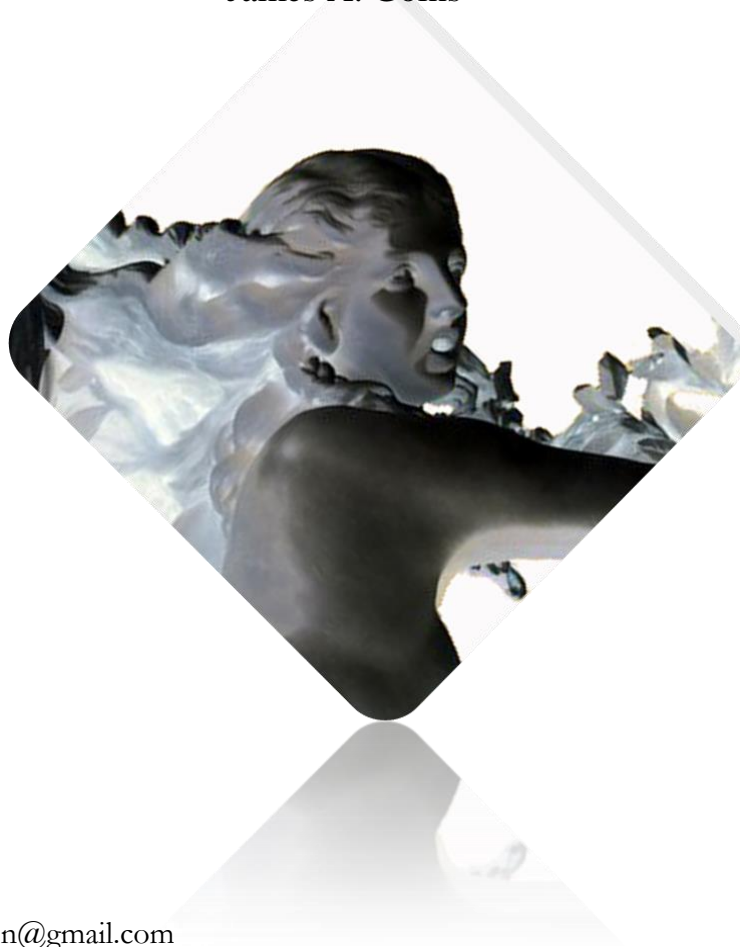


Bridget's Girl

Book and Lyrics by
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Music by
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“Bridget’s Girl”
was originally developed at New Musicals Inc.
formerly The Academy for New Musical Theatre
in North Hollywood, CA

“Bridget’s Girl”
Winner for Best Musical at the Chameleon Theatre Circle’s
Tenth Annual New Play Contest

Time: Present
Place: Bridget’s Studio

Characters

Bridget	F	Age (40 - 45)	<i>The Stymied Wife</i>
Vidal	M	Age (50 – 60)	<i>The Wise Mexican Caretaker</i>
Alberto	M	Age (18 – 21)	<i>The Modern Mexican Youth</i>
Richard.....	M	Age (40 – 45)	<i>The Disgruntled Husband</i>
Mom	F	Age (60 – 70)	<i>The Shell-shocked Grandmother</i>
Dad	M	Age (60 – 70)	<i>The Oblivious Grandfather</i>
Lucy	F	Age (40 – 45)	<i>The Dutiful Sister</i>
Annie	F	Age (16 – 17)	<i>The Rebellious Daughter</i>
Jimmy	M	Age (30 – 35)	<i>The Unfettered Painter</i>
Isabel	F	Age (25 – 30)	<i>The Exotic Model</i>

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>In the Beginning</i> | BRIDGET |
| 2. <i>This Isn't What I Bargained For</i> | RICHARD |
| 3. <i>I Told Her</i> | BRIDGET, LUCY |
| 4. <i>I Told Her: Reprise</i> | BRIDGET |
| 5. <i>It's A Beautiful Day</i> | BRIDGET, LUCY, MOM, DAD |
| 6. <i>I'm Sick of It!</i> | RICHARD |
| 7. <i>Ignore the Bills</i> | JIMMY, BRIDGET |
| 8. <i>It Seemed Like Destiny</i> | MOM |
| 9. <i>Looking at Art</i> | RICHARD, BRIDGET,
ISABEL, JIMMY, VIDAL,
ALBERTO, ANNIE |

ACT II

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 10. <i>I Will Paint You</i> | JIMMY |
| 11. <i>Tell Me About My Wife</i> | RICHARD, ISABE |
| 12. <i>The Little Ache Inside</i> | BRIDGET |
| 13. <i>Bridget, Can You Hear Me?</i> | RICHARD |
| 14. <i>Someday I will Take You There</i> | DAD |
| 15. <i>Each New Painting</i> | JIMMY |
| 16. <i>Why Are Girls So Mean?</i> | ANNIE |
| 17. <i>I Will Paint You: (Reprise)</i> | JIMMY |
| 18. <i>I Am A Girl</i> | BRIDGET, ANNIE |
| 19. <i>I Can Do This</i> | RICHARD |
| 20. <i>Looking at Art - Final</i> | BRIDGET |

“Bridget’s Girl” A Musical

Bridget is trying to get started on her sculpture but every time she begins to work, something interferes. A memory pops into her head; something one of her parents said makes her lose confidence; she gets a call about her daughter, Annie, ditching school again, or Richard, her husband, interrupts her to express his frustration with work. Then there’s the sexy painter down the hall, Jimmy, suggesting new possibilities and causing even more distraction.

Bridget's Girl deals with a wife's choice to recapture her artistic life after helping her husband acquire his career, raising a teenage daughter and who now questions the decisions she has made in life that challenges who she really is to her family and her identity as a person.

Length: 127 Minutes

20 numbers

5M and 5W

Set Requirements: Single Set with or without multiple levels. Props and set pieces determine locations.

ACT I**LIGHTS UP ON AN ARTIST'S STUDIO.**

A Grecian pedestal stands in the middle of the room, lit by beams of sunlight streaming down through a skylight, with blocks of clay stacked up beside it. In the same central area of the stage is a three-legged easel angled in its direction, a metal cart loaded with tools and ready for service, a goodly length of butcher paper unfurled on the floor, a red antique chair poised on spindly legs, and a tall wooden stool. Two floating wall panels stand near the back of the studio, one with a broom leaning against it and drawings of female figures tacked up all over it, and the other with a painting of a grove of olive trees hanging by a hook, alongside other empty hooks. Statuettes of lithe girls entwined with the branches and trunks of trees are scattered about. The periphery of the stage is empty.

BEFORE A SCENE BEGINS IN A NEW LOCATION, VIDAL AND ALBERTO WILL BRING OUT THE CORRESPONDING FURNITURE AND PROPS AND ARRANGE THEM IN AN EMPTY PART OF THE STUDIO. THIS MAY NECESSITATE MOVING THE EASEL, CART, CHAIR, STOOL OR WALL PANELS CLOSER TO THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM AND CAUSE THE CENTRAL WORKING AREA TO BECOME INCREASINGLY CONGESTED, ADDING TO THE ARTIST'S FEELING OF BEING BOXED-IN BY PERSONAL OBLIGATIONS AND CHRONICALLY DISTRACTED FROM DOING HER WORK.

(BRIDGET - early forties, athletic, sexy and spirited, dressed in T-shirt and jeans - stands facing the doorway. VIDAL - Mexican-American, early sixties, with a good sense of playful irony - and his grandson, ALBERTO - late teens, very handsome, with a more sophisticated style than his grandfather - enter pushing a cart loaded with more blocks of clay. BRIDGET eagerly steps forward to help unload. After a moment, VIDAL looks at her with a twinkle in his eye.)

VIDAL

Now you are ready to make your nympho.

(BRIDGET responds with mock indignation.)

BRIDGET

I told you, Vidal, she's not a nympho! She's a wood nymph...Daphne.

ALBERTO

"Nympha", in Spanish.

(BRIDGET looks at him gratefully.)

BRIDGET

Yes, "nympha"!

(She turns back to VIDAL.)

BRIDGET

You see?

VIDAL

Si!

BRIDGET

Her father changed her into a tree because he thought her life was in danger.

VIDAL

I have seen a statue like this in Mexico, of the girl who is becoming a tree.

BRIDGET

(becoming pedantic)

It must have been a reproduction of Bernini's work. He was a famous Italian sculptor who also made a statue of Daphne, "the girl who is becoming a tree."

VIDAL

The owner ask me to build a fence because the dogs like to go pee on her.

BRIDGET

Oh! Mine's going to be different. She'll be in a real sculpture garden, with NO DOGS ALLOWED.

(She adjusts the pedestal so it stands directly under the skylight. Something on the floor around the bottom of it catches her eye. She looks up at the skylight, and back down at the floor.)

BRIDGET

Vidal, why didn't you tell me the skylight leaks?

(VIDAL shrugs.)

VIDAL

How long it will take to make your statue?

BRIDGET

I took six months off from work. That's how long I have to make my statue.

(VIDAL counts on his fingers.)

VIDAL

Mayo, Junio, Julio...it never rains from May to October. We live in Los Angeles. It is a desert here.

BRIDGET

That doesn't mean it never rains.

VIDAL

That means it never rains from May to October.

BRIDGET

The weather is completely unpredictable now, with Climate Change.

(VIDAL nods solemnly and points across the room.)

VIDAL

Why you not make your nympa over there?

BRIDGET

I need lots of light to see the details.

VIDAL

(playing with her again)

What difference does it make if it will be raining?

(BRIDGET glares at him.)

VIDAL

Do not worry, Alberto and I will fix your skylight.

BRIDGET

Thank you, I'd appreciate that.

(The men exit. BRIDGET remembers her manners and calls out ineffectually to the empty doorway.)

BRIDGET

Thanks for helping me with my clay!

(She turns to look at the pedestal, as if able to see her finished creation on top of it, then sings with bravado that turns to self-doubt...)

BRIDGET

THIS COULD BE THE ONE
THE ONE THAT I AM KNOWN FOR
THAT OPENS UP THE DOOR TO MAKING MORE
THE ONE THEY CAN'T IGNORE

I PICTURE HER WHEN SHE IS FINISHED
INSIDE A LAUREL TREE
ARMS REACHING UP BECOMING BRANCHES
WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SET HER FREE?

SHE STANDS BATHED IN AN ASTRAL LIGHT
PEOPLE HAVE COME TO SEE HER
SUDDENLY MY ROLE IS INCIDENTAL
WHAT DOES SHE HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

BRIDGET (cont'd)
BUT IT'S SO EASY IN THE BEGINNING

BEFORE THE WORK BEGINS
BEFORE THE CHIPS START TO FALL
BEFORE THE DOUBTS SET IN
BEFORE THE DEMONS COME TO CALL

THE WORK BEGINS
AND THE CHIPS START TO FALL
THEN THE DOUBTS SET IN
AND THE DEMONS COME TO CALL

BUT IN THE BEGINNING IT'S SO EASY

(She picks up a handful of markers, gets on the floor beside the butcher paper, and draws. A DOG BARK ring tone sounds. She stops and listens, waits for another ring, then raises her head.)

BRIDGET
I could be vacuuming or chopping wood.
(dog bark)
"You don't have to answer the phone, Bridget."
(dog bark)
Damn, it could be the kid!

(Irritated but happy, she jumps up and fishes around in her purse, her back to the door.)

BRIDGET
(into her phone)
Hi, what's going on?
(she listens, then...)
How do you know?

(We hear the voice of a man approaching.)

RICHARD (off-stage)
(agitated)
A teacher saw her sneaking off campus with a boy.

(RICHARD - mid-forties, handsome, sexy in nice jeans and a dark, print shirt - enters.)

BRIDGET
Was it that *Miss McFadden* again?

(She turns around and sees RICHARD. He continues to talk into his phone, as if for amplification.)

RICHARD

What the hell difference does it make? Our daughter ditched school!

(They stare at each other, then end their calls and stow their phones.)

BRIDGET

I take it she didn't answer her phone.

RICHARD

What do you think I'm doing here? Why do you think we're having this conversation?

(BRIDGET turns away and talks to herself.)

BRIDGET

We know she's not self-destructive. She's actually quite sensible. You could say she has a good head on her shoulders. She's just a little impulsive..

RICHARD

Yeah, she does crazy shit all the time! What are we going to do?

BRIDGET

There's not much we can do.

RICHARD

She could be having sex this very minute!

BRIDGET

Where, at a bus stop? On somebody's lawn?

RICHARD

I don't know. We have to go out and comb the streets of the city.

BRIDGET

We made a deal. You're the one on kid duty now.

RICHARD

This job is too big for one person.

BRIDGET

You'll get the hang of it.

RICHARD

This is an emergency!

BRIDGET

Being caught smuggling drugs across the border is an emergency. Hitching a ride on the back of a motorcycle with a Hell's Angel is an emergency. This is par for the course in a day in the life...

RICHARD

You're enjoying this, aren't you?

BRIDGET

No, I'm not. I'm worried, too. But ditching school is pretty typical, and Annie is quite sensible, with a good...

RICHARD

Bridget!

BRIDGET

She'll come back when she's done whatever it was she *had* to do, that couldn't possibly wait until after school.

RICHARD

Like losing her virginity?

(BRIDGET ponders his question earnestly.)

BRIDGET

No, I don't think it's that. She'll want to take her time doing *that*.

(RICHARD wobbles on his feet.)

RICHARD

I'm not feeling so well.

(He sits on the red chair, which teeters under his weight, then jumps back up and glares at it.)

BRIDGET

We know she's not self-destructive. She's actually quite sensible.

RICHARD

Maybe it's allergies or I'm getting a cold.

(He looks around, sees the pedestal, then goes over and collapses on top of it.)

BRIDGET

You could say she's got a good head on her shoulders...

(She sits on the red chair, which bears up well under her weight, and puts her head in her hands. RICHARD sits slumped on the pedestal with his chin on his fist like "The Thinker".)

LIGHTS DOWN ON THE STUDIO.

VIDAL and ALBERTO enter with a patio table, which they put in an empty part of the studio.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PATIO.

(BRIDGET'S DAD - late-70's, wiry and gruff, his mind alternating between clarity and confusion - enters holding a tray with a food container, utensils, and soda can. He puts the tray on the table as BRIDGET'S MOM - mid-70's, pretty but worn, large but stooped, with a minor hearing loss and knack for passive-aggression - enters with her tray.)

DAD

It's not all that warm out here, although there is still plenty of glare.

MOM

Of what?

DAD

Glare, from the sun!

(He runs his forefinger across the table and holds it up so MOM can see the dirt.)

MOM

We can go back inside if you prefer.

DAD

(grudgingly)

No, you like it.

VIDAL and ALBERTO bring in two chairs, which the old people quickly avail themselves of, oblivious to the chair-bearers.

(BRIDGET'S older sister, LUCY - mid-40's, not as pretty as BRIDGET, small and wiry like her dad, with a robust sense of self-importance and a flair for the dramatic - enters.)

Intimidated by her presence, VIDAL and ALBERTO quickly exit.

LUCY

It's lovely out here, isn't it? You can smell the sweet, lemony scent of magnolias.

DAD

That's because the damn things are hanging right over our heads.

(LUCY ignores him.)

LUCY

And look at the jacaranda.

(MOM'S and DAD'S heads swivel on command.)

LUCY

Isn't it gorgeous? I found some wool that color, on sale. I'm going to knit a sweater, for Annie.

MOM

Oh, how nice! She'll be thrilled to have a sweater made by her favorite aunt!

LUCY

I think she will.

VIDAL and ALBERTO return with two more chairs. LUCY nods to VIDAL as he moves one closer to her, then sits down as if she were royalty.

(She sees MOM staring at her tray of food.)

LUCY

What have you got in there, Mom?

MOM

Something new I found when they had Dad hooked up to that machine at the doctor's office. It's called Gulliver Stew.

LUCY

Are there little people under the crust?

MOM

I don't know.

(MOM and DAD peer into their food containers as if this were a real possibility.)

LUCY

I'm going to make you some soup, from the vegetables I'm growing in my garden. And I'll make some of that humus you like, too. It's got lots of protein.

DAD

The humus gives me gas.

(LUCY turns to MOM excitedly.)

LUCY

You have *got* to see my garden, Mom. My chard is amazing and my lettuces are unbelievable!

MOM

We'd love to see your garden, wouldn't we, Dad?

(DAD looks up with a mouthful of food and a big question mark on his face.)

LIGHTS DOWN ON THE PATIO.

LIGHTS UP ON THE STUDIO.

