

The Lynching of a White Man in Rural, CA

by

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Cast of Characters

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes:

1 - "/" in the text indicates overlapping.

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

3 - underlined text means that Aaron is writing. It takes him as long to say the text as it takes to write it.

4 - double-underlined text means that Aaron says this text and then crosses it out.

5 - dotted-underlined text means that he says this text, without writing it, and crosses it out.

5 - "beat" is a short pause; "pause" is a medium-length pause; beats and pauses are natural, rhythmic, passive components of speech.

6 - "HOLD" is a long, anticipatory pause where both characters are speechless but retain energy from what was just said; "SILENCE" is a long pause that is generally a response to a direct question or an instance in which there is nothing to say; HOLDs and SILENCEs are active components of speech.

7 - In reality, there is no such thing as the "I Heart Milton Glaser" commemorative stamp collection.

Frat Boy Suggestions for Act One/Scene III:

(Should be a mash-up, not too intelligible.)

BROTHER ONE (O.S.)

Brother Hayes? This is the ASPCA. We've received reports that you are harboring a large, furry, animal with curved horns. Can you come /out here?

BROTHER TWO (O.S.)

/BEWARE THE BEAST!!! (followed by /animal sounds).

More pounding.

BROTHER THREE (O.S.)

(affecting a bad David
Attenborough accent)

/And here we have a fine example of Brother Aaron Hayes meeting a Wildebeest at the watering hole. /See how he stalks her while he remains camouflaged by the fronds of a large banana plant!

BROTHER FOUR (O.S.)

(panicked)

/Aaron! Aaron! Open up! It's a stampede out here! /Help!
Help!

There is pounding on the door in quick procession like the pounding of hooves.

BROTHER FIVE (O.S.)

/WILDEBEEST!!! (snorting and braying)

BROTHER SIX (O.S.)

(panicked)

He/lp!

BROTHER SEVEN (O.S.)

(panicked)

Help me! /Help me!

BROTHER EIGHT (O.S.)

(panicked)

She's gonna eat me!

Pounding.

BROTHER ONE (O.S.)

Come on, open up, Brother Hayes!

They laugh with drunken mania. They think they're hilarious.

BROTHER TWO (O.S.)
(panicked)

Let us /in!!

BROTHER THREE (O.S.)
/Let us /in!!

BROTHER FOUR (O.S.)
/Let us in!!

ACT ONE

SCENE I: A TINY AIRPORT/A LONELY TRUCK STOP

At rise: Mid-afternoon. It's hot and bright. ELIZABETH Hazzard Hayes (late - 40's) a handsome woman sits at a bus stop at an airport. She wears a crisp new tourist's t-shirt. She has khakis on. Comfortable shoes. She has a pocketbook, and no luggage. Her wool sweater sits folded next to her in a bag from the airport gift store. She watches a car drive far away in the distance.

She has a large envelope in her lap. It's full of hand-written letters. It's addressed and there are a number of stamps on it from the "I Heart Milton Glaser" commemorative stamp collection.

RISE on ...

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

Elizabeth begins to read a letter that was torn from a spiral notebook.

AARON

May seventeenth. Blue Hill, Maine. Wild Blueberries.

Dear Mimsy,

It's official. Your son is an industrial bee keeper.

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

AARON (cont'd)

This is the fourth letter that I'm writing tonight and my hand hurts. I guess I don't write too much anymore. I type now. My hands don't remember how to do something as small as writing. I could send you an email. There's an internet cafe here. But, I know you like notes and I actually like the way this all feels.

He wrings his hands. Blister.

AARON (cont'd)

I worked so hard. We put out about forty hives today and they were a little awkward and my hands rubbed. But, still, it feels good to be a part of something. We're all working so hard. Everybody helps each other. I'm a part of it and ... everyone knows it. It's special. Jimmy says that our hives can improve a harvest by 30%. Maybe more. I love thinking about that.

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

My best to Grammy and Humpa.

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

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

He tears the paper out of the spiral notebook. He puts it in an envelope and seals it. He addresses the envelope. He adds it to a stack of envelopes that is bound by a paperclip.

LIGHT OUT on Aaron

End of Scene

Seamless transition into:

SCENE II: A TINY AIRPORT

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

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

HAPPY
(a Mexican accent)
You like a Coke?

ELIZABETH
What?

She folds the letter up and puts it away.

HAPPY
You look like you want a Coke.

ELIZABETH
Oh. No, thank you.

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

He fans himself with his hand.

HAPPY (cont'd)
... thirsty. You change your shirt.

ELIZABETH
Oh, the gift shop. Yeah.

HAPPY
You look like you want a Coke. ~~No charge.~~

ELIZABETH
No, no. That's alright.

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

ELIZABETH (cont'd)
They ran out of rental cars. Can you imagine?

HAPPY
Small airport. It happens all the time.

ELIZABETH
I'm waiting for the bus.

HAPPY
Bus?

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

HAPPY
Not today. I don't think so.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

Happy looks at his watch.

HAPPY

Sunday, today. Today, no more.

ELIZABETH

I have a schedule.

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

HAPPY

"Monday to Friday." See?

He flips it over.

HAPPY (cont'd)

"Saturday and Sunday. Holidays." Today is Sunday.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

HAPPY

Maybe ... I take you where you need to go.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I saw you here in the morning. Usually, I don't come here at this time. No more flights, in or out. But, I come back to see if you're okay. Come, I'm Happy. I take you where you need to go.

He extends his hand. Elizabeth shakes it, carefully.

ELIZABETH

You're happy?

HAPPY

My name is Happy.

ELIZABETH

Oh. Elizabeth.

HAPPY

Elizabeth. Elizabeth Taylor.

ELIZABETH

Right. Happy.

HAPPY

Queen Elizabeth. Look, see?

He points.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Over there. That is my taxi cab.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

HAPPY

Best cab anywhere! Very clean. I wash it every night.

ELIZABETH

I wasn't sure you were a taxi.

HAPPY

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

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

Look.

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

ELIZABETH

Yes.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Only a little.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

It's very impressive.

Happy opens the cooler.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HAPPY

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

He points in the cooler.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I have also, horchata, sandwiches. Also my wife made it.

ELIZABETH

I-

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Uhm ...

HAPPY

Name your favorite.

ELIZABETH

(no hesitation)

Fleetwood Mac.

He searches through the iPod.

HAPPY

I have ... Greatest Hits. Okay?

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Good enough. Let's go.

HAPPY

Yeah? Great. Okay. Where are you going?

ELIZABETH

San Bernardo.

HAPPY

San Bernardo ... sixty dollars.

Elizabeth stands up.

ELIZABETH

Okay.

HAPPY

Why are you going to San Bernardo?

ELIZABETH

That's where the prison is, right?

HAPPY

Oh, yes. You have business at the prison?

ELIZABETH

I'm going to see the men who killed my son. And then I'm going to the juvenile detention center in Hancock, to see the boy they had with them. Are you ready?

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Let's go.

Elizabeth exits. Beat. Happy follows her out.

End of Scene.

SCENE III: AN ORCHARD

A buzzing bee hive.

