

# WILD HORSES

A play

by Allison Gregory

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CAST

A Woman, 45-60

SETTING

The location of this play is a room where people are gathered: a casual, communal place. It can be a coffee house, a bar, or a food court. It could be a community center or the very theatre we're in. It was once, a ways back, a Taste Freeze. Somehow we should know this; a visible trace of its earlier identity subtly catching our eye.

TIME

Tonight.

PLAYWRIGHT'S WORD TO THE WISE

Music is a life force in this play and it should be used aggressively to *drive the story forward*. The songs listed are indispensable. The music isn't incidental, it isn't transitional, it is *essential* and should be used avidly and generously.

“Against all this, Youth,  
Flaming like the wild roses,  
Flashing like a star out of the twilight  
Its fierce necessity, it’s sharp desire,  
Singing and singing.”

*Prairie Spring* by Willa Cather

“I have my freedom  
but I don’t have much time.”

The Rolling Stones ‘Wild Horses’

*The ambient buzz of conversation,  
communal eating and/or drinking, people  
gathered for a good time.*

*The WOMAN enters -- or is already  
there, watching, listening,  
remembering. She talks to us,  
continuing a story she's been telling  
herself. All the characters have names,  
but they are all voiced by the Woman.*

THE WOMAN

The worst part of The Belt was the waiting  
You had to go into their bedroom  
*your own parent's bedroom*  
which was awkward  
because it's a mysterious room that you really don't want  
to think too much about  
Get The Belt out of Dad's belt drawer  
Lay it on the bed  
Pull your pants down  
And "think about what you did".  
Only just then I couldn't get past thinking about  
how much it was going to hurt.  
What made it even worse  
I kept thinking about Garff Garrett on the waterbed with his  
pants around his ankles and his droopy checkered boxers and  
Zabby holding a knife  
But you don't know that part.

*The Woman has said too much. She makes  
move to leave, then, a decision to  
stay. She weighs her options.*

I would *never* tell my kids this. They think I'm at my book  
club.  
I'm not in a book club.

*She may need liquid reinforcements to  
screw up her courage and continue.*

That summer there was a contest on the radio and I was going  
to win it. Whoever could come up with the best name for the  
Horse With No Name would win, no lie, a *horse*.  
You had to send the name in on a postcard, one name per  
postcard. I stamped and pre-addressed ninety postcards.  
I was going to win that horse.

*She sings, defiantly, probably off-key,  
the lyrics to 'Horse with No Name'*

*"On the first part of the journey  
I was looking at all the life  
There were plants and birds and rocks and things  
There was sand and hills and rings"*

Nobody even knows what all that was supposed to mean  
But still we sang the song  
And every single day that summer I sent in a new name for the  
horse with no name

*"I been through the desert on a  
horse with no name  
It felt good to be out of the rain"*

It was our anthem if we'd known what an anthem was  
It's the thing we sang before doing it  
It being the thing we wouldn't be doing if the three of us  
weren't together.  
Zabby and Skinny Lynny and me  
Vying testing erupting  
Egging each other on to greatness  
To infamy  
To getting our asses kicked.  
Like sneaking into Zabby's parent's pub  
*They actually had a pub inside their house*  
Making drinks out of whatever's open  
Didn't matter  
Jack Daniels, Strawberry Hill, Peppermint Schnapps, Gin  
Doesn't matter because we're thirteen  
we hate the taste of all that shit  
But we're thirteen  
Yeah!

*Music: 'Living in the Past'  
Jethro Tull*

So we pour it all together  
The brown and the red and the clear stuff that makes my nose  
sting and my eyes water -- plus some orange juice for body  
We pour it all into an empty tennis ball can  
And we drink  
Holding our noses  
it's awful, godawful  
But taste is not the point  
Taste is the *last* thing we care about.

I was a good girl  
An outstanding student  
the perfect child of miserable parents  
Corruption fodder  
What class do you have right now Zabby says

THE GIRL: Um French.

ZABBY: You're going to be late to your French class.

I'm never late, I say.

ZABBY: Today you're going to be late.

Everybody knew her  
Abbey Zilker-- Zabby. She was newly notorious  
A fist fight with Tonya Yonkers on the bus had gotten her  
suspended for three days.  
Even though she had a red bald patch where Tonya yanked a  
bunch of her dirty blonde hair out it was pretty much agreed  
that Zabby won.  
Tonya crying  
Nobody really concerned because she's a bossy cry baby.  
Now Zabby is back at school  
talking to me  
I'm terrified and sort of honored.

ZABBY: You better hurry. You're going to be late to French.

THE GIRL: Can you, um, would you please give me back my  
French book?

*The Woman makes the sound of the late  
bell.*

ZABBY: Uh oh. Was that the *bell*?

THE GIRL: Oh my god give me my book!

ZABBY: I guess you're late, huh? What are you going to do?

THE GIRL: You're late too, idiot!

ZABBY: So what?

THE GIRL: So we're going to get in trouble! If you get  
three tardies you get a detention and one more after that  
you get suspended and after three suspensions you get  
*expelled*.

ZABBY: How many tardies have you had Frenchy?

None, I say.

ZABBY: I've had *five*.

THE GIRL: Five?

ZABBY: *This week*.

THE GIRL: You could get *expelled*.

ZABBY(*sarcastic*): Oh no really?

THE GIRL: Just shut up and give me my French book please.

ZABBY: Oh look, it's the assistant principal.

THE GIRL: Don't let him see us!

ZABBY: How's it going Mr. Miser?

THE GIRL(*fierce whisper*): Oh my god shut up shut up shut up.

ZABBY: Hey sorry Mr. Miser I meant to bring you raisins today but my rabbit died so no more raisins!

We spent the rest of the afternoon sitting in the assistant principal's office.

Zabby was everything I was afraid to be  
Irreverent outrageous attractive funny  
She could even dance like she was black.  
That sounds bad.

You have to remember this was a time when all the white people were doing disco and we all looked even whiter.  
Zabby was an influence.

SKINNY LYNNY: Hey Zabby, what if your parents find out?

That's Skinny Lynny  
We're in Zabby's parent's pub making a carafe of our disgusting magical elixir

ZABBY: They don't care they're at a party.

Skinny Lynny is pouring

THE GIRL: Whoa that's way too much of the brown stuff Lynny.

SKINNY LYNNY: I'll balance it with more of the clear.

She just kind of fell into my life, Skinny Lynny  
She literally fell off her bike in front of my house.  
The thing about Skinny Lynny  
She was totally accident prone.  
It's notable how many near death encounters she survived  
Some kind of miracle she didn't die sooner  
She was just funny that way.

SKINNY LYNNY: Yum, down the hatch!

*Skinny Lynny plugs her nose and  
guzzles, gasps, chokes.*

THE GIRL: Is it bad?

SKINNY LYNNY: Really bad, have some.

*Music: 'The Cisco Kid' War*

Zabby wasn't nearly as bad as her brothers Dean and Don-o.  
All things considered she was the responsible one of the  
litter.

Dean, tall, great-looking  
Square-jaw, brooding eyes  
Twenty-two or nineteen  
I don't know but too old to be a kid  
And mean  
Pain-seeking mean.

*Music: 'I Gotcha' Joe Tex*

One night we hide in the eucalyptus trees bent over the  
street  
Armed with rotten stolen eggs from the Peaker's chicken farm  
Go!  
Invisible to the unsuspecting car that had the bad fortune to  
drive under us  
Plop!  
We expertly drop fetid bombs on windshields and hoods and  
laugh til we wet our pants.

THE GIRL: Zabby look who's coming.

Uh oh  
Dean's car  
His manhood rumbling on the road below us  
Mean Dean  
We smell glory.

One-two-go go go I shout!  
We pelt that macho station-wagon with heart-felt hatred and  
joy and thirteen-year-old revenge  
Bam Bam Bam!

Miscalculation.

It takes him no time to put two-and-two together

*She makes the sound of Dean slamming  
on the brakes.*

Dean backing up like a maniac  
that car has never moved so fast  
Us screaming, laughing, skittering down the tree  
Scattering in every direction.  
Dean bolting from the passenger side of his car because the  
driver door is busted  
Dean chasing down his sister  
Dean tackling her to the ground, smashing rotten eggs in her

face and hair  
Dean grinding bits of shell hard into her head  
Dean grunting  
Zabby too tough to cry

ZABBY: Get off me you fat-ass fag!

