

MIRACLE PLAY

A play by Sheldon Wolf

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MIRACLE PLAY

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Hank, 70s

David, 20, Lakota

Elliot, 80s

Sophia, 30s, Eastern European

White Buffalo Woman

TIME

Now

SETTING

South Dakota, a unit set, described below, an abandoned church, now a
junk shop.

ACT ONE

[SOUNDS OF LAKOTA SONG OF THE FOUR WINDS, FADING, THEN LIGHTS UP ON DAVID, A LAKOTA MAN IN HIS EARLY 20S, WHITE SHIRT WITH SLEEVES ROLLED UP, KHAKI CARGO PANTS, SHAVED HEAD. HE SITS IN A CHAIR, DOWNSTAGE, OFF TO THE SIDE.]

DAVID

[TALKING TO AN UNSEEN CHARACTER, DOWNSTAGE, OPPOSITE.]

So, I get it, you're leaving it up to me to start. But where? Do I start with the creation myth, the world that came before this world? Or do I start with the epic flood that washed away that time? What about the rise of the turtle? Or the power of the eagles' wings? Or the pipe and the sage? Or the deep red earth, the spirit of my ancestors? Ancestors, yes! They are the beginning and the end. I know now that my ancestors still live in my hot red Lakota blood.

You sit in silence. Don't you know these stories? I, too, did not know them. Who needed stories when there were so many distractions? But now...Now!

I see you're taking notes. There isn't enough ink to write it all, not from that beginning.

Then let's start with another beginning. The start of my great adventure. My quest. If I say the story often enough, it will start to sound like truth.

Crazy, right? You think I'm crazy. You put away the scissors. The letter opener. I get it.

The set. From the outside, I saw a simple church. Old white paint and gothic windows. A relic of the pioneer faithful. Then, closer, I was taken by the smell, the sweet rancid musky odor of magazines and old books and maps. Moldy posters ripped and stained. Photographs of no-nonsense and nameless pioneers. And the pungent acid smell of all that paper turning brown and dying. Shelves from floor to ceiling, jammed with stuff, blue speckled pots and rusted horseshoes, glass knobs from telephone poles, and aluminum coffee pots and cast-iron skillets. Racks of guns and rifles and boxes of ammo. Knives. Rope. All the props for a who-done-it.

From the rafters, loops of barbed wire and huge bails of coiled rope on the floor, like tumbleweed that came to a dead stop. And dozens of railroad lanterns, their glass flumes grimy and cracked and covered with cobwebs. And more and more. Furniture. Frames. Big stuff. Little stuff.

Stuff. Maybe there wasn't so much. I'm having trouble with memory. My memory plays tricks in my condition. Yellow light oozing through the oily windows. And music. Surely, there was music.

[LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL THE SETTING JUST DESCRIBED, BUT A SKELETAL VERSION, A GOTHIC WINDOW, A FEW POSTS, A FEW SHELVES, A DOORWAY THAT LEADS TO ANOTHER ROOM, A SCREEN DOOR, A MEMORY OF THE PLACE. STUFF, ESPECIALLY A LARGE DESK, LOADED WITH PAPERS AND SMALL ITEMS. MUSIC IS BLASTING, HENDRIX, THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER.]

[THE LIGHTS COME UP ON HANK. A CHOATIC MIX OF DENIM, FRINGES, TIE-DYE, HEADBAND, MOCCASINS, PATCHES, SHELLS AND BEADS, SALT AND PEPPER PONY TAIL, WIRE-RIMMED GLASSES. HANK IS IN HIS 70s.]

HANK

“Oh, say does that Star Spangled banner yet wave...”

[MEANWHILE, DAVID BANGING ON THE SCREEN DOOR.]

“O'er the land of the free
And the home of the brave.”

Yee.....hah!

[SUDDEN SILENCE.]

(Sudden silence.)

DAVID

And a floor show, too!

HANK

Hey. The 60s spirit is ALIVE! That America is still alive in my body.

DAVID

Yes?

HANK

The music is still alive. One of the benefits.

DAVID

Of?

HANK

Of? Of? Of all of these disks, man. This is a repository of diamond needle twelve-inch long play high fidelity Dakota country.

DAVID

You don't say!

HANK

A first timer! Welcome, welcome my good friend to The Four Winds shop in the middle of God's country. Hau Kola, as the people say. Welcome. Some call it antiques. Some call it collectibles. Let's be honest; some call it shit. Let me get you a coffee. Browse around. Look around. Enjoy.

DAVID

[AS HE ENTERS]

I'm enjoying it already. Like stepping into a joint.

HANK

Like stepping into my very own authentic got-it-at-Woodstock big as life bong.

DAVID

It's a magic time machine.

HANK

People say that, y'know, come in here, and they feel like they're stepping back.

DAVID

I'm stepping into something!

HANK

How'd you take it? Ain't got no cream or sugar.

DAVID

Sure. Black.

HANK

[POURS FROM AN ALUMINUM POT ON A HOT PLATE.]

Gotta be careful with that electric coil. One false move and poof. Up in flames we go. L'chaim.

DAVID

What do you know about the Bimmer?

HANK

Bimmer?

DAVID

The black Bimmer? The BMW? Doing circles around here like a buzzard!

HANK

Jeez, I got so busy, I didn't hear a thing.

DAVID

You may need to tone down the floor show.

HANK

It's all part of the ambiance. Music. Conversation. We aim to please at The Four Winds. So, look around, or set yourself down. And we'll get to saying "Hey."

DAVID

I've only got a minute.

HANK

So, let's make it count for something. Every minute.

DAVID

That's my plan.

HANK

Pejuta sapa.

DAVID

L'Chaim.

HANK

Pejuta sapa. The Lakota black medicine. Like a dynamite stick where the sun don't shine.

DAVID

Yes. More medicine. Just what I don't need.

[PAUSE. DAVID LOOKS AROUND, LOOKS UP, SEES HANK WATCHING HIM, THEN FRIENDLY:]

Hey.

HANK

There ya go. It's not so hard being friendly and open, is it? But Jesus, some people make such a fuss. Just for a simple "Hello," you'd think their heads were pumped with some sort of--

DAVID

Pejuta sapa. God, this is bad. You drink this?

HANK

You're not from around here.

DAVID

No, not really.

HANK

Not really? Relax Mister Riddle Man. I'm just trying to be friendly while you're poking around.

DAVID

And I appreciate the fact, believe me.

HANK

Hey, have it your way. You just look around, Riddle Man, and let me know if you need any—

DAVID

I'm not looking. I'm delivering. I have some boxes to bring in here. And some furniture.

HANK

Boxes?

DAVID

Boxes. Furniture. Antiques, I think. They're not mine. I'm just doing some day work for the Slaughters. Do you know Helen Slaughter, and her son?

HANK

Never heard of 'em. They new?

DAVID

A coupla generations.

HANK

I don't get out much.

DAVID

Slaughter Ranch? Tiverton Pike? Asked me to bring some stuff to you. They wonder if you'll take it on consignment.

HANK

So, I'm just taking a guess you're not one of the boys from the Rez?

DAVID

No, I'm sort of Lakota. But not from the Rez.

HANK

"Sort of?"

DAVID

It's a story. I was looking for people like me. They had this program at Dartmouth.

HANK

No fuckin' way! I went to college in Dartmouth. Once.

DAVID

Once?

HANK

See, I was driving down from Montreal, cut over from I-91. Hooked up with some buddies of mine and partied till I puked. Yup, those were the days...all two of them...I think...in Dartmouth.

DAVID

Two years for me. It's very seductive.

HANK

They got some mean women in Dartmouth. It's all coming back now. Some mean kickin' women.

DAVID

The landscape, I'm saying. The college town insulation from the things you don't want to hear. From reality.

HANK

Ah, yes. I remember reality.

DAVID

And this?

HANK

This? The Four Winds? This beats your reality any day, Riddle Man. Six months colder than a witch's tit, and six months of dried out dirt and dust. Now tell me, who would want reality when you can have South Dakota?

DAVID

Now there's a sales pitch!

HANK

And here we both are, smack in the middle of The Four Winds Antiques. It's like some kind of fate! It's like the stars are lining up in a mystical way that we can hardly understand, but which we are compelled to follow because if we don't all the cosmic forces of the universe will collide and this crazy life as we know it will cease to exist!

DAVID

Okayyyyyyyy. (??) Or...maybe it's like the Slaughters had these boxes.....?

HANK

The Slaughters?

DAVID

The ranch. Boxes. Furniture.

HANK

Oh?

DAVID

So, will you take it, on consignment?

HANK

So, let's give a look see.

DAVID

Because if not, I could try some other places.

HANK

Boy, there are no other places. We're fifty miles from nowhere, my friend. And this is the one and only quality antique store in all of Greater Four Winds.

DAVID

Greater? You are a funny, funny guy. The post office is closed up. The place next store...whatever it was... is about to fall down...

HANK

Yes, but we're coming back. I got faith. Metropolitan Four Winds is coming back. I see you have no belief. You need belief, son. Long term belief. A couple of painters, artist types, got some interest in the place across the street, and I know a weaver who might be thinking about maybe considering the P.O. for a studio. There's other places for rent, too. People are starting to look. Four Winds is gonna sing with creative types. Like a Soho or a Sausalito. We're gonna fly! Why, there's cars passing through all the time on the way to Wounded Knee. You got the Black Hills, the summer pow-wows just down the road at Pine Ridge. Rushmore. Hot Springs. You'd be surprised, my sort of Lakota friend, you'd be surprised at the ac-ti-vi-ty. This right here is the epicenter of the universe. You gotta believe. One day, we are going to explode!

DAVID

So, before things get too pricey in the epicenter, I've got these boxes....

HANK

Nope.

DAVID

What's that?

HANK

You heard me. The answer is nope. Nada on the consignment thing. Ain't gonna look at 'em now, so you can go back to old lady Slaughter and let her know she's a fool for sending Mr. Dartmouth Riddle Man all the way out here to Four Winds to unload her junk. Wouldn't want to display her fine antiques out her in a two-bit no post office ain't got no real coffee hollow of a ghost town, now would we? So, we can skip the formalities, and you let her know that the answer is nada, no way ho-say.

[HANK HAS PULLED OUT ANOTHER RECORD ALBUM AND PLACED IT ON THE TURNTABLE. CRANKS UP THE VOLUME...IT'S "I GOT YOU, BABE." HANK SINGS ALONG, LOUDLY:]

"They say we're young, and we don't know....."

DAVID

Hey. HEY!!!!

HANK

Can't hear you, man. The music's too loud! And I only hear believers! "I got you, babe...."

DAVID

HEY! My head!

HANK

What's that? You know, I did hear something. "Hey, people, what's that sound, everybody look..." There's the sound of a little too much att-i-tude in here. Too much con-de-scen-sion

DAVID

Christ!

[DAVID TURNS TO LEAVE, BUT THEN HE TURNS BACK.]

HEY, WHERE AM I GOING?

HANK

That's the big question of living.

DAVID

I mean, where else am I going? Shit. I'm just so tired. YOU GOT ANY PEJUTA SAPA?

[HANK TURNS THE VOLUME DOWN.]

HANK

Pejuta sapa did I hear you say?

DAVID

Man, I could use a fuckin' cup of pejuta sapa. I can use something! I can't see straight.

HANK

Now you're talking my kinda realty! You're from Dartmouth, right?

DAVID

Yeah, Dartmouth. Once. Now, I'm talking about coming from Four Winds.

[BLACKOUT. SOUND OUT. SPOT ON DAVID, NOW AT THE DOWNSTAGE CHAIR.]

And so we met.

[SMOKEY LIGHTS UP ON LAKOTA BUFFALO WOMAN, DRESSED IN WHITE ANIMAL SKINS, SINGING THE SONG

OF THE FOUR WINDS, THE SLIGHTEST NOTION OF A
DANCE, THEN FADE.]

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

Wiohpeyatakiya etunwan yo
Nitunkasila ahitunwan yankilo...

DAVID

It was just the sort of encounter I imagined when I set out on my quest. “Meet people,” the nurse said. “Talk to people. It will do you good.” That’s what I was told. “Find a path back home.” Home...as if I’d ever been here. I left Dartmouth with nothing but a diagnosis and my thumb. Waited tables for three days in Harrisburg. Mopped the bar floor someplace in Indiana. Even with the few bucks from the Slaughters, I needed money to go on. Go on to what? I needed time, and I landed in a time machine. I thought fate was smiling on me, if only for a minute. I got my backpack from the truck and my sleeping bag.

[LIGHTS UP]

HANK

Hey, Riddle Man. I’m an outsider. I want a glimpse of the inside. I want to peak under the tent. Tell me about the Lakota.

DAVID

And you’ve come to me? Surely, with the Rez nearby-

HANK

No, you’ve come to me! Now what treasures do you bring?

[LIGHTS DIM ON THE SET, BRIGHTER ON DAVID.]

DAVID

I knew what he was asking. He was a voyeur, like a kid with a National Geographic. But after Dartmouth, I was tired of being a curiosity. So, I got busy unloading the truck.

