

Drawin' on the Walls

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ACT ONE

(An empty place, somewhere dark, dirty, and industrial. The entirety of the rear wall is lined with blank, white butcher paper attached to rolls. A crank on either side of the wall allows fresh paper to be rolled on)

SCENE 1

(The lights are gray and dim. Wind and distant thunder. THE BOY, around 12, enters)

TRACK 1: "DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS"

BOY

WHAT A DREARY DAY IT IS.
WHAT A SAD AND GRAY AND WEARY DAY IT IS.
WHAT'S A BOY TO DO?

(HE lights up with an idea, and proceeds to roll a cart from offstage, loaded with glass jars of brightly colored paints and brushes. As he paints, his drawings come to life)

BOY

IF I SAID THAT I COULD MAKE THE SKY BLUE,
WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME?
IF I SAID THAT I COULD MAKE THE DAY NEW,
WOULD YOU BUY THAT?

WELL, I-I-I... I CAN MAKE THE SUN SHINE!
AND I-I-I... I CAN MAKE THE GRASS GREEN!

IT TURNS OUT THAT RULES WERE MADE TO BE BROKEN,
IF YOU WOULD BREAK THEM.
AND THERE ARE WORLDS ASLEEP THAT NEED TO BE WOKEN,
IF YOU WOULD WAKE THEM.

SO I-I-I... I CAN MAKE A TREE TALL!
AND I-I-I... I CAN MAKE THE SHADE COOL!

SO EV'RYBODY LOOK WHAT I CAN DO:
I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
EV'RYBODY LOOK AT HOW MY DREAMS ARE COMIN' TRUE
WHEN I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
YEAH, I-I-I... I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!

IT TURNS OUT THAT LONELY TIMES REALLY DO END -
THAT I'M AWARE OF.
'CAUSE ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS DRAW YOU A NEW FRIEND.
YOU'RE TAKEN CARE OF!

NOW I-I-I... I CAN MAKE A BIRD SING!
AND I-I-I... I CAN MAKE A BIRD FLY!

SO EV'RYBODY LOOK WHAT I CAN MAKE:
I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
AND EV'RYBODY LOOK AT WHAT A TURN THE WORLD CAN TAKE
WHEN I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
YEAH, I-I-I... I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
YEAH, I-I-I... I'M DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!

(HE relaxes against the trunk of the tree he has drawn, in the midst of a bright and pastoral scene, satisfied with his work. HE dozes off. THE GIRL enters, also about 12, in glasses and a rain jacket, clutching it to herself as though protecting herself from cold, wet wind. SHE clutches a Bible in her jacket. SHE stops at the sight of the boy.)

GIRL

(immediately dripping with sarcasm)
Oh my goodness gracious, that can't be healthy...

(SHE bundles herself tighter and approaches him)

GIRL

Hey, boy! Boy!
(cupping her hands over her mouth like a megaphone)

Wake up!

(After a second of no response, she begins lightly kicking at him)

GIRL

Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up...

(HE stirs and moans a bit, shielding himself from her feet)

BOY

Hey-- hey, stop it... stop kicking me! Who-- What do you want?

GIRL

You fell asleep.

(HE looks up at her, a weary, nonplussed expression, and then begins to stand up)

BOY

(likewise dripping with sarcasm)

Oh, how terrible of me?

GIRL

Do you WANT to sleep out in the rain and catch a cold and probably die? Is that you want?

BOY

Rain? What rain? It's not raining.

GIRL

"What rain?" Really? Really? You mean all those drops of water falling from the sky? That doesn't count as rain?

BOY

(dismissive, a little superior)

I don't know what you're talking about...

GIRL

You don't see the-- but you can't just--

(suddenly notices the painting on the wall, and the cart of paints)

Wait a minute. Did you draw all this stuff?

BOY

Yeah. What's it to you?

GIRL

You drew it just now?

BOY

Yeah. So?

GIRL

So you drew a sun and now... it's sunny? To you?

(HE turns away, as though possibly embarrassed by something)

BOY

(prickly, defensive)

Leave me alone.

GIRL

Ohhhh, I get it now! I figured it out: you're nuts!

BOY

I said leave me alone.

GIRL

Leave you alone? Oh, I don't think so.

(SHE goes over to the cart of paints and begins to comb through the various brushes and colors)

GIRL

If I just let you stay out here, in the rain, wearing nothing, you're going to catch cold and die and I will feel moderately bad. So I say...

(brandishing a brush loaded with dark gray paint)

It's intervention time!

BOY

(moderately threatened)

Hey, what are you doing with that?

(SHE starts painting a raincloud over the boy's sun. As she does so, the world starts to become grayer and darker. There's the sound of thunder and rain)

GIRL

Just bringing everything back to reality...

(finishing the cloud)

There! So I guess you have to go inside now, huh?

(The BOY grabs a colorful brush and quickly draws an umbrella, sitting beneath it with a smug grin)

BOY

Guess not!

(Thinking quickly, the GIRL draws a lightning bolt to the umbrella. There is a flash and a loud crack of thunder. The BOY jumps)

BOY

Hey, that's dangerous! Someone could get seriously hurt!

GIRL

What? No, they couldn't! It's not dangerous! It's not even real!

(SHE grabs a loaded brush from the paint cart and approaches the wall with it)

GIRL

Look, are you telling me that I could draw a whole bunch of--

BOY

No! Quit it! STOP!

(HE suddenly snatches the brush away from her and violently hurls it to the ground. HE launches into a sobbing tantrum)

BOY

Stop touching it, you're ruining it! You're ruining it! Please just leave me alone... leave me alone...

(The GIRL stops cold, staring open-mouthed at him for a long moment)

GIRL

(moderating the sarcasm slightly, a little gingerly)

Oh my goodness gracious... How old are you, again? Because you're acting like a six-year-old, you know. You know that, right?

BOY

(trying to control his crying, not looking at her)

I said go away...

GIRL

I just want you to go inside, ok? I just want you to get out of the rain. That's all...

BOY

Maybe I don't have anywhere to go inside. Did you think of that?

GIRL

Wait, what is that supposed to mean?

BOY

(turning away, embarrassed)

Nothing. Forget I said anything...

(SHE approaches him quietly, her tone becoming more moderated. Distant thunder rumbles)

GIRL

Look, I'm only trying to help, ok? I just don't want you to get sick, ok? Ok?

BOY

You don't want to help me. You think I'm crazy...

GIRL

I do too want to help you! Look, people are supposed to help each other. We talked about that in Sunday School just this morning...

BOY

Sunday School? Is that a Bible there?

GIRL

Yeah... why?

BOY

Doesn't it say "do no harm"?

GIRL

That would be the Hippocratic Oath.

BOY

Oh. Well, if you really care so much about helping me, then you'd stop messing up my wall and calling me names!

(HE grabs the cart and begins to run off the stage, wiping his face on his sleeve)

BOY

I'm not crazy, and you're not very nice!

(HE exits)

GIRL

Hey! You are crazy! And I am nice. I'm extremely friggin' nice!