Me and Skinny Lynny tearing out of there  
Skinny Lynny of course tripping on a pot hole  
Scraping up her chin her knees her elbows  
I stoop to help her but Dean is coming  
Big mean smile  
I didn't do it Dean, Lynny lies  
Stop it, don't Dean don't!  
Dean not stopping  
Crushing egg into Skinny Lynny's head, her face  
Her hair a matted mess  
Her mouth full of dirt  
Dean getting up  
Looking for me  
But I am hell-bent, tearing through someone's backyard.  
Dean yelling

DEAN: I'm watching you, you bitch, you little bitch.  
I'll teach you to fuck with my car Squirt!

He never did catch me that night.  
He never did forget.

Saffire  
Shiloh  
Dark Lady

"I been through the desert on a horse *with* a name?"  
It doesn't sound right  
But that's how you win the contest

SKINNY LYNNY: What if it's a boy?

Hitchcock  
Elton John  
Ringo  
Bozo.

THE GIRL: Everyone will look for the hidden meaning in  
the name.

Destiny  
Roulette  
Fickle Finger of Fate

We were standing in Garff Garrett's driveway  
Me, Zabby, Skinny Lynny, Garff Garrett  
And some little cousin of his.

No really the cousin wasn't very tall.  
Cousin just stood there with his hands in his pockets  
He wasn't show-offy like Garff Garret who was full of it.  
The only reason we had walked there was because Garff Garrett  
He said he'd gotten a bunch of weed  
Hot-shot.  
He told Zabby he'd give her some if she came over.

Garff Garrett was always making like his family was rich.  
Whatever, but he lived in a dirty house at the top of a hill  
at the end of a winding road.  
So we're there and he's talking about nothing  
It's obvious he has a hard-on for Zabby  
Everybody does  
Zabby can't stand Garff Garrett  
Nobody can  
But she's wily.  
So we're standing in the driveway not really listening  
or caring.

GARFF: Zabby are you going to Jeff Cranover's party?

ZABBY: I don't know, maybe, are you?

He invited me says Garff

Who cares, I thought.

GARFF: Did you go to his last one?

ZABBY: I don't remember.

GARFF: I was invited to that one too.

Sure you were, I thought.

GARFF: I was pretty high I can't remember if I saw you there.

And I'm thinking because you weren't there because  
you weren't invited A-hole.

GARFF: I'm having a big party, like everyone can come  
you know? I can do anything I want, my parents don't care.  
I've just gotta wait til they get back.

Your parents are going to be at the party, asks Skinny Lynny.

GARFF: No pinhead, they have to buy the keg.

ZABBY: Where's the pot Garff?

GARFF: Yeah the pot, uh. In my room.

Go and get it Garff says Skinny Lynny.

GARFF: Hey Zabby, ever been on a waterbed?

I think Garff Garrett is a lonely guy.

ZABBY: You have a *waterbed*?

GARFF: Hell yes, California king with a heater. Hot and wet.  
*Creepy* lonely.

GARFF: Come on, I'll show you. What? I'll give you the pot  
after you look at my waterbed swear to god.

Despite every screaming impulse otherwise we follow Garff  
Garrett and his "cousin" into his bedroom to look at his  
waterbed

SKINNY LYNNY: It's oh-my-god huuuge.

GARFF: See told you, biggest one in the store.

That waterbed was big. At least he didn't lie about that.

GARFF: Come on get on it.

THE GIRL: What's that smell?

Garff Garrett pushes a pile of dirty magazines, french fries,  
batteries, and a steak knife off the bed.

GARFF: You gotta lay down to get the full experience.

THE GIRL: Whoa. How do you stay on it.

SKINNY LYNNY: It's squishy.

ZABBY: Feels like warm waves.

GARFF: Feels even better with no clothes on.

I'm watching Garff's cousin in case he tries to lock the door  
But he's just leaning against the wall, hands in his pockets  
I'm pretty sure he can't actually do anything else  
Why am I paranoid?

GARFF: The best is when you're loaded and naked and you  
close your eyes. It's like being on a magic carpet  
in the Bahamas. So what do you say, Zabby?

ZABBY: I say we smoke some.

SKINNY LYNNY: Totally smoke some.

GARFF: No way, my parents.

You said your parents are out of town, I say. You said your parents don't care.

ZABBY: We'll be cool-city. Come on Garff, where is it?

SKINNY LYNNY: Where is it Garff?

GARFF: Everyone gets naked first.

Gross no, I say. I'm not getting naked.

GARFF: Shirts off, then.

SKINNY LYNNY: Fuck off Garff.

GARFF: Forget it then, no skin no weed.

We have walked a long way for nothing.  
That's when Zabby turns Garff Garret's stereo on.

*Music: 'Rock On' David Essex*

ZABBY: I like to dance before I strip.

Now

Zabby is a really good dancer  
*But what the hell is she talking about?*  
She starts to sway and  
And something in Garff clicks  
Some kind of switch in his pea brain  
She is hypnotizing him!  
He doesn't say anything, just takes off his shirt  
Starts moving his pale chest and arms and hips  
Rolling his lax belly  
Like if one of those plastic troll-dolls danced underwater.  
He is standing up on his waterbed gyrating and undulating  
with the waves.

*Garff Garrett gyrates and undulates.*

ZABBY: Give us what we came here for. The pot, Garff.

Garff Garrett doesn't hear or doesn't care  
He is undoing his belt  
He is unzipping his pants  
Pulling them down and leaving them around his ankles  
Assaulting our eyes with his droopy checkered boxers.  
Skinny Lynny looks away.

SKINNY LYNNY: Stop Garff.

Just tell us where the stuff is, I say.

GARFF: Don't tell them Dirk!

That's when Cousin Dirk with his hands in his pockets starts snickering.

ZABBY: You little *shit*. You don't have any!

SKINNY LYNNY: Fucking Garff.

GARFF: Yes I do, I have a whole stash.

ZABBY: You do not, you're a liar.

GARFF: Yes I do, but you're not getting any of it!

Zabby jumps on Garff Garret pinning him on the surging waterbed. I'm starting to wish I hadn't come.

ZABBY: Where is it nickle-dick?

GARFF: Forget it I don't have to give you any.

ZABBY: I came to your house fucker, now are you gonna give me what you said you'd give me, or am I gonna hit you?

GARFF: Hah, make me slut!

Wait

I don't think I remembered to tell you  
Zabby was a competitive swimmer  
National Junior Olympics champ in the butterfly and the  
backstroke. All that strength in her shoulders and arms.  
So when she punched Garff Garrett in the stomach  
I felt sorry for him  
Kind of.

GARFF(*gasping*): Crazy ugly whore, now you're really not getting any. Dirk don't tell them where it is.

It's in his asshole, said Cousin Dirk.

GARFF: Shut up Dirk!

ZABBY: Guess we'd better check.

GARFF: Hah, no way, you wouldn't you're too chicken.

Skinny Lynny sits on his legs, I sit on his arms.  
Zabby starts pulling down his droopy checkered boxers  
I close my eyes  
I so don't want Garff Garrett's penis to be the first one  
burned into my memory.  
Instead of feeling unpopular at that moment Garff Garrett

seems pretty turned on  
He's twisting and groaning  
The bed is roiling and splashing, tossing us around

GARFF: What are you going to do to me. Huh? Huh? Come on.

That's when Zabby picks up the steak knife.

ZABBY: Turn over, Perv!

Weirdly he does.

GARFF: Oh yeah what are you gonna do now? Huh?

He closes his eyes *and smiles*.  
Cousin Dirk says Wait man I think your parents just rolled  
in.  
Garff Garrett doesn't hear or doesn't care  
Zabby grips the knife  
She's freaking me out  
Even Skinny Lynny is like

*Skinny Lynny makes a freaked-out face.*

Then  
Zabby plunges the knife *into the waterbed*.

At first nothing happens  
We're all in shock.  
Then she pulls the knife *out* of the waterbed  
And all hell breaks loose  
Water spouting and spraying the room, Garff spazzing

GARRF: Get off, get off, get off my waterbed!

It's hard to move quickly on those things

THE GIRL: Let's get out of here!