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

He stands before a white industrial bee hive. It is a set of wooden boxes, one on top of the other. His stack of letters rests on the ground. They are held together by a binder clip.

He smokes a cigarette.

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

The buzzing quiets down.

AARON

(cigarette dangling from his
lip)

August Twelfth. Orleans, New York. Empire Apples.

Dear Mimsy,

I'm in New York today.

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

AARON (cont'd)

I stopped back at school just to check out Orientation and see some people at the fraternity. I, uh ... I saw Hannah again. I know you told me I need to give it time, but, there were just some things that I still wanted to say and I thought that if she ... well, you know, I did everything I could, so ... Anyway, I met a girl there. (Beat.) Really, interesting ... nice-interesting ... nice actually ...

CHLOE, 18, a freshman enters. She is a chunky girl and she wears a dress that's just a little bit too fancy for a frat party. Not a conventional beauty. She's from one of the boroughs of New York City, but she doesn't have the street smarts. She enters wearing a helmet with horns on it -- the butt of some cruel joke.

She has Jell-O shots in her hands.

LIGHTS RISE on a dirty, old couch.

CHLOE
(New York accent)

Hey.

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

AARON

Hey.

Beat.

CHLOE

You guys should clean the bathroom a little better.

AARON

(joking)

I don't live here, so you can't blame me.

CHLOE

Yeah. Sorry I took so long.

AARON

That's okay.

CHLOE

Thanks for waiting.

AARON

No problem. (pointing at her horns) Who gave you those?

CHLOE

Oh, one of your brothers. Nathan?

Aaron's cell phone beeps. He has a new text message.

AARON

Speak of the devil.

He reads the message. The message makes him laugh, then it makes him nervous. He deletes it.

CHLOE

He's your Big Brother, right?

AARON

Uhm, my Big-Big. Yeah.

CHLOE

("What's that?")

Oh.

AARON

I don't know why he keeps coming around. He graduated last year.

CHLOE

Oh.

AARON

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

CHLOE

(A little worried.)

Oh.

AARON

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

CHLOE

Okay.

AARON

Yeah?

CHLOE

(flirty)

Just don't try anything.

AARON

Yeah.

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

AARON (cont'd)

Thanks.

CHLOE

Nathan said that as long as I wear these, you have to do whatever I say. 'cause I'm the Wildebeest, now, right?

AARON

Uh, yeah, that's right.

Another text message comes in. Aaron checks it.

AARON (cont'd)

Sorry.

CHLOE

Nathan?

AARON

No.

He deletes it.

CHLOE

You're popular.

AARON

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

CHLOE

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

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

CHLOE (cont'd)

Mm.

AARON

Good.

CHLOE

I can hardly taste any alcohol at all, right?

AARON

No. They're good.

CHLOE

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

AARON

I think it's vodka.

CHLOE

No, I'm talking about these.

She shows him another shot. He looks at it.

AARON

Oh, cool. That's a first.

CHLOE

(a command)

Eat it.

AARON

Okay.

Aaron eats it. Chloe eats hers too.

CHLOE

(a little dizzy)

Wow.

AARON

You like champagne?

CHLOE

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

AARON

Really?

CHLOE

This doesn't count, right?

AARON

No.

CHLOE

(as in "no")

Then, mm-mm.

SILENCE.

AARON

Uh, my dad bought a bottle of Dom Perignon on the day I was born.

CHLOE

Wow.

AARON

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

CHLOE

Wow.

AARON

We're going to have a big party. The whole family.

CHLOE

Oh. That's so cool.

AARON

Yeah. You can come if you want.

CHLOE

Really?

AARON

Yeah.

CHLOE

Where's your house?

AARON

We live on The Cape. Cape Cod.

Beat.

CHLOE

I would really, really like that, actually.

AARON

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

CHLOE

Okay.

AARON

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

CHLOE

Yeah!

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

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

CHLOE (cont'd)

Let me see.

They look at it.

AARON

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

CHLOE

Like a snarling beast!

AARON

Yeah, like a total Wildebeest!

CHLOE

Okay.

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

AARON

Perfect.

CHLOE

Yeah?

AARON

Really. It's perfect.

CHLOE

Cool. You want to kiss me?

Beat.

AARON

Okay.

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

CHLOE

(worried)

How was that?

AARON

Good.

CHLOE

Tell me if it's not, okay?

AARON

Yeah.

CHLOE

Thanks.

She kisses him again.

CHLOE (cont'd)

You're a good kisser.

AARON

Thanks.

CHLOE

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

AARON

What?

CHLOE

No. Lions eat Wildebeest. Wildebeest eat grass.

AARON

Really?

CHLOE

Yeah.

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

CHLOE (cont'd)

Am I doing it alright?

AARON

Uh, yeah.

CHLOE

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

AARON

Really?

CHLOE

Yeah. It's okay?

AARON

Yeah. Yeah, it's ...

He takes the horns off her head.

AARON (cont'd)

You're a good kisser too.

CHLOE

Thanks.

She kisses him deeply. It's lovely.

CHLOE (cont'd)

(steamy)

Hey.

AARON

Hey.

CHLOE

I don't feel so good.

AARON

Oh. That's okay.

CHLOE

I really like you. I just ...

AARON

It's okay.

CHLOE

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

AARON

No. That's fine.

CHLOE

Thanks.

She puts her head in his lap.

AARON

You okay?

CHLOE

Ughh.

AARON

I got so drunk on Jell-O shots last year. I puked for days.

CHLOE

Yeah. (Beat.) Your bathroom is really disgusting.

AARON

I know. It's like ... the most disturbing thing I've seen in my entire life.

They laugh.

CHLOE

(half-conscious, a little
mournful)

So, you're not going to be here next week, huh?

AARON

Yeah. I'm heading South. Tomatoes.

He touches her hair.

CHLOE

That's cool.

AARON

Yeah.

CHLOE

Mm. That feels good.

AARON

Oh. Cool.

CHLOE

You like bee-keeping?

AARON

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

CHLOE

What's that?

AARON

All the bees leave the hive. I went to pick it up and it was so light. I freaked out. We looked all over and finally Hector, this guy I work with, spots them in a tree. And I climbed the tree and sprayed the bees down with sugar water so they'd be too heavy to fly.

CHLOE

Doesn't that kill them?

AARON

They eat it off each other. They were fine. So, then we put a sheet under them and shook the branch until all the bees fell down.

He caresses her arm. Their fingers find a way to intertwine.

AARON (cont'd)

The queen was gone, so we had to buy another one. They're going to FedEx her to us.

CHLOE

That's cool.

AARON

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

CHLOE

(as in "obviously")

Uh, Queen.

AARON

I'd rather be a worker.

CHLOE

Worker bees don't ask, "Who would you rather beeazzz?"

She giggles. He laughs too.

AARON

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

CHLOE

I don't know. "What's over there?"

AARON

Yeah.

CHLOE

That's really cool, Aaron. I'm just washing dishes at Okenshield's right now. But, my advisor thinks I can work in her lab next year.

AARON

Chloe ... that's awesome.

CHLOE

Yeah. (Beat.) Why did you come back?

AARON

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

CHLOE

Oh. Was that weird?

AARON

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

CHLOE

Well, she's crazy. You're like the nicest guy.