There were eleven boxes of odds and ends, a couple of hundred objects in all. While they were being packed up, Helen Slaughter had told me about each and every one, how it entered her family, how and when it was used. The buffalo head was a souvenir her grandfather and cowboy days. The square platter with the large chip on the edge had been a wedding gift to great-grandmother, when she moved from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Omaha. Pretty piece,” Helen says. “It should fetch a good price.”

“And so, David,” Helen said to me with solemn emphasis, “don’t ever forget. These things have a story and meanings. Just like people.”

Eleven boxes and nine hours of stories and meanings!

I thank the Great Spirit, the Great Mystery, *Wakan Tanka*, who has blessed me with a Lakota sense of patience. And with cash on the hour even while she was talking.

And then, once I got over my collegiate sarcasm, I heard her words. “These things have a story and meanings. Just like people.”

And just what was my meaning? What about my little life? Ah! The quest. My quest would reveal all.

[AS THE FULL STAGE IS REVEALED AGAIN, WE SEE THE BUFFALO HORNS SUSPENDED FROM THE RAFTERS, HANK HAVING JUST HUNG THEM. AND A FEW BOXES ON THE FLOOR.]

HANK

Heavier than it looks, I’ll tell you.

DAVID

It good up there. Adds a note of authenticity. Respectability.

HANK

Don’t ever say that! My life mission is the opposite of respectability. It’s something of a religious thing with me.

DAVID

Sorry. I didn’t know I was crossing a line.

HANK

Oh, you crossed that line when you came “passing by.” My friend, nobody’s just passing by. They’re either running from or going to. I lived for a while in a place in the Adirondacks. No electric and the water came from a pump—just like this one. It was just a beat-up two room place, an old hunting cabin. You took 87 up passed Albany and then scooted off onto Route whatever. From there it was a two lane for a bunch of miles and then, if you looked real careful, you saw the old silver mailbox where you hung a right onto a dirt road through the woods. Just when you thought you were lost, you turned onto this rutted old path and twisted around past some dead trees and there it was. A cabin so buried in vines you had to look hard to see it, even from up close. People found me there! Jehovah’s Witnesses. Said they were just passing by. Shit, no one was

passing by then, and they don't just happen to be passing by now. Call it fate, call it "The Gods," but you and I were meant to meet this day.

So, what is it? Are you running from or running to?

DAVID

You know, you don't even know my name. And I don't know yours. My name is David.

HANK

David--??

DAVID

David Spencer Taylor.

HANK

David Spencer Taylor. A fine old Lakota name!

DAVID

It's not Lakota. It's New York. Brooklyn.

HANK

New York, New Hampshire, South Dakota. You, my friend, are a man of mystery, a man of many places. A very complex individual, David Spencer Taylor.

DAVID

But what is in a name? "A rose by any other name...."

HANK

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That blah, blah, blah
And blah de blah blah.

DAVID

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

HANK

Ah, Robbie Burns. A journey of ten thousand miles! Yes, Til all the seas gang dry. I learned that one growing up.

DAVID

For a little while more, I'm still growing up!

HANK

Touché, my friend, David Spencer Taylor, touché. You're either growing or you're dead. You and me, we're not dead yet. I got a kick or two left in me. Bud?

DAVID

It's 10 a.m.

HANK

And....?

[HANK GETS TWO BEERS FROM BEHIND THE STORE.]

DAVID

I try to stay dry. At least until noon.

HANK

Nothing like a nice cold one to help you drown out the mystery of life.

DAVID

Thanks.

HANK

Thanks for nothing. A toast to you, my friend, David Spencer Taylor. To you and to your journey.

DAVID

To seas gone dry.

HANK

(laughing) Fuck you.

[THEY DRINK.]

DAVID

[RISING, UNPACKING.]

And you?

HANK

Yes?

DAVID

And who are you?

HANK

Well, we're still trying to figure that out, aren't we?

DAVID

Name?

HANK

Would you believe that I don't have a name? I mean a name. I mean, I have many names, and I've been called many more. That platter should fetch a pretty penny.

DAVID

Royal Staffordshire.

[PAUSE.]

HANK

Hank.

DAVID

Henry?

HANK

Yes, Henry. That's what it says on my birth certificate. At least the first one.

DAVID

Born again, are we?

HANK

Born and reborn. Named and renamed. Now, don't go telling me about Lakota names. Birth names and Christian names and warrior names. I'm not Lakota.

DAVID

And with that pony tail, you look like a joke about me! Shit! I didn't mean that.

HANK

Henry Willis. Hank. Watertown, Massachusetts. Father, Robert Willis, salesman. Mother, Sofia née Bermazian. Armenian. Played softball and clarinet. Read science books under my blanket with a flashlight. Robby Burns. Honors bio. Honors physics. Honors chem. Track team. Even then I was running.

[PAUSE]

I was raised to be a good kid. Work hard. Play fair. Show respect. Be a good Christian. And it was easy to live that way, as long as you were blind. But if you watched TV, you saw the police dogs and the fire hoses, and the little girls being dragged through the streets by the police. You saw the places your father wouldn't go because of "the coloreds." You saw AnnaMay or Bettice or LuDelle walk straight as a stick from the bus stop to come and do your laundry. They called her, "The Girl." Of course, The Girl was seventy-two years old. But I was a good smart kid who wasn't supposed to see. Voted "Most Likely to Succeed." But nobody said at what.

[PAUSE]

Just stack those dishes on the floor for now.

DAVID

And then, on to Dartmouth.

HANK

And then, on to Columbia. So, talk about opening your eyes. I was there in the dorm rooms and the meeting rooms. I was there for the seminars and the rallies. I was there when the truth about our boys in Nam started to filter through. The Mekong Delta, and the gooks and the napalm and Dow Chemical. I was there when the tough questions were asked, when the voices were raised, when the fists were clenched, when the rallies were held, the banners held high, the doors locked, the minds opened, the songs sung. I was there, my friend. The music was everywhere. Man, the fuckin' spirit was alive! America was alive then!

DAVID

And who is asking the tough questions now? Where did it all go?

HANK

It's here. In me. A lot of the others are numb in their fifty-five plus condos, but me? I'm alive! I'm ready to take up the challenge. I am ready.

DAVID

The spirit is alive in Four Winds. That's what you said when I walked in to this scene.

HANK

There used to be a yearning, David Spencer Taylor. There was purpose and passion. We could change the world. Get the bastards out of the White House. Make a difference. Live the values...Live. Live free. Or die.

DAVID

Whooo, one beer with you-

HANK

And just three before you arrived, and man, I start going on.

When I watched it fall apart, I mean, when my cohorts, my marchers, my army of protesters moved to the suburbs because of the rumor of better schools—better equals whiter-- I just couldn't hang around. Maybe one day, the spirit will come back. Sometimes, I think all I have to do is wait. The bad old days will come back, and people will rise up, and I will be ready. I've got a whole arsenal here. I've got faith in the future. When the revolution comes, I'll be ready.

DAVID

“Revolution?” That's strong stuff.

HANK

That's why I get up in the morning. My mission.

But sometimes I forget. It has been so long since Columbia, sometimes I lose my way.

I'm glad you popped in here today. I'm glad you're here to help me back. To harmony.

DAVID

To walk in beauty. That is the Lakota way. Lesson number one.

HANK

Yes!

DAVID

To bring the earth into harmony with the sky. To walk in harmony with the universe by knowing who you are.

HANK

Those are just words...”Harmony,” “Who you are.” Just words unless you live them.

DAVID

This calls for another beer. Dos cervezas, amigo.

HANK

To harmony.

DAVID

To knowing who you are! To knowing why you are.

[BLACKOUT, BUT SPOT ON DAVID.]

DAVID

And so we drank a beer or two. Or three. Or seven. We drank the white man’s holy water. Truth is, I’ve done it before. Drink, I mean. Lots. In Hanover.

There was a time when this could not happen with a Lakota. But then the missionaries brought their wine. And the trappers brought their ale. The federal agents brought the hard stuff, and when they saw how much we couldn’t resist it, they brought more, especially around treaty-signing time. It was an exchange, a classic tit for tat. They gave us a drink, and they took away our buffalo.

HANK

[BRIEFLY STEPPING INTO DAVID’S REVERY]

Your cold one.

[LAKOTA BUFFALO WOMAN IN APPEARS BRIEFLY IN A SMOKEY LIGHT, PLAYING THE FLUTE.]

DAVID

Then they took away our grazing land. They wanted us to be good Christian farmers. And in exchange for promising to be good Christian farmers, they gave us cows. They gave us proper food, flour and beef, foods we had never eaten before. They even gave us little pieces of property. One hundred sixty acres of dust. Then, when they discovered gold in the Black Hills, they threatened to take away the food rations. They took our young ones and sent them to schools in Pennsylvania or Missouri. They took away our braids. They took away our eagle feathers. They took away our language. They took away our ceremonies and our

dances. They called us savages. They gave us liquor, and bit by bit they took away our pride.

And now it is now. On the reservation, I've learned, people are dying of hopelessness. The young people are dying of alcohol, and the old people are dying of the cold in broken down trailers that have no heat and no insulation. No purpose. They have no purpose.

My people are dying. And I am ...too....I, too...need purpose. "Like people," Helen Slaughter said," everything has a meaning." When I—if I finish my journey, what will my life mean to anyone? Do I have to die to have a meaning?

(to the downstage chair)

Doctor? Are you writing all this down? You see, there starts to be a pattern, but I didn't connect the dots.

[LIGHTS OUT ON WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN. SUDDENLY,
TO HANK, AS THE LIGHTS COME UP.]

Shit. The Slaughters are expecting me back. I promised I'd be back. With the truck.

HANK

Yes, go. The afternoon rush is about to begin.

DAVID

Yes, we must make room for another rush. Hank, it has been...something.

HANK

You tell Helen Slaughter her things are in good hands. We'll get a fair price. And we'll be quick about it.

DAVID

I'll let her know. And I'll thumb a ride back.

HANK

And let her know she did the right thing. Sending you. You're a good person, Mr. Taylor. A good soldier. I could use you in my army.

DAVID

[AT THE SCREEN DOOR.]

Jeez, Hank, I seem to be seeing double. I can't focus my-

HANK

Cameron. Cameron O'Neill.

DAVID

Wha...?

HANK

Cameron O'Neill. My second name. It says so, those very words, on my second birth certificate, when I was reborn.

DAVID

Cameron O'Neill. You're screwing me up.

HANK

After the Molotov cocktails. After the screaming. When the police cars were overturned and the billy clubs appeared. When they began searching the dorms for the Weathermen. Take one guess who was never found.

DAVID

Henry Willis?

HANK

There was no Henry Willis. Henry Willis went "poof." Never to be seen again. They tried to squeeze it out of my parents. I didn't mean to put them through hell. They were just innocent bystanders. The Feds were after me. But I no longer existed.

DAVID

Cameron.

HANK

[IRISH ACCENT.]

Mother: Doris née McGurty. Father: Seamus. Born: Brooklyn, New York. August 21, 1946.

Hell. Turn over the cars and busses.

DAVID

Cameron....Hank....the Slaughters are waiting. I don't know what to say.

HANK

Yes, we feel pulled between one reality and the next. Between safety and adventure. Between today and tomorrow.

Why are you here, David? You're not meant for day work. Take the step, David. Take the risky step, and see what is on the other side of honesty, with me.

DAVID

I've taken that step. As far as I can. I'm here. I'm in South Dakota. I'm in Four Winds, in your store-

HANK

But.....?

DAVID

But I need to be on my time. In my own scared way. In my own skin.

HANK

Whatever.

DAVID

I'll be back, Hank...Cameron. I'll hitch a ride back. I'll figure it out.

HANK

Michael.

DAVID

Stop messing with me.

HANK

Michael Daniels. MICHAEL FUCKIN' DANIELS.

DAVID

I'll be back.

HANK

You fuckin' better come back. I'll need an army when the apocalypse comes.

[BLACKOUT. FLUTE OFFSTAGE. SPOT ON DAVID.]

And in the thick summer heat, I felt that I was called back, compelled. And I couldn't just leave my sleeping bag there. Well, he was on a life mission, he said, and so was I. A quest.

[HE ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES A BIT MORE, OPENS THE BUTTONS ON HIS SHIRT.]

I hitched almost all the way, thank you very much to my tourist friends from Toledo, and then for the last couple of miles I walked. It hadn't rained in days, and the sun and the dust made my eyes flutter. And my ears! Helen Slaughter had told me to visit her friend, Marjory Prefontaine, on her farm, just across the way, and, surprise of surprises, there was some more stuff, a dress form...tools, and could I be a dear and come back in a few days when it was all packed and take it up to that antiques place in Four Winds she heard about? For consignment. Hmmm. Must be spring cleaning time in South Dakota. Spring cleaning in August.

