? There was honey-comb in the Bay Colony. I read that.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

It was one of the important things that had to be brought over from England. So, you see? Maybe honey's in our blood. (Beat) Honey and travel. (Beat.) Oceans and fields.

He puts the hive back together. He turns on a small radio and turns on a sweet Spanish love song.

He starts to write again.

AARON (cont'd)

I think it's time to sign off now. Someone in town has kittens and rabbits to look at. I want to see. Tell Dad I hope he's well. It must be really cold and dark out on The Cape right now. What's in Sandwich besides the outlets? You should get another apartment in Boston or something. Please, give my love to Hommy and Humpa. Te quiero todos.

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Winter.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

End of Scene.

Seamless transition into:

SCENE VI: A MODEST DRIVEWAY

The small, tinny radio continues to play.

LIGHT rise on Happy at his car. It is evening. The sun has set. We are in the driveway at his home. He is fixing his car. There is a lamp hung from the hood, moths fly around it. He wears jeans and a tidy sweatshirt.

Elizabeth enters. She has her cell phone in her hand. She wears her sweater.

ELIZABETH

(brightly, not too lame, she's not an idiot)

Hola, Amigo.

HAPPY

(fine with it)

Hola, Señora.

He turns off the radio. Crickets become more audible to us. But, very faintly.

ELIZABETH

Hello. Chilly at night.

HAPPY

Sometimes.

He wipes his hand on a cloth.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You get reception out here?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, not too bad.

HAPPY

What service do you use?

ELIZABETH

Me? Uh ... I think Verizon?

She looks at her phone.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

Yeah, Verizon.

HAPPY

Oh. Me too.

ELIZABETH

We can call each other for free!

HAPPY

Hey!

ELIZABETH

Yeah. I'm happy with it. You?

HAPPY

Pretty good. Outside is okay. But, inside? don't want to work. I don't know why.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. (Beat.) I think I want that new phone. That one you can play the games on.

HAPPY

Ah! My daughter wants that one too.

ELIZABETH

Monica?

HAPPY
(not "An-hel-lina")

Angelina.

ELIZABETH
Is she old enough to have a cell phone?

HAPPY
The way she tell it, (not "Hey-sus") Jesus had one when he was a baby.

ELIZABETH
Are you going to get her one?

HAPPY
Maybe one she can use when she's not home. After school, "Come get me." Like that. But, when she's home, it comes back to Papi.

ELIZABETH
Oh, that's a good idea.

HAPPY
Nothing fancy. Basic one. I want her to have her friends. But, you know, it have to come through me first. Papi is your best friend.

ELIZABETH
They're both lovely girls.

HAPPY
Their mother will be glad you think so.

ELIZABETH
I didn't know you had to kick them out of their rooms.

HAPPY
They like to chit-chat in our room anyway, they grew up chit-chatting to sleep. We're used to it. No problem.

ELIZABETH
Okay. (Beat.) What a cook your wife is!

HAPPY
Oh, yeah.

ELIZABETH
I had a very nice time tonight.

HAPPY
The room is okay?

ELIZABETH
Sure. Beautiful.

Good.

HAPPY

Five Stars.

ELIZABETH

HAPPY
(as in "don't exaggerate")
Okay-okay. I'm glad you are happy.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Happy, I'm happy.

Beat.

HAPPY
(amused, but not amused enough
to laugh aloud)
Oh. Ha-ha.

ELIZABETH

Sorry. Sorry. (Beat.) That's not really your name,
(*Silent* -- is it?)

HAPPY

In (not "Meh-hi-koh") Mexico, my family calls me "Redondo."

ELIZABETH

Redondo. I like that.

HAPPY

Dondo. It's okay. Named after the place my grandfather was
born.

ELIZABETH

Why did you change it?

HAPPY

For business.

ELIZABETH

The cab?

HAPPY

Much, much before. When I was in the field.

He points out in the distance.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You look at all that land. There's a boss to all of it.
Like a king. But, it's no like everyone in the field working
directly with the king.

(MORE)

HAPPY (cont'd)

The king, he cut his land into lots of different pieces, but he always wants to lease the best land to the people who will make the most strawberries. So, when me and my brothers first came, we were working for a man named Santiago who was leasing a piece of land from Mr. Yamaguchi, one of the kings. There was another good piece of land in the delta that Mr. Yamaguchi could not find a good family to work on. Everybody fail, because water there is a little tricky, and ... ah ... but more, he have bad luck with people. So, whenever Mr. Yamaguchi come to Santiago's field, I always work extra hard and always put the smile. And when he need someone to drive a truck to Carmel, he says to Santiago, "Can Happy drive?" And since then, I change my name to Happy so Mr. Yamaguchi will always remember me. And two seasons later, he let me and my brothers have the land on the delta with a discount.

ELIZABETH

What was wrong with the land?

HAPPY

It was a little closer to the ocean. Maybe just a little bit too much salt. I don't know. Could be a million things. We were testing the soil and try to negotiate more water rights with our neighbors, but then suddenly, things changed upstream, I don't know. Something happened and we balanced out.

ELIZABETH

Are you still growing strawberries there?

HAPPY

No me. But my brothers yes.

ELIZABETH

Why no you?

HAPPY

I just have to be a king. It's, very difficult for me to buy land here. I tried. Taxi cab, they let me buy.

ELIZABETH

Aren't your brothers afraid that the water will change back again?

HAPPY

Add it to the list.

ELIZABETH

Of what?

HAPPY

Reasons-to-go-to-Hollywood-be-a-movie-star.

ELIZABETH

Right. You're a clever man, Happy.

HAPPY

I am doing my best.

ELIZABETH

Is the car alright?

HAPPY

Yeah, it's fine now. But, this is what happens when you go to the Señor Express Places. They pull everything apart, but don't put it back.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry to hear that.

HAPPY

I have the oil stain on my driveway now.

ELIZABETH

You can pour kitty litter on it!

HAPPY

What?

ELIZABETH

It soaks up oil and grease! I read it somewhere! You have a cat, right?

HAPPY

Monica.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. Monica's cat. So, that should soak it right up and then you just scrub it.

HAPPY

You've tried it before.

ELIZABETH

No, I saw someone doing it on Good Morning News once. I'll help you ...

HAPPY

No. No. Please. I'll take care of it.

ELIZABETH

Oh. (Beat.) Alright. Okay. Don't forget to scrub it though. The litter just soaks the oil.

HAPPY

Got it.

ELIZABETH

Okay. (Beat.) I guess I'll be turning in now. The car is alright for tomorrow?

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Okay, good.

HAPPY

You drop something on the ground.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

Happy points at a letter sitting under a rock.

HAPPY

Angelina find it.

ELIZABETH

This is a letter from my son ... Aaron.

Happy looks up at her.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

My son's name is Aaron. (Beat.) Want to hear it?

Happy wipes his hands on a towel.

HAPPY

Sure.

ELIZABETH

Okay. Here goes.