Aaron picks up the horns and looks at them.

AARON

Yeah, right.

He puts them down.

CHLOE

I used to go to the movies with my dad every week, but I guess we can't do that anymore.

Beat.

AARON

No.

Another text messages comes in. Aaron checks it. He's ashamed.

Chloe falls asleep.

Another text messages comes in. Aaron checks it. It angers him.

AARON (cont'd)

You have a good time tonight?

CHLOE

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

Chloe falls asleep.

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

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

Gently, Aaron stands up.

AARON

(out to the audience, but, to
Elizabeth)

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

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

AARON (cont'd)

I thought that was really cool ... but, Westinghouse Prizes, Cornell ... The Atlantic ...

He shakes his head.

AARON (cont'd)

Is it vain to think that my path is supposed to be different?
Special?

There is a loud pounding on the door.
He hears it.

He puts the cage in the hive, trying to ignore the pounding.

From off-stage, we hear Aaron's fraternity brothers baying like jackals and pounding on the door. They laugh hysterically. The following should flow out in a frantic jumble. Text messages continue to come in throughout the scene.

[See notes: for a sample of what they might be saying.]

Aaron puts the hive back together. The FRAT BOYS begin to chant:

FRAT BOYS (O.S.)

(whispering)

For as Webster's defines a "wildebeest" as "a large furry animal with curved horns" ... the Wildebeest of the Week Award goes to ... Brother AARON HAYES!

AARON

I hope they accept the new queen.

AARON (cont'd)

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

FRAT BOYS

(singing to the tune of "The More We Come Together")
HERE'S TO BROTHER HAYES,
BROTHER HAYES, BROTHER HAYES
HERE'S TO BROTHER HAYES, HE'S WITH US TONIGHT
HE'S HAPPY HE'S JOLLY, HE LOVES PIGS BY GOLLY
HERE'S TO BROTHER HAYES, HE'S WITH US TONIGHT!

Aaron flips open his phone and looks at the pictures. He looks at Chloe.

AARON

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

FRAT BOYS (O.S.) (cont'd)

(getting louder)

SO DRINK-CHUG-A-LUG-A-DRINK-
CHUG-A-LUG-A
DRINK-CHUG-A-LUG-A-DRINK-CHUG-
A-LUG-A
(they switch to the tune of
"O come all ye faithful")
WHY ARE WE WAITING, WE COULD
BE MASTURBATING
WHY ARE WE WAITING FOR YOU!
TO! DRINK!

AARON

Tell Dad I say, "Hello." And tell him I'm doing really,
really well.

Aaron breaks the phone apart in his
hands. The FRAT BOYS go silent.

The baying starts up again:

FRAT BOYS (O.S.)

(scary, quiet)

WHY ARE WE WAITING, WHY ARE WE WAITING, WHY ARE WE WAITING
...

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

AARON

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Late Summer.

P.s. Don't forget to recycle.

He puts the piece of cardboard in his
stack of letters.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

The singing continues and FADES OUT.

End of Scene.

Seamless transition into:

SCENE IV: THE SIDE OF A ROAD

HAPPY enters with a basket full of strawberries.

HAPPY

Fresh from the field.

He holds the strawberries out to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

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

HAPPY

You should wash them before you eat them.

ELIZABETH

Alright.

She takes the bottle and pours it over the strawberries.

HAPPY

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

I ... wash it better than that.

She pours more water.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Better.

Happy looks in the engine.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Ah! I can't believe it.

ELIZABETH

It's very hot today.

HAPPY

I never have any problems with this car.

ELIZABETH

My father has a car with such a bad radiator, he has to turn the air conditioning off when he's driving up hill. I think he got it from one of the grounds ... keepers or something. Yeah.

HAPPY

I had a tune-up fours days ago.

Elizabeth takes a bite out of a strawberry.

ELIZABETH

It's hot.

HAPPY

Hm?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Good, no?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Leather?

ELIZABETH

Mm.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Hm, when I was riding a horse I was picking up rubber that I found on the side of the road. My hands ... smelled like rubber.

ELIZABETH

Do your strawberries taste like rubber?

Happy laughs.

HAPPY

Definitely no.

Elizabeth eats another strawberry.

ELIZABETH

Mm. I miss that smell.

HAPPY

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

He looks down at his watch.

HAPPY (cont'd)

My cousin will be here any minute.

ELIZABETH

That really is a damn good strawberry.

HAPPY

I'm glad you like it.

She takes another bite.

ELIZABETH

Mm.

She points in the distance. Happy looks out.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I've never seen anything like this. Last time we were here all I saw was the shoulder pad of a black, wool suit. Just crying. Crying. Now, look at all those people.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

No. It was this time of year. Last summer. Yeah. It was hot. I just didn't see anything. Now look at all these people. When we were first driving up, I mean, like from a distance, they looked like ... I thought, "What colorful sheep!"

HAPPY

No, it's people. Crawling.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Strawberries is to the ground.

ELIZABETH

Shouldn't there be a machine to do that?

HAPPY

Body's a machine.

ELIZABETH

You think so?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Hm.

ELIZABETH

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

HOLD.

Happy points.

HAPPY

That was me when I first come.

ELIZABETH

Picking strawberries?

HAPPY

Bend to the ground with the knife.

ELIZABETH

Sounds miserable.

HAPPY

Oh yeah. It puts rust on a body.

ELIZABETH

Did you hate it?

HAPPY

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

He points to the strawberry in Elizabeth's hand.

HAPPY (cont'd)

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

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Congressman.

HAPPY

Oh, sorry. Congressman. Is Congressman better?

ELIZABETH

(as in "it depends")

Who are you asking?

Beat.

HAPPY

(decides Congressman is best)

Congressman.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Good.

HAPPY

Everybody follow.

ELIZABETH

Good.

HOLD.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

That was a horrible thing they did to my son, wasn't it?

HAPPY

Yes, of course.

ELIZABETH

You all thought it was horrible, right?

Beat.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

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

Elizabeth stops crying. She wipes away her tears.

Beat.

HAPPY

Why you come?

Beat.

ELIZABETH

To ... see him. Them.

She looks around.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

This.

HAPPY

Why you want to see them?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Going to be night soon.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

No. That's alright.

HAPPY

I am happy to pay.

He points to his car.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I find someone to take you tomorrow. I find you another cab.

ELIZABETH

But, I want you to drive me.

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah. I think, maybe no is possible.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

How much is the hotel?

Beat.

HAPPY

Not so much.

ELIZABETH

How much for the tow? Repairs.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

At this hour the hotel will charge you a fortune. How many fares will you need to make up the difference?

HAPPY

Business.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Me?

ELIZABETH

You have a room? I'm sure your wife keeps a tidy house. (as
in "judging from your looks") Look at you. I'm sure there's
something on the stove. I'll call it square for a room
tonight. You got good strawberries.

HAPPY

I don't think-

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I'm sorry?

ELIZABETH

I like sitting in your cab, Happy. (Beat.) It's a good cab.

Pause.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

That's right.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

If you insist.

Happy begins to make a call on his cell
phone.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

How many daughters do you have?

HAPPY

I have two.