We pile out the window above his bed and Skinny Lynny falls  
onto the ground on her chin  
She's bleeding from her mouth  
Luckily she has braces so her teeth stay in.

Garff Garret is still spazzing.

GARFF: They're going to kill me, my fucking parents are  
fucking going to fucking kill me.

We pick Skinny Lynny up and race out of his yard and gallop  
half-way home  
Finally, finally stopping to breathe

THE GIRL: Oh my god oh my god! Who knows what he would have

ZABBY: The perv

SKINNY LYNNY: Totally

THE GIRL: I gotta get home.

SKINNY LYNNY: What about tonight? Want to get drunk?

My house, says Zabby, my parents will be gone.

Totally.

*Music: 'The Rapper' The Jaggerz*

Something's in the air  
I can feel it when I walk across the threshold into my house  
The betrayal.

MOTHER: Did you take something out of my scarf drawer?

THE GIRL: Why are you asking me Mom?

MOTHER: Because your sister

My sister Carrie-Ann, The Favorite, comes in. All I can do is  
give her the silent killing look.

MOTHER: Your sister said she didn't take it.

THE GIRL: Of course you believe her.

MOTHER: Did you take it?

Take what, I say.

CARRIE-ANN: Mom?

MOTHER: Not now Carrie-Ann.

*(to The Girl)*

Why were you digging through my scarf drawer in the first  
place missy?

THE GIRL: I was looking for a scarf?

MOTHER: Liar. You've never worn a scarf in your entire life.

THE GIRL: Well I was going to *start* but now forget it.

CARRIE-ANN: *Um, Mom?*

MOTHER: Be quiet Carrie-Ann. *What did you do with it?*

THE GIRL: I didn't find one I liked.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

MOTHER: *The letter*. Where did you put the letter?

CARRIE-ANN: Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom.

THE GIRL: What *letter*?

CARRIE-ANN: Can I first say something?

MOTHER: Shut up for once Carrie-Ann!

I didn't take any letter, I say. What's the big deal about it any way?

MOTHER: Look at me. *Listen to me*. You have no idea, missy. That is my personal property! *My property*.

FATHER: What's going on?

CARRIE-ANN: Dad's home.

Mom, silence.

FATHER: What's all the racket about?

MOTHER: Nothing, it's about nothing.

FATHER: Is she stealing again?

Meaning me.

MOTHER: We've already talked about it.

FATHER: What did you steal this time?

MOTHER: Oh for godssake leave her alone, it's not important.

FATHER: It goddamn is Frida, it is important if she's stealing.

MOTHER: I don't want to talk about this now.

FATHER: When should we talk about it? Next week? Next year? When she's in juvy or jail or we've been sued in court? Because that's where all this is headed.

MOTHER: Stop talking like some kind of jackass.

FATHER: Go to hell.

MOTHER: You go to hell.

THE GIRL: How about I just go?

There she goes  
My mother silently melted into a heap on the floor  
A cataplectic fit. "Limp man syndrome", not the first time,  
or the last. It's okay, you get used to it.

*FATHER gestures to incapacitated  
Mother.*

FATHER: Did you or didn't you steal from your mother?

This was a grey area.

*Music: "Me and Mrs. Jones"  
Billy Paul version*

See  
The Favorite started having an affair about three months  
earlier with a guy across the street.  
He'd moved back in with his parents  
So now they were doing it.  
He was twenty-six she was fourteen  
Yeah just  
Yeah.  
She didn't even know he was married until it kind of slipped  
out one day like 'oh yeah'.  
No one knew what was up with the wife  
Anyway it was disgusting and I told her to stop and she tried  
but they were 'in love'.

THE FAVORITE: You can't tell anyone. Please don't tell  
anyone.

THE GIRL: Are you at least using something, birth control?

Her, silence.

THE GIRL: Oh my god Carrie-Ann.

THE FAVORITE: I don't have money for that.

THE GIRL: What are you thinking? Make *him* pay.

THE FAVORITE: He's living with his parents, he's between  
jobs.

THE GIRL: And he's a jerk, hello. You need to use birth  
control so you don't make a little jerk.

THE FAVORITE: He's not a jerk. You can't tell anyone promise?  
I'd kill myself if mom and dad found out!

I was pretty sure they'd kill her first.  
So when I happened upon an envelope stuffed with cash in  
mom's scarf drawer...

*What?* I was looking for a scarf. Anyway why was she hiding so much money?

I instinctively took some cash for Carrie-Ann so she could buy whatever she needed to not have the jerk's baby.

But, and I swear this, there was no letter in the drawer.

THE GIRL: I didn't steal the letter Dad.

FATHER: What letter?

THE GIRL: There wasn't one!

FATHER: So you're telling me you didn't steal?

THE GIRL: No.

FATHER: No you didn't steal or no you're not telling me that?

THE GIRL: I'm confused.

FATHER: Are you a thief or are you a liar?

Me: I don't know.

FATHER: Get The Belt.

THE GIRL: It's not even fair!

FATHER: Go get The Belt.

THE GIRL: Dad no wait I'm sorry.

FATHER: You should have thought of that before you decided to be a lying thief.

*Music: 'Don't Let the Sun Go Down  
on Me' Elton John*

Like I said

The worst part of The Belt was the waiting

The no pants was pretty humiliating too.

I don't know how I was supposed to learn anything except how afraid of my father I was in that moment.

So I waited

I tried to not think about Garff Garrett with his pants around his ankles and his droopy checkered boxers

But I couldn't help it

I didn't know anymore who's shame I was feeling.

After it was over -- it seemed like my father was trying to whip more than just the lying and stealing out of me

Like his wife's secrets and his daughter's shape-shifting and His lack of control over any of us --

I didn't cry.

I wasn't going to give him that payoff.

FATHER: You're grounded. Go to your room. Now.

Me, silence

No grimacing no whimpering

Nothing.

I cried hard into my pillow under the blanket so no one could hear me

I fell asleep.

When I woke up it was quiet downstairs, dark out.

Mom would be watching repeats

All in the Family, Good Times, Happy Days.

Dad would be in his basement office avoiding Mom.

The Favorite would be having phone sex with her married boyfriend

Shit.

I couldn't stand it

I was dying!

I had to get out!

*Music: 'Smoke on the Water'  
Deep Purple*

The first year we moved into the unincorporated area called Cerro Vista Acres there was a fire.

Santa Ana winds blew some idiot's campfire into the massive parched oaks and eucalyptus trees

Fire tore across regional parks housing tracts

flew up into the hills where we lived

Dad waking me in the middle of the night

Me so sleepy he had to carry me through the dark house.

Mom throwing photo albums, birth certificates, ashtrays,

World Book Encyclopedias, whatever she could carry into a cardboard box.

We got to the car and the street was a surreal movie

All our neighbors driving by in their packed cars

everyone in pj's like us.

Horses trotting in and out of the dark

They were so beautiful and afraid

Horse-crazy me wanting to catch and ride them bareback, one by one in the dark.

All that freedom and fear

What will happen to them?

Where will they go?

They'll come back, my dad says. They know where home is.

Down the road pigs and goats wandering on people's porches

All of it made magical by the flakes of white ash falling from the night

I'm telling you this for a reason.

After the fire scare we had regular drills at our house.

Being on the upper floor of an old shake-roof home my Dad thought we should have an alternate escape route.

Dad installed rope ladders in the gabled window seats in our

bedroom.

Very handy for a quick getaway  
Which is exactly what I needed.  
He never did get around to showing us just how you escape  
using a rope ladder.

The Favorite sidled in as I was pulling the rope out of the  
window seat.

THE FAVORITE: We had Sloppy Joe's for dinner. I brought  
you some. You're welcome. You can't sneak out the window,  
dork.

THE GIRL: Why, are you going to rag on me?

THE FAVORITE: I'm sorry.

THE GIRL: That I got grounded? That I got whipped because  
of doing something *for you*?

THE FAVORITE: You've never gone down that rope, you don't  
know how.

THE GIRL: Maybe if you yell louder Dad will come up  
and show me.

THE FAVORITE: I'm not kidding I'll tell.

THE GIRL: *So will I.*

*A brief intense sister-to-sister staredown.*

THE FAVORITE: He hasn't called me. I don't know what's going  
on with him.

THE GIRL: Um, he's married?