I was walking east for a while on the old highway, and then suddenly in a ball of dust there it was, that buzzard BMW, must've been doing a hundred miles per hour. Heading west. Practically sideswiped me. I jumped off the main road, just a minute, just to catch my breath, watched the buzzard fade into the distance. Shit. They've got crazy people out there. I mean, not like you think of me crazy, but crazy. Buzzards!

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN IN WHITE APPEARS BEHIND DAVID, PLAYING FLUTE, DANCING AROUND HIM.]

DAVID

And then, still facing east, flooded in sunlight, my feet were pulled along by some force, yes, a force, to make a turn onto a smaller road that seemed to lead to nowhere. The air was brilliant, shimmering, and I kept walking east, walking, covering my eyes, and just moving until I was exhausted. There was no turning back., my head turned up to the sun, sweating, aching, feeling the heat and the pounding in my head, crying, soaking in the light. Sweating so hard from the light. And I pulled off my shirt and ripped a piece off, just a little ribbon of fabric, and I tied it to a twig. And I--

[DAVID REMOVES HIS CLOTHES, NOW LIT WITH AN INTENSE ORANGE-YELLOW LIGHT. A WIND BLOWS. FAINT DRUMS OFFSTAGE JOIN THE FLUTE. HE FALLS TO HIS KNEES, AND SLOWLY BENDS OVER UNTIL HIS HEAD TOUCHES THE GROUND. THEN:]

Oh, Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery, is there a ceremony for this quest? A prayer for the return of your son who is so lost? None of my study, none of my research, no one has prepared me for this day. Not the teachers, not the doctors. I'm too young. I'm too young to be so sick. Please, please, make the tumor go away.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN BOWS AS WELL.]

Oh, Wakan Tanka, here in this brown and barren place, I come to find...to find what? Answers? Logic? I know so little of the old ways. I am so lost, but now I have come home, to learn, to dream. My vision quest. *Hablecheya*. "Crying for a dream." Just for these few days, I come to sing the old songs, to dance the old dances, to learn the old ways as they were practiced by the generations. Let me hear the soothing voices of the elders. Let me touch the wrinkled skin on the hands of the medicine men. Let me sweat in the sweet warm smoke of the sage brush. Oh, Great Mystery, fill me with the ancient stories of my people. Wrap me in the warm blanket that is the history of my people. Open my eyes to their light. I come to feel the spirit of the wind burning against my skin. The wind blows through my mouth and will give answers to my head. Help me, Wakan Tanka. Help me.

[A MOMENT OF DAVID BASKING IN THE SUNLIGHT. THEN, SUDDEN SILENCE. DAVID COVERS HIMSELF WITH HIS SHIRT. DAVID FACES THE AUDIENCE AS THE LIGHT TURNS WHITE. THE WIND IS GONE, AND SO IS WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN. HE DRESSES QUICKLY.]

It was a moment tinged with guilt, praying to the Great Spirit, Wakan Tanka, when I was raised on Jesus.

Please, please understand. In my heart of hearts, I am filled with love. I hold nothing but the deepest respect for my mother. I know she did her best. I know she tried to do the right thing. But her anger took hold. Her loneliness overcame her like a cold black fog that won't let go. My father walked off the reservation, drunk again, and he never came back. And Mother flew away with her shame, with me inside her belly, followed the promise of the Federal urban relocation programs, cut her ties with the past, cut her ties with her people. She left behind her memories and her sorrows, exchanging the hopeless poverty of the reservation for the promising poverty of the city. She had nothing, but from nothing she made a new life.

She took her craft, the knowledge and skills she had learned from three generations, and turned it into a life. Beading. She created beading on wedding dresses. She stitched a sorry life from nothing, one bead at a time, one long hour at a time. She tried to reinvent herself. No longer Rose Long Tail. But Rosa Taylor. She did not teach me the old ways. She did not discuss them. We attended a Pentecostal church. For a long time, I thought I was Puerto Rican! Ours was a life built on forgetting the truth, like immigrants before us, putting the past in the past, becoming Americans by forgetting where we came from. My mother and I, we perfected that part of being American. But brown skin is still brown skin. And black hair is still black hair. And blood is--

She had a lover. She had another lover. She left the church. She left me.

HANK

[STILL IN DARKNESS.]

Well, fuck me!

DAVID

[TO THE DOWNSTAGE CHAIR]

Yes, I told him. I told him about the yellow wind. I told him about my mother.

[POINTING TO HEAD]

I didn't tell him, not yet, about...me.

[LIGHTS UP ON FOUR WINDS ANTIQUES]

[TO HANK]

School was my escape. I did well. I got to Dartmouth the old-fashioned way: work-study, Stafford loans, summer jobs. They had a program for Native Americans.

HANK

Highway One to the promised land.

DAVID

And the others got to me. The privileged ones. All that talk of summer camps and tennis clubs. The difference of me. The alone-ness. Of me. I got drunk. I stayed drunk.

[DAVID RETRIEVES TWO BEERS. THEY OPEN BOTTLES.]

L'chaim!

HANK

To your health!

DAVID

Yeah, that's me. Healthy, wealthy and wise.

[THEY DRINK. DAVID SPILLS SOME ON HIS FACE.]

HANK

So, tell me again about the tradition of the colors.

DAVID

Black, white, red, yellow.

HANK

And while you were out there, you placed ribbons of these colors

DAVID

Yes, my colors-

HANK

On your quest?

DAVID

Yes. My colors. Our colors. Ours. Yes, of course, as that strange wind was blowing, I marked my space with pieces of my shirt.

HANK

As you said the elders did it?

DAVID

Yes, Your Honor.

HANK

No.

DAVID

Ribbons of cloth. Here, look at my shirt, where I tore it.

[THERE IS NO TEAR.]

Wait.

HANK

Your shirt is not torn.

DAVID

Yes, I swear.

HANK

Y'know, I had a different impression of you. Quiet. Introspective. I mean, who believes these things anymore. Four colors? Walking on water and Moses on the mountain? But fuck me! I was wrong, wasn't I? I like the challenge, man. You do it, brother. You make your story. I like the way you write.

DAVID

And you? You who keeps changing his name.

HANK

We're on a fiction journey. It's a man thing, to leave a mark. To know we were here. That we lived.

DAVID

But what about you?

HANK

The glory days are just ahead. The revolution. That's my religion, what I believe in. My time is coming, just ahead.

DAVID

And meantime, you're stuck here.

HANK

And you keep moving. You don't sit still, do you?

[PAUSE]

DAVID

She paid me, Helen Slaughter did. I got paid to come here. You think I'd just pick out this shit hole?

HANK

No, you've come here for something big.

DAVID

I am out of here. Any minute now.

HANK

Man, you are a jumpy thing. I see you on a quest for something. And you're trying like crazy to find it.

DAVID

OUT!

[HE DOESN'T MOVE.]

HANK

Yes, I see you leaving.

DAVID

Fuck you, you crazy man.

HANK

I'm here. I've survived. In a world that tries to twist you, tries to drag you down, I've made it to today. I've got the right to be crazy. I've earned it. Crrraaaazzzzzyyyyyyyyyyy.

HANK

Open, m'am! Come on in. Welcome, welcome to The Four Winds Antiques.

SOPHIA

[ENTERING THE SCREEN DOOR]

Funny place, no? For antiques.

HANK

Funny place for high heels, no?

SOPHIA

You want I should take off?

HANK

I want you should be comfortable, that's all. Be comfortable, I mean. Look around. Check you out. I mean check it out. If you got any questions...

SOPHIA

Ya ya. I do. I check out.

[SHE PICKS UP A FEW ITEMS. DAVID AND HANK POSITION THEMSELVES TO VIEW HER. THEY EXCHANGE LOOKS. HANK HUMS/SINGS TOO LOUDLY, "WILD THING. YOU MAKE MY..."]

SOPHIA

[TO DAVID]

And you? You look around, too?

DAVID

Look around, work around. Sort of a handyman on summer break, I guess.

SOPHIA

Ah...handyman. I like handy man. You call me Sophia.

DAVID

Hello, Sophia. Hau Kola.

SOPHIA

Cola?

DAVID

Hau Kola. Welcome! In Lakota.

SOPHIA

Ah. Sexy native handyman.

HANK

You looking for something special? Sophia?

SOPHIA

Well, no. And yes. And no. I just shop. Perhaps something hit me. But some of this not antiques. Just old stuff.

HANK

Collectible. If you have a good eye.

SOPHIA

Yes?

HANK

Some of the best stuff is buried. Can I show you around?

SOPHIA

No, I can do. For collectible, don't need old man...how you say?...escort.

DAVID

Ouch!

SOPHIA

No escort man. No escort boy.

HANK

[WHISPERS TO DAVID]

Touché.

SOPHIA

What is whisper?

HANK

Just telling my..handy man-boy..here to finish up.

[TOO LOUD]

Finish up, you lazy sonofabith.

SOPHIA

Just need some time. And some space. Without the watching.

DAVID

I'm not watching, honest. Just doing my thing here, my native handy work.

SOPHIA

And you?

HANK

I'm watching every move. Like a hawk.

DAVID

[AT DOOR]

Is that yours out there? The black beauty?

SOPHIA

My car. Yes.

DAVID

Has that been you on the highway, going back and forth?

SOPHIA

So, you do watch.

DAVID

Hard to miss.

SOPHIA

I explore. Get to know the place.

HANK

Funny, I like to explore, too.

SOPHIA

Yes, your type I know.

DAVID

Oh, you don't know his type!

SOPHIA

No? You, my explorer, Mister Jingle Jangle , you own this, yes?

HANK

Yes, I own this. I own the old post office. I own the street. I guess I own the whole town! Ain't no one else left.

SOPHIA

The whole town, yes? You impress me with "own whole town."

HANK

I got a lot to impress you with.

SOPHIA

There is such excitement here for impressive man like you? Man who likes to explore!

[SHE PICKS UP A WASHBOARD.]

This scrub board, now this is not collect. Just old. Someone throws this away? In Chisinau, we use this for clothes to clean. This and big metal how-you-say, eh...tub...for the old women. Not very modern there, in Chisinau. Not very up-to-date. No need to throw away scrub boards to make antiques. You know of Chisinau, cute summer handy boy?

DAVID

Capital of Moldava. Former republic in the USSR.

SOPHIA

Now, you I like. You I start to like very much. So, how you know this about Chisinau?

HANK

Dartmouth fills your head with all sorts of useful information.

SOPHIA

Dartmouth ivy leaguer Dartmouth? To me now you become very attractive.

DAVID

And you, as well, to me. Attractive, I mean. (*aside*) Shit.

SOPHIA

This place more fun than Better Business convention in Rushmore.

HANK

All right. now. Who wants some music? Let's see...let us just see now.

[HANK PUTS ON A RECORD, CLIMAX BLUES BAND,
"SHE'LL BE COMIN' ROUND THE MOUNTAIN."]

SOPHIA

Now this song brings me much sunshine. Very much truly.

HANK

Very American.

SOPHIA

Very Jazzy. Yes, I like this South Dakota.

HANK

Not like, like that city you come from.

SOPHIA

Came from. Came. Now I come here. Now I learn new language. Speak American. Work American. Make success. Money. That's what it is all about, yes? The American god. Buy shiny BMW. Buy clothes. You like?

HANK

Very much truly!

SOPHIA

[TO DAVID]

And you? You think I look too business? Perhaps I loosen up a little. Now is good time, no?

DAVID

Yes, now is... I mean-

SOPHIA

[REMOVING THE SUIT JACKET TO REVEAL A
SLEEVELESS, TOO TIGHT, FRILLY BLOUSE
UNDERNEATH]

Yes. Now. Now is good time. Now is time to be here. Now is the only time. Is this not what you say in America? Live now. Live moment.

HANK

A moment we know will not come back again.

SOPHIA

Yes, we live now! No more talk about old women and old ways. I look. I buy. But enough of this dishes and lanterns. Why so many lanterns? You, mister explorer capitalist, I think bigger than this.

HANK

Bigger is good. I've got bigger.

SOPHIA

Ya, ya. Close the zipper. Handy boy make blush!

DAVID

I wasn't-

SOPHIA

I not so much think about antiques today.

Show me your town.

DAVID

The town?

SOPHIA

Show me Four Winds, impressive owner man. Everything. We walk around.

What? Idea so crazy? We talk outside. We laugh. We learn. Now is a moment will not come back again. Maybe Sophia turns your whole life around.

HANK

Maybe it already has!

SOPHIA

Is good, yes? Show me what you has!

HANK

[WHISPERS TO DAVID]

Je-sus!

SOPHIA

We talk. We laugh. Who knows what happens?

HANK

[WHISPERS]

Holy Fuck-a-ledo!

David, you are in charge of the store...handy boy.

DAVID

“She’ll be bouncing with the owner when she comes...”

HANK

Jazzy!

SOPHIA

[TO DAVID]

And you, I’ll also be back for. Sophia have much to tell. To teach. You need teaching, handy boy? (A little laugh.)

[TO HANK]

Now, come on, you crazy, crazy man. Show me what you got.

HANK

YEE-HA!