ELIZABETH

How old are they?

HAPPY

One is nine. One is eleven.

ELIZABETH

Nice.

HAPPY

Very nice.

ELIZABETH

Do they like strawberries?

HAPPY

I think so.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

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

LIGHTS OUT on Elizabeth and Happy.

End of Scene.

SCENE V: A SCRAPPY PIECE OF LAWN

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron.

He is very tan. His hair is long. He has a beard. His skin is dusty and worn. There is litter on the ground.

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

The stack of letters has grown, but most of the letters are written on found paper -- flyers, cardboard, napkins, etc.

AARON

February eighth. Weslaco, Texas. Cantaloupes.

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

AARON (cont'd)

Dear Mimsy,

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

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

He paints sunglasses on the sun.

AARON (cont'd)

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

He paints a smile on the sun's face.

AARON (cont'd)

Now I think it's hilarious.

He starts to paint grass.

AARON (cont'd)

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

He paints flowers on the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

But, she says it like she's Tarzan, like "Me Cantaloupe," because ... because ... well, she has no hippocampus.

This cracks him up.

AARON (cont'd)

I mean, Jesus. Come on.

He paints little bees on the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

Let's get some perspective.

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

AARON (cont'd)

(no laughing)

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

Beat.

AARON (cont'd)

No.

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

AARON (cont'd)
I quit working with Jimmy this week.

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

He points at Aaron's hive.

JIMMY
(Boston accent)
That one empty too?

AARON
Pretty much.

JIMMY
Damn!

AARON
Sorry.

JIMMY
Anything left?

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

JIMMY
Shit.

AARON
Sorry. You think it's the mites.

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

AARON
Yeah. Shit.

Beat.

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

AARON
Oh. (Beat.) Really?

JIMMY

Got to do it. I've lost eighteen hives this month.

AARON

Yeah, I know.

JIMMY

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

AARON

I know.

JIMMY

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

AARON

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

JIMMY

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

AARON

No that's good.

JIMMY

And, he's got a family.

AARON

Right.

JIMMY

I'm real sorry.

AARON

I'll work for half.

JIMMY

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

AARON

Probably.

JIMMY

Your dad'll get them to take you. You can look Old Jimmy up next summer.

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

(laughing)

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

AARON

Yeah.

Beat.

JIMMY

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

AARON

No.

JIMMY

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

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

You can bet on it.

AARON

Yeah.

JIMMY

That's right. I'm telling you. We've all been there brother. But, still, got to get back on the horse.

AARON

Yeah. (Beat.) I'll stay for free. I'll call it an independent study. I'll get class credit.

JIMMY

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

AARON

Yeah. Where you guys going next?

JIMMY

California.

AARON

That's what I thought.

JIMMY

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

Jimmy extends his hand.

Beat.

Aaron shakes it.

JIMMY (cont'd)

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

Jimmy slaps Aaron on the shoulder.

AARON

Thanks.

Jimmy tussles Aaron's hair and begins to exit.

AARON (cont'd)

I'm staying, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Aaron, look, I-

AARON

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

JIMMY

This is no place /to stay.

AARON

/I already made up my mind.

He points at the hive.

AARON (cont'd)

Will you leave me these supers?

JIMMY

I thought you said they were empty.

AARON

They are.

JIMMY

Well, the hive's dead, Aaron. They're not coming back.

AARON

Yeah, I know.

JIMMY

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

AARON

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

JIMMY

I'm sorry, Man.

AARON

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

JIMMY

Sure. Sure, you can have them supers. But, Ronnie, you can't stay here. It's not the same no more. You've seen Hector. He came from Mexico ten years ago, but now, one of these young guys comes up to "amigo-primo" him, and even when he's got work, he don't want them around. 'cause it's dangerous; it's drugs in the market, it's ... you're a white kid from Sandwich, Ronnie. You got to go back.

Aaron goes back to the hive.

AARON

Thanks, Jimmy. I appreciate it.

JIMMY

Alright, man. Alright.

LIGHTS FADE on JIMMY. He exits.

AARON

(out to the audience, but to
Elizabeth)

So, that was it. I just quit. Jimmy and Hector went off to California and I'm going to stay in Texas for a bit. I made some good friends and I'm going to be working the fields with them for a while. We're planting the seeds right now. Seed by seed. Don't you think that's amazing? We have to put each seed in the ground. Every melon you find in the store was put into the ground by hand.

I'm living with my friends now. I like it. Everyone has pets. Chickens, pigs, goats. Something you can sell or eat if you have to. But, they call them pets. I think I'm going to get a kitten.

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

AARON (cont'd)

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

You know there are no native honey bees in America, right? They were brought over on the Mayflower. Yeah. The Indians called them "The White Man's Flies," and when they saw them ... they knew we were coming. (Beat.) Honey was one of the staples that had to be brought over from England. So, you see? Maybe it's in our blood. (Beat) Honey and travel. (Beat.) Oceans and fields.

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

He starts to write again.

AARON (cont'd)

I think it's time to sign off now. Someone in town has kittens and rabbits to look at. I want to see. Tell Dad I hope he's well. And I don't need a new phone. People still use pay phones out here. And anyway, cell phones are killing the bees. Please, give my love to Grammy and Humpa. Te quiero todos.

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Winter.

He tears the paper out and adds it to his letters. He puts the letters in a manila envelope.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

End of Scene.

Seamless transition into:

SCENE VI: A MODEST DRIVEWAY

The small, tinny radio continues to play.

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

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

ELIZABETH

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

Hola, Amigo.

HAPPY

(fine with it)

Hola, Señora.

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

ELIZABETH

Hello. Chilly at night.

HAPPY

Sometimes.

He wipes his hand on a cloth.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You get reception out here?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, not too bad.

HAPPY

What service do you use?

ELIZABETH

Me? Uh ... I think Verizon?

She looks at her phone.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

Yeah, Verizon.

HAPPY

Oh. Me too.

ELIZABETH

We can call each other for free!

HAPPY

Hey!

ELIZABETH

Yeah. I'm happy with it. You?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Ah! My daughter wants that one too.

ELIZABETH

Monica?

HAPPY

(not "An-hel-lina")

Angelina.

ELIZABETH

Is she old enough to have a cell phone?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Are you going to get her one?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Oh, that's a good idea.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

They're both lovely girls.

HAPPY

Their mother will be glad you think so.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Oh, yeah.

ELIZABETH

I had a very nice time tonight.

HAPPY

The room is okay?

ELIZABETH

Sure. Beautiful.

HAPPY

Good.

ELIZABETH

Five Stars.

HAPPY

(as in "don't exaggerate")

Okay-okay. I'm glad you are happy.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Happy, I'm happy.

Beat.

HAPPY

(amused, but not amused enough
to laugh aloud)

Oh. Ha-ha.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Redondo. I like that.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Why did you change it?

HAPPY

For business.

ELIZABETH

The cab?