THE FAVORITE: He can't stand his wife it's awful. She  
doesn't *understand* him. He's going to divorce her, he  
has to wait for the right time to tell her.

THE GIRL: Interesting.

THE FAVORITE: It's sad. I feel bad for him.

THE GIRL: Oh my god Carrie-Ann.

THE FAVORITE: You don't know everything.

THE GIRL: He's a jerk, you're an idiot that much I know.

THE FAVORITE: You don't know. It's just so messed up.  
I wish you understood. How he makes me feel. How nice  
he is. How I can tell him anything and he doesn't

criticize or make fun or judge me. He makes me feel smart.  
Unlike *some* people.

THE GIRL: Well that's just stupid.

THE FAVORITE: Because you don't understand and you might  
*never* understand and I feel sorry for you. I wish you knew  
what it's like.

*I wish I knew what it was like, I thought. To be as desperate  
as Carrie-Anne.*

THE FAVORITE: I wish he would call.  
*(a beat)*

THE GIRL: It's okay. He's probably just busy.

THE FAVORITE: You think?

The rope ladder was more rope than ladder.  
I was pretty confident The Favorite was right  
They'd find my broken corpse on the driveway in the morning.  
The thing is there weren't a lot of options.

THE GIRL: Make yourself useful Carrie-Ann, hold the  
window up. *Higher*, I'm not a *lizard*.

She holds it up  
I feed the rope out the window.  
Soon enough the end that's bolted to the window seat is good  
and tight.

THE GIRL: Okay wish me luck.

THE FAVORITE: Good luck you're going to die.

I crawl out the window onto the roof terrified.

THE FAVORITE: Don't look down whatever you do.

THE GIRL: *Shut up*.

THE FAVORITE: I can't watch.

Bracing against the house with every body part  
I inch my torso  
Fraction by fraction towards the dangling "ladder"  
Belly to rooftop lowering my feet then legs then hips  
Okay  
Little splinters of shake roof piercing my thigh flesh  
Okay  
*(Loud whisper)*

THE GIRL: Are you there? *Carrie-Ann?*

THE FAVORITE: Should I get Dad?

THE GIRL: No no! Just tell me if anyone is coming upstairs.

I'm stupid, I shouldn't, I'm going to break my neck  
But I can't stop myself  
I can't go back  
That's a kind of death.  
I slide off the roof holding onto the rope for life  
I snake my searching legs through the dark  
Around the rope  
Clutching the knots like stolen gems  
Okay.

THE FAVORITE: I mean it I can't watch!

THE GIRL: Sssh! Just tell me if they're coming.

The window shuts

THE GIRL: *Carrie-Anne?*  
Shit!  
I worm my way down the rope  
A prayer for each knot  
for every second I don't fall to a gory death. Would they  
even care?  
I see the glow of the t.v. as I shinny down past the living  
room  
My mother's head bobbing in silent silhouette  
Trying to stay awake.  
Okay  
I pass the broken hall window  
The kitchen where The Favorite pads with a bowl of Neapolitan  
ice cream?!  
The dark stairs down to my father's basement office  
Where he hides from my mother.  
Okay  
I'm on the ground.  
Alive.  
Sweet freedom!

I have no idea how I'll get back into my house  
But mom and dad are never going to know I'm gone  
Right?

*Music: 'Superstition' Stevie Wonder*

Even at this time of night Zabby's house is a menagerie.  
They have seven Bull Mastiffs, two Great Danes, a Doberman  
Pincher, and a hand-full of little mutts  
'Wall dogs' Dean calls them.

DEAN: On account of if they get in my way I toss them against  
the wall. Stupid yapping mutts.

Zabby's dad was a former Mr. Universe or something  
Their garage was filled with Rube Goldberg-type contraptions  
that Dean worked out on every day  
It was like a shiny torture chamber.  
Her dad was just a flabby fifty-year old guy by then  
But Dean had plans to be a famous stunt-man. He was going to  
change his name to *Dean James*.

DEAN: Get it? Get it?

SKINNY LYNNY: Get what?

DEAN: Are you girls on your period or just stupid? James  
Dean was a rich good-looking movie star who died in a  
high-speed car crash.

ZABBY: You're not rich or good-looking but you can  
die in a high-speed car crash if you want.

DEAN: Get the fuck out of here. You're stinking the place  
up with your girl smell.

Dean never makes it as a stunt-man  
famous or otherwise.  
He was an extra on a movie once.  
I can't remember which one.  
Anyway Dean was always working on his biceps or washboard  
belly.  
Don-o, the middle brother, on the other hand  
He was more interested in cars than anything.  
Half a dozen crappy vehicles littered their yard and he  
usually had his head under one of them.  
I'd walk past and he'd say hi and I'd think it was the car  
talking  
It was just surprising.  
Anyway.  
When I finally showed up at her house Zabby was sitting cross-  
legged on the kitchen counter throwing slices of bologna to  
which ever dog was fastest.  
I kind of thought she and Skinny Lynny would be dead drunk by  
now.

THE GIRL: What's up? Where's the party?

ZABBY: My parents got suspicious. They said the Jack Daniels  
tasted watery. They locked up the bar. We need  
reinforcements.

What Zabby's parents hadn't yet discovered was that most of  
their hard liquor had been replaced with water, Coca-cola,  
Kool-aid, or rubbing alcohol.

SKINNY LYNNY: Do you think they know it was us?

I asked Zabby what she thought we should do.

ZABBY: We should do the responsible thing and rip-off some booze from the liquor store to replace what we drank.

THE GIRL: How are we supposed to do that? We can't walk to the liquor store.

ZABBY: If we had a car.

SKINNY LYNNY: If we had a car.

THE GIRL: *We can't drive.*

ZABBY: If we had a car we could.

SKINNY LYNNY: We could.

THE GIRL: That's crazy. You're both crazy.

This is a good time to tell you that I had a really bad crush on Don-o.

I never told *anyone* that so you can't say *anything*.

So okay Don-o.

He was a little insane

Not like deranged but nutty.

He had this secret glee, as if he had just put a potato in someone's tail pipe and was waiting for it to blow.

You know gleeful?

He was kinder than mean Dean

And more appealing in every way

Everything about him was better

Except he had a girlfriend

Tina White.

*(she makes a sour face)*

But he always said hi to me

And he would give me The Look.

Like "I can't say anything 'cause I'm in a stupid

relationship but I think you're probably someone special"

That kind of look.

So I kept my feelings to myself

For the time being.

*Music: 'Brand New Key' Melanie*

THE GIRL: Here he comes.

DON-O: How am I supposed to work on cars without tools?

Have you seen Dean-the-dick? He hid my tool chest.

ZABBY: Hey Don-o.

DON-O: What are you girls up to?

ZABBY: Nothing.

SKINNY LYNNY: Nothing.

THE GIRL: Hi.

ZABBY: Don-o can you do us a solid?

DON-O: No more money Zabby, you already owe me twenty bucks.

ZABBY: Not money.

SKINNY LYNNY: Yeah, not money.

ZABBY: We need a car.

*Don-o laughs.*

DON-O: A car. Are you kidding?

*Zabby laughs.*

ZABBY: Yeah no I'm not kidding.

SKINNY LYNNY: Do any of your, like...

DON-O: Cars in the yard?

SKINNY LYNNY: Do they actually work?

DON-O: Do you know how to drive?

SKINNY LYNNY: No.

THE GIRL: I do.

I flat-out lied.

DON-O: Yeah? Stick?

THE GIRL: No not a stick no.

DON-O: Just automatic?

THE GIRL: Pretty much yeah just automatic.

DON-O: Too bad. Mine are all manual.

He's giving me The Look.

Time slows way down

I wish everyone was gone but me and Don-o in one of his  
stick shifts

I wish Tina White would die peacefully in her sleep.

DON-O: But Dean's car.

ZABBY: What about Dean's car?

Dean's is an automatic says Don-o.

And Zabby says Yeah but.

He's not using it says Don-o.

SKINNY LYNNY: Wait Dean's car?

I know where he hides the key says Don-o

THE GIRL: Where's Dean?

DON-O: Fucker's out. Just be back before he is. You said  
you could drive.

THE GIRL: *Dean's* car?

ZABBY: He would kill us.

SKINNY LYNNY: He would kill us til we were dead.