(BRIDGET gets up off the chair and looks at RICHARD slumped on the pedestal.)

BRIDGET

Don't wimp out on me now, Richard. We made a deal.

RICHARD

Is our DEAL about your sculpting, or not wanting to be part of a family anymore?

BRIDGET

It's about you being Point Person for our Teen, so I can enjoy the sublime sensation of getting lost in my work, a luxury you experience on a regular basis, I believe.

RICHARD

Not really, and you picked a lousy time to get lost.

BRIDGET

I got commissioned. Remember?

RICHARD

If that's what you want to call it.

BRIDGET

Anyway, isn't it about time to see what Dad has to offer?

RICHARD

I don't know what goes on in the minds of girls.

BRIDGET

Annie's a teenager. She's trying to find herself.

RICHARD

(irritated)

Great! So, my wife wants to get lost and my daughter's trying to find herself.

(BRIDGET drags the butcher paper across the floor and shoos RICHARD off the pedestal. She climbs up on top of it and tapes one end of the paper, on which she has drawn a tall, skinny tree, to the bottom of the skylight.)

RICHARD

Help me, Bridget, just this once. When we find Annie I promise I'll leave you alone.

(BRIDGET climbs back down from the pedestal and admires her work.)

BRIDGET

No, because it won't be just once. And there's nothing we can do, except play the Waiting Game...and let the stress slowly erode every single cell in our bodies.

(A thought suddenly occurs to her.)

BRIDGET

Did you text Annie or leave her a voice mail?

RICHARD

Voice mail.

BRIDGET

She never listens to them.

(She takes her phone out of her pocket.)

BRIDGET

She rarely answers her phone, never listens to voice mail, and only responds to text messages.

(She types and sends a message.)

RICHARD

You might have told me that.

BRIDGET

You might have learned that over the years.

(Her phone whistles with an incoming message. She reads it and holds up her phone triumphantly.)

BRIDGET

Our daughter's alive!

RICHARD

Thank god!

BRIDGET

I'll tell her to get her butt over here right away.
You can figure out what to do with her for the rest of
the afternoon.

(She types and sends the message as RICHARD looks
around the studio for the first time.)

RICHARD

You've got all your favorite things here, haven't
you? The stalwart little chair that stood erect as
generations fell by the wayside...

(LUCY calls out from the patio.)

LUCY

Come sit next to me, Bridget.

RICHARD

The painting that hung over your grandparents'
fireplace, gloating.

(BRIDGET crosses to The Patio and sits down in
the chair beside LUCY. RICHARD turns around and
sees that she's gone, then sings...)

RICHARD

THIS IS NOT WHAT I BARGAINED FOR
THE FRENZIED MOODS, THE DUSTY FLOOR
I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

I NEVER GUESSED SHE WOULDN'T LIKE
SHOPPING FOR CLOTHES AND PRETTY THINGS
GOT NO THRILLS FROM GETTING FLOWERS,
CANDY, DIAMOND RINGS

WOULD THINK THAT ENTERTAINING WAS A CHORE
BE RELIEVED WHEN FRIENDS WERE DONE
AND OUT THE DOOR

I NEVER GUESSED SHE WOULDN'T LIKE
GOING ON WEEKEND GETAWAYS
WOULDN'T LIKE LAZING AROUND ON THOSE
CAREFREE SUMMER DAYS

SHE ACTS LIKE THERE ARE VOICES
 CALLING HER
 SIRENS BECKONING TO GO AND DO THINGS
 THAT SHE'D PREFER

THIS IS NOT WHAT I BARGAINED FOR
 I WANTED SOMETHING MORE

YOUR WIFE SHOULD ALWAYS
 BE THERE FOR YOU
 SHARE IN ALL THE THINGS
 THAT YOU DO
 BE HALF OF ONE
 WHERE THERE ONCE WERE TWO
 GO THROUGH LIFE
 AND SEE THE SAME WHOLESOME VIEW

WE HAVE ONLY SO MUCH
 TIME IN OUR LIVES
 WE MUST THEREFORE STAY ON
 TRACK WITH OUR WIVES
 TRACK WITH OUR WIVES

AND NOT BE CONSUMED BY URGES AND DRIVES
 TO MAKE WOOD NYMPHS WHILE OUR LIVES PASS US BY

Damn!

LIGHTS OUT ON THE STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PATIO.

(MOM pushes her tray towards BRIDGET.)

MOM

You can have mine, dear.

BRIDGET

No, thanks, I'm not hungry.

(DAD puts his hand firmly on the tray.)

DAD

Keep the tray! All your mother cares about these days
 is coffee and dessert.

(DAD picks up his fork and digs in. BRIDGET turns to LUCY, ready to push the tray over to her, but she shakes her head vigorously.)

MOM

I'm trying to talk your father into taking a trip abroad.

BRIDGET

That's a great idea!

LUCY

Where would you like to go, Mom?

MOM

We've always dreamed of seeing Venice. Haven't we, Dad?

(She turns to DAD, but he ignores her.)

MOM

It never occurred to me wouldn't make it there.

DAD

I'm not going down surrounded by people who can't speak English.

BRIDGET

You should go! It would be so much fun!

DAD

You mother and I don't think in terms of fun. The most we can hope for at our age is interesting, which often turns to trying, and sometimes downright disastrous.

LUCY

Oh, please!

(MOM talks to herself, in her own world.)

MOM

I've completely given up on The Pyramids.

DAD

Besides, I have to stay close to my doctors.

MOM

I may never make it to Maine or Montreal.

LUCY

They do have doctors in Italy.

MOM

I doubt I'll ever see Delaware.

DAD

Yes, but they don't have all our modern techniques.

LUCY

You're right, they probably still use leeches.

BRIDGET

Although I understand they're making a comeback.

LUCY

They are!

(The sisters giggle.)

MOM

I'm sure I'll never see Cincinnati.

(DAD finally turns to her.)

DAD

You don't want to see Cincinnati. It's a terrible place.

MOM

Have you ever been there?

DAD

No!

MOM

Then what do you know?

(They glare at each other, then MOM puts her hand on DAD'S forearm.)

MOM

Come to Italy with me.

(DAD ignores her and goes back to eating. A happy thought occurs to BRIDGET.)

BRIDGET

I moved into my new studio yesterday!

MOM

What happened?

(LUCY turns to MOM and raises her voice.)

LUCY

She moved into her new studio!

BRIDGET

And my clay was delivered today.

LUCY

And her clay was delivered today!

DAD

(oblivious)

They keep these in the freezer section. You just pop them in the microwave. They're quite good.

(MOM stares at LUCY, questioningly.)

LUCY

To make her sculpture.

(Understanding finally registers on MOM'S face and she turns to BRIDGET.)

MOM

Of course to make your sculpture! Forgive me, darling!

DAD

The creamed chipped beef is quite nice, too. We serve it on toast.

MOM

Is it absolutely divine, your studio?

BRIDGET

Yes, it is!

MOM

And now you're getting paid you don't have to keep calling that thing you do a hobby.

(BRIDGET is startled by the sudden clarity of her mother's understanding. MOM slaps the side of her foot, her attention diverted by a mosquito.)

MOM

Oh, dear, I felt a bite!

DAD

I told you not to wear those ridiculous shoes. They let the bugs in. Come inside, girls.

(He loads up his tray and MOM follows suit.)

LUCY

I like it out here.

BRIDGET

I'll stay with Lucy.

MOM

Well, come inside for dessert. I've got something yummy.

BRIDGET

We'll be there soon, Mom.

MOM

I'll make a fresh pot of coffee!

(She and DAD exit. LUCY turns her chair around so she can look out at the garden, and BRIDGET does the same. They sit side-by-side facing forward.)

LUCY

They've entered a new phase of aging.

BRIDGET

I hope they take a trip before it's too late.

LUCY

It already is. Their travel muscles have atrophied beyond repair.

BRIDGET

It is kind of scary, the thought of them trying to get around in a foreign country.

LUCY

It could be Downright Disastrous!

(They laugh, and fall silent.)

LUCY

(beat)

Annie asked if she could spend the night again.

BRIDGET

She likes to take a break from reality by pretending you're her mother.

LUCY

No girl likes her mother at Annie's age.

BRIDGET

She says things that take my breath away.

LUCY

Really, like what things?

BRIDGET

That she had to raise herself, as if she were some kind of an orphan. What did she think? That her bed, her clothes, her toys, the meals I made everyday, all that driving I did, was for somebody else's benefit?

LUCY

I've always suspected Annie of having a deep lack of confidence.

(BRIDGET suddenly looks terribly sad and clears her throat to keep from crying.)

BRIDGET

She said she lay in bed night after night listening to me and Richard fight.

(BRIDGET turns to LUCY, who continues to stare straight ahead with lips pursed.)

BRIDGET

We didn't fight all that much.

LUCY

Maybe you don't think you did.

(BRIDGET turns away, frustrated.)

BRIDGET

Tell me, Luce, are there really healthy couples who don't fight? Or manage to turn conflicts into teaching moments that end in compromise and resolution? What percentage of parents can do that? 65? 75? 95? Were we really such bad parents? When is somebody going to give us our score? When do we get to see our reviews on Yelp?

LUCY

No one said it was going to be easy, but at least you have a daughter.

(BRIDGET'S body sags.)

BRIDGET

I know, I shouldn't complain to you. Being a mother was the one thing you always wanted to be.

LUCY

Yeah, and that's not going to happen.

BRIDGET

I'm so sorry, Luce.

(She gets lost in her feelings of empathy.)

LUCY

What else?

BRIDGET

Huh?

LUCY

What else did Annie say?

BRIDGET

(puzzled)

That I acted annoyed when she came into the garage, which I don't think was true. I was always so happy to see her.

LUCY

I told you not to set foot in that studio until she left for school. I said it was too risky, that she'd get jealous and it would become an issue.

BRIDGET

I don't remember ever being annoyed. I was always happy to see her. She was the sweetest little girl.

LIGHTS DOWN ON BRIDGET.

SPOTLIGHT UP ON LUCY.

(LUCY stands up and sings, looking straight ahead as if she were alone.)

LUCY

I TOLD HER
HOW TO BE A BETTER MOTHER
DON'T GIVE IN TO ALL THAT SUGAR
SHE'LL END UP DIABETIC
I TOLD HER

I HAVE LEARNED
FROM THE MISTAKES OF OTHER WOMEN
DON'T GIVE IN TO ALL THAT SHOPPING
YOU MUST SET LIMITS
I TOLD HER

DON'T BE THE KIND FOR BACKING DOWN
YOUR PRINCIPLES MUST NOT BEND
IT ONLY TAKES ONE OVERSIGHT
TO SET OFF A DOWNWARD TREND

KIDS NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU EXPECT
IT'S MAKES THEM FEEL SAFE AND SOUND
IT HELPS IF YOUR HEAD IT SCREWED ON RIGHT
AND BOTH FEET ARE ON THE GROUND

A HEARTY SOUL IS WHAT IT TAKES
THE FORTITUDE OF PIONEERS
PARENTS ARE BOUND TO MAKE MISTAKES..
A LEGACY THAT'S PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE
YEARS

(BRIDGET stands. She, too, looks straight ahead and doesn't acknowledge LUCY as she sings.)

SPOTLIGHT UP ON BRIDGET.

BRIDGET

I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
SAT IN MY LAP
DOWN FOR A NAP
KIND OF GIRL

I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
SLEPT WITH A BEAR
UNRULY HAIR
I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
CLIMBED IN THE TREES
SCABS ON HER KNEES
KIND OF GIRL

I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
PLAYED IN THE YARD
MADE ME A CARD
KIND OF GIRL

SHE IS GONE

IF I COULD HOLD MY LITTLE GIRL AGAIN
IF I COULD FEEL HER IN MY ARMS AGAIN
AGAIN,
AGAIN, OH
AGAIN.

LUCY

IT'S NOT YOUR JOB TO MAKE HER HAPPY
SHE'LL THANK YOU IN THE END
WE KNOW THAT LIFE IS LESS THAN HAPPY
AND CERTAIN THINGS WE CAN'T MEND

BRIDGET

WHY DO WE ALWAYS LET THEM DOWN?
THESE LITTLE GIRLS THAT WE TEND?
I KNOW WHAT ALL THE EXPERTS SAY BUT
I STILL WANT TO BE HER FRIEND

LUCY
I TOLD HER

BRIDGET
SHE IS GONE

LIGHTS OUT ON THE PATIO.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(ANNIE - 16, open and innocent one moment, tough and critical the next - stands in her mother's studio looking at the pedestal and pile of clay.)

ANNIE

What the hell?

(BRIDGET enters.)

BRIDGET

Annie, thank god! Where have you been? Dad and I were so worried about you!

ANNIE

All's well that ends well.

BRIDGET

No, it's not. Someone saw you leaving school with a boy. Who was he?

ANNIE

My friend, Urban. You don't know him. He lives in Venice with his mom and little sister.

BRIDGET

Where did you go?

ANNIE

To the store for food. I was sooo hungry, Mom! You didn't make me enough breakfast.

BRIDGET

You were gone three and a half hours, and you're old enough to feed yourself. Where did you really go?

ANNIE

(chagrined)

To buy concert tickets.

BRIDGET

For who?

ANNIE

The Blight.

BRIDGET

Oh, they're good! Still, you can't walk out in the middle of school to run an errand.

ANNIE

What are kids my age supposed to do? Hire a Lift driver to go to the box office? The best shows sell out by noon.

BRIDGET

Call me next time. I'll go get your friggin' tickets. I might even get one for myself. It's been sooo long since I've seen live music.

ANNIE

No, Mom!

BRIDGET

Oh, okay, maybe not. But, ditching school is not an option. Promise me you'll never do it again.

ANNIE

I'm a teenager. I can't make that promise.

BRIDGET

Yes, you can. Do it for your sake, Annie. I want you to do well in school, so you can get into a good college, and be able to do something you really love when you grow up.

ANNIE

I'm trying!

BRIDGET

Well, try harder! Where did you and Urban go to get the tickets?

ANNIE

The Wiltern.

BRIDGET

You went all the way down there? How did you get there?

ANNIE

On the train.

BRIDGET

Well, good, at least you didn't go in somebody's car. Remember, you're not allowed to ride in other kids' cars. It's against the law unless they're over eighteen, and then they're too old for you to be with anyway.

ANNIE

If you don't want me riding around in other people's cars, take me to get my license!

(A look of concern crosses BRIDGET'S face.)

BRIDGET

Not if you keep ditching school.

ANNIE

I promise I won't do it again, Mom!

BRIDGET

Thank you!

ANNIE

So can I get my license?

BRIDGET

No! I don't think you're ready.

ANNIE

I know how to drive. You're just afraid something's going to happen to me.

BRIDGET

Of course I am, like every parent of a teenager who's learning to drive.

ANNIE

I mean because I was already in one car accident. But that means it's not gonna happen again, at least not for a very long time.

BRIDGET

Maybe you and Dad can practice over the summer.

ANNIE

We've been practicing. I know how to drive. Why don't you trust me?

(She picks up a statuette and carelessly turns it around in her hands. BRIDGET resists the urge to take it away from her.)

ANNIE

I like it better when you work at your stupid job. You're happy to see me at the end of the day, probably because you're so miserable there.

BRIDGET

I'm happy to see you now.

ANNIE

No, you're not. This reminds me of when I was little, and you stayed home to *sculpt*. I hate that word.

BRIDGET

I stayed home to be with you. I started sculpting after I stopped working. Remember all the things we made? Unicorns with blue manes, castles with orange turrets! We had them piled up all over the window-sills.

ANNIE

You made them. I was a little girl. It scared me the way you were so obsessed. Then when you made the garage into a studio, you couldn't wait to get rid of me. Remember the time you left me at school overnight?

BRIDGET

I didn't do that.

ANNIE

You left me there until the end of the next day.

(BRIDGET laughs involuntarily.)

BRIDGET

That's impossible! They would never let a child spend the night.

ANNIE

I thought you were never coming back.

BRIDGET

(suddenly melts)

I'm sorry, Annie!

(She tries to put her arms around ANNIE, but she pulls away.)

ANNIE

And I don't like your giant household appliances. I think they're stupid.

BRIDGET

You're not the only one. I'm hoping people will take my wood nymph more seriously.

ANNIE

(with total disdain)

Your wood nymph?

(BRIDGET tries to bolster her spirits by talking enthusiastically about her project.)

BRIDGET

Daphne...her father changed her into a tree, to keep her safe from Apollo, who was chasing her through the woods, where she went to gather wildflowers.