[HANK AND SOPHIA EXIT, BUT THEN HANK COMES
BACK TO THE SCREEN DOOR.]

HANK

Well, fuck me!

[HANK EXITS.]

DAVID

[TO AUDIENCE]

Cast your fate...Ha. So, who would've thought it would come to this?
There I was, in Four Winds, South Dakota. And I was in charge.

In charge of what? I watched them as they walked away.

[LIGHTS BEGIN TO GLOW ON DAVID AND FADE ON THE
REST OF THE STAGE.]

She seemed to ask questions. She put her arm around his waist, and then let it slowly slip into his back pocket. He had one arm over her shoulder, investigating who knows what. With his other arm, he pointed at one broken window and then another. They laughed. The heat and their footsteps lifted the dust, swirled it around them. Engulfed them in white haze and dust, until they could hardly be seen. And still the air grew brighter and brighter. And I had that cold, blue feeling that comes over me. Me...alone. Me...apart, looking at life through a window.

The heat is playing tricks. I am having trouble again with my eyes. Too much beer too early? Too much heat? Too much heat.

[HE IS ENGULFED IN A BLAZE OF WHITE LIGHT. SOUNDS
OF EAGLES.]

Holy, holy, holy. It's not always clear what brings the sacred to us. A breeze? A heat? A silence? A readiness? Yes, readiness allows holiness.

[OFFSTAGE RATTLES. FLUTE.]

There was a time before the Europeans when we did not have horses. We had our eyes to observe and our ears and our feet and our brains. We were good marksmen, and we sent our best men to look for buffalo.

On this day, two warriors are standing on a hill, their keen eyes searching the distant horizon for something to eat. Hungry and waiting. Then, look, there, off in the distance, a dot, a speck, a ball of dust coming closer, coming toward them. A lucky day, they think. A good day it is. Good! Something is about to happen. It is an animal that approaches. A white animal. A white buffalo calf. White? How could it be? The sun is playing tricks. Like today.

But, look again, it is now not a buffalo at all, but a beautiful young girl. “Yes, it is a lucky day,” one of the warriors thinks, “for now approaches a beautiful woman, all alone, and I am a man with hungers that must be satisfied.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN appears from upstage.]

Just then, a cloud of black dust raises up, and it surrounds him, choking him. And when the cloud is gone, his blood is gone and his hungry flesh is gone, and all that remains is a pile of his bones.

Now, seeing this, the second warrior is afraid, and he falls to his knees with prayer and trembling and fear before the white buffalo woman.

“Behold,” says the woman.

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

Behold. Behold what you have seen. Return now to your people, and let them know that in four days I will reappear, bringing with me a sacred bundle.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN exits.]

DAVID

And the lone warrior rises to his feet, and trembling and tripping with excitement and fear, he runs as fast as he can, a dazed and crazy man, running, as I am running, back to the safety of his people.

The people listen to his word, and he is believed. Ah, such faith they have! A great tipi is built, so that all the people can gather to await the return of the White Buffalo Woman. The days pass., The air is so still under the white sun. The people are quiet in their belief. The dogs stand still, and the babies stop their nursing, but they do not cry. And the people wait. Lakota patience.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN APPEARS, DANCING AROUND DAVID.]

DAVID

Then, suddenly, a cloud comes down from the sky, bringing the beautiful woman. She, walks around the giant tipi in the direction of the sun, singing a sacred song. And then, in the circle of all the people, women and men, the beautiful woman delicately removes the outer cloth from the sacred bundle. Inside...a pipe.

She speaks.

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

With this pipe, you will walk in harmony on the earth, the earth that is your mother and your grandmother. Remember that this earth is sacred. Every step you take on her is sacred. The red stone bowl of the pipe is of the earth. It is sacred. When you smoke from this pipe, you are joining with all of your Mother Earth. Guard this pipe, for it is sacred. And respect the earth, for then your people will multiply, and your lives will be good.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN TURNS TO GO, THEN TO
DAVID:]

The pipe will help you to the end of your days. Guard it well.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN EXITS.]

DAVID

The beautiful woman walks out of the circle of the people, tall, dignified, silent. She walks. When the people look again, they see a white buffalo calf disappearing into the horizon. A ball of dust that disappears. And then silence.

[PAUSE]

This is the sacred story I have learned of my Lakota people. When I first heard this story, I did not believe it. Just like I did not believe that a cracker could be God's body or that a bush could talk. But now, now that I need to believe in something, it is my truth. Now I am ready for this truth, this holiness.

Now. Now at the end of my days. Why? Why me now, so soon?

This is what I was thinking as I watched the ball of dust that once again was Hank or Michael or whoever he is, and her, the woman from Chisinau.

ELLIOT

[AT SCREEN DOOR]

Is there any water here?

[LIGHTS UP. ELLIOT IS STANDING BEYOND THE SCREEN DOOR, 80S, DRESSED IN RED SHORTS, A GREEN FLOWERED SHORT SLEEVE SHIRT, HIGH WHITE SOX, SANDALS.]

DAVID

[TO AUDIENCE]

The wisdom of the elders.

[TO ELLIOT]

Hey! Hanka hey!

ELLIOT

Water?

DAVID

Hello. Welcome, welcome to The Four Winds. Antiques. Come on in. Look around. Enjoy.

ELLIOT

[VAGUELY POINTING OUTSIDE]

But, they...

[ELLIOT ENTERS THE ROOM, CONFUSED]

The van is...someplace...down that red road. They won't see me, and I need water. If I come inside...

DAVID

Sure, we have water. We'll fix you up. Come on in. I'm just the assistant here.

ELLIOT

Thank you. Thank you, so much, my son.

DAVID

David Taylor.

ELLIOT

Yes.

DAVID

A pleasure.

ELLIOT

I should have been a little quicker, but I just couldn't squeeze any faster.

DAVID

Shoulda woulda coulda. So, I'm going to get you some water, and the van will come along.

ELLIOT

Thank you. Thank you, Daniel.

DAVID

Okay...what's in a name?

[DAVID EXITS TO THE INSIDE ROOM]

ELLIOT

Thank you so much. Are you sure they'll see me here? How will they see me here?

DAVID

[FROM INSIDE]

Or beer. We've got beer.

ELLIOT

No, I'm afraid beer will only make it worse.

DAVID

Or peanut butter. Old, hard peanut butter.

ELLIOT

Quite a place!

DAVID

[RETURNING WITH A GLASS OF WATER]

Must've been a church before-

ELLIOT

South Dakota. Quite a place here in South Dakota. It's so...so grand. And I think I've walked most of it today!

DAVID

Grand? My friend...and I were just commenting on how grand it was, how brown and grand!

ELLIOT

Brown?

DAVID

No? You don't see it?

ELLIOT

Well, sure there is some brown.

DAVID

Some?

ELLIOT

You're not looking deep enough.

DAVID

I guess not.

ELLIOT

You have to look into the depths of the sea.

DAVID

The sea? Oy! I'll be right back with more water.

[DAVID EXITS AGAIN "INSIDE"]

ELLIOT

Giant sea creatures. They've left their mark everywhere.

DAVID

[RETURNING]

Man, what have you been smoking'?

ELLIOT

Of course, here in the western part of the State, the big news can be found in the Black Hills. Lifted up more than 15,000 feet above the sea and then slowly, slowly eroded down. There's a lot of history here. Why, the slate in these parts is over two billion years old.

DAVID

You're a geologist!

ELLIOT

It's just a hobby with me now, now that I'm one of the ancients. "Emeriti" they call us. And they only call us when they're looking for money. But in the old days, the students would fill the lecture halls. Imagine, standing room only for a talk on the Pleistocene.

DAVID

We have a professor in our midst. Professor—?

ELLIOT

To whom are you speaking? We? We?

DAVID

To...the owner of this place... who is not here. Didn't you see him?

ELLIOT

See him? Who?

DAVID

Out there! Out...someplace. HANK! MICHAEL! You've got a customer.

ELLIOT

Actually, it wasn't a car. I remember now. It was more like a van. Like a car or a bus, but a van.

DAVID

You've lost your van? You've lost your van? Here?

ELLIOT

No, it's not here. If it was here, it wouldn't be lost.

DAVID

Here. In South Dakota. Four Winds, South Dakota.

ELLIOT

South Dakota? Funny thing about South Dakota. It was covered by a giant inland sea.

DAVID

MICHAEL!! NOW!

ELLIOT

And minerals ever so slowly sinking to the bottom for millions of years. And underneath the sedimentary layer, we find granite...and the beautiful pink quartzite they named after the Sioux Indians, named, of course, by the.....by the.....Nice. Nice junk shop you have here. Nice shop.

DAVID

Actually, it's not mine-

ELLIOT

Nice shop you have. Brings back lots of memories. Seeing these shovels and these trowels reminds me of when I'd come out with my students for our field trips and we would...such young students...so full of...Yes, standing room only.

DAVID

Now, what about that van?

ELLIOT

Standing room only.

DAVID

We seem to be going round and round.

ELLIOT

The Hindus think so.

DAVID

How about the two of us figure out what's happening with your van.

ELLIOT

My van?

DAVID

Your van. Out there someplace. Did they send you for water? Does it need water?

ELLIOT

Do they do that now? Run on water?

DAVID

You say your van is stuck somewhere? Needs water?

ELLIOT

Stuck? No, no, I'm not stuck. I'm free now, free to travel, free to think. I have so much freedom, I could die from such freedom. This is what happens when you're an elder.

DAVID

But you left your van somewhere...

ELLIOT

No, no, I didn't leave the van. The van left me! That's why I've been walking, Daniel.

DAVID

MICHAEL!

ELLIOT

Do you know what they use the quartzite for now? I bet you don't know.

DAVID

Toothpaste.

ELLIOT

Any guesses from the class?

DAVID

I give up.

ELLIOT

Toothpaste! Imagine, this rock that is a billion years old gets ground up so fine, gets swished around and then spit down the old drain. A billion years of nature's work right down the drain. When you get old, they just spit you out.

DAVID

May I call you "Professor."

ELLIOT

Elliot.

DAVID

Professor, is Elliot your first name or your last?

ELLIOT

Honestly, at this stage of the game, what difference does it make? The important thing is that you make a difference while you can.

DAVID

Yes, that's just what I'm trying to do.

ELLIOT

That's what I used to tell them. Stand up for something. Make a difference with your life. It doesn't have to be in geology or archeology or any of those "ologies" for that matter. Just make a difference somewhere.

DAVID

What if there's not much time?

ELLIOT

Why, we have our whole lives ahead of us.

DAVID

Months. A year if I'm lucky.

ELLIOT

We're lucky just to be here.

[SINGS]

“And the seasons they go round and round

And the painted ponies go up and down.

We're captive on...we're captive on...”

DAVID

Professor, why don't you have a seat while we figure out what's what.

ELLIOT

[WHISPERS]

And gold.

DAVID

Yes?

ELLIOT

There is gold in the Black Hills. It's why the government broke those Indian treaties. They wanted the gold.

DAVID

Those hills are sacred to my people. Sacred for thousands of years.

ELLIOT

Lakota?

DAVID

Yes. Now we're talking.

ELLIOT

Bullshit.

DAVID

Excuse me.

ELLIOT

They've fed you a lot of bullshit if you'll pardon my French. The Lakota weren't even here in South Dakota a thousand years ago. Not even five hundred. Know your history, young man. The colonials pushed them out

of the Carolinas, and then the Iroquois pushed them out of Minnesota. Follow the detritus of the people, young man, the stones and the arrowheads. Geology doesn't lie. Remember that, class, the stones do not lie.

DAVID

Hanka wanka!

ELLIOT

Why, there weren't even any horses here until the Spanish brought them over. Imagine, trying to herd those buffalo, and there weren't even any horses.

DAVID

Buffalos are sacred, sir. They are sacred to my people.

ELLIOT

They became sacred, yes?

DAVID

Yes, White Buffalo Woman came as a vision, and she showed us The Way.

ELLIOT

Yes, yes. A story like so many other stories. But the truth behind those stories lies buried in the stones. The buffalo became sacred only when it provided the means to live. Meat and bones and skin. There's no mystery in survival. Making it through another winter. Now, that is the truth found in the fire rings that are scattered throughout these parts. Stones do not lie.

These dishes, these lamps, these photographs. We think each one tells a story, but the story is not in the picture; it is in our head. We give it the meaning. We give ourselves meaning. We give God meaning. Our brains do the work!

[ELLIOT STARTS TO TOUCH HIS FINGER TO DAVID'S HEAD, THEN SUDDENLY PULLS IT AWAY, STARTLED.]

DAVID

What? What happened?

ELLIOT

[LOOKING AT HIS FINGERS, CONFUSED.]

There are recent studies, published in the New England Journal-

DAVID

Man, you are cold.

ELLIOT

Just scientific. What is is. Everything else is not.

DAVID

But people are talking to me about faith. "Have faith," they say. "It'll work out."

ELLIOT

They're talking now? I don't hear-

DAVID

God! People...in general...other people...have mentioned God.