TRACK 2: "EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND"

WHEN IT COMES TO KINDNESS I'D LIKE TO THINK I'M
SKILLFUL,
GOOD AT BEING SWEET,
BUT WHAT AM I TO DO WHEN A BOY WHO'S WEIRD AND WILLFUL
IS THE NEXT I MEET?
BUT MAYBE THERE'S A LONELY HEART BEHIND HIS SOCIAL
CRIMES.
EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND SOMETIMES.

IN SUNDAY SCHOOL THEY TEACH YOU TO BE NICE TO YOUR
NEIGHBOR,
NEVER BE A JERK.
BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY SOMETHING AT WHICH I'VE HAD TO
LABOR.
IT'S JUST HOW I WORK.
MAYBE ALL HE REALLY NEEDS IS SOMEONE TO BE NEAR.
'CAUSE EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND, I HEAR.

EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND WHO'S NICE.
SO MAYBE I SHOULD BE THE ONE TO MAKE THIS NOBLE
SACRIFICE.

THE TRICK WILL BE CONVINCING HIM THAT I SPEAK
SINCERELY
WHEN I SAY "WE'RE CHUMS!"
OTHERWISE IT'S POSSIBLE HE'LL REACT SEVERELY
WHEN THE OFFER COMES.
'CAUSE WHAT GOES ON INSIDE HIS BRAIN I'LL NEVER
COMPREHEND.
BUT EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND.
EV'RYBODY NEEDS A FRIEND!
SO MAYBE I COULD BE THAT FRIEND...
AND MAYBE THEN THIS CREEPY DRAWING CRAP
WILL END!

(SHE exits)

SCENE 2

(The BOY is again at his wall, drawing a new scene - a surreal, fantasy scene. Ocean waves crash against a craggy cliff face, atop of which sits a medieval city. We hear waves, gulls, wind. The GIRL suddenly enters, and the lights and sounds immediately return to normal. HE jumps)

BOY

(assuming a defensive posture)

You! What do you want?

GIRL

Relax. I'm not going to touch your drawing, ok? I'm just here to apologize.

BOY

Apologize?

GIRL

Yeah. You know, for the other day, when I messed up your drawing. And I... well, I may have said some things...

BOY

May have? You called me nuts.

GIRL

Yeah. You're right. I did. And I'm sorry. I've been thinking about it a lot, and I shouldn't have said that. And I shouldn't have messed up your drawing.

BOY

(still maintaining his posture)

Oh. Ok.

GIRL

No, really. I'm not going to touch your stuff again.

BOY

Ok.

GIRL

I mean, unless you say I can.

BOY

And why would I do that?

GIRL

Well, I was thinking, maybe, sometime, you could show me what you're doing there.

BOY

Wait. What?

GIRL

You know, show me what you're drawing. It's kind of neat looking, I mean.

BOY

Really? You want to know?

GIRL

Yeah. Like, what's all this? A city of some kind?

(A long pause. HE stares at her blankly, before turning to his wall, and continuing to draw silently for a moment)

GIRL

Oh. It's all right. I understand. You don't want anybody around right now. I can see that, so I'll just be-

BOY

You promise not to laugh?

GIRL

Of course! I promise. Cross my heart. Stick a paintbrush in my eye.

BOY

Ok then. Get ready.

(As HE continues his drawing, the world starts to change to match. The sounds return. It becomes more and more clear that the GIRL can now see and hear these things too)

TRACK 3: "ONCE UPON A LOST CAUSE"

BOY

THIS WORLD...

THIS PLACE I DREAMED IN MY MIND'S THE SETTING OF

A TALE I CALL:
"ONCE UPON A LOST CAUSE."

GIRL

(reacting to the change)
Oh my goodness gracious... what is all this?

BOY

Are you ok?

GIRL

(not fine)
Oh, I'm fine. Just fine! You keep right on doing what
you're doing!
(reacting to an otherworldly animal noise)
What was that?

BOY

Oh that was probably just a trumplehooten. They're usually
harmless.

GIRL

Oh good.

BOY

You... do you want to hear the story?

GIRL

(as a creature, evidently the trumplehooten,
swims through the air around her)
Yeah, sure. A story! Why not?
(to the creature)
Hi there!

BOY

You can help draw!

GIRL

No thanks! I'm good! I'll just watch for a while!

BOY

Ok.

ONCE UPON AN OCEAN CLIFF
STOOD A METROPOLIS SO HIGH
IT SEEMED THAT ITS DEFENSES COULDN'T FALL!

(as he draws a wizard, HE becomes the wizard)

A WIZARD LIVED INSIDE THE GATES
LONGING WATCHING OVER THEM, BUT WHY
DID IT SEEM HE HAD NO FRIENDS AT ALL?

WITH HIS STAFF, HE COULD SUMMON LIGHTNING
AND THE SKIES OBEYED HIS COMMAND.
BUT THE PEOPLE FOUND HIM SO FRIGHT'NING—
THOUGH HE BORE THEM NO ILL WILL,
THEY REFUSED TO UNDERSTAND.

PEACE WAS NOT TO LAST FOR LONG—
FOR, FROM THE ACROSS SEA, A ROAR
HERALDED A DRAGON COMING FAST!

THE WIZARD WARNED THEM ALL TO FLEE,
HAVING ENCOUNTERED IT BEFORE.
HE KNEW THAT IF THEY FOUGHT, THEY WOULDN'T LAST.

THEY FAILED TO HEED THE WARNING HE MADE
SO ON THE DAY THE DRAGON CAME,
OUR HERO WENT TO VANQUISH HIS FOE
BEFORE THE TOWN WAS LOST TO FLAME...
ONCE UPON A LOST CAUSE!

(An enormous, horrifying DRAGON appears, roaring)

GIRL

Holy... what are you going to do?

BOY

The wizard summoned a mighty wind!

(HE casts an elaborate spell by painting wind on
the wall, but the DRAGON appears unaffected)

GIRL

Uh... it didn't work.

BOY

I know that! He summoned a mighty flash of lightning!

(HE draws another lightning bolt - the DRAGON
roars in pain and flees)

GIRL

Wow. You did it. Now, no offense, but... didn't that seem a little easy to you?

BOY

Story's not over. You see, the townsfolk called a meeting in the square, led by a woman with frizzy red hair, and a bald man with glasses...

GIRL

Gosh, that's highly specific...

(HE draws the MAN and the WOMAN, who appear, dressed as medieval judges)

FOR THE STORM HAD CAUSED A COMMOTION...

MAN

YES, A TOWER FELL TO THE SEA!

WOMAN

SEVEN LIVES WERE LOST TO THE OCEAN!

BOY

BUT I MEANT NO ILL WILL...

WOMAN

I'M AFRAID WE DISAGREE...

(The MAN and WOMAN exit, as the BOY changes the scene to a misty forest)

BOY

SO HE FOUND HIMSELF ALONE,
BANISHED INTO THE WOODS, MALIGNED,
FAR FROM HIS BELOVED TOWN'S ROUTINES...