ANNIE

That sucks. He should have given her wings, so she could fly away. It's about being angry at men, isn't it? How can you make something beautiful when you're always angry?

BRIDGET

I'm not always angry. Besides, lots of art is made in response to pain.

ANNIE

I bet you wish you never got married.

BRIDGET

No, I don't!

ANNIE

Then why are you and Dad always fighting?

BRIDGET

We have things to work out, like all couples.

ANNIE

I bet you wish you never had a kid.

BRIDGET

No, I don't! I adore you!

ANNIE

You're just saying that because it's too late.

BRIDGET

No, I'm not! You're the most important person in the world to me.

ANNIE

See, you don't love Dad!

BRIDGET

That's ridiculous. I wouldn't want to live without either one of you.

ANNIE

I don't believe you! You're lying!

BRIDGET

Annie, what's wrong with you?

(ANNIE turns on her heel and heads to the door.)

BRIDGET

Where are you going?

ANNIE

Next door for coffee. Dad's there, so you don't have to worry about me.

BRIDGET

You drink coffee now?

ANNIE

Yes! And, by the way, flowers don't grow in the woods!

(She storms out and BRIDGET stares at the empty doorway as she sings...)

BRIDGET

I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
SAT IN MY LAP
DOWN FOR A NAP

I ONCE KNEW A GIRL
SWEET LITTLE GIRL
SLEPT WITH A BEAR
UNRULY HAIR

SHE IS GONE

(She sits on her red chair and puts her head in
her hands. RICHARD enters, buoyant and happy.)

RICHARD

I wanted to give you a chance to talk to her.

BRIDGET

We talked, I think.

RICHARD

I'll take her home when we're done. Or, who knows?
We can go anywhere, can't we? I have the kid all to
myself!

BRIDGET

If you end up in Denver I won't be surprised.

RICHARD

We'll be home in time for dinner. What about you?

BRIDGET

I'll be there.

(A thought suddenly occurs to her.)

BRIDGET

Annie must have fallen asleep.

RICHARD

What?

BRIDGET

She said I left her at nursery school overnight. She must have taken a nap. Then when she woke up, she thought it was the next day.

RICHARD

You did forget to pick her up sometimes.

BRIDGET

No, I didn't. I was late once, when Mom had her heart attack.

RICHARD

I seem to remember the school having to remind you a number of times.

BRIDGET

That's not true! One time I was late to pick up Annie, when I went to the hospital to see Mom. And I called the school.

RICHARD

Whatever.

BRIDGET

Not whatever! It happened once!

(RICHARD exits and BRIDGET puts her head back in her hands. After a beat, JIMMY - early 40's, frank, irreverent, sexy, playful - passes by her doorway, a to-go cup in each hand. He stops to look in.)

JIMMY

I saw them unloading your clay.

(Startled, BRIDGET jumps up and knocks over the chair. JIMMY puts the cups down on the floor and comes over to help pick it up.)

JIMMY

Sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

BRIDGET

That's okay. It's not a very practical chair.

JIMMY

I'm Jimmy.

BRIDGET

Hi, I'm Bridget. Nice to meet you.

JIMMY

I slop paint around and generally make a big mess in the studio down the hall.

(He turns to look at the pile of clay.)

JIMMY

What's it going to be?

(Having lost confidence in her concept, BRIDGET answers haltingly.)

BRIDGET

A wood nymph...Daphne. Her father changed her into a tree...when she called out for help...because Apollo was chasing her through the woods.

JIMMY

Cool! I know nothing about sculpting, except I find it completely intimidating. You must be a brave woman.

(Relieved, BRIDGET laughs.)

BRIDGET

I don't know about that! What do you paint?

JIMMY

Portraits, mainly. Men with books, women with dogs, children with attitude. I tried painting other things, tomatoes, freight trains, but no one was interested.

(He stops in front of the landscape painting.)

JIMMY

Spain?

BRIDGET

Italy...I know who you are! You're Jimmy Jakes. I saw an exhibit of your work down in La Jolla, about six years ago. Sort of folk art portraits, with bright colors and big heads.

JIMMY

They were really just glorified caricatures.

BRIDGET

No, they weren't. They were beautiful. I stayed in the gallery for a long time staring at them.

(VIDAL and ALBERTO come out to watch from the sidelines, sensing chemistry.)

JIMMY

What did you see?

BRIDGET

When I got really close, I could see what looked like trees and hills and gullies, around the eyebrows and ears, along the hairlines, like miniature landscapes.

JIMMY

My revenge for being pigeonholed.

BRIDGET

Then it wasn't my imagination?

JIMMY

No, but you were the only person who noticed.

BRIDGET

Oh!

JIMMY

Yes, oh! I thought I was being so clever.

BRIDGET

I thought you were.

(JIMMY turns away and looks at BRIDGET'S drawings to hide the sudden thrill she makes him feel.)

JIMMY

These are good.

BRIDGET

Thank you.

JIMMY

Married?

BRIDGET

Yes.

JIMMY

Children?

BRIDGET

A girl, who's a teen and a handful.

JIMMY

My sympathies!

(BRIDGET laughs.)

BRIDGET

What about you?

JIMMY

No progeny I'm aware of, not that I don't like kids. They remind me of aliens from another planet who haven't yet learned our customs, many of which I don't condone. I was one of those little boys who couldn't sit still in class and was constantly getting yelled at. Who knows what I would've had to do if I couldn't paint, something godawful, no doubt.

(He pries his eyes away from the drawings and turns to look at BRIDGET.)

JIMMY

I should go.

BRIDGET

Somebody's coffee is getting cold.

JIMMY

She won't like that.

BRIDGET

No.

(JIMMY picks the two cups up off the floor. VIDAL and ALBERTO quickly exit.)

JIMMY

Welcome to the neighborhood!

(He exits and BRIDGET turns back to her studio.)

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

VIDAL and ALBERTO enter with an easel and stool to make JIMMY'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(JIMMY enters. ISABEL - mid-30's, a dark-skinned beauty in a crimson robe and slippers - waits impatiently as VIDAL and ALBERTO rush in with a lounge chair, which they put beside her. JIMMY hands her one of the cups.)

ISABEL

Thank you.

(She takes a sip.)

ISABEL

It's not very hot.

JIMMY

I'm sorry.

(She looks around.)

ISABEL

Do you have a heater in here somewhere?

JIMMY

No.

ISABEL

Then can you work on the face until I warm up?

JIMMY

How will you do that?

ISABEL

Fine, I guess I won't!

(Peeved, she kicks off her slippers.)

JIMMY

Okay, I'll give it a try.

ISABEL

Thank you!

(She carefully lowers herself onto the lounge chair to keep the robe from coming open, as JIMMY positions himself behind his easel.)

JIMMY

You're mad at me, aren't you?

ISABEL

Why should I be? You're a free man. I'm a free woman. We have an understanding, sort of, don't we?

JIMMY

I really just wanted to paint her.

ISABEL

(sarcastic)

That makes me feel much better.

JIMMY

She has the most provocative eyebrows.

ISABEL

I get the picture, Jimmy!

JIMMY

I didn't mean to hurt you.

ISABEL

I'm not hurt, I'm angry!

JIMMY

I think I'll call this one "The Prude in the Crimson Robe".

ISABEL

I really don't feel like being naked in front of you right now.

JIMMY

You have to tell me when the rules change, Isabel. I can't play by them if I don't know what they are.

ISABEL

They're always your rules, Jimmy.

JIMMY

I thought they were always yours.

(ISABEL stares at the ceiling with a sad expression on her face as JIMMY picks up his brush.)

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

VIDAL and ALBERTO carry in a park bench, put it down and exit. VIDAL runs back in with a small tree, which he puts beside the bench, before leaving again. LUCY enters and sits on the bench.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PARK.

(LUCY takes a book and glasses out of her bag and begins to read. BRIDGET sneaks up behind her.)

BRIDGET

What are you reading?

(She playfully grabs the book and reads the title, practically giddy.)

BRIDGET

"Take Charge: Be the Captain of Your Life." Is that what you're trying to do?

LUCY

Yes, as a matter of fact.

BRIDGET

Good luck!

(She hands the book back to LUCY.)

BRIDGET

I'm sorry, that's not fair. I think taking control of your life is a good thing, if you can pull it off.

LUCY

Why are you in such a good mood?

BRIDGET

Because, the sky is such an amazing shade of blue. And the flowers! Have you ever seen such vibrant colors? Look, over there! Butterflies, and little birds hopping around on the grass!

LUCY

Are you taking antidepressants?

BRIDGET

No, I've been cooped up all day.

LUCY

In love?

BRIDGET

I'm married, silly. There is a painter down the hall who's kind of cute.

LUCY

Take my advice, don't get involved with an artist. They're way too self-centered.

BRIDGET

You know me, I don't "get involved". Do you think I'm self-centered?

LUCY

I wasn't talking about you. You got married, you have a J.O.B., you raised a child.

BRIDGET

Why do you think I went to art school?

LUCY

Because you fell in love with an artist?

BRIDGET

Thanks!

LUCY

Just kidding!

BRIDGET

What's on your mind that can't wait until the next formal family gathering?

LUCY

I'm thinking about moving to Portland.

BRIDGET

What?

LUCY

I'm flying up on Saturday to look at a house.

BRIDGET

You can't leave now!

LUCY

I knew you'd try and talk me out of it. You'll have to take up the slack with Mom and Dad. They're rapidly losing interest in practically everything.

BRIDGET

It's not a good time for me.

LUCY

I can't stay because of you. I can't stay because of them. I have to do what's best for me.

BRIDGET

You have to be the "Captain of Your Life".

LUCY

Don't make fun of me. Greg's getting married again.

BRIDGET

Oh, Luce!

LUCY

To someone much younger. They'll have plenty of time to start a family.

BRIDGET

That is so unfair! I hope they have pigeon-toed brats with buckteeth and scraggly hair.

LUCY

Don't say that.

BRIDGET

You'll meet someone. It's not too late.

LUCY

No, I pictured myself as a young woman surrounded by children, not some dried-up old prune with one lonely kid.

BRIDGET

You won't be dried up for a long time.

LUCY

It's not going to happen, Bridget. I have to accept the fact.

BRIDGET

It's ironic how things turned out. I practically had to be blackmailed into getting pregnant.

LUCY

(suddenly aggressive)

And you're going to jinx what you've got if you're not careful!

(BRIDGET holds up her hands.)

BRIDGET

Okay, okay, I'm not going to jeopardize what I've got. I know how lucky I am.

(LUCY'S tone softens.)

LUCY

I want to live in a new place, where I can stop thinking of myself as a failure.

BRIDGET

If moving is what you need to do I'll help, of course. It's the least I can do after all you've done for Mom and Dad, and all they've done for me...

LUCY

Thanks, Sis. I knew I could count on you.

(She takes a ball of periwinkle yarn and knitting needles out of her bag and begins to knit.)

LUCY

Mom and Dad's housekeeper gave notice.

(Wistful, BRIDGET sings...)

BRIDGET
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY

LUCY
You'll have to help them find a new one.

BRIDGET
A BALMY SPRING DAY

LUCY
Are you listening?

BRIDGET
A housekeeper.

I'M SITTING ON A BENCH
A BENCH IN THE PARK

LUCY
I suggest you put an ad in the paper.

BRIDGET
THE TREES ARE BLOOMING
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

LUCY
That's what I did the last time.

(MOM and DAD enter and sit on the bench beside
their daughters.)

BRIDGET
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY

MOM
Every Tuesday Lucy takes us grocery shopping.

BRIDGET
A BALMY SPRING DAY

DAD
She makes us buy much more than we need.

BRIDGET
I AM SITTING ON A BENCH
A BENCH IN THE PARK

THE EARTH IS TURNING
ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

LUCY

No more than ten minutes of direct sun.

(MOM and DAD turn their faces to the sun as
BRIDGET stands up and takes a few steps forward.)

BRIDGET

I WANT TO FLY
TO SOAR AND TO GLIDE
ON CURRENTS RISING HIGH
WINGS SPREAD
DESCEND
DOWN TO REST AMONG THE
SHELTERED BOUGHS
A DOWNY NEST

I WANT TO GROW
TO SPROUT AND TO LEAF
TO SHOOT MY ROOTS DOWN BELOW
TO PULL
THE LIGHT
INSIDE MY VEINS AND BLOOM ANEW
A BLUSHING BRIDE

MOM

Did you know Marjory's having knee surgery?

LUCY

It's a mistake at her age.

DAD

I certainly hope she doesn't expect to walk again.

BRIDGET

WHY DO I FEEL?
WHAT DO I FEEL?
LONGING

LIKE THERE IS SOMETHING JUST BEYOND
WITH DARKNESS ALL AROUND

I WANT TO HOLD IT
I WANT IT IN ME
I AM AFRAID

LIGHTS OUT ON THE PARK.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

New drawings are taped on the movable wall and a pile of tree branches lies on the floor. The paper tree has been removed, a tarp is draped over the pedestal and pile of clay, and a ladder stands beneath the skylight.

(VIDAL is on the ladder banging the lid down on a can of putty, while BRIDGET examines a branch.)

VIDAL

Now your nympha will be safe from the rain.

(He backs down off the ladder.)

BRIDGET

Are you all finished?

VIDAL

First it must dry and then we will paint.

BRIDGET

Okay! Thank you, Vidal.

(She watches him as he folds up the tarp.)

BRIDGET

Alberto seems like a very nice boy. Is he the son of your daughter, or your son?

VIDAL

He is the son of my only daughter.

BRIDGET

Does she live in Mexico?

VIDAL

She was killed when Alberto was a baby.

(These words hit BRIDGET like a shockwave and tears jump into her eyes.)

BRIDGET

Oh, my god, Vidal, that's horrible! You poor man.

(She wipes the tears from her face.)

BRIDGET

Your poor wife! And poor Alberto!

VIDAL

They never found the man who murdered her.

BRIDGET

That's every parent's worst nightmare. It must have been so hard for all of you.

VIDAL

We had a terrible sickness in our hearts. Alberto was the reason we must go on.

BRIDGET

What about his father?

VIDAL

He was a boy. He had much to learn. My wife gave birth to a daughter and we raised two sons.

BRIDGET

My daughter was in a car accident.

(She wipes more tears from her eyes.)

BRIDGET

It was a long time ago and she's fine now, but I don't know if I'll ever be able to get rid of the horrible fear I felt. It must have been so much worse for you.

VIDAL

We try to be thankful everyday for all we have that is good, and for our precious Alberto.

(He gathers up his things.)

VIDAL

I will come back later for my ladder.

BRIDGET

That's fine. Don't worry about it.

(She struggles to get hold of her emotions.)

BRIDGET

I'll see you later, Vidal.

(VIDAL exits as BRIDGET blows her nose and wipes her eyes, then fetches the broom. She's sweeping, lost in thought, when ISABEL enters and is aghast to see what she's doing.)

ISABEL

You're not supposed to do housework here!

BRIDGET

Hello, Isabel.

(ISABEL takes the broom away from her and leans it up against the wall.)

ISABEL

This is where you get to make a mess. You don't think guys sweep their studios, do you?

BRIDGET

I'm sure some of them do.

ISABEL

Well, they don't. Anyway, hello!

(She opens her arms and they hug.)

BRIDGET

Thank you for coming on such short notice.

ISABEL

No problem.

(She turns around and checks out the studio.)

ISABEL

I love your new studio! It's a definite step up from the garage. About time, too, Bridget. You deserve it.

BRIDGET

Thank you. I'm really happy with it.

ISABEL

And you got your first commission. You're getting paid, right?

BRIDGET

Not much, but, yes.

ISABEL

Someone is paying cash for something *you* create, with *your* hands, out of *your* imagination. That is so cool!

BRIDGET

It's for some old friends of ours.

ISABEL

That still counts.

BRIDGET

They're in the middle of a big remodel. They want it in time for an open house.

ISABEL

So you have a deadline! That makes it even more official. How's it going?

BRIDGET

I'm having trouble getting started, for some reason.

(ISABEL looks at the ladder.)

ISABEL

Is the ladder part of your whole *thing*?

BRIDGET

No, the Super's fixing the skylight.

(ISABEL sees a tunic draped over the back of the chair and holds it up.)

ISABEL

I take it this is Daphne's diaphanous dress.

BRIDGET

Would you mind putting it on?

ISABEL

No, of course not!

(She pulls off her clothes and slips into the tunic as BRIDGET contemplates the pedestal.)

BRIDGET

I can't quite see her yet. She hasn't come to life. I thought it might help if I made some more drawings.

ISABEL

You're the master sculptor. You'll figure it out. Where would you like me to stand?