ELLIOT

Surely, if there is a God, he (or she) is a mathematician. We find common formulas that work for everything from genetics to the movements of the universe. God is just a product of calculus.

DAVID

It was better the old way, when we just believed. It was better when we weren't so smart, with arithmetic. It was better when we didn't think we could find all the answers. We may have died young, but at least we didn't die crazy. My people had The Lakota Way.

ELLIOT

Your people had smallpox.

DAVID

They had faith and hope.

ELLIOT

And in the name of hope, a people died. How many marched to their deaths?

DAVID

No, they lived. They still live. I live. I AM LAKOTA. I must believe.

ELLIOT

No, no,...you're just a student, you don't have to hope. You have your whole life. You're just playing with me, making fun of an old man. Your wife dies. Your friends die. Your pecker dies. And then you end up in a white room with oxygen and mashed potatoes. Now, that's no hope! Captured on the carousel...of time! Time!

DAVID

Have your water. You'll feel better. Take a drink.

ELLIOT

[SUDDENLY AGIATED]

I don't need water. I need a way out. I need Molly. Where is Molly?
Molly?

DAVID

Professor, there is no one here named Molly.

ELLIOT

No. No, that's right. I remember now.

DAVID

You came for water. For your van. Poor old Molly is out there
somewhere!

ELLIOT

I should have checked. I left her behind. For so long, there didn't seem to be a problem. She seemed to be doing so well. I never suspected, and the health worker said... But when I came home, and looked in on her, she was just there, not moving, not breathing-

DAVID

Your wife!

ELLIOT

I should have checked on Molly. I should have done something.

DAVID

Maybe there was nothing to be done.

ELLIOT

Why then? Why Molly? I don't understand. I'm such an old man...an emeriti...and still I don't understand.

DAVID

Professor. Professor Elliot, sir-?

ELLIOT

This is my first trip without her. Returning to familiar ground. And look what happens! I'm so lost. I look for her, but she's not-. If only I had checked one last time. If only I had looked. It doesn't make any sense. Nothing makes any sense.

DAVID

You don't have to understand.

ELLIOT

"Science, science, science," she used to say. "When are you going to settle down?" So, now I'm ready to settle down, and where is she?

[DAVID HOLDS ELLIOT'S ARM.]

She was so beautiful, lying there so still. I leaned over, and, with all my training, all my publications, my PhD, all that logic that filled my head. And the last word I said to her was, "Jesus."

[PAUSE]

Now, where did that come from? "Jesus!" As if I believed in Jesus! Except for that one second, when I was an apostle.

[PAUSE]

You know, they used to come to hear about my adventures.

DAVID

We don't believe in miracles until we need them.

ELLIOT

I don't understand anything anymore.

DAVID

Sometimes, maybe stories are better than science.

[FLUTE. DAVID RUBS HIS EYES.]

ELLIOT

And you? Have you lost your van?

DAVID

No, no. I'm finding just what I came for.

ELLIOT

The great inland sea?

DAVID

No, I'm trying to find some meaning for my life. My last great adventure.

ELLIOT

Last? How could that be? A young student like you. I bet you make your parents proud! You have a life ahead of you.

DAVID

Do I, wise man?

ELLIOT

No?

DAVID

No.

ELLIOT

Then?

DAVID

Glioblastoma. Multiforme. Cancer of the brain. The worst kind.

ELLIOT

Glio-- But you're here! Why aren't you in a hospital? Why aren't they taking care of you? Who could I call? I have connections, you know. People know me.

DAVID

They are taking care. I'm taking care of me. Doing what I need to do.

ELLIOT

Of the brain! Sounds terrible!

DAVID

No, it sounds worse than that. The cancerous tendrils wrap themselves around.....The lesions start to.....I begged them for some time. I just needed some time, just to connect, just to connect with something, to someone. To mean something. To feel the spirit of my people, the faith I never knew, except in books and workshops, but never here, in my heart and in my....

[POINTS TO HIS HEAD]

ELLIOT

Trust science, my boy. They do such things these days. Such...things! Why, look at me. A little pill in the morning, and I'm...I'm—

DAVID

Lost.

ELLIOT

Yes. I'm lost. I don't know where I am. But I know that I am, so that makes me better than some, doesn't it?

DAVID

It may be harder knowing.

ELLIOT

Yes, we think we know what is what. But then the ice sheet advances, or the glaciers recede, or the tectonic plates shift a little bit, and the world that we were so sure of disappears. One morning, we wake up and find ourselves in another country.

DAVID

South Dakota.

ELLIOT

How much time did they give you? For this “adventure?”

DAVID

Just a week or two. And then, if I give the word, then they cut into the skull, probe into the grey matter, insert the tubes and the isotopes. And who knows what kind of eggplant I’ll be afterward. And if I don’t give the word-

ELLIOT

You’ll be an emeritus.

DAVID

An emeritus. Lucky, lucky me.

ELLIOT

You know, once upon a time this whole land we call the Dakotas was covered in water.

DAVID

Yes. I could drown in it.

ELLIOT

And I’m right about the Lakota. In the grand scheme of things, they’re newcomers.

DAVID

But-

ELLIOT

And the stories you speak of. Yes, we need the stories, or else...or else we’d all be lost, wouldn’t we?

DAVID

Yes.

ELLIOT

You see, I was right all along-

DAVID

But that was my position!

ELLIOT

Now, now, young man. Surely, your Lakota Way tells you to show a little respect to your elders. There's evidence of the mythology in rock carvings found in the caves. If we use our micrometers--

DAVID

Yes. Yes. We can find a mathematical proof for every argument.

ELLIOT

You know I forget things.

DAVID

Don't we all.

ELLIOT

And it's a good thing.

DAVID

Is it?

ELLIOT

My word, if I remembered everything, I could hardly wake up in the morning. The regrets, the hurts, the disappointments. If we remembered all that, how could we face the day?

DAVID

Did you ever have a day that had a shape to it? Today is such a day. Today just seems to be a day when something is happening.

ELLIOT

I should be going back. Molly needs me.

DAVID

Molly is gone.

ELLIOT

No, Daniel, too soon we're the ones who are gone.

[SOUNDS OF RATTLE. LIGHTS ON DAVID.]

DAVID

[TO AUDIENCE]

And so, the music shifts, and the blaze of daylight mellows into the soft dreamy lights of afternoon. A moment passes. Our grandfathers say “Have courage. We are standing on your shoulder.” And our grandmothers smile at us and sing a song of the generations:

[SINGS]

Inila istimana. Inila istimana. Be still. Sleep.

The Lakota Way made me an outsider. My face, my skin. Everywhere I went had a policy of tolerance. And I was tolerated. An outsider, looking through the screen door.

They say, “Have courage.” I don’t want to have courage. I want to mean something. My being here, on earth. On the tectonic plates. I want to mean something. To make a difference.

ELLIOT

Hang onto your stones, boy. Hang onto your stones.

HANK

[APPEARING AT THE DOOR WITH SOPHIA]

Ain’t that the truth?

[TO ELLIOT]

Seize the day, as it were. Seize the whatever.

DAVID

I’d like you to meet Elliot, Professor Elliot. Professor, this is...er, the owner, and—

SOPHIA

Sophia.

DAVID

And Sophia.

SOPHIA

[LEANING TO SHAKE HIS HAND]

A pleasure.

DAVID

A word on Elliot. He’s a little, how do you say, lost.

HANK

Well, aren't we all?

SOPHIA

Amen.

DAVID

He lost his van. In the middle of a piddle.

HANK

Lost?

ELLIOT

I can hear you, class. There will be no cheating on my exams.

HANK

Did he walk? Has he been walking in this heat? Get him some water!

SOPHIA

Where you come from, mister Professor Elliot? Where you from, may I ask you?

ELLIOT

I hope you won't mind if I tell you you've got a nice set of knockers.

HANK

Well, he's not dead yet!

DAVID

Jesus!

ELLIOT

That's what I said to her.

SOPHIA

What you do here, old boy? I have business to do. Don't mess up.

ELLIOT

Oh, don't let me get in the way.

[HE SITS CENTER STAGE]

HANK

Hey, ol' pal, ol' palomino, you're not in the way-

DAVID

Why don't I just take him-

ELLIOT

See, I'm not lost I have my tag. Golden Moments Tours. Well, isn't it now?

SOPHIA

[TO HANK]

We need to talk.

HANK

[BLOWS A KISS]

Yes, my curious friend. She wanted to see every nook and cranny.

DAVID

What should we do?

HANK

We could call if we had a phone.

SOPHIA

What you boys whisper about? Come now, let Sophia in on joke.

HANK

I was just explaining to my good friend...and business partner...David here about the severe lack of telephone lines.

SOPHIA

[REVEALING HER CELL PHONE]

Here. Use this.

DAVID

[CELL PHONE]

Or this.

HANK

High noon at twenty paces. Shit, we don't have a cell tower. We pump our own water here. Generate our own electric. If you wanna talk to somebody, you go up to'em and talk.

ELLIOT

As I was saying-

SOPHIA

[To ELLIOT]

Sha! Now, sha! You throw me off game!

DAVID

What game?

ELLIOT

I walked off the van to take a...to do my natural business. A couple of us did, you know, right in the bushes, but when the bus pulled away, one of us wasn't on it.

SOPHIA

Now, let Sophia guess which one!

ELLIOT

If Molly was here-

SOPHIA

Molly?

DAVID

His wife.

SOPHIA

Is Molly on ride.

DAVID

She is a silent partner.

SOPHIA

What she do on van?

ELLIOT

No little dribbles here, you know. Molly always said I had a good long stream.

HANK

Now, now!

DAVID

Too much info, Elliot. T.M.I.

ELLIOT

Class!

HANK

[TO SOPHIA]

What business? You said you had business-

DAVID

My head is spinning.

ELLIOT

What business?

SOPHIA

Not your business! Not your business! You, Mr. Jingle Jingle, I come with something for you. And idea.

HANK

You are my sunshine, darling.

SOPHIA

I come with serious idea, from company.

ELLIOT

Yes? Golden Moments? They called?

HANK

Company?

SOPHIA

We interested in this piece of South Dakota. Location is perfect. And location is everything.

I look around. I scout.

I can imagine it all.

HANK

Imagine what?

SOPHIA

Four Winds.

HANK

What was that?

SOPHIA

All of it. It will be perfect.

DAVID

Holy-

SOPHIA

I scout for big company. Fortune 200. They pay. American money.

HANK

For this?

SOPHIA

Yes, for this. For post office. For buildings. For land. For all around. I think it could be perfect.

HANK

What the fuck for?

SOPHIA

No need for rough language now. No matter for what?

HANK

Matters to me. Matters to my business partner, David.

SOPHIA

Matters so much you let buildings rot. I see inside of place you got. I smell it.

HANK

I thought you were looking in my eyes!

ELLIOT

Matters to me.

SOPHIA

Okay. So I tell you.

I scout for land. Land development, they call it.

We have idea to make park.

DAVID

Park. Like trees?

SOPHIA

Park, like rides and gift shop.

HANK

In Four Winds?

SOPHIA

[LAUGHS]

Silly boys! No, this is just piece. This is just tiny piece. No wonder you so confused. We think big. We could buy up land. Buy a farm here. Farm there.

ELLIOT

Here a farm, there-

DAVID

Helen Slaughter's farm?

SOPHIA

You know Helen? She will make pretty penny if this goes through, that woman. Tough!

DAVID

And-

SOPHIA

And Prefontaine, and Johansen, and Schroeder, and... Well, and everybody will make pretty penny

HANK

Everybody.

SOPHIA

Everybody got little something. And happy, too.

DAVID

Shit, I was a part of it! I was just a pawn! Scouting? Like the oh-so-friendly Europeans. "Oh, we're just scouting...with smallpox and ammo."

[TO HANK]

I swear I didn't know-

ELLIOT

I think I hear my tectonic plates moving-

HANK

And happy, too. Everybody gets a sweet little deal?

SOPHIA

Now I see your turn. If this goes through. First we do studies. Predict traffic. Test market. Then we make—are you ready?-- World of the West Cowboy and Indian Park. We tell history and have fun, too. Mountain rides and look for gold. And Indians come down from horses and trade blankets and do shows. Acres and acres for parking and restaurants and trinkets. What, you no believe?

I already see sketch.

HANK

How much?

DAVID

MICHAEL!!

HANK

How much? I mean for all of Four Winds.

SOPHIA

You fast shooter, you know. You ready to sell? I don 't know yet if we buy. I'm just scout.

HANK

How much?

SOPHIA

Fifty million? Ninety million? When investors see all this...

DAVID

Holy shit!

SOPHIA

What you say, fast shooter. Everyone else say they can sell like snap.

DAVID

[TO AUDIENCE, WITH A SUBTLE SHIFT OF LIGHT AND SOUND OF FLUTE.]

And so we met. Do people enter our lives just by chance? Elliot, Sophia, Henry-Hank-Cameron-Michael and me. A most unlikely quartet. I mean, let's hear it from all the mathematicians. What are the odds? But then, what are the odds of some of us wanting to wake up tomorrow?