WHEN THE ROAR RETURNED ONE DAY,
HE WENT TO A HILL NEARBY, TO FIND
THE CITIZENS CONSTRUCTING WAR MACHINES.

HE TRIED TO CAST A SPELL TO ASSIST,
BUT FOUND HIS SPELLS HAD ALL BUT DRAINED.
WITHOUT EVEN THE MEAGER RESPECT
THE TOWNSMEN GAVE, HIS POWER WANED.
HE COULDN'T HELP THEM EVEN IF THEY
DESIRED HIS HELP, HIS STAFF, HIS SAY...
AND SO, HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WATCH

THE TOWN HE LOVED BE BURNT AWAY...

ONCE UPON A LOST CAUSE.

(the DRAGON roars and prepares to torch the city,
when it suddenly freezes)

GIRL

Wait! Hold it!

BOY

What? What is it?

GIRL

That's it? That's how the story ends? His powers are based on the love of the townsfolk? So they all just... die?!

BOY

Yeah.

GIRL

Oh my goodness gracious, that's... well, that's stupid!

BOY

Stupid? It's not stupid! It's powerful!

GIRL

It's stupid. Trust me. Haven't you ever heard of a happy ending?

BOY

Not if you want to be realistic...

GIRL

Realistic?! Oh yeah, I understand. Realistic. With all the realistic trumplehootens and everything. You know, sometimes life really does have happy endings. Really. It does.

BOY

For some people, maybe.

GIRL

Everybody can have a happy ending. Sometimes, at least. I mean, why not try it? Just once?

BOY

I, uh... I wouldn't know how.

GIRL

Well, can I show you then?

(SHE extends a hand towards the cart of paints.
HE looks at her face for a long while, before
finally giving her a brush)

BOY

Ok. Show me.

GIRL

All right, but, I'm not a very good drawer. Not like you
are.

BOY

(entirely earnest)

It's all right. I won't laugh. I promise.

(SHE looks at him for a moment, before drawing a
poorly rendered stick figure of a girl)

TRACK 4: "DON'T HAVE TO"

GIRL

SUPPOSE A GIRL FOUND HIM THERE,
AND SAID, "DON'T THINK I'M UNAWARE
OF ALL THE STUFF YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH."

SUPPOSE SHE SAID, "I KNOW YOUR PAST.
I KNOW ALL THE SPELLS YOU CAST.
AND EVEN SO, I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU.

AND THOUGH YOU BELIEVE THAT THE WORLD'S FULL OF FEAR,
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT YOU TO HEAR...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE...
DO THIS ALONE...

YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE SAY,
"I'LL BE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY?"
YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE TAKE YOUR HAND

TO GO WITH YOU HOWEVER FAR?
YOU'LL SEE HOW STRONG YOU ARE

WITH SOMEONE THERE WHO CAN UNDERSTAND.

AND THOUGH YOU BELIEVE THAT IT'S ALL DOWN TO YOU,
I WANT YOU TO KNOW IT'S NOT TRUE!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FACE THIS ALONE...
FACE THIS ALONE...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT THIS ALONE...
FIGHT THIS ALONE...

I DON'T HAVE MUCH STRENGTH OR THE KNOWLEDGE TO GUIDE.
BUT I CAN STILL FIGHT RIGHT ALONGSIDE!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO...

YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE SAY,
"I'LL BE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY?"

(HE stares at her, stunned, as she finishes)

BOY

Wow. Yeah, ok. That seems like a good addition. So what happens next?

GIRL

Well, I suppose they go off together to fight the dragon.

(The DRAGON suddenly comes to life and delivers a threatening roar. The BOY quickly draws a bush to hide behind. The GIRL joins him)

BOY

Ok, so now what? Got any bright ideas?

GIRL

Me? I thought YOU were the wizard!

BOY

Well, the magic didn't exactly help much last time, did it?

GIRL

You could try again!

BOY

(excited by the idea)

Hey, yeah... and then, when the dragon counterattacks, we could die tragically in each other's arms-

GIRL

No, wait. Bad idea. Happy ending, remember? Happy ending! Hey! How about I distract it? You could get it in its weak spot!

BOY

Distract it? How?

GIRL

I don't know. I could irritate it or something.

BOY

(thoughtfully)

You are very good at that.

(SHE leaps out from behind the bush and runs to the other side of the dragon, yelling. The DRAGON ignores her)

GIRL

Hey, dragon pants! That's right, I'm talking to you, you flying fantasy cliché! Hey, over here! I hear through the grapevine that your fiery breath is weak and inferior! Yeah, that's right! And you strike fear in the hearts of relatively few, if any, men!

(The DRAGON roars and turns to her)

GIRL

Hey, you noticed me! I did it.

(realizing, as the DRAGON takes in air, that she's about to be toast)

You know, this seemed like such a great idea just a few seconds ago...

BOY

Now!

(The BOY leaps from behind and draws a second lightning bolt. This one hits its target, and the DRAGON reels in pain and dies.)

GIRL

We did it! It's dead! We did it! Didn't we?

(The MAN and the WOMAN appear, inspecting the corpse of the dragon)

BOY

The townsfolk emerged from hiding. But, they didn't understand...

GIRL

They DID understand!

MAN

You... wizard. You saved us. From this monster.

BOY

They understood...

WOMAN

We were afraid of what we didn't understand. But now we see... you were always on our side.

BOY

(agitated)

How could they understand? There's nothing to understand!

GIRL

What? They understand because they see that you saved their town!

WOMAN

We... we're sorry for banishing you. We were unjust. Please. Please return.

BOY

Return?

MAN

Yes. We're sorry.

BOY

But it wouldn't happen that way...

GIRL

Let it happen. Just this once.

BOY

And so the town... the town celebrated!

(HE paints fireworks. The GIRL begins to dance a celebratory jig. The MAN and WOMAN join in. As they circle around, SHE tries to get the BOY to join, but he refuses, until finally, at the climax, HE surrenders, and joins in the dance. When the dance ends, the GIRL applauds, and the MAN and WOMAN exit)

GIRL

So, I... I guess I have to be going now.

BOY

Going? You have to go?

GIRL

Yeah. Places to be. You know the drill.

BOY

Oh. Well, I have places to go, too.

GIRL

You do?

BOY

Yeah, you know. Places. Really cool places. I'll be going to those places now. See ya round.

(HE packs up the paints and heads off)

Thanks for playing with me.

(HE exits)

TRACK 5: "MARY SUE"

GIRL

Yeah, sure. Anytime.

(sighs, relaxes, condescendingly)

Oh my goodness gracious... that boy...

(turning to the audience)

WASN'T THAT CUTE?

WASN'T THAT ADORABLE?

MAKES ME WANT TO CRY!

Well, kind of.

ALTHOUGH I MUST SAY,

IT'S NOT QUITE IGNORABLE

HOW ALL THIS FANCIFUL TALE MIGHT APPLY...

(brandishing a laser pointer)

Let's deconstruct, shall we?

(SHE indicates the drawing of the wizard with the laser pointer)

A heroic but sad tale! What does it all mean? And a wizard who quite obviously represents somebody...