Elizabeth takes a letter out of the envelope.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

(reading)

September fourth. LaBelle, Florida. Early Girl Tomatoes.

Dear Mimsy,

We got in late last night and the work starts early here. It's Florida and it's hot. Have you ever seen a tomato flower? They're yellow and you smell one, and you know right away that it won't turn into something sweet. I had the best omelette I've ever had in my life today. I know you like omelettes.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

Connie, the cook, pulled something out of the grass and it was peppery and lemony. It reminded me of the time when the landscaper told us we had shallots in our lawn and Dad didn't believe him until we dug them up. Do you remember that? I used to pull them up and smell them, just because they were there.

Be well, Mimsy. I miss you.

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Autumn.

She puts the letter back in the envelope.

HAPPY

Nice.

ELIZABETH

I was so excited for him. Scared, but excited. (Beat.) You know why he went off? It was a girl. This girl Hannah he's known since they were little. They were dating for a few years and she met an Indian boy when she was doing a summer internship. It was the first time I saw him in ... a man's pain. Made me realize he was getting grown up.

HAPPY

No more baby teeth.

ELIZABETH

Exactly. Right. So when he got a job that would let him travel around the country, I said, "You have to go do that." What an adventure, right? I was hoping he'd go all the way around the world. Twenty years old.

HAPPY

I was nineteen when I decide to come North.

ELIZABETH

That's different. You came for ... work.

HAPPY

No. No different. I wanted to see the world. (Beat.) What is "Mimsy?"

ELIZABETH

Oh. Instead of "Mommy." "Mom."

HAPPY

I see.

ELIZABETH

It's from a poem we liked. Do you know it?

HAPPY

"Mimsy?"

ELIZABETH

It's from Alice In Wonderland.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Actually, Through the Looking-Glass.

(reciting)

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

(not-reciting)

Well ... and then this boy goes and kills the monster and
when he comes home, they say:

(reciting)

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

(Beat.)

That's it. It's called "The Jabberwocky."

HAPPY

Yes. We have this poem also in my country.

ELIZABETH

Really?

HAPPY

Era brilligio, y los flexilimosos toves
Giraban y Girareon en el vade;
Todo debilirana estaban los borogoves;
y venía el verdal con paso tardo.

(MORE)

HAPPY (cont'd)

Yes, we have it. See?

ELIZABETH

That's "The Jabberwocky?"

HAPPY

Yes. That's all I remember.

ELIZABETH

Through the Looking-Glass?

HAPPY

That's where I see it. My father, he had all kinds of books. He read to us all the time.

ELIZABETH

Aaron and I loved to read together! I was his Mimsy, and he was my Beamish Boy. Did you like the poem?!

HAPPY

(polite, not-enthusiastic)

Okay.

ELIZABETH

(deflated)

Okay.

HAPPY

Is silly words right?

ELIZABETH

Silly words.

HAPPY

No meant to mean nothing.

ELIZABETH

Nothing. No meant. Ha-ha.

HAPPY

I liked the book

ELIZABETH

(speaking with condescension to
an unseen conversation
partner)

He likes it.

HAPPY

Yeah. (Beat.) We all liked it.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Good. Was it scary to you?

HAPPY

Scary?

ELIZABETH

Were you scared to read it?

HAPPY

Maybe. A little when I was a boy. But, it's just silly words, no?

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Maybe it's the translation.

HAPPY

Must be.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. Through the Looking-Glass.

Elizabeth puts the envelope in her pocket.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

Such an adventure, right? For the last few months, I tried to visit every town he wrote me from. I even hired a private investigator to find out everything about Aaron's time there. Right out of the Yellow Pages. They gave me a report like it was something from Frommer's. Told me where to stay. What to eat. "This is what you'll see." I got in the car and drove. I would get there and drive right through though. Never stopped. (Beat.) I've been eating a lot of cheeseburgers lately.

Beat.

HAPPY

That's no good.

ELIZABETH

No. Cheeseburgers and Cokes. (Beat.) I was just on the phone with my husband. Tim. I let him know where I am.

HAPPY

Is he worried?

ELIZABETH

Maybe.

HAPPY

This is a difficult time for you. It's family. Family is important.

ELIZABETH

He's flying out the day after tomorrow. He's coming to get me.

HAPPY

See-?

ELIZABETH

(suddenly)

God, I hate the way he talks to me sometimes! Like really. If I'm so crazy. Why did you ever marry me? I'm me - I'm me! (Beat.) For better or for worse.

Pause.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I ate strawberries today. Like you said. Maybe Aaron planted one of those strawberries or maybe the seeds came from a strawberry he planted. (Beat.) I'm not driving through this time. We're going to San Bernardo tomorrow.

HAPPY

If that's where you want to go.

ELIZABETH

That's where I'm going.

Pause.

HAPPY

I think maybe you no go.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

Maybe you're husband is right.

ELIZABETH

Happy-

HAPPY

Is best thing for you is no go. Right?

ELIZABETH

You think so?

HAPPY

San Bernardo ... no place for woman to go by yourself. You wait. You wait for your husband.

ELIZABETH

That's what's best for me.

HAPPY

That's what I think. That is best.

ELIZABETH

That's what you think.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

(edgy)

That's what Happy thinks.

HAPPY

Just my thinks. I-

ELIZABETH

Was it the best thing for my son to give you his life savings too?

Beat.

HAPPY

I'm sorry?

ELIZABETH

Twenty-seven thousand dollars. Summer jobs and graduation gifts. He never bought new skis, watches, never spent on things like that. Was that the best thing?

Beat.

HAPPY

I don't know ... this ... no, I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

"I Heart Milton Glaser."

HAPPY

What?

ELIZABETH

Commemorative stamps. The books with the "Windows On the World" stamps have serial numbers. They were made special for September 11th. All the stamps have serial numbers.

HAPPY

I'm sorry. I don't know what you are saying.

She holds up the letter.

ELIZABETH

You sent this to me didn't you?

HAPPY

No, I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

All in a big envelope, all the letters he wrote but never sent me.

HAPPY

I don't know these letters.

ELIZABETH

The postage on the envelope was from the "I Heart Milton Glaser" commemorative stamp collection, am I right? Tell me you didn't!

HAPPY

I think is time for bed, maybe.

ELIZABETH

No. You tell me!

HAPPY

Please. Good-night. Please.

She holds up the letter again.

ELIZABETH

Two weeks after I got this in the mail, your wife, Esmeralda Lugo, paid her cable bill with a stamp from the same book that was used to send my son's letters to me. "Angels In America." That was the logo on the stamp. She paid for cable with a check. God, I don't know how you people get checking accounts. You sent me these letters!

HAPPY

I-

ELIZABETH

The title for the Crown Victoria with your VIN number, it changed owners with the DMV three weeks before my son was killed. The dealer sold it for six thousand dollars. Cash. The transmission was changed a week later for twenty-five hundred dollars. I watched you all day driving that car, picking up your fares. Redondo Lugo. Right where they told me you'd be. I wondered all this time what it would look like. Did you buy that car with Aaron's money?