HAPPY

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

He points out in the distance.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You look at all that land. There's a boss to all of it. Like a king. But, it's no like everyone in the field working directly with the king. The king, he cut his land into lots of little pieces, but he always wants to lease the best land to the people who will make the most strawberries. So, when me and my brothers first came, we were working for a man named Santiago who was leasing a piece of land from Mr. Yamaguchi, one of the kings. There was another good piece of land in the delta that Mr. Yamaguchi could not find a good family to work on. Everybody fail, because water there is a little tricky, and ... ah ... but more, he have bad luck with people. So, whenever Mr. Yamaguchi come to Santiago's field, I always work extra hard and always put the smile. And when he need someone to drive a truck to Carmel, he says to Santiago, "Can Happy drive?" And since then, I change my name to Happy so Mr. Yamaguchi will always remember me. And two seasons later, he let me and my brothers have the land on the delta with a discount.

ELIZABETH

What was wrong with the land?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

You're still growing strawberries, then.

HAPPY

No me. But my brothers yes.

ELIZABETH

Why no you?

HAPPY

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

He shakes his head.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Taxi cab, they let me buy.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Add it to the list.

ELIZABETH

Of what?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Right. (Beat.) You're a clever man, Happy.

HAPPY

I am doing my best.

ELIZABETH

Is the car alright?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry to hear that.

HAPPY

I have the oil stain on my driveway now.

ELIZABETH

You can pour kitty litter on it!

HAPPY

What?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Monica.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

You've tried it before.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Got it.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Okay, good.

HAPPY

You left something in the car.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

Happy points at a letter sitting under a rock.

HAPPY

Angelina find it when she was vacuuming.

ELIZABETH

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

Happy looks up at her.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

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

HAPPY

Sure.

She hands the letter over. Happy takes a moment to read it. He finishes.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Nice.

ELIZABETH

Thanks. LaBelle Florida. Early Girl Tomatoes. Aaron Early Autumn.

She puts the letter back in the envelope.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

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

HAPPY

No more baby teeth.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I was nineteen when I decide to come North.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Mimsy.

HAPPY

"Dear Mimsy."

ELIZABETH

Oh. Instead of "Mommy." "Mom." I always thought "Mom" was so, so ...

She laughs. She shakes her head.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

... you know.

HAPPY

Mm.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

"Mimsy?"

ELIZABETH

It's from "Alice In Wonderland."

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Actually, "Through the Looking-Glass."

(reciting)

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

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the ...

(not-reciting)

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

(reciting)

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

'Twas brillig, and the slithy ...

... Anyway, it's called "The Jabberwocky."

HAPPY

Yes. We have this poem also in my country.

ELIZABETH

Really?

HAPPY

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

(MORE)

HAPPY (cont'd)

Yes, we have it. See?

ELIZABETH

That's "The Jabberwocky?"

HAPPY

Yes. That's all I remember.

ELIZABETH

"Through the Looking-Glass?"

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Aaron and I loved to read together! I was his Mimsy, and he was my Beamish Boy. Don't you love that poem?!

HAPPY

Yes. It's very silly.

ELIZABETH

(deflated)

Yeah.

HAPPY

Is silly words right?

ELIZABETH

Silly words.

HAPPY

No meant to mean nothing.

ELIZABETH

Nothing. No meant. Ha-ha.

HAPPY

I liked the book.

ELIZABETH

(speaking with condescension to
an unseen conversation
partner)

He likes it.

HAPPY

Yeah. (Beat.) We all liked it.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Good. Was it scary to you?

HAPPY

Scary?

ELIZABETH

Were you scared of The Jabberwocky?

HAPPY

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

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Maybe it's the translation.

HAPPY

Must be.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. "Through the Looking-Glass."

Elizabeth puts the envelope in her pocket.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

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

Beat.

HAPPY

That's no good.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Is he worried?

ELIZABETH

Maybe.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

See-?

ELIZABETH

(suddenly)

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

Pause.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

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

HAPPY

If that's where you want to go.

ELIZABETH

That's where I'm going.

HOLD.

HAPPY

I think maybe you no go.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

Maybe your husband is right.

ELIZABETH

Happy-

HAPPY

Is best thing for you is no go. Right?

ELIZABETH

You think so?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

That's what's best for me.

HAPPY

That's what I think. That is best.

ELIZABETH

That's what you think.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

(edgy)

That's what Happy thinks.

HAPPY

Just my thinks. I-

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

I'm sorry?

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

"I Heart Milton Glaser."

HAPPY

What?

ELIZABETH

The "I Heart Milton Glazer" Commemorative stamp collection. "I Heart NY," "DC Comics," "Windows On The World," "Brooklyn Brewery," "Angels in America." All the stamps have serial numbers. Collectors items.

HAPPY

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

She holds up the letter.

ELIZABETH

You sent this to me didn't you?

HAPPY

No, I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I don't know these letters.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I think is time for bed, maybe.

ELIZABETH

No. You tell me!

HAPPY

Please. Good-night. Please.

She holds up the letter again.

ELIZABETH

Two weeks after I got your package in the mail, your wife, Esmeralda Lugo, paid her cable bill with a stamp from the same book that was used to send my son's letters to me.

"Angels In America." That was the logo on the stamp. She paid for cable with a check. God, I don't know how you people get checking accounts. You sent me these letters!

HAPPY

I-

ELIZABETH

They tracked you down with your stamps! I watched you all day driving that car, picking up your fares. Redondo Lugo. Right where they told me you'd be. Did you buy that car with Aaron's money?

Happy approaches her hands out.

HAPPY

Mrs. Hayes.

Elizabeth stiffens.

ELIZABETH

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

Happy stops.

HAPPY

Mrs. Hayes.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Yes-

ELIZABETH

And you sent me his letters!

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Why?!

HAPPY

I want you to see you have a good son.

ELIZABETH

I know I have a good son!

HAPPY

I can pay you back the money.

ELIZABETH

Did he stay here?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Did he stay here in this house with you?!

Beat.

HAPPY

(confused)

No.

ELIZABETH

House is new. You bought it after he died.

HAPPY

I no can buy a house. Please.

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I don't want the money.

HAPPY

Then why you here?

ELIZABETH

I want you to drive me.

HAPPY

Drive?

ELIZABETH

To San Bernardo. I want you to take me to see those two men who killed him. Then I want to go to that juvie place in Hancock to see the boy that was with them. That boy who ...

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I want you to drive me, Happy!

Beat.

HAPPY

Okay. Whatever you say you want.

ELIZABETH

(soft)

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

HAPPY

Whatever you say.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Yes. I fix.

ELIZABETH

Was it really broken?

HAPPY

Yeah. Was broken. Was problems.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Did they like him?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I'm really tired, Happy.

HAPPY

Yeah. You should sleep.

Elizabeth begins to exit. She stops.

ELIZABETH

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

SILENCE.

HAPPY

Yes. We know.

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

Maybe nothing.

ELIZABETH

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

She exits.

LIGHTS OUT on Happy.

End of Scene.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE I: A LONELY LAUNDROMAT

LIGHTS RISE on Aaron sitting in a Laundromat. The machines pound out their rhythmic cycles. His 8" x 10" envelope sits next to him.

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

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

AARON

April sixth. Santa Alicia, California. Organic Strawberries.

Dear Mimsy,

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

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

AARON (cont'd)

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

He begins to write in a notebook.