It's a scientific fact  
The frontal lobes-- the part of the brain involved in  
decision-making and insight  
They aren't fully connected until you're in your twenties  
So the adolescent brain isn't completely formed, particularly  
in the regions that govern impulse control, risk assessment,  
and moral reasoning.  
This explains why I said what I said.

THE GIRL: *Let's drive.*

*Music: 'Black Dog' Led Zepplin*

I crawl in the passenger side because remember the driver's  
door is busted  
I scoot across the wide bench  
Don-o climbs in after me  
And just like that I'm sitting next to him  
My hands on the wheel, nearer to him than I've ever been  
Except in my teenage dreams.  
Why do I feel like I'm naked?  
I keep looking at my clothes to make sure they're on.

*Music: 'Midnight at the Oasis'  
Maria Muldar*

DON-O: So.

THE GIRL: Um.

DON-O: What do you want to do?

He's giving me The Look.  
I'm trying to hold in my sweat.

THE GIRL: I don't know. Just. Um.

DON-O: You know how to drive right?

THE GIRL: Oh. Yeah.

Stupid.

THE GIRL: Where's the place where you poke in the key?

DON-O: The ignition's on the other side.

THE GIRL: Oh. I'm left-handed so everything always seems  
backwards.

DON-O: I'm left-handed.

THE GIRL: Hey twins.

So stupid.

DON-O: Do you want the seat forward?

THE GIRL: No.

DON-O: So your feet touch the pedals?

THE GIRL: I mean sure. Where's the

But Don-o is  
He's leaning into me.  
He's  
Not talking  
Reaching  
No  
*Pressing*  
Against me.  
Oh my god  
This is happening  
It's happening  
I'm  
Holding my breath  
Do it do it do it  
A boy has never touched me, you know, "there"  
Or anywhere  
Oh god.  
*Relax*  
I close my eyes

*Breathe*

I open my legs.

He reaches

Suddenly

Don-o releases a lever, the seat jerks forward, and I am thrust toward the windshield.

Oh.

I'm face to face with the wheel.

DON-O: You're set. Have fun. Be good.

The passenger door slams

Just like that he is gone.

And we are driving.

*Music: 'Shambala' 3-Dog Night*

I am driving!

THE GIRL: Dear God holy shit. Okay shut up!

Zabby and Skinny Lynny shouting directions and encouragement

The car seems too big the seats too deep.

We drive down the street

Down the boulevard on our way to

THE GIRL: Where are we going?

SKINNY LYNNY: Tastee Freeze!

ZABBY: Not Tastee Freeze. First the liquor store.

THE GIRL: Just tell me where to turn.

SKINNY LYNNY: Here turn here

ZABBY: No keep going

THE GIRL: You guys

SKINNY LYNNY: You almost hit that policeman!

THE GIRL: What policeman?

ZABBY: She's kidding.

SKINNY LYNNY: Turn the radio on!

THE GIRL: Where are we going? Which way?

ZABBY: Turn here turn here.

SKINNY LYNNY: I love this song!

*Music: 'Dancing in the Moonlight'*  
King Harvest

We are powered by fear and guile and a contact high  
and it feels amazing  
The freedom, the power, the electric surge.  
The world has cracked open for us this night  
and we will never be thirteen again!

*The Girl dances to the music.*

Miraculously no one dies  
Except the car.

ZABBY: Piece of shit car!

We've gone less than five miles and we are screwed.

ZABBY: Great now what do we do?

SKINNY LYNNY: Walk to Tastee Freeze?

ZABBY: We're not going to Tastee Freeze, Lynny! Dean's going  
to kill me. He's going to kill me.

Maybe Don-o can fix it before Dean kills you I say.  
*Maybe Don-o will confess his love for me.*  
Anyway

We start walking  
Off the beaten path in a rural suburb of the suburbs  
Dead quiet and pitch black.

SKINNY LYNNY: You guys if we walk over the hills  
it's shorter you guys.

THE GIRL: No way we'd have to cut across Morningstar.

SKINNY LYNNY: Who cares it's faster.

THE GIRL: It's *trespassing* Lynny.

ZABBY: I heard they have an electrified fence.

THE GIRL: I heard that too.

SKINNY LYNNY: Electrified? Like we would be fried?

Morningstar is Morningstar Ranch  
a low-end horse boarding property notorious mainly because  
we've never actually been there  
We've only heard about it.  
So there's stories  
The kind you make up about the shuttered house at the end of  
the street?

Only Morningstar is at the end of nothing.

THE GIRL: What are you doing Lynny?

She's running straight at the barb-wire fence.

ZABBY: Lynny!

SKINNY LYNNY: You guys it's not electrified. Hey look  
I'm bleeding.

This does not seem like a good plan to me.

THE GIRL: What if they catch us on their property?

They're not going to catch us, climb through says Zabby  
She holds the wires up.  
I climb through.

SKINNY LYNNY: Where are the horses?

ZABBY: We don't have time nut-head.

SKINNY LYNNY: Look look!

Skinny Lynny's jumping up and down.

THE GIRL: Sssh!

SKINNY LYNNY (*whisper*): They're pretty.

ZABBY (*whisper*): Ride one. I dare you.

No way I say. They're probably wild.

SKINNY LYNNY: They're looking at us. What can we give them?

ZABBY: We have to get the car fixed before Dean kills us.  
Come on, let's go.

THE GIRL: Let's go Lynny.

But Skinny Lynny has pulled up a fistful of grass and is  
running across the pasture straight at a bunch of dark  
horses.

SKINNY LYNNY: Here horsies!

THE GIRL (*whisper*): Shut up!

ZABBY(*laughing*): Lynny you idiot!

THE GIRL: She's nuts.

I run after her light-footed  
Laughing  
a sprite, a unicorn  
Cantering across the dirt and grass  
But I can't see Skinny Lynny.

THE GIRL (*loud whisper*): Lynny?

No answer, bad sign.  
Where is she?

THE GIRL: Lynny?

SKINNY LYNNY: I tripped.

Over what? I say.  
Silence.

ZABBY: Lynny come on, cut it out.

THE GIRL: Are you okay?  
Silence.

ZABBY: Quit messing around Lynny, we gotta go.

Then Skinny Lynny screams.  
She screams so loud it sounds like a slasher movie.  
She's gotta be faking it.

THE GIRL: Lynny what the hell?

ZABBY: Lynny you idiot they're gonna find us!

Next thing we're on the ground, fallen beside our cowering  
friend. All of us tripped over it.

ZABBY: What is that?

SKINNY LYNNY: A horse. A dead horse.

THE GIRL: No no no.

Bloated stiff stinking  
a few days gone  
A cougar attack, an accident, it happens.  
But this.  
This is different.  
The horse's front legs are bound at the fetlocks by wire.  
You don't do that unless you're trying to keep it from moving  
And you *never* use wire.  
This was no accident.

THE GIRL: They killed it.

SKINNY LYNNY: Why? Why kill a horse? Who does that?

ZABBY: That's sick.

SKINNY LYNNY: Poor horsie.

ZABBY: Stop looking at it.

THE GIRL: He's looking at me.

SKINNY LYNNY: He's laying there staring at us like a dead horse. *A horse with no name.*

ZABBY: We should get out of here. We should run like hell.

We get up but now a strange thing is happening.  
Some of the other horses are coming over  
They form a circle around us, twenty pair of sullen brown eyes.  
Beautiful breathing beasts calmly staring us down  
Witnesses  
They know we know.

ZABBY: Come on let's go.

THE GIRL: No. We can't leave them.

ZABBY: What are you even talking about?

THE GIRL: I don't know, I want to  
catch them and get them out of here.

SKINNY LYNNY: What? Wait how?

THE GIRL: I don't know, just go up to them like

*The Girl puts out an open palm and takes a few steps forward.*

But they're smart horses  
They don't trust us.  
We're not going to bind their legs leave them to die but how  
do they know that?  
They turn  
The group of them trot off into the dark.

*Music: 'Horse With No Name' America*

We sing it the entire two hours it takes us to walk over the hills, through backyards and down our street, back to Zabby's house.

*Don-o laughs.*

DON-O: You walked all that way? It was probably just the fuel line.