HAPPY

How-?

ELIZABETH
I'm the daughter of a Congressman!

Beat.

Happy approaches her hands out.

HAPPY
Mrs. Hayes.

Elizabeth stiffens.

ELIZABETH
People know I'm here! They'll go right to the police!

Happy stops.

HAPPY
Mrs. Hayes.

ELIZABETH
You bought that car with Aaron's money, didn't you?!

HAPPY
Yes-

ELIZABETH
And you sent me his letters!

HAPPY
Yes.

ELIZABETH
Why?!

HAPPY
I want you to see you have a good son.

ELIZABETH
I know I have a good son!

HAPPY
I can pay you back the money.

ELIZABETH
Did he stay here?

HAPPY
Take me some time. I always tell him I want to pay him back.

ELIZABETH
Did he stay here in this house with you?!

Beat.

HAPPY
(confused)

No.

ELIZABETH
House is new.

HAPPY
Yes.

ELIZABETH
He never stayed in the room I'm staying in.

Beat.

HAPPY
No. He never stay here. I meet your son when he come to work in our strawberry field. We worked together. We were good friends. He stay in the bunkhouse I rent with my family. Chit-chat-chit-chat. I tell him my dreams. One day, he just give me the money. Twenty-five thousand dollars. I tell him I pay him back someday. Mrs. Hayes, I pay back the money. I promise you. Please-

ELIZABETH
I don't want the money.

HAPPY
Then why you here?

ELIZABETH
I want you to drive me.

HAPPY
Drive?

ELIZABETH
I want you to take me to see all those men who killed him. Then I want to go see the boy that was with them. The boy in the detention center.

HAPPY
I wanted to pay him back. I say to him-

ELIZABETH
I want you to drive me, Happy!

Beat.

HAPPY
Okay. Whatever you say you want.

ELIZABETH

(soft)

I want to see them before my husband gets here. Then you'll never hear from me again.

HAPPY

Whatever you say.

ELIZABETH

Sixty dollars to San Bernardo, right?

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah. Sixty dollars. After, is another hour to Hancock. That's where is the boy.

ELIZABETH

A hundred then. First to San Bernardo then to Hancock.

HAPPY

A hundred.

ELIZABETH

Okay, I'm going to bed. The car works now, right?

HAPPY

Yes. I fix.

ELIZABETH

Was it really broken?

HAPPY

Yeah. Was broken. Was problems.

ELIZABETH

I'm glad it's fixed then. I'm going to bed. That room looks very inviting. (Beat.) Your girls. They knew Aaron, yes?

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Did they like him?

HAPPY

Very, very much, Mrs. Hayes. Very, very much. They speak Spanish with him.

ELIZABETH

I'm really tired, Happy.

HAPPY

Yeah. You should sleep.

Elizabeth begins to exit. She stops.

ELIZABETH

You know those boys thought he was Mexican, don't you? My son.

SILENCE.

HAPPY

Yes. We know.

ELIZABETH

What in God's name is happening to this world, Happy?

Beat.

HAPPY

Maybe nothing.

ELIZABETH

Well if that doesn't scare you, nothing will, Amigo.

She exits.

LIGHTS OUT on Happy.

End of Scene.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE I: A LONELY LAUNDROMAT

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron sitting in a Laundromat. The machines pound out their rhythmic cycles.

He wears tattered flip-flops, a dirty old t-shirt and polyester shorts.

He skin is dark brown now, though he has a very bad rash on his arms. His hair and beard are shaggy.

AARON

April sixth. Santa Alicia, California. Organic Strawberries.

Dear Mimsy,

So California. Here we are. I've been here for maybe two and a half weeks now?

He uncaps a tube of skin cream and rubs ointment on his rash. He wipes his hands on his shirt. He caps the tube.

AARON (cont'd)

It's huge. Like an ocean, huge. It's California. I had to check to see that we were in Santa Alicia. It all blends into one for me out here. It's just Rural, CA.

He begins to write in a notebook.

AARON (cont'd)

When the fields here were ready, they sent an old school bus down to Texas to get us. It just showed up one day. We barely got any notice, but everyone knew it was time. Everyone but me. I guess it's this way every year. No one told me. I had to seal up my hive and ship it with some guy who had extra room in his pick up truck.

He stops writing and looks up.

AARON (cont'd)

I wanted to ride with him, but everyone was giving him stuff to take and there wasn't any room.

We drove up and over from Texas and never stopped and it still took us two days to get here. When I finally got my hive back, I could feel that it was too hot from being under the sun.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

I unsealed it and right away, a bunch of bees crawled out and started beating their wings in front of the entrance trying to cool it down. But, a lot of bees died. I spent the rest of the afternoon watching the workers carrying dead bees out of the hive. It was a lot of bees.

SILENCE.

AARON (cont'd)

I should have had a better plan.

It's funny how dead things just look and feel so hollow. My bees are so beautiful and strong when they're alive. When they're dead, any old wind can blow them any way it wants. I spent the whole morning pulling the stingers out of the dead bodies. I'd stick them into the meat of a grape and pull the whole thing out. Don't know why? Just felt like being odd, I guess.

I didn't see the body of the queen, so that's a good thing. I'm sure they took care of her in there, but I was worried. If the queens dies, one of the workers will turn into a queen, but supposedly, that never turns out right. The hive loses its identity, only makes drones and just turns into a mess. I'll pry the hive open and look for her after they've settled down a bit. Right now, they're flying around a field of wildflowers and they seem pretty happy. I say, "Let them be happy for a while."

Actually, we did stop once on the way here. The boss likes to hunt and we stopped at a Bassmaster Pro Shops. Have you ever heard of this store? I'm surprised we don't have one out on The Cape. It's like this huge camping and hunting store. Huge like Wal-Mart huge, and it's all outdoors stuff inside. It might as well be a forest to go camping in, it's that big, Mimsy. Everybody was wearing hunting camouflage hats and shirts. It was crazy.

They had a waterfall there and under it was a giant pool of water and they actually had fish in it! Huge, huge fish, like catfish that weighed over a hundred pounds. We just sat there watching the fish while the boss bought arrows or bullets or something. I don't know.

One thing I noticed was that there were a lot of soldiers there.

DANNY, early-20's sits down next to Aaron. He is dressed in his Naval uniform. His hair is neatly trimmed. He holds a baby in his arms. He seems mesmerized by the laundry.

AARON (cont'd)

I remember this one guy. He was wearing a uniform and he had a little baby girl and he was sitting there just staring at these fish and men in hunting caps would just come up to him and shake his hand.

Aaron approaches him.

AARON (cont'd)

Hey.

DANNY
(Texan accent)

Hey.

AARON
(regarding the fish tank/fourth wall)

Pretty cool, huh?

DANNY

Yeah.

Beat.

AARON

You fish?

DANNY

Much as I can. You?

AARON

No. No I don't.