AARON (cont'd)

When the fields here were ready, they sent an old school bus down to Texas to get us. It just showed up one day. We barely got any notice, but everyone knew it was time. Everyone but me. I had to seal up my hive and ship it with some guy who had extra room in his pick-up truck.

He stops writing and looks up.

AARON (cont'd)

We drove up and over from Texas and never stopped and it still took us two days to get here. When I finally got my hive back, I could feel that it was too hot from being under the sun. I unsealed it and right away, a bunch of bees crawled out and started beating their wings in front of the entrance trying to cool it down. But, a lot of bees died. I spent the rest of the afternoon watching the workers carrying dead bees out of the hive. It was a lot of bees.

SILENCE.

AARON (cont'd)

I should have had a better plan.

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

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

Actually, we did stop once on the way here. The boss likes to hunt and we stopped at a Bassmaster Pro Shop. Have you ever heard of this store? I'm surprised we don't have one out on The Cape. It's like this camping and hunting store where even the shoppers are wearing camouflage from head-to-toe. And it's huge! Huge like ... Las Vegas and Teddy Roosevelt had sex in the Grand Canyon huge.

They had a waterfall there and under it was a giant pool of water and they actually had fish in it! Huge, huge fish, like catfish that weighed over a hundred pounds. We just sat there watching the fish while the boss bought arrows or bullets or something.

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

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

AARON (cont'd)

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

Aaron approaches him.

AARON (cont'd)

Hey.

DANNY

(Texan accent)

Hey.

AARON

(regarding the fish tank/fourth
wall)

Pretty cool, huh?

DANNY

Yeah.

Beat.

AARON

You fish?

DANNY

Much as I can. You?

AARON

No. No I don't.

DANNY

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

AARON

Which one is that?

DANNY

The green one.

AARON

(pointing)

That one?

DANNY

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

AARON

Yeah.

Pause.

AARON (cont'd)

Who's that baby? I mean, is that your baby?

DANNY

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

AARON

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

DANNY

Twenty.

AARON

Really?

DANNY

Yeah.

AARON

Wow.

DANNY

Wow?

AARON

That's young.

DANNY

Maybe.

AARON

You married?

DANNY

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

AARON

That's cool.

DANNY

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

AARON

Cool.

DANNY

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

AARON

What?

DANNY

The service. It's a good deal.

AARON

Yeah. Maybe.

DANNY

You're American, right?

AARON

What? Yeah.

DANNY

You should think about it then.

AARON

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

DANNY

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

AARON

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

DANNY

For real?

AARON

Yeah.

DANNY

Where were you going?

AARON

Cornell.

DANNY

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

AARON

Yeah.

Beat.

DANNY

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

He nods to unseen people.

AARON

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

DANNY

So you dropped out of Cornell to go picking fruit.

AARON

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

DANNY

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

AARON

Pretty good, I guess.

DANNY

A's?

AARON

Yeah.

DANNY

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

AARON

I went to /Exeter.

DANNY

/Yeah. /See?

AARON

/But, no, you don't have to.

DANNY

(laughing)

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

AARON

Well, it's pretty interesting.

DANNY

Yeah?

AARON

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

DANNY

Thousands of Mexicans.

AARON

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

DANNY

What does this pay?

AARON

Like nothing. Five dollars an hour for the best guys and on top of that, you have to pay the boss to stay in the bunkhouse. The little kids end up working in the fields making up the difference. Crazy, right?

DANNY

Yeah.

AARON

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

DANNY

I guess. Beat going to college?

AARON

Uh, it's like an independent study ... but ... well, you know school is really bullshit, right? I mean, what's the point of going to college? So someone can tell you what to read at the library? I'm seeing things that are real. I mean, you get it. It's real. Like ... uhm, well, like the older guys, some of them have families and they all just go from farm to farm and the little kids get rashes on their bodies because their parents hang their laundry on vines or fences that get sprayed with pesticide. But, as far as I see, they keep hanging their laundry there. It's like having hope and being hopeless all together. It's really amazing to witness it. I mean, all around us, there are all of these people who are serving up their lives so that the rest of us can have a carton of strawberries, you know? Nothing's equal. A life's not a life. That's an education.

DANNY

(a nerve was struck)

Yeah.

AARON

Anyway, it's interesting.

DANNY

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

AARON

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

Aaron looks back at the fish tank.

AARON (cont'd)

So, this one. That's a catfish, right? The one with the whiskers.

DANNY

Yeah.

AARON

What's that one?

DANNY

What?

AARON

That one.

DANNY

Striped bass.

AARON

Cool. What-?

DANNY

Hey, Mister.

AARON

What?

DANNY

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

Aaron's laundry buzzes loudly.

Beat.

DANNY (cont'd)

You think maybe you can, uh-

AARON

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

DANNY

Sure.

Danny extends his hand. They shake.

AARON

Good luck, alright?

DANNY

God bless.

AARON

See you.

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

AARON (cont'd)

(out to the audience, but to Elizabeth)

He was still watching those fish when we left.

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

AARON (cont'd)

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

He spreads some more cream on his rash.

AARON (cont'd)

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

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

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

Your beamish boy,
Aaron - Another Spring.

P.s. I never did get that kitten.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron and Danny.

End of Scene.

SCENE II: A BEAUTIFUL FIELD OF YELLOW WILDFLOWERS

The sun is shining and there are bees everywhere.

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

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

(quiet, brooding)

Mm.

HAPPY

Beautiful here, no?

ELIZABETH

Very beautiful.

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

HAPPY

Okay. We're here.

ELIZABETH

What?

Happy points to the bee-hive.

HAPPY

There it is.

ELIZABETH

Oh. (Beat.) That's it?

HAPPY

Yes.

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

ELIZABETH

That's it.

HAPPY

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

He turns his head and looks around.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Happy bees everywhere, no?

He begins to take food out of the picnic basket.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing?

HAPPY

Lunch.

She turns away from the beehive.

ELIZABETH

How far away is Hancock?

HAPPY

Maybe forty-five minutes.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

A cup of coffee not enough since morning.

ELIZABETH

I'm fine.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Happy ...

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

She turns around and sees him.

HAPPY

I want you should taste the honey.

She sits down on the blanket.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Eat the bread. My neighbor makes it.

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

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

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

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

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

AARON

Dondo.

HAPPY

Hm?

AARON

Dondo, yo encontré los abejas.

HAPPY

Hm?

AARON

Los abejas salvajes.

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

Beat.

HAPPY

No. No, no.

AARON

Encontré uno ... uh ... colmena de ... uh ... uh ...
encontrar nueve abejas.

HAPPY

Okay, now we stop it.

AARON

What?

HAPPY

We talked about this already.

Aaron rolls his eyes.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Are we men, Aaron? Hm?

AARON

Yeah, we're men.

HAPPY

So we have to talk like men.

AARON

Alright.

HAPPY

If my English no good, no problem, we hunt and peck like chickens. But, my English is better than you Spanish. It's good. English? We can talk like men.

AARON

Esmeralda says that I'm talking just fine.

HAPPY

(correcting him)

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

AARON

I understand everything she says.

HAPPY

Yes, this is a good stage for you. Everything coming in, but, not too much flowing out.