WRITERS HAVE THIS WAY TO GIVE THEMSELVES ALL THE GLORY.

THEY PUT A CHARACTER LIKE THEM IN THE STORY, SO NOBLE AND GOOD.

AND, OF COURSE, HE'S MISUNDERSTOOD!

ALL OF THESE CREATIVE TYPES HAVE NO ONE TO TURN TO, SO IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING THEY LEARN TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES THROUGH A CHARACTER CALLED MARY SUE.

Mary Sue, noun - a character representing an idealized version of the author!

(SHE "interviews" the wizard, assuming his voice alternating with her own)

OH, MARY SUE, WHY DO THEY EXCLUDE YOU?
"WELL, THEY JUST CAN'T SEE PAST MY EXTERIOR."
OH, MARY SUE, WHY DO FRIENDS ELUDE YOU?
"MAYBE IT'S 'CAUSE I'M MOR'LLY SUPERIOR!
I'M SMARTER THAN THEY ARE,
WISER THAN THEY ARE,
KINDER THAN THEY ARE,
BETTER THAN THEY ARE!"
THAT'S GOTTA BE IT!
OH, MARY SUE...

And if I may now draw your attention to the bovine herd usually referred to in creative circles as "the townsfolk"...

CREATIVE PEOPLE THUNDER AT THE LOSERS AROUND THEM,
WHOSE BRAINLESS BIGOTRIES COMPLETELY ASTOUND THEM.
IT'S TERRIBLY TRITE:
THE POPULATION'S NEVER BRIGHT!

THEY ARE IGNORANT BUT HE IS THOUGHTFUL AND PENSIVE!
(IT KINDA MAKES THE WRITER SEEM ALL DEFENSIVE.)
SO GIVE ME A BREAK!
HE'S THREATENED - BUT WHAT'S AT STAKE?

OH, MARY SUE, WHY DO THEY IGNORE YOU?
"THEY FEAR ME FOR I'M BEYOND COMPREHENSION!"
OH, MARY SUE, WHY DO THEY DEPLORE YOU?
"FEAR LEADS TO HATE, AS STATES THE CONVENTION!
I'M SMARTER THAN THEY ARE,
WISER THAN THEY ARE,
KINDER THAN THEY ARE,
BETTER THAN THEY ARE!"
THAT'S GOTTA BE IT!
OH, MARY SUE...

And these two people, the man and the woman with frizzy red hair. Why so specific all of a sudden? Tell me, Mary Sue, who's got frizzy red hair...

AND WHAT DID THEY DO TO MAKE YOU
END UP LIVING LIKE THIS?
WHAT DID I MISS?

(SHE suddenly stops, realizing something. SHE moderates herself now)

Wait a minute...

WERE THESE FOLKS YOUR PARENTS? DID THEY BEAT YOU OR
HURT YOU?
MAYBE YOU HAD FAM'LY, BUT THEY CHOSE TO DESERT YOU!
THIS WORLD THAT YOU BUILT
COULD BE A MASK FOR GUILT!

MAYBE YOU'RE ASHAMED BUT I BELIEVE IN COMPASSION!
WHERE I COME FROM, FAIRNESS HASN'T GONE OUT OF
FASHION!
THERE'S SOMETHING BEHIND
THE CRAZINESS IN YOUR MIND!

OH, MARY SUE, DID SOMEONE ABUSE YOU?
WHAT'S IN YOUR PAST? WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?
OH, MARY SUE, I SHOULDN'T ACCUSE YOU
SINCE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR STORY'S MADE OF...
YOU'RE SADDER THAN I THOUGHT,

MORE HURT THAN I THOUGHT,
MORE DAMAGED THAN I THOUGHT,
DARKER THAN I THOUGHT...
THAT'S GOTTA BE IT!

And the only way it's ever going to heal is if you get help! And I'm going to help!

AND SO I WILL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT!
'CAUSE WHAT ELSE CAN I DO,
MARY SUE?

(SHE exits)

SCENE 3

(The walls are again blank. The BOY is there, idly painting a picture of the girl, admiring it fondly)

TRACK 6: "SOMETHING ABOUT YOU"

BOY

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT MAKES ME FEEL ALL RUNNY INSIDE...
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT MAKES ME WANT TO GO AWAY AND HIDE!
MAYBE IT'S NOTHING!
I HOPE IT'S JUST A FLUKE.
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT MAKES ME WANT TO PUKE.

'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THIS FEELING
IS A FEELING THAT YOU SHARE.
AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER YOU KNOW I'VE GOT IT
OR IF YOU EVEN CARE!
IS IT YOUR KINDNESS?
OR THAT YOU ARE A... GIRL?
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT MAKES ME WANT TO HURL.

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
I WISH THAT I SOMEHOW UNDERSTOOD.
SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT COULD BE, BUT IT CAN'T BE GOOD!
MAYBE IT'S FLEETING,
BUT PROBABLY I'M STUCK.

'CAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU
THAT MAKES ME WANT...

TO UP... CHUCK!

GIRL

Drawing something interesting there?

(The BOY quickly stands in front of the drawing,
trying to cover it)

BOY

This? Oh, this! This is nothing! Really, it's not
important at all... here...

(turning the crank to scroll fresh paper onto the
wall)

It's all gone now. Just fresh paper. Good ol' fresh
paper. You came back!

GIRL

Yup. I came back, all right.

BOY

You want to play again? I was thinking this time I could
show you the Planet Zebuloid..

GIRL

Well, actually, I was wondering if maybe, this time, we
could just talk.

BOY

Just talk?

GIRL

Yeah. Just talk.

BOY

(hesitantly, carefully)
I don't think I would enjoy that.

GIRL

What? Don't you talk to people?

BOY

Sure. There's people I talk to. Lots of people.

GIRL

People you didn't draw?

BOY

(caught, embarrassed)

What's the big deal anyway? Can't I do what I want? If I want to play by myself that's my business.

GIRL

(gently, realizing she might have pushed too far)
Yeah, sure, fine, do what you want. But maybe you could at least answer me one question?

BOY

Ok. What question?

GIRL

Those people you drew from the other day -- you know, the lady with frizzy red hair and the man with glasses -- who are they?

BOY

(not convincingly)

Who are they? They're just some people I made up. That's all.

GIRL

Oh, come on. The details are too specific. They've gotta represent somebody. Maybe somebody from your past? Maybe parents?

BOY

Why do you care so much?

GIRL

Well... I'm worried about you.

BOY

Worried?

GIRL

Yeah. You seem like a nice kid, and, well... I guess I get the feeling that something bad happened to you, and, you know, if I can help you work through it, well... I'd like to.

(The BOY turns away and stares at the wall for a long moment)

GIRL

Are they your parents? Did they hurt you somehow?

BOY

I guess I might as well tell you. Yes. They're my parents. Or were my parents, as far as I'm concerned.

GIRL

Oh? Did they... what did they do?

BOY

It's kind of hard to talk about.

GIRL

Well, maybe you could draw it...