DANNY

Well, get a good look. That's probably the biggest largemouth bass you're ever going to see.

AARON

Which one is that?

DANNY

The green one.

AARON
(pointing)

That one?

DANNY

Yeah. It's like fourteen pounds. Biggest one I've ever seen and I've fished my whole life. Don't know where they find these fish.

AARON
Yeah.

SILENCE.

AARON (cont'd)
Who's that baby? I mean, is that your baby?

DANNY
Yeah. She's Susannah. She's mine.

AARON
She's cute. (Beat.) How old are you?

DANNY
Twenty.

AARON
Really?

DANNY
Yeah.

AARON
Wow.

DANNY
Wow?

AARON
That's young.

DANNY
Maybe.

AARON
You married?

DANNY
Yeah, we decided to get married before shipping out. That way Susannah's got health insurance, you know?

AARON
That's cool.

DANNY
Yeah, Uncle Sam's treating me okay. Plus, I get to go to college when I come back so it's real good.

AARON
Cool.

DANNY

You should think about it if you don't got something else going on?

AARON

What?

DANNY

The service. It's a good deal.

AARON

Yeah. Maybe.

DANNY

You're American, right?

AARON

What? Yeah.

DANNY

You should think about it then.

AARON

Yeah. I don't know. I don't think so. Not for me, maybe.

DANNY

I was in college for a semester last year. Got to say, it was pretty awesome.

AARON

Oh. Well, I was in school already. I'm just taking a little time off.

DANNY

For real?

AARON

Yeah.

DANNY

Where were you going?

AARON

Cornell.

DANNY

I've heard of that. That's a good school.

AARON

Yeah.

Beat.

DANNY

So now, what, you're with those guys?

He nods to unseen people.

AARON

Uh, yeah. We were just planting cantaloupes in Weslaco, and now we're going to California for strawberries.

DANNY

So you dropped out of Cornell to go picking fruit.

AARON

Well, not exactly. I'm just taking a little time off.

DANNY

Right. What kind of grades you need to go to Cornell?

AARON

Pretty good, I guess.

DANNY

A's?

AARON

Yeah.

DANNY

Yeah. You got to go to a fancy high school too, right?

AARON

I went to Exeter.

DANNY

Yeah. See?

AARON

But, no, you don't have to.

DANNY

(laughing)

And now, you're picking fruit? Lord, I've heard everything, everything now.

AARON

Well, it's pretty interesting.

DANNY

Yeah?

AARON

I mean, you get to see how everything really works, right? Like there are fields all throughout the country and there are literally thousands of us working in them right now, travelling from field to field.

DANNY

Thousands of Mexicans.

AARON

All over. (Beat.) Right. I understand what people are saying when they're like, "You can't just open the doors and let the flood come in." And you can't. But, seriously, if we weren't working like this, everyone would be paying like twenty dollars for a cantaloupe. Maybe more.

DANNY

Shit. What does this pay?

AARON

In California, they're going to pay us by weight. But, my friends who've been doing this for years, they say even the best strawberry pickers only make five dollars an hour and on top of that, you have to pay the boss to stay in the bunkhouse. The little kids end up working in the fields making up the difference. Crazy, right?

DANNY

Yeah.

AARON

But, they can get people to do it, so it must beat whatever's going on at home, right?

DANNY

I guess. Beat going to college?

AARON

Uh, it's like an independent study ... but you're right, it's true, I look around at some of the people who have been doing this for years and I just want to say, "What the Hell are you doing with your life?" You know? The young guys, I get it, but the older guys, some of them have families and they just drag them around from farm to farm. The little kids get rashes on their bodies because their parents hang their laundry on vines or fences that get sprayed with pesticide. But, as far as I see, they keep hanging their laundry there. I don't get it. Anyway, it's really amazing to witness it. I mean, all around us, there are all of these people who are serving up their lives so that the rest of us can have a carton of strawberries, you know? That's the way the world works. That's an education.

DANNY
(a nerve was struck)

Yeah.

AARON
Anyway, it's interesting.

DANNY
Yeah. (Beat.) So, all those people are illegal?

AARON
Most of them are here with worker passes. But, some are, yeah.

Aaron looks back at the fish tank.

AARON (cont'd)
So, this one. That's a catfish, right? The one with the whiskers.

DANNY
Yeah.

AARON
What's that one?

DANNY
What?

AARON
That one.

DANNY
Striped bass.

AARON
Cool. What-?

DANNY
Hey, Mister.

AARON
What?

DANNY
I don't mean to be rude, Sir, but, well, I'm shipping out tomorrow and my dad's up buying me a fly rod, like I'm going to have a place to fish in the desert, you know? But, I'm not going to have much time with my baby girl so-

Aaron's laundry buzzes loudly.

Beat.

DANNY (cont'd)

You think maybe you can, uh-

AARON

Oh, hey. Yeah, sure. I just, uh ... well I wanted to come and shake your hand.

DANNY

Sure.

Danny extends his hand. They shake.

AARON

Good luck, alright?

DANNY

God bless.

AARON

See you.

Aaron takes his clothes out of the dryers. He doesn't have much, maybe 15 articles of clothing tops, including each sock. He starts to fold it.

AARON (cont'd)

(out to the audience, but to Elizabeth)

He was still watching those fish when we left.

As he folds his clothes, Aaron periodically sneaks glances at Danny.

AARON (cont'd)

Mimsy, I know that you've been putting money in the Bank of America account from time to time, so I wanted to let you know that I closed it. I took all the money out of it and I gave it to a guy I met out here. Great guy. He has a dream and ... I know it's a lot of money, but, I didn't make it, right? It was gifts. So, what can someone else do with a gift, right? What if someone else gets to start off a little bit ahead? Anyway, in a couple of months I'll be back in school and they'll still be here for like ... forever.

He spreads some more cream on his rash.

AARON (cont'd)

I got Dad's message. I know he wants me to come home now, but I just feel like I've got a few more months left in me. Things can be so beautiful out here. I see the sunrise every morning and even though my body's tired, it's always beautiful.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

Dad signed his email, "Dr. Timothy Bradley Hayes, M.D."

Okay, Mrs. Timothy Bradley Hayes, M.D. Time to go. We'll see each other soon.

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Another Spring.

P.s. I never did get that kitten.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron and Danny.

End of Scene.

SCENE II: A BEAUTIFUL FIELD OF YELLOW WILDFLOWERS

The sun is shining and there are bees everywhere.

Aaron's bee-hive is there ... somewhere. It is weathered. There is a vase in front of it. A bouquet of fresh, but wilted white flowers sits in it.

Happy enters carrying a bouquet of fresh purple flowers, a picnic basket and a large plastic bag. Elizabeth follows him. She has purchased some new clothes, a trim black suit. Good shoes. A "VISITOR" sticker from the San Bernardo State Penitentiary is stuck to her lapel. "VISITOR" is written in red.

HAPPY

You see? I told you is not far off from the road.