AARON

I can talk to Monica and Angelina.

HAPPY

(mock-disgusted)

Oh, this is the standard now.

AARON

Yeah.

HAPPY

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

Aaron laughs.

AARON

Speedy Gonzalez.

HAPPY

Right! Oh you laugh! You laugh, but all you Spanish comes from the soap operas. You come to me after you read some Calderón in Spanish, then we'll talk.

AARON

Okay.

HAPPY

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

AARON

Tomorrow.

HAPPY

Of course. Always tomorrow.

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

AARON

I found bees.

Happy looks at the bees closely.

HAPPY

(surprised)

You paint these bees?!

AARON

It's White-Out from the office.

HAPPY

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

AARON

(laughing)

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

HAPPY

Then what we going to do?

AARON

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

HAPPY

Oh, she just going to come out. We'll just go and say, "I'm sorry. Excuse me. Uhm, a Mister Elton John is here, Queen Bee. He ready for you to make him a knight." Are you crazy?

AARON

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

HAPPY

You need a psychologist.

AARON

Happy, my hive is dead.

Beat.

HAPPY

Yeah. I know.

AARON

So, I need your help. I need new bees.

Beat.

HAPPY

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

AARON

(slightly annoyed)

Come on, Happy.

HAPPY

No. Your money, no is a gift. It must be investment. Cab, repairs, start-up costs.

AARON

Sure, whatever.

HAPPY

So, you are a partner in my business.

AARON

Yeah, whatever.

HAPPY

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

AARON

Why?

HAPPY

Is a lot of money.

AARON

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

HAPPY

Because we are men. Men. We speak the same language, yes?

AARON

Yes.

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

HAPPY

Okay. You make me happy today.

AARON

Alright.

HAPPY

Okay, so now what?

AARON

Now, we let them go.

HAPPY

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

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

Pause.

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

(to Elizabeth)

We follow them to the hive. Wild bees.

Happy puts the hat and veil back on.

HAPPY (cont'd)

(to the bees)

Ah, sí mis queridas. Shhh. Shhh. Tranquilo. Don't be scared. Es solemente Dondo. No las voy a molestar. I no going to hurt you.

He goes to the hive and begins to take out combs that are dripping with honey.

HAPPY (cont'd)

(to the bees)

I no going to hurt the babies. Shhh. I love the babies. Shhh. No las voy a molestar.

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

(to Elizabeth)

They build their hive inside a barn. We have to go and cut it out of the walls. Bees flying everywhere.

He harvests another comb.

He puts the lid back on the hive.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Angry bees. But, Aaron no is scared, all he can think is get that queen.

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

And this just to say thank you to the bees for the honey.

He says a silent prayer and crosses himself. He arranges the flowers a little bit.

HAPPY (cont'd)

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

He sets the flowers down in front of the hive.

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

HAPPY (cont'd)

You want to taste?

ELIZABETH

Just like that?

HAPPY

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

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

ELIZABETH

Good?

HAPPY

Best taste ever.

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

She stands.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Oh. Okay. Let me pack up.

ELIZABETH

Fine.

Happy starts to put his bee-keeper suit away.

A bee starts to fly around Elizabeth's head.

HAPPY

You like the bread.

She waves the bee away.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. It was good.

The bee is persistent.

HAPPY

The man who makes it is an old farm hand.

He puts the food away.

ELIZABETH

(quietly, urgently)

Happy-

HAPPY

His hands look like tree roots now.

The bee flies into Elizabeth's hair.

ELIZABETH

HAPPY!

HAPPY

What?!

ELIZABETH

HELP ME?!

HAPPY

What?!

ELIZABETH

IT'S IN MY HAIR!

She starts to shake her head.

HAPPY

(as in "Don't shake. ")

No-no.

ELIZABETH

Help me!

HAPPY

No shaking!

ELIZABETH

I can feel it!

HAPPY

It sting you?!

ELIZABETH

Not yet!

Happy grabs Elizabeth by the shoulders.

HAPPY

You have to stand still!

ELIZABETH

Help me!

HAPPY

Stand still!

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

ELIZABETH

Do you hear it?

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

It's buzzing.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

I can feel it. It's buzzing.

HAPPY

Yes, I see it. Stand still.

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

ELIZABETH

Is it out?

HAPPY

Yeah.

Elizabeth opens her eyes and shoves
Happy away.

ELIZABETH

JESUS! JESUS! My God! Pack this all up! I just want to leave!
I just want to leave! I just want to fucking leave, alright?!

Beat.

HAPPY

Okay.

He continues to pack up.

HAPPY (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

I thought you would like to see it.

ELIZABETH

Well, thank you.

HAPPY

He have friends, Mrs. Hayes.

ELIZABETH

Oh, he had friends.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

Such good friends.

HAPPY

Forget it.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY finishes packing everything up.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Twenty-five thousand.

ELIZABETH

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

She points at the hive.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

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

SILENCE.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

HAPPY

(as in "it's alright")

No.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

HAPPY

Are you ready to go?

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

You still have your sticker.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

Your this. From the prison.

He points to his chest. Elizabeth looks down.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

She takes the sticker off. She crumples it up.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I'm sorry.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

They let you see him?

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Hm.

ELIZABETH

Both of them.

HAPPY

Oh. Wow. Was good?

ELIZABETH

Good?

HAPPY

You see what you want to see?

ELIZABETH

What do you mean?

HAPPY

You talk to them?

ELIZABETH

One of them was talkative. The other was quiet.

HAPPY

What did they say?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

And the other one?

ELIZABETH

He asked me to pray for him.

HAPPY

Right.

ELIZABETH

And I said I would.

HAPPY

Oh, good.

ELIZABETH

Why did I say that?

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I don't want to pray for them!

HAPPY

That's okay. Come-

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Okay.

Pause.

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

Jesus.

ELIZABETH

And I want to cut "Beaner" into their skin with buck knives and I want to drag them behind a Brown 2003 Ford pick-up truck and I want to hang them from a Melrose tree. That's what I want! And I don't want them to die.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

I want them to live forever so they can feel every bit of gravel in their skin, everyday, just like me! Oh God! Oh God! Why didn't you help him?! Why didn't you help my son?!

HAPPY

Stop that.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

What do you want from me?!

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

/Oh yeah-!

ELIZABETH

He didn't know-!

HAPPY

What do you want from me?!

ELIZABETH

He didn't know what he was doing-!

Happy throws his basket to the ground with enormous force.

HAPPY

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

He gets in her face.

HAPPY (cont'd)

You want me to tell your son no to stand in the sun?! "Your skin might get too dark and someone might want to kill you?! Don't speak Spanish?! Go home!?" Where were you, Mami?! What did you say?! (pleading) What do you want from me?!

He backs away from her.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Those people in prison are white people. It's white people running loose like wolves-what-do-you-want-from-me? You want us to speak, (as if pointing out suspects) "It was him and him and him," who do we speak? You think Aaron is the first?! Every year, we have so many people beat, so many womens hurt, so many people gone and what can I tell my children?! My little one still ask questions, Monica don't say nothing!

(MORE)

HAPPY (cont'd)

I see it happen in her body like turn off the water. What do I tell them? Aaron is not the first, only the first one you see! But, you no see it all! You no see it all! What do you want from me?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!