(SHE offers him a brush, which HE takes. HE starts to draw the living room in a fabulous mansion. The scene comes to life)

BOY

I used to have a house. Well, my parents used to have a house. A big house, with gold, and crystal, and a yacht. I had my very own room and everything. I would hide in there, and draw. My parents would sit in the drawing room...

(The MAN and WOMAN appear on a sumptuous couch, finely attired, looking haughty)

TRACK 7: "WALTZ OF THE DREAM CRUSHERS"

BOY

I was a disappointment to them. They wanted someone who would take over the family business, with a head for money, I guess. I wasn't like that... I remember one day, I came in to talk to them...

LOOK! I FOUND AN AD FOR DRAWING SCHOOL!
MOTHER, FATHER, PLEASE, IT'S DRAWING SCHOOL!
THE FEELING'S SO STRONG
THAT IF I LEARN TO PAINT AND DRAW THERE,
I'D BE THE BEST THEY EVER SAW THERE,
AND MAYBE I'D BELONG...

(The MAN and WOMAN look grimly at each other, and then sit the BOY down on the couch between them. The MAN places a hand warmly on his shoulder.)

MAN

An artist's life, son? That's what you really want?

BOY

Yes, father. It's what I really want.

MAN

I see...

WELL, THE THOUGHT HAS LEFT YOU SWOONING,
AND YOU ARE, WELL, OF THAT BENT...
BUT UNLESS YOU ARE DE KOONING,
IT'S HARD TO PAY THE RENT.
NOW IT'S TRUE WE SAID YOU COULD DO ANYTHING YOU WANT
TO DO...

WOMAN

NOW TO SIMPLY HAVE A YEARNING
DOESN'T MEAN YOU'VE MUCH TO TOUT.
AND WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU LEARNING
THAT YOU SUCK BY FLUNKING OUT.
NOW IT'S TRUE WE SAID YOU COULD DO ANYTHING YOU WANT
TO DO...
EVEN THOUGH THE FUTURE GLEAMS,
IT IS TIME TO CRUSH YOUR DREAMS.

MAN AND WOMAN

WE'RE CONSERVATIVE, LUDICROUS TROG-UH-LO-DYTES.
WE LOVE TO BE MEAN AND DENY KIDS THEIR RIGHTS.
THE TEARS OF A CHILD ARE OUR GREATEST DELIGHTS.
YOU MIGHT AS WELL ASK TO WEAR TIGHTS!

THOUGH THE WORLD TELLS YOU TO FOLLOW
THE LONGINGS OF YOUR HEART -
THAT OLD PLATITUDE RINGS HOLLOW
WHEN IT LEADS TO DOING ART!

(THEY spit together in disdain)

THOUGH IT'S TRUE WE SAID YOU COULD DO ANYTHING YOU
WANT TO DO...

(Laughing together, THEY waltz around the room in
twisted glee, before returning to the couch and
cradling the boy tenderly)

NOW IT'S TRUE WE SAID YOU COULD DO ANYTHING YOU WANT
TO DO...
BUT WE LIED. AND SO IT SEEMS,
THAT IT'S TIME TO CRUSH YOUR DREAMS.

BOY

LOOK! I FOUND AN AD FOR DRAWING SCHOOL!
MOTHER, FATHER, PLEASE, IT'S DRAWING SCHOOL!
THE FEELING'S SO STRONG
THAT IF I LEARN TO PAINT AND DRAW THERE,
I'D BE THE BEST THEY EVER SAW THERE,
AND MAYBE I'D BELONG...

MAN AND WOMAN

EVEN THOUGH THE FUTURE GLEAMS,
IT IS TIME TO CRUSH YOUR DREAMS.
YES, WE HAVE--
WE LOVE--
TO CRUSH YOUR DREAMS...

(SHE gives him a kiss on top of the head and HE
gives him a firm pat on the shoulder as THEY
depart)

WOMAN

(tenderly)
It's for your own good, my dear. One day, you'll
understand.

(THEY exit)

BOY

So I ran away. I ran until I came here. Is that what you
wanted to know?

GIRL

I guess. Except for the part where not a word of it's
true.

BOY

What?

GIRL

You don't honestly expect me to buy all that baloney, do
you?

BOY

It's not baloney!

GIRL

So your parents called themselves troglodytes and danced around in glee at the thought of tormenting their son?

BOY

Ok, I may have exaggerated a bit, but--

GIRL

And you say your parents forbade you from going to drawing school... why does that mean you have to cut yourself off from humanity? I don't get it. It doesn't ring true. You're still not telling me something.

BOY

(after a long, hard pause)

Maybe I don't want to tell you.

(HE turns away, not looking at her. HE remains in this position for a long while)

GIRL

Oh. Look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to push you so hard. You know, I'm just, overeager, I guess. It's always been a problem with me. But I just... I can tell you're hurting, and I want to help. I don't want you to hurt.

(HE remains turned away. A long, silent moment passes)

TRACK 8: "JUDGMENTAL"

GIRL

YOU DON'T LOOK ME IN THE EYE.
YOU'RE SCARED BUT YOU DON'T TELL ME WHY.
WHATEVER FEELING
YOU'RE CONCEALING,
I WOULD NEVER BE JUDGMENTAL.
I WOULD NEVER BE THAT WAY.

YOU TRY TO PUSH IT ALL AWAY
AND FIND YOUR PAIN IS HERE TO STAY.
YOU'LL DECREASE IT
IF YOU RELEASE IT.
I WOULD NEVER BE JUDGMENTAL.

THAT'S A PROMISE I CAN KEEP.
FOR THE ONE WHO IS JUDGMENTAL
PAYS A PRICE THAT'S AWFUL STEEP.

OTHER PEOPLE MAYBE
OTHER PEOPLE, THEY MIGHT JUDGE YOU.
SELF-RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE MIGHT JUST JUDGE YOU--
UNEDUCATED
UNSOPHISTICATED
YOKELS FROM YOKEL-A-HOMA MIGHT JUST JUDGE YOU--
BUT NOT ME
NOT ME

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LET IT OUT
BUT I KNOW WITHOUT A DOUBT
THERE IS HEALING
IN REVEALING.
I WOULD NEVER BE JUDGMENTAL
THERE'S A CODE THAT I OBEY...
MAYBE OTHERS ARE JUDGMENTAL
BUT I WOULD NEVER BE THAT WAY...
I WOULD NEVER BE THAT WAY...

YOU CAN TELL ME
YOU CAN TRUST ME
YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING
ANYTHING...

I WOULD NEVER BE JUDGMENTAL...

BOY

I... I... I want to, but... I can't.

GIRL

It will be better, I promise.

BOY

I can't.

GIRL

(offering a paintbrush)

Can you draw it? Draw what happened?

(After a long moment, he takes the brush, and
breathing hard, begins to draw. His drawings
again come to life. He draws an ordinary house)

TRACK 9: "THE CONFESSION"

BOY

ALL RIGHT, THEN,
I'LL DRAW IT.
IT WASN'T A MANSION,
JUST A HOUSE.
A NORMAL HOUSE.