[LIGHTS TO NORMAL, FLUTE CONTINUES, NOW WITH RATTLES AND DRUMS.]

SOPHIA

So, what you say? You like what I bring to you?

[THUNDER SOUNDS, FAR AWAY]

DAVID

Please. Don't make a joke of it. This is home to my people. For a thousand generations.

[ELLIOT COUGHS]

ELLIOT

This land has geological significance!

DAVID

My people's history! My history!

SOPHIA

And you, Mr. What's your name Jingle Jangle? I look on records at court house. Who is this secret name on papers, Luigi DiStefano?

DAVID

Luigi? You're kidding!

HANK

This land has guns. Bombs.

SOPHIA

Ha! You funny man, Jingle Jangle. I don't scare so easy. I grow up with bombs and guns. You want power? You get money. Lots of moolah coming down the highway. Luigi DiStefano. People say they sell like snap!

DAVID

You tried to kill us every other way. Why not just kill us with mockery!

HANK

Well, fuck me!

ELLIOT

Class.....dismissed.

[THUNDER. BLACKOUT]

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN APPEARS WITH FLUTE,
FOLLOWED BY LIGHT ON DAVID]

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

[SINGS]

*Cante matokecaca wanmayanka yo cante matokecaca heiyaye waye
wazyata tate hiyomali we.*

[SPEAKS]

My heart is different.
Behold me.
My heart is different.
I have shown it.
From the north, a wind
Comes to get me.

DAVID

[TO AUDIENCE, AS WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN EXITS]

My moment! World of the West Cowboy and Indian Park! So, don't look at me with such skepticism. I know what you're thinking, that I'm just making this up, this whole story, unable to make a decision, just stalling for time. That I did something crazy, and now I'm trying to talk myself out of it. I'm not crazy, Dr. Levin. I've listened to all the medical jargon you've thrown at me so fast I could hardly understand. And I'm a Dartmouth drop-out! Glioblastoma. GBM. Epidermal growth factor receptors. Protein inhibitors. Mutant genes and anaplastic astrocytoma. The cranial pressure and the headaches and the blurry vision. The most vicious cancer, the least responsive. And although I sat in total disbelief, I believed it. I believed the science. I mean, I heard what the oncologists said. It was real. But it was unreal. I mean, how can you hear it? How can you take it all in? Honestly, I appreciate the time the team allowed me to get away and think. But damn it, what are the odds of this tumor, the one they say strikes men over 50, striking me, and I'm only 20 years old? Of all the millions of cells inside by skull and of all the millions of viruses or whatever the hell it is, two of them happen to collide inside of my head, and whammo, you got this twisted mass of tumor. So, speaking of arithmetic, what are the odds of that?

And you don't think four people can meet in South Dakota?

And now you complicate the whole thing with news about clinical trials. I'm supposed to be some sort of guinea pig with catheters filled with diphtheria toxins inserted into my brain. And if this whole procedure doesn't work, I could be what? An emeritus? Talk about crazy! Yes, I

know you think your time is precious, but honestly, given my situation, I think my time is more precious. And all I'm asking from you is to let me finish my story. It could be what matters most!

[LIGHTS UP ON STAGE]

HANK

Well, fuck me!

DAVID

Hanka wanka hey!

ELLIOTT

Class.....dismissed.

DAVID

As I was saying before that ...intermission....Luigi?

SOPHIA

DiStefano.

DAVID

Where the hell did you get the name Luigi?

HANK

[TO SOPHIA]

How about it if you get in the nice BMW and take a quiet ride around the block. I need a little time to think.

SOPHIA

And your partner?

HANK

Yes, of course, and my partner. To think.

SOPHIA

Good thing he come today, this partner, or he miss Sophia.

DAVID

Yeah. Good thing about timing. What are the odds?

SOPHIA

Okay. I go. Then I come back. For you, handy boy. I have eyes on smart young man like you. Maybe you no want talk with Luigi. Maybe you come for ride?

DAVID

[STEPPING AWAY]

Oh, Great Spirit! Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people. Help me to remain calm and strong in the face of all that comes towards me. Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping others.

SOPHIA

Now you pray for pure thoughts?

DAVID

I pray that I don't take a knife and-

SOPHIA

Oh, no, no, no.

DAVID

Not you. Me! You have touched something deep in my blood, and I have to let it out.

SOPHIA

I no touch. Not yet.

HANK

Fifty million?

SOPHIA

It is choice of investors.

DAVID

[TO HANK]

Shit. You're not really thinking of-

SOPHIA

[TO DAVID]

What? You not like offer? Talk to Sophia. Sophia can make things sweeter for you? Yes?

DAVID

No, please. Don't make sweeter.

SOPHIA

You handsome boy. We go for ride after, okay? I show you how big this park will be. I show you...maybe more. Just don't tell my husband. Or my boyfriend.

DAVID

[ASIDE]

I'm just going to throw up now.

[TO SOPHIA]

No, it's not you!

HANK

Okay now, we've heard your offer, your "concept." And we have some thinking to do. Thank you very much, Miss Sophia. You just give us some time.

SOPHIA

The pleasure, Luigi DiStefano, has been mine, however brief. Ciao, boys.

ELLIOT

You like that Bimmer?

SOPHIA

Sure, old man, what's not to like? Shows success, no?

ELLIOT

It shows money. Not success.

SOPHIA

And the difference in your language is? I was lucky girl, Mr. Professor. I grow up with neighbor who gives away dry old bread. Mama cuts off the mold. Some no have bread even with mold. Some no have shoes. Now, I have car. Save to buy house, maybe in Vegas. Is so bad? I'm bad person for this?

DAVID

No, not for that.

SOPHIA

Then what? What is it? Tell me secret?

ELLIOT

There's blood in the soil. History!

DAVID

And if someone wanted to destroy your town? Your history?

SOPHIA

I be there with first match.

[LAUGHS]

Look at you cute boys so serious! This is difference of girls from boys. Someone make me such offer, I already be shopping! But you cute boys, you think about it. You think, and you think. For me, life is not so complicated, okay? I drive around town now, check out property. In BMW.

[HANK FLASHED PEACE SIGN THEN JUST MIDDLE FINGER. SOPHIA EXITS. NIGHT APPROACHES STARTING WITH A PINK-ORANGE SKY.]

DAVID

Hank..Cam...Luigi...I'm sorry. I didn't know I was part of it. Slaughter. The others. They're ready to sell out.

HANK

Nobody knows nothing. Forget it.

ELLIOT

Fifty million smackers!

DAVID

You're not thinking seriously-

HANK

I'm just thinking. Four Winds, South Dakota. A theme park!

[SOUND OF A CAR ENGINE STARTING, REVVING.]

DAVID

Right on the edge of my people. Maybe this is what drew me back. A premonition.

ELLIOT

There was gold in the Black Mountains. And the Lakota stood in the way.

DAVID

They stood in their hunting ground.

HANK

They got buried in their hunting ground.

DAVID

But maybe I can make it different.

HANK

You?

ELLIOT

Sometimes there is such a seismic shift—

DAVID

Who are you, old man? What are you doing here?

[HEADLIGHTS FLASH ACROSS THE STAGE.]

HANK

Look at her out there.

DAVID

Money, money, money, money. Is that what it's all about? If yes, I'm lost.

HANK

Fifty million big ones.

[HANK FINDS A LANTERN AND LIGHTS IT, HANGS IT ON
A NAIL.]

DAVID

Just across the way there are people living in rotten shacks and rusty old trailers and cinderblock huts. And do you know why? Because they know this land is sacred. They know that the blood of their fathers flows in the dried-up riverbeds. Our grandfathers are buried here. They know that White Buffalo Woman appeared to them here. This is the land. Lakota land.

ELLIOT

Across the road. Not here.

DAVID

You know the boundaries are artificial. The whites created a holding pen.

HANK

Fifty million big ones. Fifty million.

DAVID

Drew some lines on a map. A "concept" so they could claim the gold.

HANK

Gold? That's her religion! That bitch! Who does she think I am?

ELLIOT

She thinks you're Luigi DiStefano. But, y'know, I think you're someone else.

HANK

I used to have such purpose, such a sense of mission. But time eats away at you. And you forget what it was that you were all about. And then, you grow used to things. You start to like the doing nothing. You can't bear the thought of what you could have been, and all you want is a little refuge. You think you can stop running, David? You think you can stop hiding? The hiding from yourself is the hardest. You change everything, change your name. But what? They come after you with the most powerful weapon of all. Buckaroos. Wampum. Push you right into the corner with your old values, and BAM. Security, my friends, is just an illusion. Four Winds, this town, this store. It's just an illusion. There's no getting away. And you find yourself having the same old supper from a sardine can and staring at the stars.

DAVID

Where'd you get "Luigi" anyway?

HANK

What the hell would I do with only fifty million dollars? Buy a new suit?

I was there, right at the heart of it. And, man, we were strong. We were fifty people, maybe one hundred, but we had power. We had dynamite. We took over the admissions office, turned over cars, owned the streets.

[HANK TINGS HIS FINGER BELLS.]

And we were strong! We were a thousand people. We held our peace banners, sat in the hallways, demanded concessions.

[FINGER BELL]

Yes, we were strong. A million of us, standing on the highways, blocking the bridges, raising our fists, flowers in rifles, an army of believers, marching with guitars and African beads and poems and candles.

[FINGER BELL]

And then we were strong, tens of millions. Changing the WORLD. We had the power to change the world, turn the system upside down. Pushed along by the music, by Arlo and Joan and Pete and the Weavers, we could feel it, any moment now. We had such power. We had such dreams. Any moment now. Any moment.

That bitch! Shit, I was THERE.

DAVID

"Was. Was." I'm here now. What do I do now?

HANK

David, I had dreams. Running to Madison. Running to Berkeley. Running to Burlington. Changing like a crazy chameleon. Now all I have is this, this lonely shithole ghost of a town where they sent me to guard an arsenal, this shithole store halfway to nowhere. “Just wait for the sign,” they said Wait. A holding place, they called it. Holding for fifty years, and I can’t hold it any more. I wake up in the morning, and stand in that doorway watching the heat rise in the dust, and I wonder, “What the hell happened to my army?” We were so strong.

[HANK sits. HEADLIGHTS FLASH ACROSS THE STAGE.
CAR HORN HONKS. HONKS AGAIN.]

I’m still waiting for the sign.

ELLIOT

They sent you? Who’s the they?

DAVID

Maybe that’s why I’m here. Maybe I’m your army.

[HORN]

ELLIOT

I’ll be right out! I told you they would come for me. Thank you. Thank you, both so much.

[ELLIOT TURNS TO GO, THEN STOPS.]

Holy Jesus. I know who you are! You’re...what’s his name?

DAVID

We can protect this land. Give me some purpose.

ELLIOT

The one with the dynamite. Every campus security guard from here to Timbuktu was looking for you. Imagine.

HANK

Yes. Imagine.

ELLIOT

What the hell happened to you?

HANK

I’m what happened to me.

ELLIOT

You were a clever little ball-buster.

DAVID

We can do something here.

ELLIOT

So, did you really have dynamite? Or was that just part of the myth.

HANK

All the fixins' are right here. Just waiting for a sign from Jesus.

DAVID

Maybe you're waiting for the wrong God. Maybe you should pray to Wakan Tanka. The Lakota have lived on this land for thousands-

ELLIOT

Ah.....

DAVID

For generations. The trappers came and the hunters came and the railroads came and the armies came. The teachers came and the politicians came and the social workers and the agencies and the relocation specialists. And we're still here. We may be living in trailers, but we're here. We're alive. Our traditions are alive. And we are the army. We have the power. Let's use it. Do it for me. This is what I was meant to do.

HANK

They're going to drive me out. Somehow or other. They're going to build their goddamned park whether I'm here or not. They already got the land! There'll be bulldozers and cement trucks. There'll be the promise of jobs. That'll do it. And the people—your people—will turn against me for screwing them.

DAVID

The Lakota will see you as a god!

HANK

Fifty million for me. Jobs for them. That is the god that speaks. Just look at that buzzard driving around. BITCH!

ELLIOT

As I was saying to the faculty committee-

DAVID

I have to DO something. I may be among the dead soon enough.

[DAVID DOESN'T MOVE.]

ELLIOT

I was saying, "This man has a right to have his say. I may not agree with him, but this Paul Solomon has a right--"

DAVID

Paul Solomon? Solomon? That was you? Is? You were a legend! I read about you!

HANK

Wouldn't ya fuckin' know!
[FINGER BELL]

ELLIOT

"The Bomb Maker."

HANK

The one and only.

DAVID

So, you weren't just making up those stories? What the hell happened to you?

HANK

Didn't he just ask me that?

DAVID

I've seen pictures. News clips from way back. My god! Paul Solomon!

ELLIOT

"The Bomb Maker" right here in Lakota country.

HANK

The very one.
[HANK LIGHTS ANOTHER LANTERN.]