Don-o agreed to retrieve the car  
I like to think he did it because he didn't want us to get tortured by Dean and because he secretly loved me.  
He charged us twenty bucks that we didn't have.

I run home  
Crawl through the broken hall window just before dawn  
House is quiet  
Still.  
Good.  
I drink Sparkletts from a Dixie cup.  
Upstairs I throw my filthy self on my bed  
I'm beat, my heart hurts  
And crap we didn't replace the liquor!  
But I can't stop thinking about that dead horse  
Bloated and stiff, it's legs wired together  
How it must have struggled before it died  
Separated from the others  
Helpless and bound  
All it was trying to do was break away.

I have a new mission in life:  
*Save the Morningstar horses.*  
Then my bedroom door swings open.

MOTHER: Where in god's name have you been missy?

THE GIRL: *Mom! Hello, privacy?*

MOTHER: You could have been dead. You could be lying dead in the road right now.

THE GIRL: I'm not, sorry.

THE MOTHER: You could have been killed or raped. Or mutilated.

THE GIRL: I'm sorry Mom. Sorry. Does Dad know I snuck out?

THE MOTHER: No. Your father went out.

THE GIRL: What? Where?

THE MOTHER: For ice cream, what do you think? I want to talk to you about your sister.

Oh no please no.

THE MOTHER: Does Carrie-Ann talk to you? Do you two talk?

THE GIRL: About what?

THE MOTHER: Is she alright?

Part of me wants my mom to drag it out of me  
the whole ugly mess of the affair with the neighbor's son,  
Carrie-Anne's increasing torment.  
Not because I'm mad at The Favorite  
but because nothing good can come of something that lame.  
I'm scared for her. Part of me knows that telling would be  
the worst possible thing to do.

THE GIRL: There is something.

THE MOTHER: I knew there was something. She's upset, is she  
upset with me? She's upset with me.

Cataplexy is not arbitrary  
A cataplectic fit hits when my Mother has big emotions  
Like laughing or crying or thinking stressful thoughts.  
It's like watching a heavy snow fall on a weak tree  
She's standing there  
Then everything just sort of bends  
And then she tips over  
into my arms.

I tuck my mother into my bed.

THE MOTHER: You didn't... The letter. It's there.

I did steal her money so it kind of evened out.

THE GIRL: You found it?

THE MOTHER: Do not climb...the window. Or...you're grounded.

THE GIRL: I *am* grounded.

THE MOTHER: Good. Good. Night.

THE GIRL: Is Dad coming back? Mother?

THE MOTHER: Love you.

THE FAVORITE: It was disgusting what was in that letter.  
I can't talk about it. I can't even think about it.

I'm in The Favorite's bed next morning  
Mom is still asleep in my bed  
Dad is nowhere to be seen.

THE GIRL: You found the letter in her scarf drawer?

THE FAVORITE: He wrote all this stuff he was going to do to  
Mom. It was worse than disgusting.

THE GIRL: You mean like torture?

THE FAVORITE: Like *sexually*. To her. On her. With her.  
With his fingers his tongue his toes everything you can  
think of.

THE GIRL: Oh god.

THE FAVORITE: In graphic detail like a freaky sex pamphlet.  
So disturbing.

THE GIRL: Who is he?

THE FAVORITE: He wrote that he wants her to use a *dildo*--  
on him!

THE GIRL: *Oh god* What's a dildo?

THE FAVORITE: I can't even think about it.

THE GIRL: Why is Mom getting letters from this guy?

THE FAVORITE: I can't tell you.

THE GIRL: Did she tell you?

Her, silence.

THE GIRL: Everyone in this house is sleeping around and  
I haven't even been *kissed* yet!

THE FAVORITE: His name is George.

THE GIRL: I hate that name I hate George!

THE FAVORITE: You don't even know him.

THE GIRL: I know I'd hate him.

THE FAVORITE: I met him.

THE GIRL: *You met George?*

THE FAVORITE: Well at the time I didn't know I was actually  
meeting him.

THE GIRL: Spill it Carrie-Anne.

*Carrie-Ann does a I Will Tell You This But  
Only At Great Emotional Cost to Myself face.*

THE FAVORITE: So. Okay remember that day when we had a  
half-day because Willy Peaker set-off fireworks which he  
(MORE)

(cont'd)  
built in chemistry class?

THE GIRL: What the hell Carrie-Ann?

THE FAVORITE: So. Okay remember the front door was locked when we got home that afternoon, because we got home early, and we thought Oh Mom doesn't know school is out, that's why it's locked? And Mom was all all, like surprised and confused and 'you girls aren't supposed to be home I guess I fell asleep'.

THE GIRL: *Yes?*

THE FAVORITE: So. Remember you were in the kitchen with Mom getting a Scooter-Pie or Ho-Ho?

THE GIRL: *Carrie-Ann.*

THE FAVORITE: So I went upstairs kind of sneaking because I wanted to wear those fringy boots of hers and I knew she wouldn't let me because of the high heels, so I didn't ask. I just went up there. She didn't know or she would have stopped me. I wish she would have stopped me. I wish wish I could un-see what I saw that day.

*Carrie-Ann does a dramatic look of mortification.*

THE GIRL: *What did you see?*

THE FAVORITE: So.  
I went into Mom and Dad's bedroom, into the closet and reached down...and where the fringy boots should have been? There was a pair of bare feet. Hairy bare man feet. I will never forget it. For a second I didn't understand. Then I screamed. He jumped out of the closet, no clothes on nothing. That's how I met him.  
That's how I met George. Only I didn't know it was George.

THE GIRL: Who did you think he was?

THE FAVORITE: Mom said he was a *streaker*.

THE GIRL: *In her closet?*

THE FAVORITE: She said he was running down the street and ran into her house to hide from the police. At the time I believed her.

THE GIRL: That's messed up Carrie-Ann.

THE FAVORITE: It was George. When I found the letter in her scarf drawer I knew for sure.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

THE GIRL: God she is such a liar. Do you think Dad knows?

THE FAVORITE: We can't say anything.

Considering her own situation, I could see why Carrie Ann had that opinion.

THE GIRL: Hey, have you heard from the jerk?

Her, silence.

THE GIRL: What's going to happen, Carrie-Anne?

THE FAVORITE: She's leaving him.

THE GIRL: She's leaving who?

THE FAVORITE: Dad. Mom's been planning it for a while. She and George. They're going to run away together.  
(beat)

THE GIRL: That means she's leaving us.

*Music: 'Radar Love' Golden Earring*

Our plan takes shape over the phone since I am still grounded:

*(various phone calls)*

ZABBY: We're going to need a bunch of halters and ropes.

THE GIRL: Like how many Zabby?

ZABBY: Like twenty or something.

SKINNY LYNNY: Twenty?

THE GIRL: That's what Zabby said.

SKINNY LYNNY: Where the heck are we supposed to get that many halters and ropes?

ZABBY: Wire cutters, gloves, blankets.

THE GIRL: Lynny can you get a bunch of blankets?

SKINNY LYNNY: I think so. Probably. I don't know. MOM?

ZABBY: Buckets. Apples. Carrots.

SKINNY LYNNY: DO WE HAVE ANY BLANKETS WE DON'T NEED?

THE GIRL: When are we gonna do this?

DON-O: So what are you doing?

Sometimes Don-o answers when I call Zabby.

THE GIRL: We're going to catch the horses at Morningstar and I think my mom is dating this guy and I *know* my sister is and my dad might move out.

I talk too much too fast but he listens. I could be on the phone with him forever, even when we're not saying anything. Just breathing.

*Music: 'The Loco-motion' Grand Funk Railroad*

Finally

It is the big night.

We are going to save them

Save the Morningstar horses.

Zabby, Skinny Lynny, and me are going to the movies

but not *really* going to the movies

To see a Mel Brooks double-feature

Blazing Saddles and Young Frankenstein

We've already seen both of them like five times

We can recite things pretty much verbatim if questioned.

Along with some lipstick-pink floral sheets

*But no blankets*

Skinny Lynny has brought Tupperware containers of bourbon

from her parent's stash and Boone's Farm Blackberry Ridge

that her underage brother bought from the blind guy who works at the liquor store on Wednesdays.

ZABBY: Totally bitchin.

Zabby takes the first slug then hands it to me.

DEAN: What are you little ladies planning on doing tonight?