BRIDGET

It's getting kind of crowded in here, isn't it? What about over there, next to the ladder?

(ISABEL goes and stands beside the ladder.)

ISABEL

Am I struggling to get out?

(She strikes a dramatic pose.)

ISABEL

Or is my energy focused on becoming a tree?

(She strikes a different pose with her arms around the ladder.)

BRIDGET

You, Daphne, are willfully becoming a tree.

(She describes the scene as ISABEL acts it out.)

BRIDGET

Apollo sees you gathering flowers in the woods. He's smitten by your beauty, not to mention your scanty attire. All of a sudden, he pops out from behind a tree. The expression on his face makes you very nervous - there's no denying his intentions. You run off into the forest as fast as you can, with Apollo in hot pursuit. You know you can't outrun the son of Zeus, so you call out to your father, Peneus, the river god...

RICHARD (off-stage)
Bridget!

ISABEL
Uh, oh!

(She folds her arms across her breasts. RICHARD enters and his eyes grow wide when he sees the beautiful ISABEL in her scanty attire.)

RICHARD
Hello!

ISABEL
Hi, there!

(She quickly turns away and puts on her shirt.)

BRIDGET
What are you doing here?

RICHARD
I need to talk to you.

(ISABEL turns back around.)

BRIDGET
Isabel, this is my husband, Richard.

ISABEL
Hello, Richard.

(She steps forward and they shake hands.)

RICHARD
Nice to meet you.

ISABEL
Bridget's told me all about you.

RICHARD
You must let me tell my side of the story sometime.

ISABEL
Okay!

(She giggles nervously and looks at BRIDGET.)

ISABEL

I'll just run to the little girl's room.

(Then dashes out the door.)

BRIDGET

What's going on?

RICHARD

I wish you'd keep your phone turned on.

BRIDGET

Sorry!

(She hunts for her phone.)

RICHARD

I got another call from the school.

BRIDGET

Oh, no! What did they say?

RICHARD

That Annie handed in a note with your signature.

BRIDGET

I didn't sign anything.

RICHARD

Then she ditched again yesterday and forged your signature to get back in today.

BRIDGET

How could she do that? I had a talk with her!

RICHARD

What are we going to do?

BRIDGET

Put her in an ivory tower? Make her wear a chastity belt?

RICHARD

This isn't a fairy tale.

BRIDGET

Thank god school will be out soon.

RICHARD

How's that going to make things better? As far as I know you didn't sign her up for anything.

BRIDGET

She wants to get a job, which I think is a great idea.

RICHARD

Then I'll take her to the DMV.

BRIDGET

She gets around just fine on public transportation.

RICHARD

I don't want Annie coming home late at night on the bus.

BRIDGET

Maybe she won't have to work at night, or one of us can pick her up. I don't think she's ready to get her license.

RICHARD

She is. Our daughter's going to drive, regardless of your fears, and it better be sooner rather than later if she's getting a job and you're disappearing on us.

BRIDGET

I'm not disappearing, we made a deal. And part of the deal is that you'll be available, right?

RICHARD

Yes, but I still have a job, and Annie's a perfectly good driver. It's not fair to hold her back by making her feel incapable. That's what you're doing, you know.

(BRIDGET suddenly looks terribly sad.)

RICHARD

What happened to her when she was a little girl has no bearing on what's going to happen to her now.

BRIDGET

I know, I'm sorry.

RICHARD

Apologize to her, not to me.

(BRIDGET wipes more tears from her eyes.)

BRIDGET

Can we please talk about this later? Isabel's on the clock.

(Frustrated, RICHARD turns abruptly and exits.)

VIDAL and ALBERTO enter with a drafting table and chair, which they put in an empty part of the stage to make RICHARD'S OFFICE. VIDAL takes a stack of photographs out of the back of his pants and puts them on the desk. (The lights remain up on BRIDGET'S studio.)

LIGHTS UP ON RICHARD'S OFFICE.

(RICHARD crosses and sits at his table. ISABEL sticks her head in the studio door.)

ISABEL

Is it safe?

BRIDGET

Yes, let's get started.

(ISABEL goes to her spot by the ladder. She can't see or hear RICHARD in his office.)

ISABEL

So that's Richard.

BRIDGET

He's worried about Annie. She's taken a fancy to ditching school.

ISABEL

Oh, god, I did that all the time.

BRIDGET

You did?

ISABEL

Didn't everyone?

BRIDGET

I don't know. Plus, he's frustrated at work.

ISABEL

At least he has a job.

BRIDGET

That's true.

(ISABEL strikes a pose. BRIDGET adjusts her arms and the angle of her head, then goes to her stool and picks up her sketchpad. RICHARD paces.)

RICHARD

Day after day I have to listen to their idiotic ideas. The real challenge isn't coming up with the designs, it's finding ways to mitigate the damage done by these assholes. How do you think that makes me feel?

BRIDGET

(distracted while drawing)

Not good, I'm sure.

RICHARD

Don't you think it's understandable that some days when I come home from work I'm not in the best of moods?

BRIDGET

Yes, only that's the way it is everyday.

RICHARD

Because that's the way it is for me everyday. But I can't quit, can I?

BRIDGET

I worked while you went to school, now it's my turn.

RICHARD

It seems like you already had your turn.

BRIDGET

Staying at home with a child is not a turn, it's an excuse for the other parent to abdicate all domestic responsibility.

RICHARD

You got to stay home and raise our child. That was a decision we made together.

(BRIDGET puts aside her sketchpad.)

BRIDGET

(to ISABEL)

I'll be right back.

(She crosses to RICHARD'S OFFICE. ISABEL grabs a magazine and sits down on the red chair.)

BRIDGET

All bets were off after the accident, and you didn't exactly jump in to help.

RICHARD

Why do you keep bringing that up?

BRIDGET

Because it was a very difficult time for me, which you have never acknowledged.

RICHARD

It was a very difficult time for me, too. The Biodome was a very prestigious project, with a very strict deadline, and everyone constantly stabbing each other in the back. We knew Annie was going to be all right.

BRIDGET

She wasn't all right. She isn't all right.

RICHARD

Yes, she is! Except for a big scar on her leg, she's fine.

BRIDGET

It's a very big scar.

RICHARD

And she loves showing it off. It's her badge of courage, which you helped make her believe.

BRIDGET

Well...now I have six months to prove myself as an artist. That was a decision we made together, too.

(She gets a faraway look in her eyes.)

BRIDGET

Don't you see? I want the chance to plumb the depths of my subconscious. Explore the farthest reaches of my imagination.

RICHARD

I don't know if I can hold out for six months while you go spelunking through your psyche.

BRIDGET

We made a deal, and we're sticking to it!

(She goes back to her studio and picks up her sketchpad, while ISABEL resumes her position.)

RICHARD

I don't know if I can hold out for one more day!

(BRIDGET draws while he sings...)

RICHARD

I'M SICK OF IT
THE BUSTING MY BEHIND OF IT
THE NEVER-ENDING GRIND OF IT
THE BUMPING UP AGAINST THE FEAR
THAT DULLS THE CORPORATE MIND OF IT

I AM SICK OF IT

I'M SICK OF IT
THE HAVING TO EAT CROW OF IT
THE WANTING MUCH MORE DOUGH OF IT
THE NEVER SEEING EYE TO EYE
BUT GOING WITH THE FLOW OF IT

I AM SICK OF IT

I TOO HAD A DREAM
A SIMPLE LOVELY DREAM
DESIGNING A BUILDING LIKE A CASTLE
IT WAS MADE OF STEEL AND GLASS

A TIMELESS CLASSIC
 BUT MORE THAN MODERN
 A MIRACLE OF MASS
 WITH LINES LIKE MOUNTAINS
 FLOORS LIKE MEADOWS
 SHALLOW POOLS WITH MARBLE BANKS

A PLACE TO REST
 TO STARE IN WONDER
 PONDER OR GIVE THANKS

THIS TOO WAS A DREAM
 I HAVE LOST MY DREAM

AT SCHOOL...

I QUICKLY LEARNED TO GET AHEAD
 NO ONE DOUBTED I'D GO FAR
 SILVER TONGUED AND CHARISMATIC
 I WAS THE LATEST RISING STAR

AT WORK...

I ALWAYS HAD THE BEST IDEAS
 I WAS ON THE WINNING TRACK
 BUT SOMEHOW THE LIMELIGHT SHIFTED
 AND NOW I'M JUST A STRIP MALL HACK
 JUST A STRIP MALL HACK

I'M SICK OF IT

THE AT THEIR BECK AND CALL OF IT
 THE BACK AGAINST THE WALL OF IT
 THE DO THE SAME THING EVERYDAY
 THE DO THE SAME THING EVERYDAY
 THE DO THE SAME THING EVERYDAY
 AND IS THIS REALLY ALL OF IT?

I AM SICK OF IT!

(He sits down at his desk and sorts through the
 photos, stopping to examine one in particular.)

RICHARD

Actually, this project could be kind of interesting.
 There's a favorite tree the client wants incorporated
 into the design of his house...

(ISABEL suddenly checks the time on her phone.)

ISABEL

Oh, my god! I have to go!

LIGHTS OUT ON RICARD'S OFFICE.

(ISABEL pulls off the tunic and scrambles into her street clothes.)

BRIDGET

What's going on?

ISABEL

I forgot they're putting on a play at Jeremy's school! He has to be home and fed and back by two.

BRIDGET

You just got here.

ISABEL

I know, I'm sorry! I hate to let you down this way.

(She runs to the door.)

ISABEL

At least you understand about having a kid.

BRIDGET

Let's pretend I don't!

(JIMMY appears in the doorway wearing a Red Sox cap and carrying a paper bag in one hand and a bag of kettle corn in the other. BRIDGET'S face lights up, of which ISABEL is acutely aware.)

ISABEL

I'll see you later.

(She slips out the door.)

JIMMY

I take it that was your wood nymph.

BRIDGET

Foiled again!

JIMMY

The life of a wood nymph isn't easy, what with being changed into trees.

BRIDGET

And having to pick children up from school.

JIMMY

Ah, reality, it's constantly rearing it's ugly head, trying to spoil our fun.

(He holds the paper bag out to BRIDGET.)

JIMMY

I bought you some apricots.

BRIDGET

Thank you, I love apricots.

(She sticks her face in the bag and inhales the scent inside, as JIMMY exits.)

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PATIO.

(MOM and DAD enter with their lunch trays.)

MOM

We might as well enjoy it while we can.

DAD

You mean before the snows arrive or the temperature hits triple digits?

(MOM stops in her tracks.)

MOM

We can go back inside if you prefer.

DAD

No, you like it. Why shouldn't I have particulate matter sprinkled on my food?

(They unload their trays and sit down.)

MOM

I've been thinking...

DAD

Uh-oh, that's dangerous.

MOM

Maybe we should move.

DAD

Where, across town? To the Fiji Islands?

MOM

Somewhere with good public transportation, like Oregon or Washington.

DAD

We're too old.

MOM

The change of temperature would do us good.

DAD

(raises his voice)

No, we're too old!

MOM

We're in a rut. We need a change.

DAD

There's one monster of a change roaring down the turnpike heading our way. That's enough for me.

MOM

Why sit around the waiting room when your number's coming up no matter where you are?

DAD

What are you talking about?

(MOM looks up at the sky.)

MOM

It looks like rain.

DAD

It never rains this time of year.

(MOM holds out the palm of her hand.)

MOM

I felt a drop.

DAD

You're imagining things again.

MOM

You know, a lot of the things I imagined over the years turned out to be real. It seems I'm a good anticipator.

DAD

I'll have that carved on your gravestone:" She was a good anticipator. She knew death was coming."

(MOM ignores him.)

MOM

I want to go see Bridget's new studio. We haven't shown enough interest in her sculpting.

DAD

Is that what she does?

MOM

She was always so independent.

DAD

She pushed us away.

MOM

(tongue in cheek)

Let's give her another chance, shall we? She'll be all grown up before we know it, and there're so many things I haven't gotten around to telling her yet.

LIGHTS OUT ON THE PATIO.

LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(BRIDGET stands in the doorway and watches JIMMY on his stool eating kettle corn.)

BRIDGET

You can paint anytime you want, can't you? At three

AM, during Sunday dinner, on Christmas morning. What does that feel like?

JIMMY

Like being out on the open sea in a cruising yacht, with the trade winds in your sails.

BRIDGET

Sounds lonely, and chilly!

(She shivers involuntarily.)

BRIDGET

I just wish I could stay focused.

JIMMY

You have to keep adjusting your sights. Refining your viewpoint. Zeroing in on what you want to say.

BRIDGET

I know what I want to say. It's the everyday stuff that keeps getting in the way.

JIMMY

Do what I do, as little as possible. Pay your parking tickets. Otherwise, be ruthless, or you'll never get anything done. There are way too many distractions out there. You have too much to accomplish in too short a time. No one else is going to make sure you get it done. No one else cares if you succeed. One day your life will be over and you'll find yourself saying, "But I didn't get my turn," because you were too busy taking care of everybody else's needs. You'll say, "I'm ready for my turn now," and the cosmos will answer back, "We're sorry, Bridget, but your time here is up."

(He sings...)

JIMMY

IGNORE THE BILLS
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES
OF USING MATCHES, FORGET PHONES
USE PIGEONS FOR DISPATCHES
EAT IF YOU MUST, BUT JUST,
A FEW SARDINES OR NAVY BEANS
A BIT OF HARDENED CRUST

READ AT NIGHT BY CANDLELIGHT
 AND NEVER MESS WITH LAUNDRY
 UNDIES CAN DRY ON WINDOWSILLS
 AND YOU CAN TEST YOUR GIRL SCOUT SKILLS

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE PAINTING A PICTURE
 OR WRITING A FABULOUS BOOK
 TO GET A PASS OUT OF CLASS
 AND GET YOU FINALLY OFF OF THE HOOK

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE BEING IN MOVIES
 OR ACTING A PART ON THE STAGE
 FOR AN EXCUSE TO CUT LOOSE
 AND TO NOT HAVE TO ACT YOUR AGE

I MUST CLEAR MY HEAD TO HEAR MY MUSE
 IT MIGHT TAKE SOME ROMANCE
 OR JUST A LITTLE BOOZE
 BUT OTHERWISE I'M FORCED TO DOWNSIZE
 SO, I CAN PROPERLY AGONIZE

NO, I'M SORRY,
 I CAN'T MAKE
 THAT DINNER
 NO USE CALLING AT THIS TIME

CAN'T SEE
 THE DOCTOR
 WON'T CALL
 THE PLUMBER
 I'M SET ON KEEPING EVERY DIME

BALANCE MY CHECKBOOK?
 TEACH A CLASS?
 WATCH SLIDES OF YOUR RECENT TRIP? NO!
 I'M AFRAID THESE
 ARE ALL THINGS
 THAT I WILL HAVE TO SKIP

YOU'VE GOT NO TIME
 THE MEASURE OF YOUR LIFE
 IS IN A PIECE OF CLAY
 A TUBE OF PAINT
 THE NOTES THAT FLY ACROSS A PAGE
 A SIDEWAYS GLANCE
 A SHAFT OF LIGHT
 A TURN, A LEAF, A FLAME...

(BRIDGET gets the hang of it and joins in...)

BRIDGET

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE PAINTING A PICTURE
OR WRITING A FABULOUS BOOK
TO GET A PASS OUT OF CLASS
AND GET YOU FINALLY OFF OF THE HOOK

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE BEING IN MOVIES
OR ACTING A PART ON THE STAGE
FOR AN EXCUSE TO CUT LOOSE
AND TO NOT HAVE TO ACT YOUR AGE

BRIDGET & JIMMY

YOU'VE GOT NO TIME
THE MEASURE OF YOUR LIFE
IS IN A PIECE OF CLAY
A TUBE OF PAINT
THE NOTES THAT FLY ACROSS A PAGE
A SIDEWAYS GLANCE
A SHAFT OF LIGHT
A TURN, A LEAF, A FLAME

JIMMY

IGNORE THE BILLS
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

IGNORE THE BILLS
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

IGNORE THE BILLS
EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

(BRIDGET suddenly leans forward and kisses JIMMY
on the mouth, then recoils with embarrassment.)

BRIDGET

Oh, I'm so sorry, I shouldn't have done that!

(JIMMY tries to put his arms around her, but she
extricates herself, good-humoredly.)

BRIDGET

No, that was completely inappropriate.

JIMMY

Not by my standards.

BRIDGET

You're obviously depraved. Let's forget about it, shall we?