DAVID

Shit, look at you! You were a revolutionary.

ELLIOT

"Love between my brothers and my sisters....."

DAVID

And so the fire just dies? Where's the fire now? Where's the juice? The brazen militant feared by so many. "Damn the pigs! Screw the system!" What the hell are you doing here?

HANK

What are you doing here?

The revolution must be over. On to the next thing. The clock keeps ticking. Right, Elliot?

[HEADLIGHTS FLASH ACROSS THE STAGE.]

GOD, WILL YOU STOP IT WITH THE LIGHTS!

[TO DAVID]

I found what I was after.

DAVID

You're almost a ghost! Is that what happens? You grow old like him

[INDICATING ELLIOT]

and everything you believed in just slips away. Then what's the point?

ELLIOT

Who's growing old? I AM old.

HANK

Is there a point? Maybe there is no meaning. Just molecules colliding. Look around. Do you think the lizards are looking for meaning? The vultures? Maybe there's some peace in not understanding and just being.

DAVID

Then, why live?

HANK

Why not? That is the question.

DAVID

I'm willing to risk my life for this.

ELLIOT

What's left of it.

HANK

This. The land. The friends I've made, the people who look out for me. I have Lakota friends who bring me what I need. I have music. A good book. An occasional glass of wine. Am I missing something, Elliot? At this stage, is there more?

DAVID

Is there less? If that's all there is to wake up for maybe I should just let this...head thing... take its course.

HANK

Sometimes, there is the chance of meeting a stranger, a you, a David. Someone who lightens up the day. Someone you can talk about and remember for a while. Sometimes-

DAVID

NO! NO, DON'T TELL ME THIS. No, when you're alive you have to live, you have to feel now, not just in the past, not just who you were. You have to act now. Take action. You can't just stop taking action. Live and breathe and rant and rebel and fight and fuck and get drunk and get crazy with your friends and have babies and give some meaning, even if it's violent or hurting or shooting or..or making bombs.Even if it's...GOD, LOOK AT YOU! Am I going to be like you?

[TO ELLIOT]

And you?

HANK

David, you're young. Slow down. You've got time.

DAVID

No, I have no time. I'm...I'm-

ELLIOT

Glioblastoma. Multiforme. The head thing. A bad cancer if there ever was one

HANK

Cancer. Fuck!

ELLIOT

And so unusual in a boy so young.

HANK

He seems so...Oh, shit.

DAVID

[ALMOST A WHISPER:]

I need to fight. Fight for this. Fight for Four Winds. Fight now. Because if I don't...if I just let this moment blow over...there may not be another moment and then I have no reason to... grow older...no meaning....Show

me. We can do this. Show me there is some meaning. I pray to the ancestors, "Please. Show me." Or else, I might as well take that knife and-

ELLIOT

I used to tell my class-

DAVID

"Used to. Used to." Your history can drown you.

ELLIOT

Or it can make you grow.

DAVID

And you call this growing? Look at you. Henry, Michael, Luigi for Chrissakes. If you're not growing, you're dying.

[SOPHIA HAS APPEARED AT THE DOORWAY WITH A
LARGE CARDBOARD TUBE.]

SOPHIA

Hello, boys.

[NOTHING.]

I say, "Hello, boys." What? I come at bad time again? Still thinking?

ELLIOT

No, no. I was just leaving.

HANK

The angel is back.

SOPHIA

Yes, I come back like promise.

DAVID

Like bad penny.

SOPHIA

No, silly boy. Like silver dollar.

ELLIOT

The van never-

SOPHIA

And I bring concept plans for you.

DAVID

We were—I was just teaching the guys about the Lakota. Did you ever notice how so many of the Lakota buildings face east.

SOPHIA

Yes?

DAVID

Yes, east. So the doorway faces the rising of the sun. We were just facing east. All of us.

SOPHIA

But it is nighttime now.

DAVID

Facing the dawn. If you look hard enough, it's dawn somewhere.

SOPHIA

Poland, maybe.

DAVID

[SINGS]

Wi hinape wanlaka nunwe lo.
Wi hinape wanlaka nunwe lo.
Sunrise, you may behold!

SOPHIA

Ay-ay-ay! Such singing all the time. You funny boy, happy-sad, happy-sad.

DAVID

But when it comes here, here in Four Winds, every dawn is a new day, a new opportunity. Right, Elliot?

ELLIOT

Opportunity, yes.

DAVID

Right, Paul?

SOPHIA

Paul? Who this Paul?

DAVID

I mean Henr--Luigi. Yes. Luigi.

HANK

Si, grazie. We face the east. We face Naples.

SOPHIA

Who is this Paul?

DAVID

And we say.....Now, come now...NOW...everyone face east, *wi yo hin yan pata*, and we pretend it is morning, and we feel the warmth of the sun shining on us, reminding us, yes, Luigi, that we have another chance to be the people we were meant to be. And we say-

HANK

“Scusa mi, can’t you see, back in ol’ Napoli—“

SOPHIA

What is this Napoli?

DAVID

[CHANTS]

Anpetu mitawa kon letu nunwe

[SINGS]

I don’t remember the rest but the first part says, “May this be the day which I considered mine,”

[SPEAKS]

and so on and so on...Washtay! It is good. Washtay.

SOPHIA

Very nice. Very sweet.

DAVID

Lakota scout song.

SOPHIA

You scout, too? What you scout for?

DAVID

Vultures.

SOPHIA

I may have wrong, but vultures come, no, when body is dead?

DAVID

You’re quick.

SOPHIA

So, where is body? You boys play riddles with me, not make happy. But my surprise make everyone happy.

DAVID

Do they know, on the reservation?

SOPHIA

No use making ready soil if we not have seeds to plant. No?

ELLIOT

These people were nearly wiped out by poverty. Then, by success. The soldiers thought there was an endless supply of gold here.

SOPHIA

Still is gold. But a different gold from tourists bring! Plenty of gold for spread around, make jobs, build schools, build hotels, restaurants. Tourists come from all around for World of Wild West. Marketing department says two million visitors first year. Good studies from Mister Independent Consultant if you wish to see. You listen to me. We will get plenty gold for everyone!

DAVID

Plenty of broken treaties.

SOPHIA

See, I bring plans for you. Drawings! Sometimes, is hard to see idea in mind, so I bring sketches.

[SHE REMOVES DRAWINGS FROM THE TUBE.]

From artist. "Renderings." Wild West Village. Ride through gold mine. Genuine Ghost Town. That where Four Winds come in handy. The real thing! Trading Post Shops where we sell silver jewelry and baskets and how-you-say "Katchina" dolls.

DAVID

Yes, Katchina. Nice, old, authentic NAVAJO.

SOPHIA

Yes, authentic, of course.

DAVID

NAVAJO, damn it. From Arizona!

SOPHIA

Not South Dakota? I make note.

What? What is with you? I no see excited. I no understand you boys. I no understand this heavy thinking. Why heavy thinking? I come with idea of so much money, and you not even smile, you not laugh. These drawings just temporary. Changes easy. Easy! Just erase and change.

[SHE REMOVES A BOTTLE FROM HER POCKETBOOK.]

Come, we celebrate. Nice champagne.

DAVID

And they came with their liquor. And they came with their arms.

SOPHIA

I come with kisses for lonely college boy.

[SHE MOVES TOO CLOSE TO DAVID.]

I come with gold for handsome-

What? I see before I talk to wrong person. When did college boy become negotiator? What about you, Mr. Four Winds Antiques store owner. Why so quiet today? I come in morning and hear singing. La la la. In morning you like Sophia. Why no singing? Why I hear nothing from you?

HANK

I've been listening.

SOPHIA

Now, this is good. Listening is good. You ready to see concept.

HANK

I've been listening to the wind. Can you hear it?

[PAUSE]

SOPHIA

I hear nothing. I hear opportunity pass you by. What, the money not enough? Fifty million not enough for such big lifestyle?

HANK

One thing about Dakota country, the wind is always blowing. Sometimes a warm whisper of a breeze and sometimes a screaming wind from the north. You get to know the wind here, get to feel it. But maybe just now, listening to David, I'm starting to understand it.

SOPHIA

I talk money, he talk wind!

ELLIOT

Sometimes, in the wind, I hear Molly.

SOPHIA

What is with this Molly?

ELLIOT

“The answer my friend...”

HANK

There’s a Lakota proverb, right David? “A people without a history is like a wind over buffalo grass.” Today I hear that wind, that lonely buffalo grass wind, and I can hear weeping.

SOPHIA

There no weeping. I come with laughing. No? No?

Alright, alright. This I should not tell you, but assistant in county office already give okay. They start traffic study. Water study. Electric study. Construction study. I have papers here, shows Four Winds right in the middle of the action. We move with you or without, but if we build around you, this Four Winds worth nothing.

ELLIOT

Jesus. So much happened here! The inland sea!

DAVID

Listen to Wakan Tanka, Paul. The Great Spirit is talking to you. Remember your history.

SOPHIA

A dead old town on the road between nowhere and nowhere. Now is chance won’t come again.

ELLIOT

It’s sacred space. Has been sacred for thousands of years, isn’t that what I was telling you, David. Sacred since the time of the White Buffalo Woman.

SOPHIA

I’ll tell you what, Mr. Professor, the sacred I know is in the bank.

DAVID

What do you think about all this paper? And the buffalo horns?

SOPHIA

Very nice. You want, you take. Anything you want, you take.

DAVID

I was thinking about it hanging up there. Wondering if a person could be hanging there. From the beam.

SOPHIA

A person. Don't talk scary talk. No person hanging from beams.

DAVID

I was thinking, what if we make something happened here. Really give my little life some meaning.

ELLIOT

In the old days, you would've-

SOPHIA

What is this, "something."? Wind and beams! Horns! The future is happening here. Now. World of the West. It happens with you or around you. Either way it happens. We build around you, cut you off from roads. Cut you off from tourists. Cut you off from everything. So, you might as well show some love of concept and enjoy. Yes? You take! I try to help you.

Fifty million. Maybe more. Plenty girls get in your pants with fifty million.

HANK

Yes, and let's just screw everything else, is that it? The people on the rez, my friends here, the blood in the soil.

SOPHIA

I tell you secret. Blood is in your pecker. That's what matters. Not soil. Soil won't know.

HANK

But I'll know.

SOPHIA

You think too much. Life is too short.

ELLIOT

Class! Class, there was a time, more than a million years ago, when all of this land we now call South Dakota was covered by the glaciers of the last Ice Age. And then it began to melt, melting for many, many years, and depositing massive ridges of sediments, mounds and layers of rock that had been scraped up by the weight of glacier, layers as deep as 900 feet. And the waters continued to melt, and the glacier receded to the north, leaving an enormous basin that filled with water, a massive salt water tub,

the Great Inland Sea, a sea that stretched all the way from the Arctic to the Caribbean. And in that sea, there was life. A saltwater sea, teeming with life. Ichthyosaurs, with their short paddles, swam in this great inland sea. And giant sea turtles. And the toxochelyids and the Archelon. And in this great sea, there were the elasmosaurids, nearly forty feet long with their long necks and pointed teeth. The xiphactinus audax swam here, thousands of them, and other fish. And microscopic plants by the millions. All in the great inland sea.

SOPHIA

Who is this guy?

ELLIOT

SILENCE! I will not be dismissed by someone as insolent as you. Just who do you think you are? You will sit down, and you will listen.

Now. It was a sea full of life, pulsing with tides and currents, stretching for thousands of miles. A sea of great force. A sea that was changing the landscape. A sea of power. And from all of that, all that water, all the reptiles, all the plants, all the fish, all the currents and all the tides, all that we have left from all of that life are fossils, from the bones that were pressed between the layers of sediment. The outline of bones is all that remains from that powerful sea of life.

SOPHIA

Clock is ticking.

ELLIOT

I was a great professor in my day. My classes were filled, standing room only. My research papers were eagerly awaited by the leading scientific journals.

So, I always wondered, and, if you had brains, you would be wondering, too. As the seas began to dry, as the sediments began to fall, did they just stand still, waiting to die? The fish couldn't do much, but the turtles. Why didn't the turtles leave? Why didn't they do something?

Don't become like me, young man. Don't get lost in the sediment. You want meaning? Then, don't become a fossil. Change the world. Change the world.

SOPHIA

[TO HANK]

And this old man to you is what? Fifty million, maybe more, buys so many ways to kill your conscience. Electronic whatsis and medicated who knows what? Vacations, comforts. Plug in, tune out. This is the way, yes?

HANK

Yes, I hear that's how it is done. Screw your neighbor, and then we pray at Christmas.

DAVID

Not the Lakota Way.

HANK

Yes, I hear that's how it is done with the whores. Take your money and forget. I may be crazy. I may be over the hill. But I'm not a whore.

SOPHIA

You stupid man. And crazy man.
[SHE ROLLS UP DRAWINGS.]

HANK

A man of courage.

SOPHIA

Maybe once. Now, you man with no balls.
[TO DAVID]

And you, a healthy young stud with a life in front of you, you no want luxury? You no want it easy street? You, too, a stupid man of courage?