Mean Dean has snaked his way into Zabby's room

He's in my face repulsive as he is handsome.

DEAN: Hey Squirt what have you got there?

I look at the Tupperware of bourbon.

THE GIRL: Nothing.

SKINNY LYNNY: Yeah nothing.

ZABBY: None of your ugly business. Get out of my room.

DEAN: Better be careful Squirt. Better stay out of trouble or Daddy might ground you again. How's your mom's

(MORE)

(cont'd)  
boyfriend?

That fuckwad Dean listened in on my phone calls to Zabby  
Or worse, *Don-o!*  
The thought of him picking up the receiver like a cat-burglar  
Listening with that shit-eating grin  
Makes me want to throw-up on his seriously chiselled face.  
Instead I pass the Tupperware along to Skinny Lynny  
I'm not doing anything I say.

DEAN: What about you Toothpick? Exciting plans for tonight?

Just shine him on, Zabby says.

Skinny Lynny stares at something fascinating on the ceiling.

DEAN: Hey Zabby, you little ladies need a *ride* anywhere?

ZABBY: *No.*

DEAN: Not even to the movies. Or *Morningstar?*

*What???*

DEAN: 'cause, you know I've got a car.

*Dean grins maliciously.*

He knows.

ZABBY(*whispering*): Fucker knows.

SKINNY LYNNY(*whispering*): Oh no he knows now what?

ZABBY: Sssh! Okay Dean. What do you want?

DEAN: Oh I don't know, maybe...

And then.

And then.

And then it got weird.

Dean points.

THE GIRL: What me? What for?

DEAN: Oh come on. What's the matter Squirt, you afraid?

THE GIRL: No way Dean I'm not afraid of you.

ZABBY: Dream on Dean, you're not doing anything to her.

DEAN: I guess you're not going anywhere.

ZABBY: Try to stop us asswipe.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

DEAN: I don't think the parents will fully appreciate what you girls are planning to do.

THE GIRL: You wouldn't tell on us.

Dean does a slow smile.

SKINNY LYNNY: *He'd blow our cover!*

You know what Dean says Zabby. You know what?

DEAN: No what?

ZABBY: You're a cock-sucking bastard prick.

DEAN: Yeah? So?

ZABBY: Forget it we're not doing it then.

THE GIRL: *Wait.*

I couldn't believe it was *my mouth* that said that.  
*Just wait.*

Zabby and Skinny Lynny are looking at me like

*Zabby and Lynny does a 'what???' face.*

I couldn't explain that the dead horse followed me around  
every night  
stumbling  
falling on me  
suffocating  
dying slowly  
its wire-tied legs churning against me.  
That no matter how hard I kicked  
I couldn't get out from under it.  
That Morningstar was everything unfair and ugly.  
That those unlucky mute horses were worth something.  
That I needed to break away.  
That the night was bigger than Dean.

THE GIRL: It's okay Zabby. It's cool.

ZABBY: That's bogus, you're not going with him.

DEAN: She wants to Zab, she's a big girl.

ZABBY: Tough balls, shut up Dean!

Dean instantly pulls Zabby by the hair  
His big hand grabbing it in a tight wad.

*Zabby flinches and holds her hands  
protectively against her head.*

DEAN: Are you saying something? Hmmm? Are you talking?!

ZABBY: Let go motherfucker!

DEAN: I can't hear you.

Dean shoving Zabby's head down onto the table  
Pinning her down  
Dean knocking her head against the table.

DEAN: Now try again. Try saying something I want to hear.  
Something nice.

Zabby kicking, shouting

THE GIRL: Stop! I said okay! *It's okay.*

Dean stopping.

DEAN: I like the sound of that. See how easy that was?

Zabby looking at me red-faced.

THE GIRL: It's okay Zabby.

*Two minutes*, she says to Dean.

DEAN: Ten.

ZABBY: *Five*. And I swear to god

THE GIRL: Just wait Zabby, okay?

*Outside* says Dean, *they have to wait outside.*

Zabby snarls, then stalks out of the house.

Skinny Lynny gives me a pitiful look and drops the  
pink sheets at my feet.

SKINNY LYNNY: They're clean kind of.

Then it's just me  
And Dean closing the bedroom door.  
He bares his big teeth in an obnoxious Mean Dean smile.

DEAN: I've been waiting for this for a long time Squirt.  
I think you knew that didn't you? Yeah you did. Sweet  
little bitch.

My fingers are stuck together  
(MORE)

(cont'd)

I keep swallowing my spit  
 That's when he makes his move  
 Clamp!  
 His mouth is huge over mine, his lips are hard, his tongue is  
 surprisingly pointy and strong and fills my mouth.  
 I don't know what to do, how to breathe  
*Why do people like this?*  
 It's wrong I'm doing it wrong  
 I'm a terrible kisser.  
 I hang in, hang on  
 he digs in with his forklift tongue gouging out my mouth.

*Music: 'Let's Get It On' Marvin Gaye*

And I start to feel something  
 Not pleasure but  
*Hunger.*  
 I don't like Dean but  
 I like this  
 I like kissing.  
 He moans, touches my breast  
 Oh my god  
 It's the weirdest thing  
 It feels so good and so stupid  
 My laugh gets muffled inside his mouth.

DEAN: What? What?

THE GIRL: Nothing just.

DEAN: Have you ever been felt up? Huh? No?

I watch him feel me up  
 Pressing, squeezing, rubbing  
 First one boob and then the other.

*She observes her boobs being felt up.*

It's okay I guess  
 But I want to kiss  
 I clamp my mouth onto his  
 My tongue snaking his lips open  
 It feels like a slip n' slide in there.  
 He moans and I realize  
 I'm not a bad kisser  
 I'm a *good* kisser.  
 Oh my god *Dean* is the bad kisser that's what!  
 How am I going to tell him that I love his brother not him  
 That I'm just using him for kissing practice.  
 I'm starting to feel sorry for him.  
 It's hard to make-out with someone when you feel sorry for  
 them.

Zabby and Lynny are banging on the door

(MORE)

(cont'd)

ZABBY: Okay Spaz time's up.

Zabby shoves her way in

ZABBY: Time's up Dean I'm not kidding!

DEAN: Okay. She's ugly and doesn't know how to kiss anyway.

You're pathetic, is what I'm thinking  
But I don't say it  
Tonight is bigger than Dean.

It's after midnight.

Don-o promised to drive us to Morningstar in one of his crap cars for another twenty dollars that we don't have. If this is going to happen tonight is the night but Don-o is nowhere.

SKINNY LYNNY: What if he blew us off? We can't walk the whole way.

He's not even that late, I say.

SKINNY LYNNY: I couldn't find very many halters.

ZABBY: Okay how many Lynny?

None she says.

ZABBY: Shit Lynny. What about ropes we gotta have ropes.

I say I've got four.  
How are we gonna lead all those horses?

ZABBY: I guess we're gonna lead *four* horses because that's how many ropes we have.

SKINNY LYNNY: Where is Don-o anyway?

ZABBY: Probably in a fight with his girlfriend.

SKINNY LYNNY: I wouldn't want to fight with Tina White.  
Tina's mean to the max.

ZABBY: She could totally beat him up. Did you bring gloves?

SKINNY LYNNY: I have a pair of Playtex rubber gloves. See, they're yellow.

ZABBY: *Playtex?*

SKINNY LYNNY: Rubber will keep us from getting electrocuted, just in case.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

All of a sudden we're in headlights  
A car is slowing down  
I have a feeling  
It's him, it's Don-o, it's him.  
I try to just be cool not stupid  
but everything in me is fizzy

THE GIRL: Hi Hey.

He doesn't look up doesn't say anything.  
And Zabby says Nice of you to show up, Don-o.

DON-O: I'm going home. I'm beat.

ZABBY: What about driving us?

DON-O: Not tonight kiddo. Sorry.

ZABBY: You're too tired to drive us five miles? Why, 'cause  
you're a dick?

DON-O: Maybe. Maybe I am a dick.

You are a dick says Zabby.

He's staring at his steering wheel, doesn't take the bait.

ZABBY: You definitely are Don-o.

THE GIRL: Zabby forget it, we can walk.

ZABBY: Yeah he has enough energy to hump his girlfriend all  
night but not enough to do what he *promised*.

DON-O: Look I said I'm sorry.