I LIVED THERE
IN THAT HOUSE
WITH MY MOM...
WITH MY MOM.
AND WHOEVER WAS MY DAD
FOR THAT MONTH.

THEY DIDN'T
MUCH LIKE ME.
THEY SOMETIMES
WOULD DO THINGS...
HE SOMETIMES...

SO I WOULD HIDE
IN MY ROOM
AND I WOULD DRAW
IN MY ROOM
AND WHILE I WAS DRAWING
I FELT
HAPPY.

BUT AT SCHOOL
I WOULD FEEL
SOMETHING ELSE.
SOMETHING ELSE...
I DON'T LIKE
TO TALK MUCH.
BUT AT SCHOOL
I FELT
ANGRY.
I FELT
ANGRY.
A LOT.

AND THEN I
DISCOVERED
WHEN I HURT SOMEONE
I FELT

HAPPY.
I FELT
HAPPY.

SO ONE NIGHT
I LEFT HOME.
NOBODY CARED.
AND THAT WAS JUST FINE WITH ME.

I WENT TO...
I WENT TO...
AN OVERPASS,
WATCHING THE CARS.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO!
OF COURSE I MEANT TO.
I DIDN'T KNOW!
OF COURSE I KNEW.
I WASN'T THINKING!
I WAS THINKING A LOT.

THERE WAS THIS
BIG PILE OF
CINDERBLOCKS.
AND SO I
BEGAN TO
PUSH THEM OFF, ONTO THE ROAD.
I LIKED IT.

THIS CAR CAME.
THIS CAR CAME.
THEY HAD TO SWERVE,
INTO A WALL.
INTO A WALL...

THESE PEOPLE
THEY GOT OUT OF THE CAR...

GIRL

The bald man with glasses... and the woman, with frizzy red hair...

BOY

AND THEIR SON...
HE DIDN'T...
DIDN'T GET OUT...

GIRL

Was he... was he ok?

(The BOY doesn't answer.)

GIRL

The boy in the car... was he ok?

(The BOY quickly shakes his head "no." The GIRL covers her mouth in shock.)

BOY

I RAN AWAY...

(The GIRL stands up, reeling)

GIRL

I'm sorry, I... I can't--

(Awkwardly, SHE runs off. The BOY looks after her, starting to cry, and runs off as well. The world returns to normal, and the magic dies)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(The same as before. Everything is dark. The GIRL enters, carrying a Bible again, tentatively, quietly, frightened)

GIRL

Hello... hello... drawing boy... are you in here? Hello?

(The lights suddenly come up, revealing that the wall has been covered in horrible, grotesque monsters. Disturbing noises play. SHE starts, turns around, and the BOY is there, glaring darkly at her, looking threatening)

BOY

So you came back. It's been a while.

GIRL

(freaked out)

Oh, hey... I just was passing by, you know, on my way home from Sunday School again, and I thought I'd check up on you. You know, see how you're doing.

BOY

Oh, I'm just fine now. Thanks so much for stopping by. I had a realization.

(The MONSTERS come to life, and being surrounding the GIRL, trapping her, threatening her. They proceed to chase her and menace her throughout the scene - she defends herself as best she can)

TRACK 10: "MAYBE I'M THE BAD GUY"

BOY

I had this realization, and now I'm all better. And I have you to thank for it.

GIRL

Um, you're welcome?

BOY

It occurred to me...

MAYBE I'M THE BAD GUY.
DID YOU THINK OF THAT?
I BET YOU THOUGHT OF THAT.

THESE ARE MY FRIENDS.
THEY ARE THE BAD GUYS, TOO.
IT'S OUR JOB TO WAIT FOR THE GOOD GUY TO COME.
AND TRY TO TEAR THE GOOD GUY LIMB FROM LIMB
'CAUSE THAT'S HOW THE STORY GOES.

MAYBE I'M THE BAD GUY.
DID YOU THINK OF THAT?
I BET YOU THOUGHT OF THAT.

YOU KNOW THE SCORE,
YOU'VE READ IT ALL BEFORE,
HOW THE BAD GUY LIVES FOR THE JOY OF THE KILL,
AND SO IT ALL COMES DOWN
TO IF THE GOOD GUY COMES
TO SEE THE BLOOD OF THE BAD GUYS SPILL!

(SHE grabs a red paintbrush, and proceeds to
slosh red on the MONSTERS, who die)

BOY

THE GOOD GUY FIGHTS,
SHE'S GOTTA JOB TO DO,
THERE'S NO WAY AT ALL FOR THE BAD GUYS TO WIN.
THEY SOLD THEIR SOUL
SO FROM THE START THEY'RE DAMNED
THAT IS HOW THE STORY GOES...

THAT'S HOW THE STORY GOES...

(Soon it is just the GIRL and the BOY. HE
approaches her, threatening. SHE extends the red
brush towards him, backing away, as if wielding a
sword)

BOY

MAYBE I'M THE BAD GUY.
I BET YOU THOUGHT OF THAT...

(HE backs her into a corner, and stands in front
of the end of the brush. HE extends his chest
forward, as though daring her to use the brush.
At the climax, SHE hurls the brush to the floor,

and the lights turn to normal. HE sinks to his knees, and covers his face with his hands)

GIRL

No! No. This isn't... this isn't right. There's going to be no red brushes, ok? No red anything. Ok? Let's just stay calm and nice for a while. Calm... and nice... Ok? No one's going to hurt you. Look, I brought something for you.

(SHE reaches into her pocket to take out a business card, but HE suddenly snatches the Bible out of her hand)

GIRL

Wait, that's my Bible!

BOY

(flipping through it rapidly)
You think this has the answers in it, right? All the answers? You think this saves you, right? This is what you brought me?

GIRL

Actually, no, I brought you this. Can I have that back, please?

(HE cradles it and turns away from her, like a gorilla)

GIRL

On second thought, why don't you just hang on to that... But please, take this. I promise it'll help.

BOY

What is that?

GIRL

It's just a business card. It's got the phone number for my psychiatrist.

(HE turns away)

BOY

I don't need any psychiatrist.

GIRL

(extremely gingerly)
Oh no, I'm not saying you need a psychiatrist. Far from it. I'm just saying, if YOU think it might be helpful to take advantage of the expertise of someone who helps people in similar situations, maybe you should, you know, think about it. That's all I'm saying.

BOY

(dully, politely)
No, thank you.

GIRL

I used to go all the time. Yeah. I know. Me. A psychiatrist. Who'd've thought, right? But, you know, I was dealing with a lot of stress at school, and he helped me. I was feeling all this guilt, and he helped me let it go, and now, I'm such a better person.

BOY

No, thank you.

GIRL

Please just take the card. I promise it's not scary at all. Here, let me show you.

(SHE cranks fresh paper onto the wall)

GIRL

I promise you, there's nothing to be afraid of.

(SHE begins to paint the psychiatrist's office. The scene comes to life. Eventually the MAN appears, as the psychiatrist, in a rolling office chair)

TRACK 11: "THE NICE MAN WITH THE NICE BEARD"

GIRL

HE'S THE NICE MAN WITH THE NICE BEARD...