ELIZABETH

(quiet, brooding)

Mm.

HAPPY

Beautiful here, no?

ELIZABETH

Very beautiful.

Happy sets his things down far to the side of the hive.

HAPPY

Okay. We're here.

What?

ELIZABETH

Happy points to the bee-hive.

HAPPY

There it is.

ELIZABETH

Oh. (Beat.) That's it?

HAPPY

Yes.

Happy takes a blanket out of the picnic basket and unfurls it. He places it on the ground.

ELIZABETH

That's it.

HAPPY

It's a very strong bees. Aaron decide to put the hive here.

He turns his head and looks around.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Happy bees everywhere, no?

He begins to take food out of the picnic basket.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing?

HAPPY

Lunch.

She turns away from the beehive.

ELIZABETH

How far away is the juvenile detention center?

HAPPY

Maybe forty-five minutes.

ELIZABETH

I don't want to get there and it's closed.

HAPPY

It's okay. Come, you have to eat.

ELIZABETH

I'd just like to get there. I had a coffee in San Bernardo.

HAPPY

A cup of coffee not enough since morning.

ELIZABETH

I'm fine.

HAPPY

My wife she pack you good things. She says God bless you. Come, you eat something and then we go to Hancock. There's good fruit. There's good bread.

ELIZABETH

Happy ...

Happy takes an old mechanic-suit out of the plastic bag, a make-shift bee-keeper suit. He has a bee-keeper's hat and veil. He starts to put it all on.

She turns around and sees him.

HAPPY

I want you should taste the honey.

She sits down on the blanket.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Eat the bread. My neighbor makes it.

Elizabeth takes a loaf of artisan bread out of the basket. She breaks off a piece and chews it.

HAPPY (cont'd)

See? Good. I wear the whole suit. Aaron just wear the hat. Not even gloves. To me, that's crazy.

He puts the hat and the veil on. He puts on gloves.

He takes a smoker, a brush, a large knife and a large piece of Tupperware out of the bag. He puts newspapers and pine needles in the smoker. He lights a piece of the newspaper and puffs smoke from the smoker.

He sprays the hive with smoke. The sound of buzzing quiets.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Aaron and I we go get these bees together. He teach me all this. Sometimes, your son, he have the crazy ideas.

He takes the lid off of the top of the hive. He sprays it with smoke.

Aaron enters. He's excited. He looks better than he looked at the laundromat. He's cut his beard and his hair is pulled back. His skin is dark and his hair black and shiny. He looks like a Mexican.

Elizabeth seems to see him, but he can't see her.

AARON

Dondo.

HAPPY

Hm?

AARON

Dondo, yo encontré las abejas.

HAPPY

Hm?

AARON

Las abejas salvajes.

Happy takes the hat and veil off. Instead of a hive, he's standing over the engine of a car. He wipes his hands on a cloth.

Beat.

HAPPY

No. No, no.

AARON

(a struggle)

Encontré una ... uh ... manero de ... uh ... uh ... encontrar nueve abejas.

HAPPY

Okay, now we stop it.

AARON

What?

HAPPY

We talked about this already.

Aaron rolls his eyes.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Are we men, Aaron? Hm?

AARON

Yeah, we're men.

HAPPY

So we have to talk like men.

AARON

Alright.

HAPPY

If my English no good, no problem, we hunt and peck like chickens. But, my English is better than you Spanish. It's good. English? We can talk like men. Nobody have to be brought down to speak.

AARON

Esmeralda says that I'm talking just fine.

HAPPY

(correcting him)

Esmeralda says that you're *speaking* just fine and she has no authority. Her whole family shouting all the time like tamale salesmen.

AARON

I understand everything she says.

HAPPY

Yes, this is a good stage for you. Everything coming in, but, you need more time before anything should start flowing out.

AARON

I can talk to the Monica and Angelina.

HAPPY

(mock-disgusted)

Oh, this is the standard now.

AARON

Yeah.

HAPPY

If their grandmother could hear their Spanish, I would never hear the end of it. You float around, flirting with the Senoritas, thinking you are Gabriel Marquez, but to me, you sound like the ... Pepe Gonzalez.

Aaron laughs.

HAPPY (cont'd)

(laughing also)

Oh you laugh! You laugh, but all the time I see you watching the soap operas with Esmeralda. You come to me after you read some Calderón in Spanish, then we'll talk.

AARON

Okay.

HAPPY

Okay. So, what now? We no going to fix the carburetor?

AARON

Tomorrow.

HAPPY

Of course. Always tomorrow.

AARON

Happy, I need new bees.

He takes a few jars out of his pocket and hands them to Happy.

AARON (cont'd)

Look what I found.

Happy looks at the bees closely?

HAPPY

(surprised)

You paint these bees?!

AARON

Yeah. It's White-Out from the office.

HAPPY

You crazy?!

AARON

No.

HAPPY

What kind of crazy you have to be, sitting around painting on bees?!

AARON

(laughing)

No, this is the way people used to find bees back in the old days. These bees are feral bees. Strong, wild bees. We're going to let them go and we'll follow them back to their hive.

HAPPY

Then what we going to do?

AARON

We're going to steal the queen and all the other bees will follow her.

HAPPY

Oh, she just going to come out. We'll just go and say, "Pardón, pardón. Uhm, a Mister Elton John is here, Queen Bee. He ready for you to make him a knight."

AARON

It's not going to be easy. That's why I need you.

HAPPY

You need a psychologist.

AARON

(serious)

Happy, you know I need new bees.

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah. I know.

AARON

So, I need your help.

Beat.

HAPPY

Okay, I help you get your queen. But, for me, you have to sign the contract.

AARON

(slightly annoyed)

Come on, Happy.

HAPPY

No. Your money, no is a gift. It must be investment.

AARON

Sure, whatever.

HAPPY

So, you are a partner in my business.

AARON

Yeah, whatever.

HAPPY

No, "whatever." Business is no whatever. You put your faith in me, I'm going to see it rewards you.

AARON

Why?

HAPPY

Is a lot of money.

AARON

Maybe. But, why can't it just be a gift?

HAPPY

Because we are men. Men. No one needs to be brought down to speak the same language, yes?

AARON

Yes.

Happy extends his hand. They shake.
Happy embraces Aaron.

HAPPY

Okay. Yes. Yes, that's good. You make me happy today.

AARON

Alright.

HAPPY

Okay, so now what?

AARON

Now, we let them go.

HAPPY

So, let them go. These ladies want to go home.

Aaron holds the jars and Happy unscrews the tops, they watch the bees fly up into the air.

Pause.

Aaron runs off-stage after them.
Elizabeth watches him go.

Happy puts the hat and veil back on.
He goes to the hive and begins to take out combs that are dripping with honey.

He takes the knife and cuts the comb out of the frame. He puts the comb in the Tupperware. He seals the top.

HAPPY (cont'd)
(to Elizabeth)
We follow them to the hive. Wild bees.

He harvests another comb.