JIMMY

I'll never forget, but I promise I won't tell.

BRIDGET

Agreed! It's just that I've just never met anyone who feels the same sense of urgency about making art that I feel.

JIMMY

I'm right down the hall whenever you need to consort with a comrade.

BRIDGET

Thank you, that's very comforting.

(She backs out of the studio reluctantly.)

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

VIDAL and ALBERTO enter with two café tables, which they put down. They exit and return with two chairs, one for each table, before leaving again. RICHARD enters and sits at one of the tables, with a cup of coffee and the newspaper, which he opens to read.

LIGHTS UP ON THE CAFÉ.

(ISABEL enters, behind RICHARD'S back, talking on her cell phone, and sits at the other table.)

ISABEL

I'm not sure what I want. Stability would be nice for a change, but you know Jimmy...

(RICHARD tunes into ISABEL'S conversation.)

ISABEL

His idea of monogamy is painting one person at a time.

(RICHARD recognizes her voice and turns around.
She looks up and sees him.)

ISABEL
(into her phone)
I'll call you later.

(Embarrassed, she quickly ends her call.)

RICHARD
Hello!

ISABEL
Sorry about that.

RICHARD
I didn't hear anything. May I join you?

ISABEL
Sure!

(RICHARD moves his things over to her table, as
she checks something on her phone.)

ISABEL
I thought I felt a few raindrops earlier.

RICHARD
Must have been from an air conditioner.

ISABEL
Nope, my phone says rain at three, and lightning at
eight. Awesome!

RICHARD
I'm glad I ran into you. I want to apologize. I'm
afraid I wasn't very friendly the other day.

ISABEL
You were stressed. You're a dad. At least you take an
interest in what your child does.

RICHARD
Do I detect a note of resentment?

ISABEL

Not just a note, a whole symphony! I have a son who will no doubt spend the rest of life trying to figure out why his own father couldn't stand to be with him.

RICHARD

Poor kid! Poor you!

(ISABEL nods her head and breaks down. RICHARD hands her his napkin.)

RICHARD

It must be very difficult to be a single parent. Taking care of a sick child in the middle of the night has to be one of the scariest experiences I've ever had. I sure wouldn't want to do that alone.

ISABEL

Being a single parent is really hard, but I can't complain, can I? People think I got what I deserved, like I decided to make a baby all by myself.

RICHARD

It's rotten when men don't take responsibility for having kids. I think there should be three or four adults involved in the raising of every child. There's certainly enough work to go around.

ISABEL

That's for sure!

(She smiles gratefully and dries her eyes.)

ISABEL

You're an architect, aren't you? That must be so cool, designing something that lasts for such a long time, and is out in the open where everyone can see it.

RICHARD

I've won awards.

ISABEL

You have? Bridget didn't tell me that.

RICHARD

It was a long time ago. What about you, do you like modeling?

ISABEL

It gives me flexibility. You know, with my son and my acting.

RICHARD

You're an actor!

(ISABEL'S face lights up.)

ISABEL

Yes, that's what I love doing more than anything else in the world!

(She suddenly catches herself.)

ISABEL

I mean I love being with my son, too. That sounded bad, didn't it? You must think I'm awful.

RICHARD

No, not at all. I'm sure you love your son very much, and I'm sure you don't neglect him for your acting.

ISABEL

Of course not! Before I go to work I put out a box of cereal and turn on the television and give him an old blanket to snuggle with.

(They laugh.)

ISABEL

Actually, Jeremy loves having time with Dave, his kid-sitter. He dresses like a lumberjack and reads poetry.

RICHARD

The perfect combination. How old is Jeremy?

ISABEL

Seven.

RICHARD

He must be very cute.

ISABEL

He is.

RICHARD

Such a nice age.

ISABEL

It is.

(Her mind drifts, then a thought occurs to her.)

ISABEL

I just finished a big painting with Jimmy!

RICHARD

Jimmy?

ISABEL

He rents the studio down the hall from Bridget. It's a full-length nude. Maybe you'd like to see it sometime.

(RICHARD suddenly chokes on his drink. ISABEL pats him on the back as he nods his head.)

RICHARD

Yes, I would! Very much, thank you!

(Rain starts falling on the roof, and ISABEL looks up.)

ISABEL

Told you!

LIGHTS OUT ON THE CAFÉ.

LOW LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(The rain is falling harder now. JIMMY, VIDAL and ALBERTO make repeated trips in and out of the studio to bring in JIMMY'S paintings, which they hang from the empty hooks on the wall panel and lean against the chair, the stool, the cart, the easel, until everything that belongs to BRIDGET, except the pedestal, is blocked from view. MOM walks downstage and takes an umbrella out of her pocket, which she opens and holds above her head, as she sings...)

SPOTLIGHT UP ON MOM.

MOM
IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO, AND YET
WHEN I REACH OUT YOU'RE ALMOST THERE
YOUR FACE A BEACON IN THE NIGHT
SPRING FEVER IN THE AIR

IT SEEMED LIKE DESTINY

IT ALL BEGAN THE NIGHT MY SISTER
CALLED YOUR HOUSE TO SAY
SHE THOUGHT SHE HEARD A NOISE OUTSIDE
OUR PARENTS WERE AWAY

YOU CAME AT LAST WITH FLASHLIGHTS DRAWN
YOUR FATHER CHECKED OUT BACK
HE LET YOU STAY TO KEEP US SAFE
WE HAD A MIDNIGHT SNACK

IT SEEMED LIKE DESTINY

MY SISTER KNEW YOUR SISTER
AND THERE WAS NO NOISE OUTSIDE
THEY HATCHED A PLAN TO GET US HITCHED
AND I BECAME YOUR BRIDE

WE HAD TWO KIDS AND DID WHAT
OTHER FAMILIES DID BUT THERE
WERE THINGS I LEARNED ALONG THE WAY
THAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE...

YOU NEVER DO ENOUGH
YOU OFTEN MAKE MISTAKES
YOU HURT THE ONES YOU LOVE
YOU FIND YOU DON'T HAVE
WHAT IT TAKES

YOU DO THE BEST YOU CAN
BUT IN THE END THERE'S
NO WAY OUT
FOR TAKING TRIPS WITH BAGGAGE
IS WHAT TRAVELING'S ALL ABOUT

IT SEEMED LIKE DESTINY
IT SEEMED LIKE DESTINY

SPOTLIGHT OUT ON MOM.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(The sound of rain is deafening. JIMMY stands surrounded by his paintings. BRIDGET and ANNIE enter shaking water off their clothes. When BRIDGET sees the paintings, she goes over to JIMMY and they shout inaudible things into each other's ears. BRIDGET gestures to ANNIE, who comes over and meets JIMMY. BRIDGET'S face droops when VIDAL and ALBERTO enter with a very large painting of a nude bearing an unmistakable resemblance to ISABEL. They walk the painting across the room and lean it against the pedestal. BRIDGET gestures for VIDAL to come over and meet ANNIE. VIDAL turns around to look for ALBERTO, who comes over, too. The two teens stare at each other, enthralled. ISABEL pulls RICHARD through the door and across the room to see her painting. BRIDGET gestures to RICHARD. He and JIMMY check each other out as they shake hands, then RICHARD turns to gaze at the painting. ISABEL sidles up to him, peeking to make sure JIMMY is watching. The rain finally dies down.)

ISABEL

Phew, that was crazy rain!

RICHARD

Positively biblical!

ISABEL

What are your paintings doing in Bridget's studio, Jimmy?

JIMMY

My skylight's threatening to become a waterfall and pipes are busting out all over.

RICHARD

I wish I could spend my days looking at beautiful women.

JIMMY

How do you spend them?

ISABEL

He's an architect!

JIMMY

If I had the brains, that's what I would have done.
Designing a building must be awesome.

RICHARD

It has its rewards.

ISABEL

I'd love to see some of your buildings sometime.

RICHARD

I'd be happy to give you a tour.

(JIMMY puts his hands on BRIDGET'S shoulders and
steers her across the room.)

JIMMY

I want to show you something.

(He stops in front of one of his paintings.)

JIMMY

Who does she remind you of?

BRIDGET

Daphne!

JIMMY

I understand the urge to connect with our collective
past, Bridget. It's in your DNA. No one can take it
away from you.

(BRIDGET looks at him gratefully. He finally lets
his hands fall away from her shoulders, and turns
around to the others.)

JIMMY

I know! Let's pretend we're at an opening...MINE! You're
a friend, or a friend of a friend, or read about me
in the ARTS section of the newspaper. You're milling
around, sipping wine from plastic cups, eating cheese
cubes. The lighting is abominable. It's hard to focus.
But...TRY! Peruse my paintings...PLEASE! I'd love to hear
what you think of them. Richard, will you do me the
honor, Sir?

RICHARD

How honest do you want us to be?

JIMMY

There's no limit to the amount of praise I can tolerate.

(He motions to the others, as the rain dies down to a gentle patter.)

JIMMY

Vidal, Alberto, Annie, come and look at my paintings. Tell me how they make you feel.

(He steps back as RICHARD, ANNIE, ISABEL, VIDAL and ALBERTO each position themselves in front of a different painting and sing...)

RICHARD

I AM STANDING HERE PRETENDING
THAT I GIVE A DAMN FOR FLOWERS
AND FOR ARTISTS WHO HAVE GOT THEIR HEADS
STUCK UP THEIR IVORY TOWERS

(BRIDGET looks at RICHARD.)

BRIDGET

I WONDER IF HE SENSES
THAT THERE HAS BEEN SOME HEAT
BUT HIS NOT QUITE FAITHFUL WIFE CAN'T
QUITE BRING HERSELF TO CHEAT

(Everyone, except JIMMY, rotates to stand in front of another painting.)

JIMMY

THIS IS DEFINITELY THWARTING
MY ATTEMPTS TO MAKE ADVANCES
WHEN THE HUSBAND'S IN THE PICTURE
IT PUTS A DAMPER ON YOUR CHANCES

(ISABEL looks at BRIDGET and RICHARD.)

ISABEL

A KID SHOULD HAVE A DAD AND
HAVING HELP IS ALWAYS GOOD, BUT...
IF IT MEANT MY GETTING MARRIED
I'M NOT SO SURE I WOULD

ANNIE
 WE'RE LOOKING AT ART
 WE'RE "CHECKING IT OUT"
 DO WE LIKE IT?
 DON'T WE LIKE IT?
 WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

JIMMY
 I'M LOOKING AT THEM
 TO SEE WHAT THEY THINK
 BY HER POSTURE
 HIS EXPRESSION
 DO THEY THINK IT STINKS?

ISABEL
 ART IS SUBJECTIVE
 BUT MAYBE I'M AN IDIOT

BRIDGET
 ART IS SUBJECTIVE
 BUT MAYBE I AM WRONG

RICHARD
 I CAN'T TAKE THIS ONE SERIOUSLY
 THE COLORS ARE MUCH TOO GAUDY
 I'M SEEING THINGS I DON'T USUALLY SEE
 THE SUBJECT IS MUCH TOO BAWDY

ISABEL
 IT'S GOOD

ANNIE
 IT'S ART

VIDAL
 (overblown and operatic)
 FLOWERS IN VASES
 FLOWERS IN GARDENS
 LIT BY THE SUN
 GIRLS IN SPRING DRESSES
 GOLDEN BROWN TRESSES
 LAZING FOR HOURS
 BLANKETS AND FLOWERS
 NOTHING BUT FUN

(ANNIE and ALBERTO giggle at him.)

ALBERTO
NUDES WITHOUT...

(At a loss, he gestures to his chest.)

ANNIE
NIPPLES

ALBERTO
NUDES WITHOUT FACES

(ANNIE stiffens her arms and points them down.)

ANNIE
LIMBS STICKING DOWN

ISABEL
BLATANT BLACK PATCHES
CURLICUE THATCHES
FLIPPING OFF PRUDES
IMMODEST NUDES
ALL OVER TOWN

(They circle around again and stop in front of a
different painting.)

BRIDGET
I AM LOOKING AT THIS PAINTING

RICHARD
OF A MAN INSIDE A DOORWAY

ISABEL
AS SHE KNEELS BESIDE A BASIN

ANNIE
IN A REALLY UGLY SWEATER

VIDAL
WITH A LETTER IN HER POCKET

ALBERTO
ON THE TABLE IN THE GARDEN

RICHARD
DO I WANT TO BE PROVINCIAL?

ALL (except Jimmy)
WE ARE LOOKING AT ART

BRIDGET
OF A WOMAN WITH A MIRROR

ISABEL
WHO APPEARS TO BE DESPONDENT

RICHARD
WITH A TOWEL AROUND HER SHOULDERS

ANNIE
AND A SUITCASE IN THE CORNER

RICHARD
AS SHE WAITS TO MAKE HER EXIT

BRIDGET
IS THERE EVER ONE AND ONLY?

JIMMY
WILL I END UP OLD AND LONELY?

ALL
WE ARE LOOKING AT ART
ART!
ART!

(Everyone, except JIMMY, freezes, leaning forward or backward, head to one side or the other. Then ISABEL comes to life, takes RICHARD by the hand and pulls him across the room.)

ISABEL
Come on, let's brave the floods and take that tour!

(The others pivot to watch ISABEL pull RICHARD out through the door, then they freeze again.)

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO**LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.**

JIMMY'S paintings are back in his studio, on elevated pallets to keep them off the floor.

(JIMMY putters around as ISABEL enters.)

JIMMY

I haven't seen you for a few days.

ISABEL

I've been around.

JIMMY

With your new friend?

ISABEL

What do you care?

JIMMY

Just making small talk. I am kind of surprised, though. He doesn't seem like your type.

ISABEL

Because I usually end up with some self-centered asshole who doesn't give a shit about anybody else?

JIMMY

I was thinking more of the artistic type.

ISABEL

You mean who has one pair of paint-splattered pants and never changes his underwear? I bet Richard owns a suit and has an IRA.

JIMMY

He seems like a very solid dude. He also has a wife and a child.

ISABEL

They don't seem to be getting along so well these days.

JIMMY

It's not nice to tempt a man who's having marital problems.

ISABEL

We're just friends. Anyway, you're one to talk. It's certainly not nice to have an affair with his wife...

JIMMY

I'm not!

ISABEL

Or fantasize about having one, when your girlfriend is pregnant.

JIMMY

Did you just say what I think you said?

(ISABEL nods her head solemnly.)

JIMMY

And you're sure it's mine?

ISABEL

Of course, it's yours! I'm not like you!

JIMMY

A baby! Holy shit!

ISABEL

I knew you'd say that. I don't want to have another fatherless child, Jimmy.

(She starts to cry and JIMMY rallies.)

JIMMY

Wait a second! I'm still here! Give me a chance to catch my breath.

(He takes a few deep breaths and thinks hard.)

JIMMY

A baby...a baby...A BABY! YIKES! I'm imagining one about 12 feet tall! That's not right! Let me try this again... A little, tiny baby...one that's cute and cuddly...and makes about as much noise as a garbage truck! OH, NO!

(He modulates his voice.)

JIMMY

More like a forest animal you can snuggle with. That looks like you. Or, even better...

(He points to ISABEL.)

JIMMY

Like her! One who smiles and laughs and holds on for dear life. I think I'm going to faint.

ISABEL

Keep breathing, Jimmy!

(He wavers, and she guides him to his stool. He slumps for a moment then jumps up and paces.)

JIMMY

We can rent a house with a yard. I can take a job at the college...be respectable, predictable, get an IRA! We'll teach our kid she has to work hard to make her dreams come true. I'll put my dirty socks in the hamper and watch my use of sexual expletives!

ISABEL

We might have a boy, you know.

JIMMY

Then to hell with the language, we'll play baseball!

(He pantomimes swinging a bat, then freezes.)

JIMMY

I'm getting ahead of myself, aren't I? It's not like he's gonna be born with a mitt on his hand.

ISABEL

Jeremy loves baseball.

JIMMY

Jeremy, that's right! I can live in a house with a real boy, one who's ambulatory! I can be like his big brother.

ISABEL

You can be like his father.

JIMMY

Oh, no! I don't wanna be on some kind of a power trip. Tell him he can't cry, has to act like a BIG BOY. Lay any of that crap on him.

ISABEL

You don't have to do that to be his father.

JIMMY

I don't? Well, if and when he's good and ready.

ISABEL

Being a father will definitely put a crimp in your sexy, Bohemian painter lifestyle.

JIMMY

A myth I've worked damn hard to perpetuate.

(His tone becomes pedantic.)