HE'S GOT THIS LITTLE OFFICE,
WITH A COUPLE LITTLE CHAIRS.
YOU SIT INSIDE THE OFFICE AND YOU CHAT.
THE LAMP IS LOW AND GENTLE,
AND HE SMILES BECAUSE HE CARES.
AND YOU'RE SITTING,
YOU'RE JUST TALKING,

THERE'S NO PRESSURE,
YOU'RE JUST TALKING,
BENEATH A FAM'LY PHOTO WITH HIS CAT.

HE IS THE NICE MAN WITH THE NICE BEARD.
HE LISTENS AND HE HELPS YOU BY GIVING YOU INSIGHT.
AND YOU'LL FIND, ONCE YOUR MIND HAS CLEARED,
THAT SUDDENLY YOUR PROBLEMS START TO SEEM ALL RIGHT...
SEEM ALL RIGHT...

HE'S GOT THIS LITTLE BALDSPOT,
AND A PAIR OF LITTLE SPECS.
HE DRESSES LIKE IT'S 1984.
HE UNDERSTANDS YOUR PROBLEM,
NO MATTER HOW COMPLEX.
AND YOU'RE SITTING,
YOU'RE JUST TALKING,
THERE'S NO PRESSURE,
YOU'RE JUST TALKING,
AND YOU'RE NOT CONFUSED AND LONELY ANYMORE!

HE IS THE NICE MAN WITH THE NICE BEARD.
HE HELPS YOU WHEN YOUR LIFE STARTS TO COME OUT OF LEFT
FIELD.
YOU FEEL SILLY FOR ALL THOSE TIMES YOU FEARED
'CAUSE SUDDENLY YOUR LIFE STARTS TO LOOK LIKE IT'S
HEALED...
LIKE YOU'RE HEALED...
LIKE YOU'VE FINALLY BEEN HEALED...
LIKE YOU'VE SUDDENLY BEEN HEALED...
LIKE YOU'RE LIFE HAS BEEN HEALED...
YOU'VE BEEN HEALED.

YOU'RE JUST SITTING.
YOU'RE JUST TALKING.
THERE'S NO PRESSURE.
YOU'RE JUST TALKING.
YOU'RE JUST SITTING.
YOU'RE JUST TALKING.
THERE'S NO PRESSURE.
YOU'RE JUST TALKING...

(SHE extends the card to him again)

GIRL

HE'S THE NICE MAN...

(HE takes the card from her. SHE relaxes)

GIRL

So why don't you just give him a call, make an appointment, and I'll be back to check on you a little later, ok?

(SHE starts to leave, but stops en route)

GIRL

Oh, and you keep the Bible for now. You can read it, just don't try to INTERPRET anything without a professional, ok? All right, I'll be back later.

(SHE exits. The BOY looks to the Bible and the card. HE tosses the card away and flips open the Bible)

BOY

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' houses and by their clans. From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, all who can come to...'"

(HE groans and tosses the Bible unceremoniously aside. HE goes back to the card and picks it up, regarding it. The MAN, who has been sitting frozen in the office chair, comes to life. The BOY never makes eye contact with him, ashamed)

MAN

What can I do for you?

BOY

I... I don't know.

MAN

That's all right. Just take as much time as you need. When you're ready to tell me what you're feeling, we can talk.

(The BOY sits in silence for a moment, heaves a sigh)

BOY

I guess... I feel... I feel guilty.

MAN

I see. Can you tell me why you feel guilty?

BOY

I don't want to.

MAN

That's all right. You don't have to do anything you don't want to.

BOY

She told me you helped her not feel guilty. How do you do that?

MAN

Well, some people struggle with a lot of misplaced feelings of guilt. A little guilt is helpful sometimes, but long term it can be very damaging to our self-image, our health, if we don't keep it under control. Some people are perfectionists - they place a lot of value on the feelings and opinions of others. Part of my job is to help my patients learn to refocus their values away from the opinions of others, and back on what THEY want, and what THEY feel. The process helps them to heal.

BOY

Oh.

MAN

Perhaps you can answer a question for me. I'm hearing that you feel guilty. Now you don't have to tell me why if you don't want to. But are there other people who are making you feel guilty or ashamed?

BOY

I guess.

MAN

Their feelings are very important to you?

BOY

I don't know.

MAN

I see.

BOY

What if I feel guilty because I really am guilty?

MAN

(frowning, concerned)

Well, I would question the standard you're using. Who says you have to feel guilty? Where is it written that you have to feel guilty?

BOY

What if I did something really bad?

MAN

Now you may have made an unhealthy choice or two in the past, and there's sense in learning from them, but, again, I would say, who says it's "really bad?" Who says you have to feel guilty? Do you want to feel guilty?

BOY

No.

MAN

Why is it so important to you that you feel guilty?

BOY

I don't know.

MAN

I see. Well, my job is to help you consider what YOU feel, what YOU want, deep inside. It doesn't have to be right now, but, I want you to think about what's important to you. Not anyone else, not your parents, not your teachers, not your friends. Important to YOU. What YOU feel. Do you think you can do that for me? Would that be all right?

BOY

What I feel?

MAN

That's right. What you feel.

BOY

Oh. Well...

(takes a deep breath, beginning to cry)

I feel like... I feel like maybe I shouldn't have done it...

MAN

I see.

BOY

(crying)

I shouldn't have done it. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I don't know what to do. I don't know what I'm supposed to do.

MAN

I see.

BOY

No, you don't...

MAN

I'm sorry?

BOY

(at last facing the man, his tears turning to anger)

You don't see at all!

MAN

Well, if you would tell me what it is that's making you feel the way you feel...

REPRISE OF TRACK 10

BOY

Ok, then. You want to know? I'll tell you. I took a life. That's what I did.

THE LITTLE KID I KILLED,
HIS CAR SMASHED ON A WALL,
SWERVED TO MISS THE CINDERBLOCK THAT I JUST THREW.
YOU SAY DON'T FEEL GUILT,
BUT WHAT ELSE SHOULD I FEEL
WHEN I KILLED A LITTLE KID?

MAYBE YOU HELPED HER,
BUT YOU CAN NOT HELP ME.
SO GOOD-BYE, SO LONG NOW, OUR TIME IS UP!
AND I DON'T NEED TO HEAL,
I ONLY NEED TO DIE.
SO FAREWELL, SO LONG, GOOD-BYE!

(HE pushes his rolling chair away, and sinks to his knees)

I ONLY NEED TO DIE...

(Alone, HE chokes back sobs and tries to regain his composure. Seeing the Bible on the floor where he threw it, HE grabs it again and starts flipping through hungrily, repeatedly scanning a page and then flipping somewhere else, frustrated. HE finally seems to land on something that holds his attention. HE stands up, saves his place, goes over to the crank and brings up fresh paper. As HE reads the story, HE draws what he reads, and it comes to life)

TRACK 12: "SYCAMORE TREE"

BOY

(reading methodically and mechanically, like a schoolboy, struggling a little)

"He entered Jericho, and behold, there was a man named Zatch-- Zatchay-- Zack. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.