HAPPY (cont'd)
They build their hive inside of a wall. We have to go and cut it out. Bees flying everywhere.

He puts the lid back on the hive.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Angry bees. But, Aaron is no scared, all he can think is get that queen.

He takes the old flowers out of the vase and throws them away. He puts the new flowers in the vase and then pours water into the vase.

HAPPY (cont'd)
And this just to say thank you to the bees for the honey.

He arranges the flowers a little bit.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Monica and Angelina pick these for me. Every time we come get honey we bring new flowers. Give them a taste of something different.

He sets the flowers down in front of the hive.

He takes the suit off. He brings the Tupperware over to Elizabeth.

HAPPY (cont'd)
You want to taste?

ELIZABETH
Just like that?

HAPPY
I put it in a jar for you when we get home, but you can eat it now. It's good with the bread. I eat it all the time.

Happy opens the Tupperware and breaks a piece of comb off. He chews it and spits out the wax.

ELIZABETH
Good?

HAPPY
Best taste ever.

He offers a piece to Elizabeth. She reaches out, but stops herself.

She stands.

ELIZABETH
I really think it's time for us to get going.

HAPPY
Oh. Okay. Let me pack up.

ELIZABETH
Fine.

Happy starts to put his bee-keeper suit away.

A bee starts to fly around Elizabeth's head.

HAPPY
You like the bread.

She waves the bee away.

ELIZABETH
Yeah. It was good.

The bee is persistent.

HAPPY
The man who makes it is an old farm hand.

He puts the food away.

ELIZABETH
(quietly, urgently)
Happy-

HAPPY
His hands look like tree roots now. He makes good bread.

The bee flies into Elizabeth's hair.

ELIZABETH
HAPPY!

HAPPY
What?!

HELP ME?!

ELIZABETH

What?!

HAPPY

IT'S IN MY HAIR!

ELIZABETH

She starts to shake her head.

HAPPY
(as in "Don't shake.")

No-no.

ELIZABETH

Help me!

HAPPY

No shaking!

ELIZABETH

I can feel it!

HAPPY

It sting you?!

ELIZABETH

Not yet!

Happy grabs Elizabeth by the shoulders.

HAPPY

You have to stand still!

ELIZABETH

Help me!

HAPPY

Stand still!

Elizabeth complies. She closes her eyes. Happy starts to look through her hair.

ELIZABETH

Do you hear it?

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

It's buzzing.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

I can feel it. It's buzzing.

HAPPY

Yes, I see it. Stand still.

Happy grabs the bee with his fingers.
He pulls it out of Elizabeth's hair.
He releases it up in the air.

ELIZABETH

Is it out?

HAPPY

Yeah.

Elizabeth opens her eyes and shoves
Happy away.

ELIZABETH

JESUS! JESUS! MY GOD! PACK THIS ALL UP! I JUST WANT TO
LEAVE! I JUST WANT TO LEAVE! I JUST WANT TO FUCKING LEAVE,
ALRIGHT?!

Beat.

HAPPY

Okay.

He continues to pack up.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

JUST CLEAN THIS UP! (Beat.) I just want to get going.
Thank you.

Beat.

HAPPY

I thought you would like to see it.

ELIZABETH

Well, thank you.

HAPPY

He have friends, Mrs. Hayes.

ELIZABETH

Oh, he had friends.

Yes.
HAPPY

Such good friends.
ELIZABETH

Forget it.
HAPPY

Such good friends that not one of you came forward when the police were looking for his killers.
ELIZABETH

Happy finishes packing everything up.

Okay, you want to go, let's go.
HAPPY

You know, I can't believe I'm saying this, but you want to live here, really live here, you have to be here. You can't just pocket your twenty-seven thousand dollars, buy your house and hide when it suits you.
ELIZABETH

Twenty-five thousand.
HAPPY

If you want to be here, you have to be here! You can teach him Spanish, you can make him a ... a ...
ELIZABETH

She points at the hive.

... gravestone, but you were not there when he was born and you certainly were not there when he died! The Aaron I knew was no one anybody wanted to kill!
ELIZABETH (cont'd)

SILENCE.

I'm sorry.
ELIZABETH (cont'd)

No.
HAPPY
(as in "it's alright")

I'm sorry.
ELIZABETH

Are you ready to go?
HAPPY

Yeah. ELIZABETH

You still have your sticker. HAPPY

What? ELIZABETH

Your this. From the prison. HAPPY

He points to his chest. Elizabeth looks down.

Oh. ELIZABETH

She takes the sticker off. She crumples it up.

I'm sorry. ELIZABETH (cont'd)

It's okay. You no saying much since San Bernardo. I know you upset. HAPPY

Yeah. ELIZABETH

They let you see him? HAPPY

Yeah. ELIZABETH

Hm. HAPPY

Both of them. ELIZABETH

Oh. Wow. Was good? HAPPY

Good? ELIZABETH

You see what you want to see? HAPPY

What do you mean? ELIZABETH

HAPPY

You talk to them?

ELIZABETH

One of them was talkative. The other was quiet.

HAPPY

What did they say?

ELIZABETH

Oh, he was very apologetic. "I'm sorry." "We didn't know."
"He was wearing a hat." (Beat.) "Do you have any gum?"
That sort of thing.

HAPPY

And the other one?

ELIZABETH

He asked me to pray for him.

HAPPY

Right.

ELIZABETH

And I said I would.

HAPPY

Oh, good.

ELIZABETH

Why did I say that?

HAPPY

It's good. You don't judge. You let God judge.

ELIZABETH

I don't want to pray for them!

HAPPY

That's okay. Come-

ELIZABETH

I don't want to pray for them, Happy!

HAPPY

Okay.

Pause.

ELIZABETH

I want to hit them with aluminum baseball bats ...

Beat.

HAPPY

Jesus.

ELIZABETH

And I want to cut them with buck knives and I want to drag them behind a Ford pick-up truck and I want to hang them from a Melrose tree. That's what I want! And I don't want them to die. I want them to live forever so they can feel every bit of gravel in their skin, everyday, just like me! Oh God! Oh God! Why didn't you help him?! Why didn't you help my son?!

HAPPY

Stop that.

ELIZABETH

You were his friend! Why didn't you tell him?!

HAPPY

What do you want from me?!

ELIZABETH

You should have told him what he was doing was /dangerous!

HAPPY

/Oh yeah-!

ELIZABETH

He didn't know-!

HAPPY

What do you want from me?!

ELIZABETH

He didn't know what he was doing-!

Happy throws his basket to the ground with enormous force.

HAPPY

What do you want from me?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!

He gets in her face.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You want me to tell your son no to stand in the sun?! "Your skin might get too dark and someone might want to kill you?! Don't speak Spanish?! Go home?!" What do you want from me?!