JIMMY

Life throws us curve balls, Isabel. When it does we have to make lemonade or perish. This isn't what I expected, but it might turn out to be just what I need. Besides, what's more important than raising a kid?

ISABEL

I was afraid you might want to run away.

JIMMY

And pass up the opportunity to paint you when you're pregnant? No way!

(He steps back to admire ISABEL as he sings...)

JIMMY

NEWS FROM MY MUSE
MY MUSE HAS SOME NEWS
SHE'S HAVING A BABY!

I WILL PAINT YOU
IN THE SUMMER WITH A MELON OF A BELLY
GENTLY PROTRUDING

JIMMY (cont'd)

I WILL PAINT YOU

IN THE AUTUMN WITH THE BOUNTY OF YOUR BODY
STRETCHING ITS LIMITS

I WILL PAINT YOU (IN THE WINTER)

WHEN YOU'RE BURSTING WITH A MAELSTROM...
WHEN THE SKY IS HOWLING DARKLY...
WITH THE BRANCHES WHIPPING BLINDLY...
AND THE GOBLINS CRUISING JET STREAMS...

THEN SHE WILL BE BORN
AND YOU WILL RETURN
FACE WET AND WORN
HOME FROM THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE
THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE

I WILL PAINT YOU WHEN YOU'RE SLEEPING
I WILL PAINT YOU WHEN YOU'RE NURSING
I WILL PAINT YOU WHEN YOU'RE WEEPING
I WILL PAINT YOU WHEN YOU'RE CURSING

ON A PLAYGROUND

IN A CLASSROOM

ISABEL

As an actor!

JIMMY

Holding roses!

MY MONA LISA
MY MADONNA
MY MADAME X
MY MRS. MONET

MY MONA LISA
MY MADONNA
MY MADAME X
MY MRS. MONET

THE SUBJECT OF MY LIFE
MY SUBJECT FOR MY WIFE

JIMMY (cont'd)

I'll never need to paint another woman as long as I live. And if I do, I'll have another younger, different you!

(A smile spreads across ISABEL'S face.)

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

The floor is swept clean, the paper tree is gone, and a futon is folded on the floor with a pillow and blanket neatly arranged on top. New drawings are taped to the floating wall and new study sculptures are scattered about, the subject of which has changed. Now the female figures stand with arms raised, as if preparing to take flight.

(RICHARD looks around the empty studio, takes out his phone, and makes a call. ISABEL passes by.)

RICHARD

Isabel, hello!

(He quickly puts away his phone as she enters, cooler, and somewhat guarded.)

ISABEL

Hi, Richard.

RICHARD

How are you?

ISABEL

Fine, thank you. Busy.

RICHARD

Have you seen Bridget?

ISABEL

Not recently.

RICHARD

Wretched caller ID. She never answers the damn thing when she knows it's me.

ISABEL

Do you wanna use mine?

RICHARD

No, that's okay. How's Jeremy?

ISABEL

He's fine. Thank you for asking.

(At a loss, she looks at the pedestal.)

ISABEL

I can't wait to see what Bridget does with her sculpture.

RICHARD

Who knows if she'll finish. Who knows if she'll even get started.

ISABEL

Oh, she will. She has an amazing ability to focus.

RICHARD

How do you know? I thought you just helped her out with a few drawings.

ISABEL

I posed for the Medusa.

(RICHARD looks at her blankly.)

ISABEL

You know, devouring the ram...that Bridget made in your garage? She had to stop working on it because Annie kept getting sick with strep throat. Does any of this ring a bell?

(This is not ringing a bell for RICHARD.)

ISABEL

You have no idea what I'm talking about, do you?

RICHARD

When you've been with someone for a long time, you
need fresh eyes. Someone to help you see.

ISABEL

You do?

RICHARD

Like you, to help me see.

ISABEL

Your wife?

RICHARD

Yes!

(And they sing...)

RICHARD

TELL ME ABOUT MY WIFE

ISABEL

YOUR WIFE IS NOBLE

RICHARD

OH, PLEASE

ISABEL

AND ELEGANT

RICHARD

SHE'S OFTEN ILL AT EASE

ISABEL

WITH A WAY OF SEEING WHAT IS GOOD INSIDE
AND BEAUTIFUL IN UGLY THINGS

RICHARD

IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT THE WEATHER
BRINGS INSIDE

ISABEL

SHE'S DIGNIFIED AND CHIC

RICHARD

HER OUTLOOK CAN BE BLEAK, ON LIFE

ISABEL
I GUESS YOU KNOW YOUR WIFE

RICHARD
BUT, IS SHE TALENTED?

ISABEL
YES, SHE IS TALENTED

WHEN SHE WORKED ON THE MEDUSA
I SAW IT IN HER EYES
A DEPTH OF CONCENTRATION
THAT HER GENTLENESS BELIES
HER STUDIO WAS CHARGED WITH SUCH
INTENSITY OF FEELING
I THINK THE WALLS MOVED SEVERAL FEET
AND PAINT PEELED OFF THE CEILING

RICHARD
BUT, IS SHE TALENTED?

ISABEL
YES, SHE'S TALENTED

WHEN SHE WORKED ON THE MEDUSA
I SAW IT IN HER HANDS
SHE HAD THE SELF-ASSURANCE
THAT A LESSER GOD COMMANDS
HER TOOLS BECAME EXTENSIONS
OF MACHINERY INSIDE HER
IT SEEMED LIKE THERE WERE ANCIENT FORCES
DEEP INSIDE TO GUIDE HER

RICHARD
BUT, IS SHE TALENTED?

ISABEL
YES, SHE IS TALENTED

RICHARD
IS SHE TALENTED?

ISABEL
YES, SHE IS TALENTED

ISABEL (cont'd)
HAVE YOU LOOKED AT HER SCULPTURE?
HAVE YOU SEEN THE WAY THE LIGHT
COMES THROUGH THE EYES
THE LIFE INSIDE, TRAPPED
THE FROZEN TEARS AND STIFLED CRIES
THE LONGING IN THE HANDS TO HOLD AND TOUCH
AND LIPS TO TELL THE SORROW
THAT THE HEART AND THE MIND WITHSTANDS?

HAVE YOU LOOKED?
HAVE YOU LOOKED?
HAVE YOU SEEN?

Your wife is talented.

RICHARD

I get that.

ISABEL

It's great she finally has time to focus on her sculpting, and so nice of you to help her make it happen.

(RICHARD practically shuffles his feet.)

RICHARD

Ah, well, it's the least I can do after all she's done for me, and all she's done for Annie.

ISABEL

I'm really glad to hear you say that. I should get going. See you later.

RICHARD

Take care!

(awkwardly)

Say "hi" to Jeremy.

(ISABEL exits. A few beats later, BRIDGET enters with a drink and a sandwich.)

BRIDGET

She's my friend, too.

RICHARD

She's a big fan of yours.

(He glowers at the futon on the floor.)

RICHARD

I hope you had a productive night.

BRIDGET

Fairies came and sprinkled pixie dust on me.

RICHARD

And the work you did was crap, right?

BRIDGET

Not all of it.

(She picks up a drawing and hands it to him.)

RICHARD

Looks like just another wood nymph to me.

(He hands the drawing back to BRIDGET.)

RICHARD

I'm not happy about all this.

BRIDGET

All what?

RICHARD

Your getting sucked in. I know what it's like. When I'm involved in a project I don't care if alligators are chewing on my feet. Annie still needs you.

BRIDGET

She'll be all right, and she's got you to look after her.

RICHARD

I can't always be available. Shouldn't she be in a safe place doing supervised activities when school gets out?

BRIDGET

You mean like some kind of camp? She'd refuse to go.

RICHARD

We could be like parents and tell her she has to go.

BRIDGET

I am being like a parent by understanding my daughter. She's too old for camp. She'd run away. Earning money is the most important thing to her right now.

RICHARD

I know she wants to earn money, to buy a camera, but maybe she's not responsible enough to have a job.

BRIDGET

That's what she wants to get?

RICHARD

Didn't she tell you?

BRIDGET

I thought she wanted money for concert tickets and going out with her friends.

RICHARD

What Annie really cares about is getting a camera. If you spent more time talking to her you'd know that.

BRIDGET

I do talk to her.

RICHARD

When you're done with your project and come back to the real world, you can get reacquainted with your family.

(BRIDGET thinks for a moment.)

BRIDGET

Tell me something, if I stopped sculpting would you worry about me?

RICHARD

You're an adult. That's a choice you're free to make.

BRIDGET

It would mean there was something terribly wrong with me. Wouldn't you be concerned?

RICHARD

Maybe you sculpt because there's something wrong with you. Maybe you do it to stop thinking about all the things that make you feel guilty. Maybe you need to face up to the fact that you're not perfect, and your daughter isn't either, and never will be.

BRIDGET

I hate you.

RICHARD

Thank you for being so reasonable.

BRIDGET

Thank you for being so supportive.

RICHARD

Maybe we just don't want the same things anymore.

BRIDGET

Maybe we don't.

RICHARD

Maybe you want to live in your studio.

BRIDGET

Maybe I do.

RICHARD

That's what you wanted all along, isn't it? I hate this studio. I hate your sculpture. It's all about you. It has nothing to do with us.

BRIDGET

I'm not giving it up, not even for you!

(RICHARD storms out. Different emotions play across BRIDGET'S face, and then she sings...)

BRIDGET

THE LITTLE ACHE INSIDE
WHY CAN'T I HAVE IT ALL?

THE LITTLE ACHE INSIDE
WHY MUST I ALWAYS CHOOSE?

BRIDGET (cont'd)
I'LL NEVER KNOW FOR SURE
HOW GOOD I COULD HAVE BEEN

THE LITTLE ACHE INSIDE

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(JIMMY is sitting on the ground drawing in his sketchpad. After a beat, BRIDGET enters.)

BRIDGET
Did anyone ever tell you not to be an artist?

JIMMY
My stepfather. He told me to "buckle down" and go into business.

(He puts aside his pad and stands up.)

JIMMY
Needless to say, I was a big disappointment.

BRIDGET
My husband practically said it's either him or the sculpture.

JIMMY
How does that make you feel?

BRIDGET
Like his needs come first. Like he doesn't care if I'm happy.

JIMMY
Maybe he feels threatened. Or can't tolerate the idea of playing second fiddle to a wood nymph.

BRIDGET
Whose side are you on?

JIMMY

A battle's been raging inside me for decades. Part of me wants to be alone to paint, but we're social animals. Damn hormones see to that, if nothing else. I knew a woman in art school who thought she could have it all, except, apparently, not with me.

BRIDGET

What happened to her?

JIMMY

I don't know. She got married and moved away. We lost touch.

(He takes BRIDGET by the hand and tries to pull her towards the stool.)

JIMMY

Come over here.

(She resists.)

BRIDGET

No, I can't. I'm not a model.

JIMMY

Sure, you are. Everyone is...the man with the broom, the woman behind the bar.

(BRIDGET finally sits down on the stool. JIMMY picks up a piece of charcoal.)

JIMMY

Talk to me. Tell me what you do when you're not sculpting.

BRIDGET

Well...

(She warms up to the idea of talking about herself. JIMMY draws quickly as she speaks.)

BRIDGET

If I'm not in my studio I'm usually home washing clothes or cooking or cleaning. I always thought if I could just get the house really clean I'd finally be able to do my art...

THE LIGHTS DIM ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

A SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON RICHARD.

(He stands alone and sings...)

RICHARD

BRIDGET, CAN YOU HEAR ME
CALLING TO YOU?
I'M CALLING TO YOU
CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I COULD GO AWAY
WITH SOMEBODY NEW
STARTING TODAY
I COULD FORGET ABOUT YOU

I COULD FORGET ABOUT YOUR FACE
I COULD FORGET ABOUT YOUR SMILE
IN THE ARMS OF SOMEONE NEW I COULD
FORGET YOU FOR AWHILE

BECAUSE YOU'RE DRIFTING AWAY
A LITTLE MORE EACH DAY
LIKE A CLOUD UP IN THE SKY
I TRY TO STOP YOU

BUT EVERYTHING I DO
KEEPS PUSHING YOU ALONG
I'M SOMEHOW ALWAYS WRONG

AND YOU KEEP RIGHT ON DRIFTING...

SPOTLIGHT OUT ON RICHARD.

LIGHTS BACK UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

JIMMY

What about having a kid? If you don't get pregnant by accident, what's the process by which you decide to bring another life into this wretched world?

BRIDGET

It takes a huge leap of faith, one a person in their right mind wouldn't possibly make, which is where the hormones come in, like you said. Being a parent takes

a tremendous amount of time and energy, not to mention the bouts of panic, gripping fear, debilitating guilt...
(She stands abruptly.)

BRIDGET

I know! Why don't I take off my clothes?

JIMMY

(trying to sound blasé)
Sure, that's a fine idea.

BRIDGET

Your models are often nude, aren't they?

JIMMY

Practically always.

(BRIDGET unbuttons her shirt and takes it off,
revealing a sexy bra and plenty of cleavage.)

JIMMY

Oh, my god!

BRIDGET

That's not a very professional response.

JIMMY

I can't help it. You're so beautiful.

(He comes out from behind his easel and BRIDGET
kicks off her shoes.)

JIMMY

Let's run away to the South of France. Make love and
art all day long.

BRIDGET

That sounds so good!

(She unzips her pants and pulls them part way
down, then stops to think...)

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(VIDAL ushers in MOM, wearing a backpack, and
DAD, who's disoriented. MOM looks around.)

MOM

It looks very professional.

(VIDAL goes to the door and calls out.)

VIDAL

Senora Bridget, your parents are here!

BRIDGET

Oh, my god, it's my parents!

VIDAL

They have come to see your new studio!

(BRIDGET pulls up her pants.)

BRIDGET

I can't go to the South of France. I finally have my own studio.

JIMMY

I can't go either. I'm pregnant.

(He picks her shirt up off the floor and helps her put it back on.)

MOM

We can come back some other time!

BRIDGET

You are? With Isabel?

(He nods solemnly.)

JIMMY

I'm going to be a failed authority figure. I don't have the right to father a child.

BRIDGET

You're already miles ahead with that attitude. It'll be great.

(JIMMY doesn't look convinced.)

BRIDGET

It'll be better than you expect.

VIDAL

I WILL GO LOOK FOR YOUR DAUGHTER, THE ARTIST!

(He crosses to JIMMY'S STUDIO and stops in the doorway when he sees JIMMY tenderly fastening the buttons of BRIDGET'S shirt.)

JIMMY

Remember to keep adjusting your sights, and honing in on exactly what it is you want to say.

(He kisses BRIDGET on the lips as VIDAL slowly backs out of the doorway. She longs to lose herself in the kiss, but JIMMY turns her around and points her to the door.)

JIMMY

You have work to do!

BRIDGET

I have work to do!

(JIMMY gives her a push and she marches out.)

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(BRIDGET enters her studio.)

BRIDGET

Mom, Dad, welcome! I'm so glad you came!

(She notices MOM'S backpack.)

BRIDGET

I like your backpack, Mom.

DAD

She's running away from home.

MOM

I'm getting ready for my trip to Italy. I'm not letting some thief ride by on his Vespa and snatch my purse.

BRIDGET

Good to be prepared. Are you going, too, Dad?

DAD

No, I'm staying home with my doctors.

MOM

What are you going to make with all this nice clay, Bridget?

BRIDGET

I'm not sure.

(She sinks onto the chair.)

BRIDGET

Why can't I figure out what I want to say? Because I can't concentrate. I need to stop worrying about all the things I should have done, and all the things I did wrong. I need to stop thinking about Richard and Annie all the time.

MOM

I hope you'll never stop thinking about them.

BRIDGET

You're right, I'm an ungrateful idiot!

MOM

A woman's family is her greatest achievement.

(BRIDGET buries her head in her hands.)

MOM

That doesn't mean she can't sneak away from time to time and do exactly what she wants to do...buy a new pair of shoes, have a martini or a chocolate sundae.

(The landscape painting catches DAD'S eye. He talks to MOM as he stares at the painting.)

DAD

That painting hung over your parents' fireplace when we were dating. In those days girls would keep their fellows waiting. I'd sit on the couch and I'd look at that scene and I'd think to myself...

(He stares longingly at the painting and sings...)