ELIZABETH

I JUST WANT YOU TO TAKE ME TO HANCOCK!

HAPPY

WHY?!

ELIZABETH

I WANT YOU TO TAKE ME TO HANCOCK!

HAPPY

Why?! Aaron no is in Hancock! Aaron was no in San Bernardo!

ELIZABETH

I KNOW! You think I don't know?! You think I don't know that I'm going to go, and I'm going to see this boy and it's going to be horrible and that Aaron still won't be there when I leave? But, where do you want me to go? Where am I going to go? Where am I going to go, Happy? Where? There's no where else to go. Where would you have me go?

LIGHTS OUT on Happy and Elizabeth.

End of Scene.

SCENE III: A HOSPITAL ROOM

The SOUNDS of a hospital.

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

He writes on a piece of stationary. His letters are not with him.

There is a very expensive camera on the bed.

AARON

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

He looks up.

AARON (cont'd)

Dear Mimsy,

Dad just left.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

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

Pause.

He writes.

AARON (cont'd)

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

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

I wanted to have something perfect to tell you.

He looks out the window.

AARON (cont'd)

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

Pause.

AARON (cont'd)

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

He rubs his eye.

AARON (cont'd)

About a week ago, I found a feral hive in the walls of one of the abandoned barns near the fields and I went and stole the queen. I guess I got stung a bunch. I'm used to being stung, so I wasn't worried. But, a couple of days later ... they tell me that my kidneys stopped working. My friend, Happy, the one I wrote to you about, he found me and brought me here. He was really scared. I guess I was pretty sick.

I thought that Dad was going to be kind of a jerk here, but he wasn't at all. He just stayed with me the whole time.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

Slept in a chair, made jokes with the nurses, showed me this new fancy camera that he bought. Showed me all the pictures he's been taking with it. Has he shown them to you? He's pretty good. Really good, actually. He left his camera for me.

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

Pause.

AARON (cont'd)

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

I was thinking today about that summer Uncle John bought that thoroughbred ... Liberty ... and we stayed with him in East Hampton when he was racing her at Belmont. Dad was in fellowship in Boston and we only saw him on the weekends. I spent a whole summer at that race track and I hardly remember it now. I thought I'd never forget that place, but ... what did I know? I remember your friend Luis, the trainer, and I remember Caesar, that old man I played with while you and Luis were talking horses. What happened to Caesar? He taught me to make lemonade and when he clapped, the horses danced. He died, right? He died when his horse died.

Dad was never the same after that summer. We were never the same. Do you still love Dad? (Beat.) I think he still loves you.

He takes a drink of water. He picks up the camera and takes a picture of something that's outside the window. He takes pictures of everything in the room. The tubing. The spot where the IV needle meets his vein. His feet. He takes a self portrait.

He looks at the self portrait in the viewfinder. He is saddened.

AARON (cont'd)

Dad was holding my hand and he was crying and he was asking me to come home and ... I told him, "No." I'm not ready yet.

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

Yeah, I miss everyone.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

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

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

He puts the pen down.

AARON (cont'd)

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

Beat.

He picks up the pen. Crosses out the last paragraph.

AARON (cont'd)

I don't know.

Pause.

He wants to scratch this out but he doesn't.

AARON (cont'd)

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

It translates to:

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

Because it doesn't have, because it's lacking
it's two back feet."

I asked my friends what it means, and they tell me that it's just silly words, a song to sing. I say that it can't be, and they just shrug. When I was in Santa Alicia, I went to the library and I looked it up and it does mean something. It was a corrido sung during the Mexican Revolution and it made fun of the corrupt dictator the revolutionaries were fighting against.

(MORE)

AARON (cont'd)

I told my friends about it and still, they don't care. To them, by now, it's just silly words and I guess they're right. Silliness in meaning, meaning in silliness. (Beat.) Only a comma separates those two thoughts.

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

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

He takes a picture of the letter then slowly tears the letter to shreds.

LIGHTS OUT on Aaron.

End of Scene.

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

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

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

Happy is nervous. His leg is shaking.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

It looks scary.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

That's what you see.

ELIZABETH

What?

HAPPY

It's nothing. They are ready for us?

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Okay.

ELIZABETH

Thank you for coming in.

HAPPY

Okay.

ELIZABETH

Are you alright?

HAPPY

Me? Fine.

Beat.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

I have my sodas in the car.

ELIZABETH

That's right.

HAPPY

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

So, what's the problem?

Beat.

HAPPY

Police.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

HAPPY

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

SILENCE.

Happy sniffs and covers his eyes.

He stops and composes himself.

ELIZABETH

They're not going to bother you. It's taken care of. They
know who I am.

Beat.

Happy laughs.

HAPPY

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

HOLD.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Is nothing fancy. Just a pony.

ELIZABETH

Was it smart?

HAPPY

Yeah, okay-smart.

ELIZABETH

Strong?

HAPPY

Strong for it's size.

ELIZABETH

Gentle?

HAPPY

Oh yeah. She very friendly.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

My mother train.

ELIZABETH

Oh, that's very interesting.

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

Yeah. (Beat.) They smashed my husband's camera ... he lost
all his pictures.

HAPPY

That's too bad.

ELIZABETH

It is. Too bad.

HAPPY

When are you going home?

ELIZABETH

I guess in a day or so.

HAPPY

Ah.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

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

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

What?

Elizabeth points at the door.

ELIZABETH

His mother's from El Salvador.

Happy points.

HAPPY

He?

ELIZABETH

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

Beat.

HAPPY

Something like that.

ELIZABETH

What do you make of that?

Happy shakes his head.

HAPPY

Got to make something.

SILENCE.

ELIZABETH

You didn't leave me at the airport.

No response.

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

You knew it was me. (Beat.) You didn't leave me.

Beat.

HAPPY

You looked like you needed a Coke. (Beat.) Five minutes almost up.

ELIZABETH

Okay. Shall we?

They stand up.

HAPPY

There are people at the doors.

ELIZABETH

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

HAPPY

Yeah.

A loud BUZZING. Doors open. A crowd exits.

HAPPY (cont'd)

Okay. Now it looks like our turn.

ELIZABETH

Yeah.

HAPPY

Let's go.

ELIZABETH

I wish he had sent me those letters, Happy.

HAPPY

Yes.

ELIZABETH

We got postcards from him. He called sometimes. "I'm fine. I'm fine." Those letters. If I had read them, I would have known he wasn't fine. I would have known it and I would have come to find him. I would have.

HAPPY

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

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

Really?

HAPPY

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

You know he's a handsome.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. And so sweet. Really, since he was a baby.

HAPPY

Is tragedy. Happens sometimes.

ELIZABETH

Yeah. (Beat.) Yeah.

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

ELIZABETH (cont'd)

And hold my hand.

Happy takes Elizabeth's hand.

HAPPY

Good?

ELIZABETH

Good.

HAPPY

Are you ready?

ELIZABETH

No.

Beat.

Happy tugs her hand a little bit.

HAPPY

Queen Elizabeth. Come.

Happy and Elizabeth take a step forward.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Scene.

End of Play.