He backs away from her.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Those people in prison are white people. It's white people running loose like wolves. What-do-you-want-from-me? Already, you don't do anything for yourselves anymore! If no for me, you would starve to death! What do you want from me?! You want me to eat your sin for you too, but no! I don't do it! You want us to speak, (as if pointing out suspects) "It was him and him and him," who do we speak? You think Aaron is the first?! Every year, we have so many people beat, so many people hurt, so many people gone and what can I tell my children?! My little one still ask questions, Monica don't say nothing anymore! I see it happen in her body like turn off water. What do I tell them? Aaron is not the first, only the first one you see! But, you no see it all! You no see it all! What do you want from me?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!

ELIZABETH

I WANT YOU TO COME WITH ME!

Pause.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I want you to come with me! And I don't want you to wait in the car while I go in! I want you to be there and we'll see him together. (Beat.) Where we're going, there's a thirteen year old boy who could ... who could step on someone else's throat, smash a throat under his shoe. A little boy. Two years older than Monica. I have to see ... him. And I'll die of fear, Happy. I'll die of fear if I have to go alone. I'll die, Happy. I'll die, I'll die, I'll die.

She covers her face with her hands.

LIGHTS OUT on Happy and Elizabeth.

End of Scene.

SCENE III: A HOSPITAL ROOM

The SOUNDS of a hospital.

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron. He wears a hospital gown and he is sitting next to a window. His hair is tied in a pony-tail and his beard has been shaven.

He writes on a piece of stationary.

AARON

June first. Rural, California. (Beat.) Honey.

He looks up.

AARON (cont'd)

Dear Mimsy,

Dad just left. He said that he didn't tell you that he was coming out here, so I guess all you know is that he was gone. Well, I'm going to tell you that I'm here in the hospital. I'm okay now. I had some complications and it looked, not so good for a minute, but ... I'm okay now. I guess Dad is friends with the head of the hospital, Medical Director conferences or something and that's who called him.

Pause.

He writes.

AARON (cont'd)

I'm sorry that I haven't been in great touch this year. I just needed ...

He scratches out what he is writing.

AARON (cont'd)

I wrote you a lot. I did. But, for whatever reason I couldn't bring myself to send it. I'm sorry. I think I wanted to have something special to write you, like I had found whatever ...

He scratches out what he is writing.

AARON (cont'd)

I wanted to have something perfect to tell you.

He stops writing and looks out the window.

AARON (cont'd)

My hive died. I think that's the best way I can say it. It didn't swarm. It just kept getting thinner and thinner and thinner until it was nothing anymore. I opened the box one day and all the bees were gone. There was honey. There were some baby bees and there was a mouse that had been stung to death and covered in propolis ... it's like sterile beeswax. They cover everything in it.

Pause.

AARON (cont'd)

That just totally broke my heart because I was like, "They want this to be their home. They defend it, bring food back to it, Their babies are here. Why did it fall apart?"

He rubs his eye.

AARON (cont'd)

So maybe a week ago, I found out about a feral hive that was in the walls of one of the abandoned barns near the fields and I went and tried to cut it out, steal the queen. I guess I got stung a bunch. I'm used to being stung, so I didn't think anything of it. But, a couple of days later, they tell me that my kidneys stopped working for a bit. My friend, Happy, the one I wrote to you about, he found me and brought me here. He was really scared. I guess I was pretty sick.

He starts writing.

AARON (cont'd)

I thought that Dad was going to be kind of a jerk here, but he wasn't at all. He just stayed with me the whole time. Slept in a chair, made jokes with the nurses, showed me this new fancy camera that he bought. Showed me all the pictures he's been taking with it. Has he shown them to you? He's pretty good. Really good, actually.

I watched him sleeping here. Curled up in a chair. How did he curl into it? He's really little, isn't he? I never noticed how little Dad is.

Beat.

He scratches out the last sentence of what he's writing.

AARON (cont'd)

It was really good to see him. It was like old times, like when we were living in that little apartment in Boston.

I was thinking today about the time Uncle John bought that thoroughbred and you and I were staying with him and Little Liberty out in East Hampton for the summer. Dad was in fellowship in Boston and only saw us on the weekends and you always wanted to take me out to the stables to see Uncle John's horses and your friend Luis ... the one who trained them ... and he left me with Caesar, that old man, while he showed you horses. I still wonder what happened to Caesar. He taught me to make lemonade and when he clapped, the horses danced. I heard he had an accident, but I never heard what happened to Caesar. Dad was never the same after that summer. We were never the same. What happened?

He starts to write.

AARON (cont'd)

Dad was holding my hand and he was crying and he was asking me to come home and ... the problem is that I just don't know what I'm coming home to anymore. I told him, "No." I'm not ready yet.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

Yeah, I'm tired. Yeah, it's hard out here. Yeah, there are people who drive by and throw bottles at us and call us "Beaners"--"Beaners." How fucking stupid a racial slur is that?

Beat.

He scratches the last sentence out.

AARON (cont'd)

Yeah, I miss everyone. But, I'm seeing a million beautiful things everyday out here. Things I never saw before.

He starts to write.

AARON (cont'd)

I checked my email on Dad's Blackberry. Hannah wrote to me. "How are you?" "Everybody's wondering about you." I guess she's marrying that guy this winter, because "when you know you know," right? and ...

He puts the pen down.

AARON (cont'd)

... she and I were going out for four years. She's known this guy barely one and she's never even had a real fucking job in her entire life! Her father is Chris Smythe, she went to Choate, she went to India on a vacation, that's what she's seen of the world, she's never done anything, she's never done a thing in her life, so how can she know?!

Beat.

He picks up the pen.

AARON (cont'd)

I don't know.

He scratches out this last part.

AARON (cont'd)

They say that I should be out of here in a few days and I guess it's lucky that I'm still on Dad's insurance. It's been a lot of money to be here. All that money and there's nobody to talk to. Nobody to sing a song with. I've come to like singing. I can't sing for shit, but none of my friends care. Their songs don't mean anything anyway. At least, they don't think they do. Like that (singing) "LA CUCARACHA" song.

It translates to:

"The cockroach, the cockroach,
can't walk anymore.

Because it doesn't have, because it's lacking

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

it's two back feet."

I asked my friends what it means, and they tell me that it's just silly words, a song to sing. I say that it can't be, and they just shrug. When I was in Santa Alicia, I went to the library and I looked it up and it does mean something. It was a corrido sung during the Mexican Revolution and it made fun of the corrupt dictator the revolutionaries were fighting against. I told my friends about it and still, they don't care. To them, by now, it's just silly words and I guess they're right. Silliness in meaning, meaning in silliness. (Beat.) Only a comma separates those two thoughts.

I miss you, Mom. I miss you and Dad and I want to come home. I just don't know how.

Your son,
Mr. Aaron Jeffrey Hazzard Hayes - Summer II.

He tears the letter to shreds.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

End of Scene.

SCENE IV: EPILOGUE - THE INLAND EMPIRE YOUTH GUIDANCE CENTER, HANCOCK, CA

The SOUNDS of a prison. People shuffle about. Doors close. Loud buzzing.