DAD
 SOMEDAY I WILL TAKE YOU THERE
 WE WILL GO TOGETHER
 TO SEE THE BOATS ON THE CANALS
 BEFORE THE KIDS
 ME AND MY SPECIAL GAL

SOMEDAY I WILL TAKE YOU THERE
 AFTER WE ARE MARRIED
 TO SEE THE STONE AND HEAR THE CALLS
 OF ANCIENT SOULS
 BEHIND THE CRUMBLING WALLS

I WANT TO BE
 IN A PLACE FAR AWAY
 WHERE THE PRESSURES OF THE DAY
 CANNOT BE UNDERSTOOD

WHERE NO ONE KNOWS, NOT EVEN ME
 THAT I MIGHT NOT SUCCEED
 IN MAKING EVERY DREAM COME TRUE
 FOR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, AND FOR YOU

AND I CAN WALK WHERE CAESAR'S GHOST
 RECLINES
 AMONG THE COLONNADES AND VINES
 MY HEAD HELD HIGH
 A COAT OF ARMOR ON MY BACK
 PREPARED FOR AMBUSH AND ATTACK
 RELYING ON MY SIMPLE SWORD AND
 MIGHTY STEAD

I thought...

SOMEDAY I WILL TAKE YOU THERE
 WE WILL GO TOGETHER
 TO SEE THE BOATS ON THE CANALS
 BEFORE THE KIDS
 ME AND MY SPECIAL GAL

(MOM puts her arm around DAD and together they
 gaze across their many years together.)

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(JIMMY lifts a canvas onto his easel and sings...)

JIMMY

EACH NEW PAINTING IS LIKE A LOVER
WITH SECRET PLACES TO EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

THE DARKENED ROOMS BEHIND AN OPENED EYE
THE WINDSWEPT LANDSCAPE OF AN INNER THIGH

EVERY PAINTING MEANS A NEW BEGINNING
MAYBE THIS TIME I WILL GET IT RIGHT
MAYBE THIS TIME I WILL GET IT RIGHT
MAYBE THIS TIME I WILL GET IT RIGHT

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.**LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.**

The futon is open on the floor
with the pillow and blanket on top
in disarray.

(BRIDGET is talking on her phone.)

BRIDGET

It's going great. The new studio's all set up, and I'm finishing more preliminary studies...

(She listens for a few beats to the person speaking on the other end of the line.)

BRIDGET

That might be premature. Let's wait 'til I have something more to show you.

(beat)

Okay, that sounds good. By the way, do you have any pets? Dogs, perhaps?

(beat)

A cat? Oh, no, that should be fine.

(ANNIE enters.)

BRIDGET

I'll tell you when I see you. Annie just walked in. I have to go...Okay, bye bye.

(She puts away her phone and turns to ANNIE.)

BRIDGET

Hi, Annie. Thanks for coming, Sweetheart.

ANNIE

Are you and Dad getting a divorce?

BRIDGET

No, why?

(ANNIE looks at the futon.)

ANNIE

Because you spent the night on the floor again.

(BRIDGET quickly goes over and folds up the futon and blanket and makes it all neat.)

BRIDGET

I was up late drawing. I didn't want to drive home in the middle of the night. It's all part of the deal I made with Dad. You know that. For the next - what is it now? - five and a half months, I get to work on my project whenever I feel like it, day or night, and he takes care of things at home, and with you.

(suddenly concerned)

How did you get here?

ANNIE

I drove.

BRIDGET

By yourself?

ANNIE

That's what you get to do when you pass the driver's test and they give you a license.

BRIDGET

I guess you know how to drive.

ANNIE

At least somebody thinks I do.

BRIDGET

Well, congratulations!

ANNIE

You don't have to say that. I know every time you look at me you think of the giant scar on my leg.

BRIDGET

You know I think you're very capable, don't you?

ANNIE

To be honest, I'm not always sure.

BRIDGET

Well, I do, and I apologize if I don't make you feel that way. I just worry, like all parents.

ANNIE

I'm going to be careful. Do you think I want to get in another accident?

BRIDGET

Of course not. Just promise to let us know when you're going somewhere in the car. And answer your phone when you're out. And don't let other kids go with you until you're eighteen. Okay?

ANNIE

Yes, I know, I promise!

BRIDGET

Thank you.

ANNIE

Dad said you wanted to talk to me about something.

BRIDGET

I have a job for you.

(She holds out the tunic to ANNIE.)

ANNIE

No.

BRIDGET

Just for a few hours, until school gets out and you start your new job.

(ANNIE stares at the tunic with revulsion.)

ANNIE

I can't be a model. My arms are too long and my legs are too short.

BRIDGET

No, they're not. I'll pay you.

ANNIE

How much?

BRIDGET

Fifteen dollars an hour.

(ANNIE grabs the tunic and pulls it on over her clothes, then looks down at herself.)

ANNIE

This dress is retarded.

BRIDGET

Please don't say that. Would you mind rolling up your pant legs and taking off your shoes?

ANNIE

My feet are kind of smelly.

BRIDGET

That's okay.

(ANNIE sits on the floor and pulls off her shoes.)

BRIDGET

I like your idea better. Daphne's going to have wings. Come over here, please.

(She gently pulls ANNIE into position.)

BRIDGET

Put your arms up, like this.

(She guides ANNIE'S arms up into position.)

BRIDGET

Pretend you're about to take flight. That's right. Now look over at the corner. That's good!

(For a moment, they replicate each other. BRIDGET backs away.)

BRIDGET

Put your arms down whenever they get tired. I'm just making a bunch of quick sketches.

ANNIE

Then can I go next door and get some coffee?

BRIDGET

No!

(BRIDGET gets her sketchpad and begins to draw.)

BRIDGET

Talk to me.

ANNIE

Ask me questions.

BRIDGET

What's going on with your friends? Do you still see Amber?

ANNIE

I have two friends, Mom. Laina and Simone.

BRIDGET

What about the other girls you used to hang out with?

ANNIE

I don't "hang out" with them anymore.

BRIDGET

Not even Chelsea or Brianna?

ANNIE

Chelsea moved to a different school and Brianna hangs out with the preppy kids.

(Her phone whistles with an incoming text. She pulls it out and reads the message.)

BRIDGET

That's too bad. I liked those girls.

(ANNIE types out her response.)

ANNIE

(with sarcasm)

Why don't you give them a call? I'm sure they'd be up for a trip to the museum.

BRIDGET

Sometimes the meanest girls act the nicest to grown-ups.

ANNIE

No shit!

BRIDGET

Please don't say that.

ANNIE

Sorry!

(She reads and responds to another text.)

BRIDGET

Did something happen?

ANNIE

(distracted)

Things are always happening. Big rigs flip over, priests molest little kids.

(She puts away her phone and looks up.)

ANNIE

Mom?

BRIDGET

Yes, dear?

(ANNIE bellows...)

ANNIE

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

(BRIDGET stops drawing and watches with amazement as ANNIE jumps on top of the pedestal and sings...)

ANNIE

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE ROLLING OF EYES
STABBING BACKS AND SPREADING OF LIES?
IT MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU CAN'T TRUST
YOUR FRIENDS

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

CAN'T THEY EVER SAY WHAT THEY FEEL
CONFRONT A PROBLEM AND TRY TO BE REAL?
THEY ACT LIKE THEY'VE GOT STICKS UP
THEIR REAR ENDS

Sorry.

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

ARE WE LIVING IN A WAR ZONE?
HAVE WE TRAITORS IN OUR RANKS?
SHOULD THE TEACHERS PACK BAZOOKAS?
I SEE NANNIES DRIVING TANKS

MUST WE ALWAYS GO TO BATTLE
WHEN WE NAVIGATE THE HALLS?
DO WE HAVE TO BRAVE THE RESTROOM
JUST TO PROVE THAT WE'VE GOT BALLS?

Sorry!

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

IF I WERE QUEEN...

NO ONE WOULD CARE
IF YOU WORE A DRESS
OR BRAIDED YOUR HAIR
WERE BIG ON TOP
OR SHAPED LIKE A PEAR
HAD OLIVE SKIN
WERE FRECKLED AND FAIR
COVERED YOUR STOMACH
OR LET IT GO BARE

IF I WERE QUEEN

ANNIE (cont'd)

ALL THE LITTLE SHY GIRLS
WHO OFTEN FEEL LET DOWN
WOULD GET THEIR PICK OF ALL THE GUYS
AND GO OUT ON THE TOWN

EVERY GIRL WHO STUMBLED
WOULD GET A HELPING HAND
AND WE COULD HOLD OUR HEADS UP HIGH
AND SIDE BY SIDE WE'D STAND

IF I WERE QUEEN

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

DON'T THEY KNOW THE WAY IT ALL ENDS
IN A WHEELCHAIR WEARING DEPENDS
OR LYING FACE DOWN IN SOME NASTY DITCH?

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

DON'T THEY KNOW THE EARTH SPINS AROUND
AND THERE'S HOT LAVA UNDER THE GROUND
SO WHAT IS THE POINT OF BEING A BITCH?

ROLLING OF THE EYES
SPREADING OF THE LIES
CAN'T SAY WHAT THEY FEEL
OR TRY TO BE REAL
THE WAY IT ALL ENDS
THE EARTH SPINS AND SPINS

WHY ARE GIRLS SO MEAN?

(ANNIE'S phone whistles. She gets down from the pedestal and takes it out of her pocket. BRIDGET gets an idea, flips to a new page in her pad, and draws ANNIE sending and receiving text messages.)

ANNIE

Sorry, Mom. There's a lot of drama going on with my friends right now.

BRIDGET

That's okay do what you need to do.

(ALBERTO enters with a ladder and a bag.)

ALBERTO

Excuse me, Senora.

BRIDGET

Hello, Alberto.

(ANNIE puts away her phone and pulls off the tunic.)

ALBERTO

I have come to put the shade for your...

(He smiles at ANNIE and loses his train of thought.)

BRIDGET

Skylight! Thanks for coming, Alberto. I really need to be able to shut out the sunlight. It's too bright!

ANNIE

Ola, Alberto.

ALBERTO

Ola, Annie.

(The two teens gaze at each other.)

BRIDGET

We're kind of busy right now. What about coming back some other time?

(ALBERTO doesn't respond.)

BRIDGET

Maybe early some morning, before I come in?

(ALBERTO is oblivious to what she's saying.)

BRIDGET

Or at night, after I leave?

(He still doesn't hear her.)

BRIDGET

You're not going away, are you?

ANNIE

Mom!

BRIDGET

Okay, she's all yours.

(ALBERTO tunes back in.)

ALBERTO

Senora?

BRIDGET

The skylight, you may work on it.

ALBERTO

Yes, thank you!

(He takes a box out of the bag and pulls a shade out of the box, then climbs the ladder and holds it up to the skylight. BRIDGET and ANNIE watch as he tries to figure out how to install the shade, which he obviously has no idea how to do. BRIDGET breaks the silence to take the pressure off.)

BRIDGET

How long have you been here in L.A., Alberto?

ALBERTO

For two months!

BRIDGET

Oh, only a short time. Where in Mexico do you come from?

ALBERTO

I come from Mexico City. There we have many fine artists. You have been to my city?

BRIDGET

No, but I've heard it's very beautiful, with lots of parks and museums and historic buildings.

ALBERTO

It is very beautiful.

(He looks admiringly at ANNIE.)

BRIDGET

How do you like Los Angeles?

ALBERTO

It is very nice, but also, I am pretty lonely. In Mexico City we have many restaurants and clubs.

ANNIE

We have them here, too!

ALBERTO

Yes, but they are very expensive.

ANNIE

I know some that aren't. Do you like music?

ALBERTO

I love music!

ANNIE

Do you have a car?

BRIDGET

Annie!

ALBERTO

I have a Vespa.

ANNIE

Yes!

BRIDGET

No!

ANNIE

Mom!

(ALBERTO climbs back down off the ladder.)

ALBERTO

I will come back when you are not so busy, maybe early one morning.

BRIDGET

If you think that's best.

(ALBERTO folds up his ladder.)

ALBERTO

Goodbye, Senora.

BRIDGET

Goodbye, Alberto. We'll see you later.

(ALBERTO heads to the door and in a flash, ANNIE puts on her shoes and scoots after him.)

ANNIE

I'll be back soon, Mom!

BRIDGET

No, wait, Annie! Come back!

(She stares at the empty doorway.)

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

(JIMMY is boxing up his paintings. ISABEL enters, and tries hard to hide her disappointment.)

ISABEL

You're leaving.

JIMMY

I got a showing at my friend's gallery on the Upper East Side. We've gotta get serious now, with nursery school and college to think about.

ISABEL

You'll be the toast of the town. You won't want to come back.

JIMMY

I'll come back, but I need time to think. I wasn't consulted about this idea of starting a family.

ISABEL

There are risks when you get romantically involved.

JIMMY

There's reliable protection.

ISABEL

You can't always leave that up to the woman.

JIMMY

You're right, and I've been guilty of that more times than I care to remember.

ISABEL

You said you loved me.

JIMMY

I do love you. I always will, and I promise I'll never abandon our child. And I won't allow Jeremy to feel left out of whatever kind of family we cobble together. I also promise to support your efforts as an actor, because I know how important that is to you. But we have to think outside the box. I can't do the Family Man thing right now. That's not who I am, because of my shortcomings, not yours.

(ISABEL pouts. JIMMY puts his finger under her chin and raises her head so he can see her face.)

JIMMY

You may not get everything you want, but you'll come damn close.

(He lightens up and sings to ISABEL...)

JIMMY

I WILL PAINT YOU
IN THE SUMMER WITH A MELON
OF A BELLY
GENTLY PROTRUDING

I WILL PAINT YOU
IN THE AUTUMN WITH THE BOUNTY
OF YOUR BODY
STRETCHING ITS LIMITS

I WILL PAINT YOU

LIGHTS OUT ON JIMMY'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(BRIDGET is drawing. RICHARD enters.)

BRIDGET

What are you doing here?

RICHARD

I let Annie have my car. I said we'd meet here and go over to Aunt Lucy's together. She's spending the night there. You know that, right?

BRIDGET

No, but that's okay.

RICHARD

Where is she, by the way?

BRIDGET

She ran off with Alberto.

RICHARD

Who the hell is Alberto?

BRIDGET

Vidal's son.

RICHARD

Who the hell is Vidal?

BRIDGET

The Super.

RICHARD

So that makes his son okay?

BRIDGET

Alberto is a very nice boy.

RICHARD

The reason for her to be here was to model for you. Why did you let her go?

BRIDGET

I didn't, she ran out the door.

RICHARD

You could have run after her.

BRIDGET

It didn't occur to me. She probably needed a break anyway.

RICHARD

So they're here in the building?

BRIDGET

I don't know. I wasn't worried about it, but now I am!

(She takes out her phone and types a message.)

BRIDGET

This is exactly what I didn't want to be doing right now. I want you to be the worrier from now on.

(She sends the message.)

BRIDGET

I want to be the one who gets to think about other things from time to time.

RICHARD

We both worry about Annie. That's what parents do.

BRIDGET

Do you lie awake at night trying to figure out how to protect her from things you never even knew existed before she was born?

RICHARD

Sometimes.

BRIDGET

Do you agonize about teachable moments you let slip by? Questions you didn't take seriously enough?

RICHARD

(becoming defensive)

I think I do.

(BRIDGET stares at her phone intently.)

BRIDGET

Come on, Annie!

(Then looks back up at RICHARD.)

BRIDGET

Has being a parent made you painfully aware of your limitations as a person?

RICHARD

Of course, it has!

BRIDGET

You weren't in the car when she got hurt.

RICHARD

We've talked that into the ground...all the way to the Earth's core and out to the other side! You know it wasn't your fault.

BRIDGET

She was so scared, and in such pain.

RICHARD

I know, but there wasn't anything you could have done differently.

(BRIDGET looks at her phone again.)

BRIDGET

Why isn't she answering my text?

RICHARD

Let it go, Bridget. You can't change the past. It's time to look to the future, for your sake and for Annie's.

BRIDGET

What future? You said you hate my studio. You said you hate my sculpting.

RICHARD

I also said you should take six months, that you had a right to. I said you shouldn't let anyone stand in your way. Do you remember that, too?

BRIDGET

Of course, I do.

(A thought suddenly occurs to her.)

BRIDGET

Oh, my god, I forgot she drove! What if they went somewhere in the car?

RICHARD

I'll go see if it's out front.

(He rushes out, while BRIDGET stares at her phone and paces. RICHARD rushes back in.)

RICHARD

I don't see it.

BRIDGET

She does exactly what she wants, doesn't she? No matter what we say to her! What are we going to do?

RICHARD

Play the Waiting Game, and let the stress slowly erode the cells in our bodies? I'm sure she's fine.

(He smiles bravely.)

RICHARD

Remember, our daughter is actually quite sensible, with a good head on her shoulders...

BRIDGET

She never ignores text messages.