HANK

You want to talk courage, tell your marketing people to live through a winter here. That's courage. Learn to live with the goddamned wind. That's something! Feel the wind.

SOPHIA

Again he talks wind. Like a big fart!

HANK

Feel the wind every day, whistling, screaming: "Don't give up. Don't give up." You hear that wind?

ELLIOT

"...blowing in the wind...."

SOPHIA

You spit in wind, it falls on the face. So, I hear wind, too. It tells me I done here. What you tell me is go home with my money. So, I go.

HANK

Look at you. You're not a young woman. And such a sad face, such a hard and sad face that even money cannot fix. You don't smile young. Your hands are not young hands, rough and scratchy. All the Bimmers in the world couldn't turn that into happy young face.

[DAVID HAS GRABBED THE DRAWINGS.]

SOPHIA

My drawings!

HANK

You want my deal, you call me Mister, show a little respect for what I've done in my life.

SOPHIA

Mister DiStefano, tell your friend I want my drawings.

DAVID

Want? Want? There are people here who want. There are babies who want to know it is good to be Lakota. There are elders who want to preserve language. There are mothers who want to remember the old ways, and fathers who want to perform the rituals. This is their land. Their soil. They only want what money cannot buy. They want the land of their fathers and their fathers' fathers. And no fascist big-business, international cartel is coming in here to push them out for some big money exploitation. THIS LAND IS SACRED. THIS LAND IS SACRED. (*A chant now.*) SACRED LAND. SACRED LAND. SACRED LAND.

[DAVID SLOWLY RIPS THE DRAWINGS IN HALF.]

YOU WILL NOT BE THE DREAM KILLER. YOU WILL NOT DESTROY THIS SACRED PLACE. So, don't come in this sacred place with your whore's money. GET OUT. GET OUT. GET OUT OF FOUR WINDS.

SOPHIA

Nice anger. Everything very nice, very impressive. Your courage is impressive. Your singing, impressive. All of it, so, so impressive.

The politicians will come. The trucks will come. Trucks are impressive!

DAVID

WE ARE MEN HERE! CANT'T YOU SEE THAT WE ARE MEN!

SOPHIA

Goodbye, boys--.
[SOPHIA EXITS.]

HANK

Shit! What can I do?

DAVID

[GRABBING A LANTERN.]

SACRED LAND. Sacred land. Sacred land. We are just pilgrims here, all of us. And it takes courage to be a pilgrim. Courage to be searching for who you are. Just searching. Just passing through. Looking for the spirit. Looking for some spirit. Well, damn all of this. Damn this store. Damn these dishes and these records. This is a sacred place, and the spirit is alive. THE SPIRIT IS ALIVE. Can you feel it? Can you feel how the spirit has come in now? At last! It's in here now, men!

HANK

Yeah, right. We're getting back to the garden!

ELLIOT

What garden?

HANK

Woodstock, my friend.

DAVID

I have a plan! "Go forth and set the world on fire."

ELLIOT

What nonsense is this?

DAVID

I have a plan. But I couldn't say it in front of her. Climb the barricades. Light the lanterns. Send a signal from steeple to steeple.
[HE IS LIGHTING MORE LANTERNS.]

HANK

Come'on down now. Let's think about this.

DAVID

What? I have so little to lose. Why not be a martyr?

HANK

You're not a martyr; you're a criminal.

DAVID

Just burn it down, Paul. Burn it down.

HANK

I'm not Paul. I'm the Bomb Maker. I brought the bombs to Columbia. I carried the bombs to Wisconsin.

DAVID

Brought them, but didn't use them.

HANK

I was there!

DAVID

[PUSHING STUFF OUT OF HIS WAY]

There'll be no trucks here. Not this week or any week. Turn over the fucking trucks. I have a plan!

HANK

There's an arsenal. Below. In the bunker. That's why they sent me.

DAVID

Right. And the Messiah is coming to save us. Stop waiting.

HANK

David. There is an arsenal.

DAVID

You make me laugh! You and your revolution. "Make a human blockade. Stand in the roads." What happened to your revolution? You play old music and get drunk?

This, right now, is the dawning of Aquarius. The sun is rising in the east, and we got to make this space sacred. And we have to act now. ACT NOW. ACT NOW. ACT NOW.

HANK

You're just going to burn my place? My place?

DAVID

Don't you get it?

With me inside.

HANK

What the fuck are you talking about?

DAVID

[CLIMBING HIGHER]

To mean something. To give my years some meaning. Wakantaka and Jesus Christ, so help me now, the spirit is alive. (*Turning now*) Alive. Alive. Alive. (*Twirling now*) I AM A MAN AND I FEEL ALLLLLIIIIIIVVVVVVVVVE.

ELLIOT

Oh, God. I just wanted to take a leak!

HANK

PUT THE LANTERNS DOWN. PUT THE FUCKING LANTERN DOWN. FOR CHRISSAKES. There are bombs in the bunker.

DAVID

[TAUNTING HANK WITH THE LANTERN]

Talk, talk, talk. You and your stories! Now is our chance! Fan the flame and live. Live. Live.

HANK

Not this way! Jesus.

DAVID

If you're going to be chicken shit, get out. Get out and look for the van with Mister Professor.

HANK

JESUS!

DAVID

JUST FAN YOUR FLAME. JUST LIVE. (*He laughs*). Or are you just going to stay on the edge again. Live on the margins and talk about yesterday when you could do something now.

Choose life, Hank Choose life. This is your moment to show your stuff. Hanka hey! Hanka hey. I'll make this a sacred place. The elders will gather. It will be a site for pilgrims. There will be a museum sign with my picture. I won't be a burden with pee in my pants. I will mean something.

[TWIRLING WITH LANTERN]

Forever and ever, I will be alive!

HANK

[GRABBING ELLIOT]

Quick.

DAVID

Chicken shit. She's right about you. No balls.

ELLIOT

Christ, what fun!

DAVID

Go on. Remember back in the day. Millions of dinosaurs, and they left no footprint.

HANK

[TO ELLIOT]

Run, you old fool.

[ELLIOT EXITS, CONFUSED.]

ELLIOT

Molly, I'm coming.

HANK

DAMMIT! This was my life.

DAVID

I AM LEAVING A FOOTPRINT! Someone is going to remember me. *Washtay. Washtay.* It is good.

[LIGHTS SUDDENLY TO BLACK, EXCEPT A BRIGHT LIGHT ON DAVID AND A DIMMER LIGHT ON HANK. DAVID TURNS IN SLOW MOTION, THEN, FACING THE AUDIENCE:]

DAVID

The old papers caught fire in an instant. Then the photos and the wood. In just seconds there was a roaring blaze. And in minutes, everything was flame. Shelves crashed to the floor. Beams cracked and fell.

HANK

Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

[SPOT ON DAVID TURNS YELLOW]

DAVID

The Dakota wind caught hold of the flame, and one building lit the next. The wood was popping like machine guns. And the smoke lifted the embers and they rose like fireworks into the clearest of nights.

[DAVID LOWERS THE ANTLERS OVER HIS HEAD. LIGHTS TURN ORANGE, THEN RED.]

DAVID

As my ancestors said, “Today is a good day to die.”

HANK

GERONIMO!!!!!!!

[HANK RUNS OFFSTAGE.]

[BLACKOUT. SOUND: A HUGE EXPLOSION FOLLOWED BY SMALLER BLASTS AND A SHOWER OF LIGHTS RAINING ON THE STAGE.]

[LIGHTS UP SLOWLY TO REVEAL DAVID STILL STANDING WHERE HE WAS.]

DAVID

Wait. How am I still talking. That’s what you’re asking. Right? How is it possible? Like a martyr, I prayed for a miracle. But I got the wrong one. I wanted death, but I got hardly a scratch.

[HE CLIMBS DOWN TO GROUND LEVEL, AND, AS HE SPEAKS, WITH A PIECE OF CHALK, DAVID DRAWS TWO Xs ON THE GROUND.]

DAVID

The elders on the reservation saw explosion. And they came and stood at the edge of the burning town.

[DAVID DRAWS TWO Xs NEXT TO THE FIRST TWO.]

They told us that on the side of the road, a car, a BMW, they thought, had been run off the road by a minivan full of seniors. At Dartmouth, they called it poetic justice.

[DAVID DRAWS MORE Xs, SLOWLY CREATING A SEMI-CIRCLE OF MARKS.]

And those who didn’t see the light smelled the smoke and saw the ash fall to the ground like little black angel wings. Later, the women left their fry bread and came, and the daughters and sons put their beers and their lust aside.

[MORE Xs, NOW NEARLY A CIRCLE AROUND DAVID]

A line of watchers became a circle of the faithful, slowly inching back as the flames and the heat grew higher and hotter. Waiting. Silent. Silent.

The sound of the blast was heard miles away. More people came down the road. Cars and motorcycles joined the circle.

Soon, there were thousands, the Lakota. Waiting. Silent. Patient. Knowing.

And then, much later, when the flames died down and the police arrived, we watched the dawn in silence as the dogs sniffed for footprints and the searchlights scanned the roads.

We Lakota know patience. We waited in the earliest light of sunrise until the work was announced done. The police finished the paperwork. “So sad,” they said about me. “Attempted suicide.” An ambulance followed. Then cuffs and straps.

[SOUND: FLUTE]

They looked for bus tickets. They looked for hitchhikers. Paul? Where are you, Paul?

They found no sign of Paul Solomon. Once again, the chameleon had slipped away. How?

“How was it possible?” I asked. “I don’t understand.” Four Winds was a place where the inexplicable had happened to me.

There would be no theme park in that lonely brown place. There would be no rides. The people would chant, “Not even a scratch.” Even for those who no longer believed, the place had become a shrine. Beyond explanation. Beyond reason.

[LIGHTS BRIGHTER ON DAVID, COLD, BLUE-WHITE, FLUORESCENT, AS HE RETURNS TO HIS CORNER.]

[DAVID, TO AUDIENCE]

What, Dr. Levin? Don’t you believe in miracles?

What if instead of me, you were riding on the gurney? Would you believe then? Wouldn’t you want a way out? I wanted lightning to strike. I wanted a tree for fall on me. I wanted a speeding truck or a trailer. I wanted to

explode, parts and limbs floating off into the universe. Fingers flying. Eyes circling the moon.

I wanted to stop. I wanted out. I just wanted to stop. But, no. I got a miracle.

[A NARROW BEAM OF LIGHT ACROSS THE STAGE TO THE OTHER CHAIR, REVEALING A MASS OF WHITE FABRIC. SOUNDS OF FLUTE CONTINUE.]

I see her. White Buffalo Woman. She comes to caress my brown skin. I believe in her. And she believes in me. She brings her gifts for me. She walks with me on my journey.

[CHANTING:]

Tukte tuke esa munkin kta ca waun we. Hepin nan blihic'iya waun we.
Tukte tuke esa munkin kta ca waun we. Hepin nan blihic'iya waun we.
Tukte tuke esa munkin kta ca waun we. Hepin nan blihic'iya waun we.

[SPEAKS]

Soon, I am going to lie somewhere. But now I stand. I say this, and I stand...

[CRYING NOW]

with courage.

Yes, Paul Solomon, I am a man of courage.

[THE WHITE MASS RISES. IT IS WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN, SLOWLY UNFOLDING A HOSPITAL JOHNNIE TO CROSS THE STAGE TOWARD DAVID. WE SEE A LONG TRAIN OF WHITE FABRIC. AS THE FIGURE REACHES DAVID, SHE WRAPS HIM IN THE FABRIC AND IN HER ARMS.]

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

Washtay. It is good.

[WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN STANDS BEHIND DAVID, IMITATING HIS MOTIONS.]

DAVID

[ARMS OUTSTRETCHED]

Dr. Levin, you say that there is only a two percent chance of success. Experimental, you say. You say you will cut open my skull, and you will insert the tubes, and the chemicals will flow, and who knows what will follow.

Oh, Wakantanka, I turn to you, Great Spirit. *Oun she la yo*, have compassion on me. You have given me the intellect to understand all the facts about the White Man's medicine. But somehow, it all comes down to this. This life isn't neat with everything in tidy little columns. Sometimes, we must put aside our science and our numbers. We must put aside our college courses, our logic and our rational explanations.

Wakantanka tells me to tell you this: I will have another miracle. That is His concept.

And all I have to do is... believe.

[LAUGHS]

Luigi DiStefano!!

[DAVID CARESSING THE CLOTH. THEN, SUDDENLY:]

Dr. Levin, I stand in the light. I am ready now for the procedure.

[SOUND: A HOSPITAL MONITOR. BEEP. BEEP. LIGHTS BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER]

DAVID AND WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

Let us pray.

[BUFFALO WOMAN PLACES AN ANESTHESIA MASK OVER DAVID'S FACE]

DAVID

Ten. Nine. Eight....Well, fuck me!

[RATTLE. FADE TO BLACK AND SILENCE.]

END