LIGHTS RISE on Happy and Elizabeth. They are sitting in a waiting area. They both wear stickers that say, "VISITOR," on them in bright red letters.

Happy is nervous. His leg is shaking.

ELIZABETH

It looks scarier from the outside, doesn't it?

HAPPY

It looks scary.

ELIZABETH

But there are things on the walls. "Read" posters.

HAPPY

(as in "I can't believe that
that's what draws your eye.")

That's what you see.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

It's nothing. They are ready for us?

ELIZABETH

His last name begins with an "R." We have five more minutes before they let us in.

HAPPY

Okay.

ELIZABETH

Are you alright?

HAPPY

Me? Fine.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Do you want something to drink? There's a vending machine out front.

HAPPY

I have my sodas in the car.

ELIZABETH

That's right.

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

So, what's the problem?

Beat.

HAPPY

Police.

ELIZABETH

Oh. Don't worry, you're with me.

HAPPY

I am with myself. (Beat.) Is no a good feeling to have to be afraid of police. In my country, I come from a good family. Don't ever have to be afraid of police. Here, I am doing something wrong just by sitting here.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

HAPPY

That's why when I take your son to the hospital, I no stay.
(Beat.) I don't even know when he is getting out. That's
why he was walking on the street when they- ... he no tell me
to pick him up.

SILENCE.

Happy sniffs and covers his eyes.

He stops and composes himself.

ELIZABETH

They're not going to bother you. They know who I am.

Beat.

Happy laughs.

HAPPY

You no comfortable where I am comfortable. I no comfortable
where you comfortable. Sometime, we all like to pretend
we're the same, but really we are very different. We no even
supposed to be here. Sign says only parents can come. Is
children here.

HOLD.

ELIZABETH

The horse you rode in Mexico. What kind was it?

HAPPY

Is nothing fancy. Just a pony.

ELIZABETH

Was it smart?

HAPPY

Yeah, okay-smart.

ELIZABETH

Strong?

HAPPY

Strong for it's size.

ELIZABETH

Gentle?

HAPPY

Oh yeah. She very friendly.

ELIZABETH

Hm. Maybe it had some cold-blood in it then. You train it?

HAPPY

My mother train.

ELIZABETH

Oh, that's very interesting.

HAPPY

All animals like my mother. Dogs, ponies. Everything. People, oh, she make us run and hide.

ELIZABETH

Ha. I mostly rode warm-bloods. I used to like to jump, but ... now I'm scared. I don't know what happened to me. I was a very shy, very nervous child, and then for my twenties, my thirties, I guess right when Aaron was born I wasn't and I was angry about all the things that I'd wished I'd done before. Then when Aaron went away to school, I got scared again, but scared for different things this time, like I get nervous now when a glass or a plate is too close to the edge of the table. I just know it's going to fall off. I just know it. (Beat.) I had a lover once. Yeah. He was a horse trainer and he had an old assistant who died the same week that his favorite horse died. Some kind of accident. The man I was seeing was convinced that the old man died because his horse died and I was fearless so I wouldn't have any of it. It was one of those arguments we just couldn't let go. Finally, he said that I didn't understand because all the horses I ever owned were my pets. The old man's horse plowed fields in Mexico and until I clung to life on the back of something else ... I'd never understand anything. That was the last time I saw him. (Beat.) What do you make of that?

HAPPY

"Never anything." Sound like something you say when you don't want to see someone anymore.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

When are you going home?

ELIZABETH

I guess in a day or so.

HAPPY

Ah.

ELIZABETH

Soon after my husband gets here. (Beat.) This is a beautiful part of the country, isn't it?

HAPPY

Is a young part of the country. Touched by God. Everything you plant in it grows. When people first came here, they were driven by Henry Ford. And they make a factory in the field. Very American. But, is always a danger, because everything you put in the field, it grow and grow and grow. Everything.

ELIZABETH

Everything. (Beat.) You know it's not just white people, right?

HAPPY

What?

Elizabeth points at the door.

ELIZABETH

His mother's from El Salvador.

Happy points.

HAPPY

He?

ELIZABETH

Yeah. I met her. She sells ices to the kids after school. I bought one from her. Cherry. Lemon. Something like that.

Beat.

HAPPY

Something like that.

ELIZABETH

What do you make of that?

Happy shakes his head.

HAPPY

(resigned)

Got to make something. (Beat.) Five minutes almost up.

ELIZABETH

Okay. Shall we?

They stand up.

HAPPY

You have our number.

Elizabeth holds up a piece of paper.

ELIZABETH
Yes. Right here.

HAPPY
Okay.

ELIZABETH
Yeah, like we're waiting on line at the deli.

HAPPY
Yeah. (Beat.) I'm scared.

He taps his hand quickly against his chest. His racing heartbeat.

ELIZABETH
Me too.

HAPPY
What are you scared of?

ELIZABETH
That he'll be there.

Happy sees something.

HAPPY
There are people at the doors.

ELIZABETH
Doors are locked. We can't go in until they come out.

HAPPY
Yeah.

A loud BUZZING. Doors open. A crowd exits.

HAPPY (cont'd)
Okay. Now it looks like our turn.

ELIZABETH
Yeah.

HAPPY
Let's go.

ELIZABETH
Oh! Wait. Before we go. I wrote you a letter.

HAPPY
A letter.

ELIZABETH
For your folder.

HAPPY
Oh. (Beat.) Really?

Elizabeth takes an envelope out of the inside pocket of her suit jacket. She hands it to Happy.

ELIZABETH
Here.

HAPPY
Thank you.

ELIZABETH
You want to read it? You should read it.

Happy opens the envelope. There is nothing written on the paper.

HAPPY
You don't write nothing.

ELIZABETH
I don't know what you need. So, when we're done here, you write down what you want it to say, and I'll sign it.

HAPPY
Oh.

ELIZABETH
Wait, do you have good penmanship?

HAPPY
Uh ...

ELIZABETH
Then you dictate it and I'll write it. Okay?

HAPPY
Okay.

ELIZABETH
I wish he had sent me those letters, Happy.

HAPPY
Yes.

ELIZABETH
We got postcards from him. He called sometimes. "I'm fine. I'm fine." Those letters.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

If I had read them, I would have known he wasn't fine. I would have known it and I would have come to find him. I would have.

HAPPY

He was fine. You trust me. I saw. A little heart-break, but oh, he sets all the girls on fire.

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

Really?

HAPPY

(as in "I don't have to tell you.")

You know he's a handsome.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Is tragedy. Happens sometimes.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. (Beat.) Yeah. Right, okay, now put that letter away.

Happy puts the blank paper in the envelope and puts it in his pocket.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

And hold my hand.

Happy takes Elizabeth's hand.

HAPPY

Good?

ELIZABETH

Good.

HAPPY

Are you ready?

ELIZABETH

No.

Beat.

Happy tugs her hand a little bit.

HAPPY

Queen Elizabeth. Come.

Happy and Elizabeth take a step forward.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Scene.

End of Play.