RICHARD

I know.

BRIDGET

Can we call the police?

RICHARD

Not yet.

BRIDGET

She always answers her texts!

(She starts to cry, and RICHARD puts his arms around her.)

LIGHTS OUT ON THE STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PATIO.

(MOM and DAD lean back in their chairs, empty food containers on the table in front of them.)

MOM

Do you remember the time Bridget ran into the elevator? What was the name of that hotel?

DAD

I believe it's still called the Fairmont.

MOM

Lucy was having a tantrum over a Limoges box in the gift shop.

DAD

I was there.

MOM

Bear with me, I'm processing.

DAD

It's been almost 40 years.

MOM

I think I can finally talk about it without my heart seizing up. If I get it out, maybe some of the fear will go away.

DAD

Go for it!

(MOM laughs.)

MOM

We were in the lobby trying to calm Lucy down, when the elevator door opened and closed behind us. We turned around and realized what must have happened because suddenly Bridget wasn't there. I pushed the buttons like crazy, but the door wouldn't open and the elevator didn't come back!

DAD

You were hysterical.

MOM

She was so little, and we didn't know what floor she'd gone to.

DAD

You were always hysterical about something or other in those days.

MOM

Anyway, a few minutes later the door opened and there she was, standing beside a young couple who acted like it was the most normal thing in the world for a two-year-old to be riding on the elevator by herself.

DAD

Bridget's a grown woman now, and she's safe, for the time being. Can you let it go?

MOM

I don't know. I think I'm suffering from PPS.

DAD

What's that?

MOM

Post-Parenting Syndrome.

DAD

You're definitely suffering from something!

LIGHTS OUT ON THE PATIO.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(BRIDGET sits on her red chair, which is pulled up next to the pedestal, where RICHARD sits. Her head is resting on his shoulder and she checks her phone for signs of life.)

RICHARD

I may not like the fact that most of the time you'd rather be doing something that has nothing to do with me, but that doesn't mean you should stop doing what you need to do to make yourself whole.

BRIDGET

That makes me feel so guilty, and so sad.

RICHARD

You have to own your need to sculpt. Why is that so hard for you? What are you afraid of?

BRIDGET

That Annie won't fulfill her potential because I didn't try hard enough as a parent. That she got derailed because I was preoccupied with my passion.

RICHARD

I think you tried very hard but talk to Annie. That'll make you feel better. Apologize, if you think it's necessary. Ask her about her plans for the future. You might be surprised. She's a chip off the old block.

BRIDGET

I'm also terribly afraid of losing her.

RICHARD

You have to have the courage to let go of your little girl. You have a big girl now, who's turning into an interesting young woman and will make a fine life for herself.

(BRIDGET nods her head and wipes the tears from her cheeks. Suddenly, ANNIE bursts in, terribly distraught, and BRIDGET jumps up, knocking over the chair.)

ANNIE

Something horrible happened, Mom!

BRIDGET

Annie! What's the matter? Where's Alberto.

ANNIE

He's right here.

(ALBERTO walks casually through the doorway.)

BRIDGET

Is the car okay?

ANNIE

(incredulous)

I didn't take the car. Alberto was with me.

BRIDGET

Good girl!

ANNIE

I'm not a dog! The horrible thing that happened was I dropped my phone in a Port-a-Potty at the beach! It was so disgusting, and there was no way I was going to put my hand in there to get it out!

BRIDGET

No, of course not.

(BRIDGET suppresses a smile.)

ANNIE

Seeing my phone down there, with all my contacts, and my music, and my pictures, and my pod-casts, floating around in all that shit was so disturbing!

(ANNIE tries to muster feelings of sympathy.)

BRIDGET

I'm sorry, honey.

(She finally can't help herself and bursts out laughing, much to ANNIE'S dismay.)

ANNIE

Mom, how can you laugh? You are so mean! This is a really big deal to me. I've lost everything! Don't you understand? You are the worst mother! I hate you!

(She takes RICHARD by the hand and pulls him towards the door.)

ANNIE

Come on, Dad. Take me to Aunt Lucy's. She'll understand.

RICHARD

Your mother's relieved to see you, that's why she's laughing. We were both worried about you.

ANNIE

It's still really mean, and I wish you'd stop worrying about me all the time! I'm not a baby!

(She turns back to look at her mother, who's struggling to keep a straight face.)

ANNIE

I'm never going to pose for any of your stupid sculptures again!

(She exits with RICHARD. BRIDGET turns to ALBERTO, who looks at her and shrugs.)

ALBERTO

It was very smelly!

BRIDGET

(laughing)

Yes, I'm sure it was!

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON THE PARK.

(LUCY sits on the bench, holding her knitting needles and periwinkle yarn, beneath an arbor shaped like a giant halo covered with flowers and vines. To the rhythm of her knitting she repeats over and over again...)

LUCY

I am the good one. I am the good one. I am the good one. I am the good one...

LIGHTS OUT ON THE PARK.

Out of the dark comes the sound of ANNIE'S voice...

ANNIE

Mooom...I can't stand to stand still anymore.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(BRIDGET draws ANNIE posing with her face bowed over her cell phone.)

BRIDGET

I thought you could hold that position indefinitely.

ANNIE

Only if someone's texting me. I don't stare at my phone for the hell of it. I do like this new phone, though. Thanks for getting it for me.

BRIDGET

You're going to earn it. That's our deal. Tell me about your date with Alberto.

ANNIE

We had soooo much fun, Mom. Alberto is soooo cool. He knows all about movies. He wants to be a director. It's so great to talk to him because he doesn't make me feel like some kind of an obsessed freak, which of course I am.

BRIDGET

(distracted)

It's nice to have a friend who shares your interests.

(She stops drawing and gazes at ANNIE.)

ANNIE

What?

BRIDGET

I'm sorry I made you feel like you were bothering me when I worked in the garage.

ANNIE

I just said that. You didn't act annoyed.

BRIDGET

Something made you angry.

ANNIE

I guess I felt guilty because I knew you had so little time, and I couldn't help wanting to be with you.

BRIDGET

I shouldn't have put you through that.

ANNIE

It also made me angry to see how easily you gave it up. How you let everyone else's needs come first.

BRIDGET

You came first. Don't you see, you're my inspiration.

ANNIE

(humoring her mother)

Thanks, Mom.

BRIDGET

You'll understand if you have a daughter.

ANNIE

I'm going to be a modern woman. I'm not having kids.

(Suppressing the urge to respond, BRIDGET picks up her pad and pencil.)

BRIDGET

Okay, Annie. Let's get this done. Tomorrow I begin my new sculpture: "Modern Girl with Head in I-Cloud".

ANNIE

And I begin my first documentary, the journey of a sculpture, from clay to girl with cell phone.

BRIDGET

Really, that's your idea?

ANNIE

Yes! I'm going with Laina tonight to get my camera.

BRIDGET

I got cash, like you asked for.

ANNIE

Thank you.

BRIDGET

Okay, keep still. I just need you for a few more minutes.

(ANNIE poses like a pro, and they sing...)

ANNIE

I AM A GIRL

BRIDGET

I'M IN CONTROL

ANNIE

I WON'T BECOME A TREE

BRIDGET

I PUT THE CHARCOAL TO THE PAPER
I LEAVE A MARK

ANNIE

NO BARK ON ME

BRIDGET

I'VE MADE A CHOICE

ANNIE

I WILL BE FREE

Guess what? Dad and I are planning a trip to Italy. He wants to see the cathedrals.

BRIDGET

When is this happening?

ANNIE

In the spring. We asked Grandma to go but she wants to stay home with Poppy.

BRIDGET

I'm glad you asked her.

ANNIE

Dad said you can come too, if you're not too busy. It's up to you.

BRIDGET

I don't think I'll be able to take anymore time off from work for quite a while.

ANNIE

That's what Dad said. He said now that you're going to be a real artist, you'll have to work very hard.

(BRIDGET is suddenly overcome with emotion.)

BRIDGET

That's right. However, I might be able to take time off to go to Italy...and be with my family.

BRIDGET
I PUT THE CHARCOAL TO THE PAPER
I LEAVE A MARK
TO FIND THE GIRL

ANNIE
THE GIRL IS ME

BRIDGET
I'LL SET YOU FREE

BRIDGET, ANNIE
BY MAKING ART

BRIDGET
THE ART IN WHAT I SEE

BRIDGET, ANNIE
A CHANCE FOR IMMORTALITY

LIGHTS OUT ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

LIGHTS UP ON RICHARD'S OFFICE.

(RICHARD is working away, furiously drawing, his
mind lit up with ideas, as he sings...)

RICHARD
SO, HERE IS A TREE
MUST BE A SPECIAL TREE
OR, ALL TREES ARE SPECIAL

DESIGNING A HOUSE
A HOUSE AROUND A TREE
NOW, THAT IS THE CHALLENGE

WHAT TO DO WITH THE TREE...

SHOULD IT GO IN THE HALLWAY?
PERHAPS IN THE KITCHEN?
WHAT KIND OF ROOM WOULD A TREE ENHANCE?

DON'T THEY TEND TO HAVE BUGS AND
ATTENDANT SMALL CREATURES?
WHAT WOULD BECOME OF AN ERRANT BRANCH?

RICHARD (cont'd)

NOW, THIS IS EXCITING
AN IN'TRESTING CHALLENGE

I CAN DO THIS

AT FIRST AN ASSIGNMENT
BECOMING A PASSION

I CAN DO THIS

RISING UP LIKE A CHIMNEY!
SHOOTING DOWN THROUGH THE BASEMENT!

WHERE IS MY PEN? WHERE IS MY PEN?

BABY SQUIRRELS IN THE NURSERY
TEENAGE SLOTHS IN THE ATTIC
OWLS IN THE DEN

Here it is.

I CAN DO THIS!

I CAN DO THIS!

(He draws quickly and fluidly.)

RICHARD

LEAN YOUR BACK ON HER TRUNK
REST YOUR FEET ON HER ROOTS
FEEL HER LEAVES IN YOUR HAIR

LET YOUR MIND TAKE A BREAK
FROM THE DAY-TO-DAY ACHE
TAKE A SOAR THROUGH THE AIR

THIS IS NOT UNREAL
THIS IS NOT PUT ON
THIS IS NOT A GAME
DREAM IS NOT DELUSION

I CAN DO THIS!

I CAN

I CAN DO THIS!

LIGHTS OUT ON RICHARD'S OFFICE.

LIGHTS UP ON BRIDGET'S STUDIO.

(A tarp lies on the floor beneath mounds of red clay. VIDAL and ALBERTO are helping BRIDGET by kneading the clay. VIDAL takes a break and sits on the pedestal. Sunlight streams down on him and he wipes his brow with a handkerchief. With a sly smile, BRIDGET leans over and pulls a string that hangs at the side of the skylight. She winks at ALBERTO as the blind comes down and blocks out the light. VIDAL looks up, surprised, and ALBERTO smiles at BRIDGET as he presses the heels of his hands into the clay. ANNIE films the three of them with her camera.)

ANNIE

Go ahead, Alberto. Answer her question. Pretend I'm not here.

ALBERTO

(to BRIDGET)

I will study filmmaking at U.S.C. Then I will return to my country and join the new wave of directors that is coming out of Mexico and on the Internet.

(BRIDGET speaks in a loud, unnatural tone, as if that's what she's supposed to do.)

BRIDGET

That sounds great, Alberto!

(to the camera)

Now I am going to begin to make the mold...

ANNIE

It's not a U-Tube video, Mom. You don't have to explain what you're doing.

BRIDGET

Okay!

RICHARD (off-stage)

Bridget!

(RICHARD enters with a handful of drawings, then sees ANNIE with her camera and puts them behind his back.)

RICHARD

I'm sorry, Annie. I didn't know you were making your movie.

ANNIE

It's okay, Dad. You're going to be in it, too. Go ahead and talk to Mom. What are you doing here?

RICHARD

(plays to the camera)

I came to tell your mother how much I love her, and that I'm sorry.

BRIDGET

(still sounding phony)

I take it things are going well at work, dear.

RICHARD

(mimics her tone)

Everybody's crazy about the drawings, even the receptionist.

ANNIE

You can talk like normal people!

(BRIDGET hesitates, then continues speaking in the same unnatural tone.)

BRIDGET

I'd love to see them sometime.

RICHARD

I'll show them to you when Annie's finished.

ANNIE

It's okay, Dad. Mom can look at your drawings.

(RICHARD takes the drawings out from behind his back and hands them to BRIDGET. ANNIE films her mother looking at the drawings.)

BRIDGET

(in a normal tone)

They're beautiful, Richard! I love the way the lines of the house radiate out from the tree, as if it's the Heart of the Home.

RICHARD

It makes the lives of the people living in the house richer, more interesting. It's says, be open to what's out of the ordinary, to changing the way you look at things.

(He suddenly turns serious.)

RICHARD

This project is going to take up a lot of my time over the next few months. There's a pretty strict deadline. I hope that's not going to be a problem for you.

BRIDGET

I think we'll manage. Won't we, Annie?

(ANNIE calls out from behind her camera.)

ANNIE

I think we will, Dad! What did you wanna tell Mom you're sorry about?

RICHARD

That I haven't been more supportive. I guess I was worried about what would happen to our family if she turned out to be the next Michelangelo.

BRIDGET

I'm sure it wasn't easy for Mrs. Angelo.

RICHARD

I don't think there was a Mrs. Angelo.

BRIDGET

Oh, right! Well, maybe you can be the next David.

(JIMMY and ISABEL enter, glued at the hip. JIMMY sees ANNIE and freezes.)

JIMMY

I'm sorry, I didn't know you were making a movie.

ANNIE

Pretend I'm not here!

(JIMMY looks at BRIDGET.)

JIMMY

I came to say goodbye.

BRIDGET

Goodbye, and good luck! I hope you sell lots of paintings.

JIMMY

Thank you. I hope so, too.

RICHARD

Bridget told us your news. Congratulations!

(He kisses ISABEL on each cheek, then holds out his hand to JIMMY. He looks up at JIMMY'S Red Sox cap as he shakes his hands.)

RICHARD

Did you grow up back there?

JIMMY

In Marble Head.

RICHARD

Have you forgiven Bill Buckner yet?

(A sudden transformation comes over JIMMY. He instantly relaxes and becomes engaged.)

JIMMY

Yes, of course I have! He shouldn't have been out there. His knees were gone.

RICHARD

And you've won twice since.

JIMMY

I'm a happy guy! Where did you say you're from?

RICHARD

I went to school in Boston, but I grew up in the Bay Area.

JIMMY

My second favorite team.

RICHARD

There you have it! You've got baseball. It'll see you through those early days with the new baby.

(Panic briefly flashes across JIMMY'S face, then he turns to ISABEL and locks eyes with her.)

JIMMY

She's beautiful, isn't she?

RICHARD

She sure is.

(JIMMY gives ISABEL an embarrassingly passionate kiss and RICHARD can't take his eyes off them. ALBERTO calls out to ANNIE as she films the kiss, and her father, transfixed.)

ALBERTO

So, Annie, what is it going to be? Independent or Hollywood?

ANNIE

Independent, for sure!

ALBERTO

You will have to go to New York.

ANNIE

I know, I haven't told my parents yet.

(BRIDGET exchanges a look with RICHARD, sudden panic in her eyes.)

RICHARD

(to BRIDGET)

Nobody drives in New York.

BRIDGET

(relieved)

That's right!

ANNIE

I'll go to community college to get my grades up and then I'll apply to film school. That'll give me a chance to develop my skills, and my personal style.

(ISABEL turns to JIMMY.)

ISABEL
It's time to go to the airport.

BRIDGET
(to JIMMY)
We'll look after her for you.

JIMMY
Thank you. I'll be back.

(He holds up his hand and waves to her with a slightly wistful expression on his face. She holds her hand up to him as she steps back and takes in the whole scene. The others freeze, the lights dim, and BRIDGET sings...)

BRIDGET
I AM STANDING HERE PRETENDING
NOT TO SEE THEM ALL AS SCULPTURE
NOT TO WANT TO FORM THEIR MUSCLES
NOT TO WANT TO BUILD THEIR BODIES
NOT TO WANT TO SHOW THEIR FEELINGS
NOT TO WANT TO TELL THEIR STORIES
NOT TO WANT TO MAKE THEM SOLID
SO THEY WILL LAST FOREVER...

THESE PEOPLE
THAT I LOVE
WHO GROW
AND LEARN
AND PLAY
AND PERISH...

I AM LOOKING AT ART! ART! ART!

LIGHTS OUT.