ZABBY: Great, why don't you go fuck yourself, dick?

Zabby throws the Playtex gloves at her brother.

ZABBY: We're walking to Morningstar because my brother  
is a *dick*.

She stalks off into the dark.  
Skinny Lynny waits a minute, grabs the gloves, goes.  
I'm standing alone in the headlights.

THE GIRL: Hey it's totally cool if you don't take us.

Don-o finally looks up, his eyes round, soft.  
He's looking at me like  
He's looking at me.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

DON-O: Do you know how pretty you are?

This is it  
This is the night  
He's looking at me  
Tina's pregnant he says  
He stares at the steering wheel.

Oh.

That's it.  
He drives away slowly  
Leaves me in the dark.

*Music: 'Horse With No Name'*

The girl who won the contest that summer?  
She was from Bakersfield  
I didn't know they even had horses in Bakersfield.  
"Amirage", that was the winning name.  
Amirage.

*(beat)*

It's a really good name.

We're walking and walking, but I don't know anymore  
It seems like a stupid idea now  
Saving horses saving anything.  
Thinking Don-o was a possibility when all the time he was  
just something I made up.  
But right then we were there  
We were at Morningstar  
With our ropes and our rubber gloves and our plan  
A really stupid plan.  
*(whispered)*  
You guys wait a minute. Wait a minute.

Starlight falling on the hills so it looks like a dark day  
not night  
Too bright, too easy to see.  
But we are cutting the unelectrified barbed wire  
Walking through  
Skinny Lynny somehow managing to get her hair caught on the  
barbs.

*(whispered)*

Wait you guys!  
Walking softly, clucking and cooing  
Holding out carrots and apples

Here horsie

*(clucking)*

*(whispered)*

Sssh!

A couple of horses trot away.

*(whispered)*

Go slow.

*(clucking)*

Come on, come here horse.

Zabby slips a rope over the neck of a mangy bay mare  
Skinny Lynny stalks a zippered buckskin and a greedy palomino  
I stand there.

*What are we doing? What does it matter? We can't save them  
all.*

Warm breath on my neck my ears

It would feel nice if it weren't a horse and I wasn't scared.

THE GIRL: You guys look!

Ssshhh!

An appaloosa

Young, probably green, but super friendly

She likes me, I don't know why

I don't have any carrots.

She's nuzzling

Aw

Super sweet.

SKINNY LYNNY: Whoa whoa whoa!

Skinny Lynny is kind of being led by the buckskin and  
the palomino.

Zabby is trying to make the bay move.

The appaloosa lets me pet her

I put the rope around her --

*The Girl looks underneath for  
confirmation*

*His*

His neck.

Smooth and shiny grey with light spots.

He walks with me like we've been doing this forever

Like we were meant to be.

We start up the hill

Away from Morningstar.

We are doing this, we are saving these horses!

Not doing something wrong but making something right.

Oh crap they're coming says Zabby.

SKINNY LYNNY: What, no way who?

We don't know who or what but they are in a truck

They are driving across the dark dirt pasture straight at us.

ZABBY: Giddy-up, come on let's go, let's book!

Her horse is a statue.

ZABBY: Oh forget it.

She looses her horse and slaps its rump with the rope.

ZABBY: Run away, be free you idiot!

The mangey bay just stands there. Why doesn't she want to be free? What are we doing? I can't think.

Skinny Lynny's horses are dancing around  
Yanking her long arms.

SKINNY LYNNY: Hey hey, you stop that. I'm taking you to a  
better place so back off.

Her horses aren't interested in going anywhere but back to  
Morningstar, they drag her down the hill through cactus  
towards the coming truck  
Crazy Lynny, she's crying, swearing  
Zabby is like Let go, let go, let go they're gonna kill you!  
Finally finally Skinny Lynny releases her death grip  
Her horses fly away.  
Ropes and tails trailing behind them

*(Clucking)*

Come on

Me and my Appy start trotting up the hill

Faster, faster come on!

We have a head start they won't follow they can't

Stupid truck doesn't fit through the fence

But they jump out of their truck and start running

Fuckity-fuck.

ZABBY: Shine it, let's get out of here!

No way Zabby, I'm not letting go.

*(Clucking)*

The men are yelling something about jail and our asses

Zabby and Lynny are screaming

*What are you doing?*

I don't know.

I didn't know that night that my sister would swallow a  
bottle of pills

Pills that she stole from her married boyfriend's mother

I didn't know.

*(Clucking)*

I keep running, running

Out of breath, out of my mind.

I didn't know that night my mom would be waiting for George  
to pick her up

Take her away.

I didn't know.

*(Clucking)*

They're closing the distance, those guys are fast.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

Come on, come on! There's no way I think  
Then I rethink.  
Whoa!  
I stop the appy.  
*What are you doing?*  
I climb onto his back  
His shiny slippery strong back.  
I wrap my hands in his wiry grey-black-white mane  
Like my mom's hair when she doesn't dye it  
I lean against his neck, squeeze, my legs hold on.

*The Girl leans forward, and rides.*

It's happening  
We are running, running  
Starlight falling on the hills  
Hope riding fear  
Running free  
It's happening.

Zabby and Lynny scatter shouting  
Keep going you're almost there, almost!  
Zabby on the hillside  
Her arms overhead screaming  
Go go go!  
And then what?  
We keep running  
And then what?

In three weeks Skinny Lynny will go to the doctor to have  
infected cactus quills removed from her belly.  
She'll move to a 400-acre ranch in Northern California where  
she'll have horses  
She'll break her neck riding one  
I'll never see her again.

The house is lit up when I get home  
It's not even daylight and I'm already busted.  
I'm filthy  
Covered in horse hair and dried blood  
There's nothing I can say or do  
I am dead.  
The house is quiet inside  
My mom is awake  
More awake than I've seen her in the middle of the day.  
She's watching The Favorite who's asleep on the couch.  
They had to give her something to make her throw up, get the  
pills out, says my mother. She's alright. I don't know why.  
Why would she take so many pills? Does she talk to you? Do  
you and Carrie-Ann talk?

I sit next to her  
Mom leans her head on my shoulder  
We look at Carrie-Ann asleep.

(MORE)

(cont'd)

THE MOTHER: Did Carrie-Ann tell you about George?

THE GIRL: God Mom.

THE MOTHER: He got bad news. Very bad news. Cancer.  
Fast-growing, terminal.

THE GIRL: Oh.

THE MOTHER: He has maybe two months to live.

THE GIRL: That's fast.

THE MOTHER: He said. He said he just couldn't do that to me.

THE GIRL: I look at her. I can see it, the desperation.  
Would you, Mom? Would you leave us?

Her, silence.

THE MOTHER: Missy you could have been dead. In the road.  
You could be dead and I'd be sitting here.

THE GIRL: I'm not dead. I stole a horse. The owners at  
Morningstar caught me and called the police  
I think they're pressing charges.

THE MOTHER: *Why?*

THE GIRL: Mom *it's illegal.*

THE MOTHER: Why did you steal a horse? Tonight of all nights?

In six months when she's out shopping my mother will run into  
George. He'll be with another woman.  
He won't have a lot to say.

My dad comes up from the basement.  
I offer to get the belt but he shakes his head no  
Goes back to the basement.  
Okay.  
I'm here.

*Music: "Wild Horses" The Rolling Stones*

The Morningstar people never did press charges. They knew  
that we knew about the dead horse, the horse with no name.  
They said it had been "inadvertently hobbled". Whatever. They  
closed down within a year. Maybe we had something to do with  
that.

That summer we knew what we'd been through was something  
real. Something that changed everything. We weren't freedom  
fighters, we were *freedom takers*

Clutching fistfuls of it like thieves of air  
Like starved spirits.  
That's how I remember it.

That summer we made a pact to no matter what, meet at Tastee  
Freeze every ten years.

*The Woman looks around.*

It's not a Tastee Freeze anymore, but I keep coming back  
Keep thinking that...

Right after high school Zabby got married, got religion. We  
lost touch. I guess she's still married, still loves Jesus.  
She might even be the mother of teens, like me.  
Corruption fodder.  
Irreverent, erupting  
Searching and stealing  
Freedom takers.

The WOMAN acknowledges the audience,  
then exits.  
Lights snap out.

END OF PLAY