(drawing a gnarled tree)

AND SO HE CLIMBED
A SYCAMORE TREE
IN ORDER TO SEE
AS JESUS WAS PASSING THERE...

A SYCAMORE TREE
IN ORDER TO SEE
AS JESUS WAS PASSING THERE..."

HEY, LITTLE MAN, LITTLE MAN...
WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WOULD FIND
ON THAT ROAD
OR IN YOUR MIND
IN THE SYCAMORE TREE?

"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zack, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, 'He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.'

HEY, LITTLE MAN, LITTLE MAN...
WHAT DID YOU FEEL DEEP INSIDE?
DID YOU FEEL SHAME
TO HAVE TO HIDE
IN THAT SYCAMORE TREE?

"And Zack stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.' And Jesus said to him,

SALVATION HAS COME TO THIS HOUSE
SALVATION HAS COME TO THIS HOUSE
FOR HE TOO IS
A CHILD OF ABRAHAM...
A CHILD OF ABRAHAM...
FOR I HAVE COME
TO SEEK AND SAVE
THAT WHICH WAS LOST..."

HEY, LITTLE MAN, LITTLE MAN,
WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WOULD FIND?
OR DID YOU KNOW
THAT YOU WOULD
BE FOUND...

BUT THE THING I HAVE STOLEN--
I CAN NEVER GIVE THAT BACK...

SO AM I TOO
A CHILD OF ABRAHAM?

WHO'S ABRAHAM?

I CAN'T MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

BUT I CAN CLIMB
THE SYCAMORE TREE
IN ORDER TO SEE,
AS JESUS WAS PASSING THERE...

THE SYCAMORE TREE
IN ORDER TO SEE,
AS JESUS WAS PASSING THERE...

(HE paints a phone booth. HE pulls out a phone and tries to dial, but we hear a recorded voice: "Please insert 25 cents." HE checks his pockets, but they're empty. So HE draws a gumball machine and pulls 25 cents out of it. HE starts to put the coin in the slot, but stops himself, and throws the phone down, stepping away from it, trembling, breathing hard. Finally, HE pulls himself together and puts the coin in the slot. We hear the dial tone, and the voice of the operator)

BOY

(too choked up to be understood)

I want to place a collect call please.

(clears throat, wipes face)

A collect call. The, um, the Rosenberg family. Name? My name? Um... just tell them... oh God. Tell them it's the boy from the bridge. Yeah. Thank you. Yes, thanks.

(waits a moment, hears the ringing, starts sobbing when he fears the voice "hello" on the other end)

I... I... I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!

(HE abruptly drops the phone and runs off stage. We hear the tinny "hellos" of the woman on the other end of the line)

SCENE TWO

(The walls are hidden now, darkened. Police lights flash from somewhere in the distance. We hear POLICE RADIOS crackle. The MAN and the WOMAN enter, Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg, looking around warily. SHE is leading the charge, HE hangs to the rear)

WOMAN

This has to be it. It's only a block from that pay phone the police said he used.

MAN

You're sure about this?

WOMAN

No. I'm not. I just know that I have to see him. I have to see him.

MAN

(agitated, trying to maintain his composure)
Look, the police are here. Maybe we should let them deal with the boy first. We can see him afterward. We can even talk to him, in a safe place. We don't know what we're dealing with. We don't know anything about this kid.

WOMAN

We know he's sorry. We know he's scared. If we send in the police, they could scare him. I don't want to scare him.

MAN

You don't want to scare him? Why, because he could run away?

WOMAN

Maybe. Or maybe... maybe I just feel like, there could be another way. I want to see him. I just want to talk to him. That's all. I promise, if there's even the tiniest sign of danger or anything, we can call the police, ok? I just need to see him.

MAN

(sighing, resigned to her attitude)
I see. All right, then. We'll do it your way. But we're agreed then. The instant I feel any threat, or it looks like he's going to make a break for it, I'm calling the police in. All right?

WOMAN

All right...

(The GIRL appears, dressed for church. SHE notices the couple and starts)

GIRL

Oh my goodness gracious! The frizzy red hair... the glasses... you! You're them!

MAN

Who are you? You know us? You know the boy? You know what's going on?

WOMAN

We just want to talk to him.

GIRL

Well, he told me about what happened, actually. I've visited him a few times. I think we were friends for a little while, maybe... I don't know. He's kind of a strange case.

MAN

Strange case? What do you mean? Is he dangerous?

GIRL

Oh no, I don't think he'd ever hurt anyone! Except maybe himself, I guess. He's kind of lost in there... I was just going to drop by on my way to church, you know, see how he's doing.

WOMAN

You know him well? Can you tell us... where are his parents? Where does he live?

GIRL

His parents? Well, his parents are out of the picture, as far as I can tell. I think there, well, may have been some abuse of some kind. You know, there have been hints. I don't know where he lives. Maybe here. But, there's something you should know about him...

MAN

What is that?

GIRL

He draws.

MAN

Draws?

GIRL

On the wall. For him, that's kind of his whole world. He lives in his imagination. I think it's how he escapes from his guilt.

WOMAN

Guilt?

GIRL

(becoming increasingly upset)
Yeah. He's pretty much tearing himself apart in there... I don't know what to do about it. I've seriously got no clue. I gave him the card for my psychiatrist. But I don't know... he seemed so... I just wish I had a way to...

(SHE stops and steels herself)
No. You know what? This isn't my responsibility. This isn't for me to fix. It's clearly none of my business, and besides, I have to be at church in a few minutes. The youth group is leading service today. I'm giving the reading.

WOMAN

Oh, that's nice...

GIRL

You can come visit if you want, sometime. It's right around the corner. We have a great chai machine.

MAN

Actually, we're Jewish.

GIRL

Ok, never mind, then. Look, I've got to go. Maybe I'll stop by later, but... not now. I can't right now. Listen... Good luck in there...

(SHE leaves. The MAN looks to his wife)

MAN

Are you still sure about this? You're sure you want to do this?

WOMAN

More than ever. I have to see him.

(THEY move closer to the wall. The lights come up, and we see what the boy has been painting. The place is a mess. Some of the paper is torn. Things have been messily scrawled on the wall - "HELP ME" prominently in red. Twisted religious iconography covers the wall - images of hell, an image of Christ looking angry, distorted and grotesque. The floor is covered in religious tracts and trash. The girl's Bible sits open on the floor)

MAN

Just from a cursory examination, I'd say he's a little unstable.

WOMAN

He needs help.

(picking up some of the tracts)

Look at this. He must have picked up these tracts from men in the park.

MAN

I don't like this. I don't think we should be here.

(HE hangs back, looking back at the police car.
SHE examines the cart of paints)

WOMAN

Paints... look at all this. The guilt must be killing him.

MAN

(quietly)

Shouldn't it be?

WOMAN

What was that?

MAN

Nothing... I just... I don't understand why you're doing this. You seem to have all this empathy for this kid, and... I wish I had that. I really do. I really wish I did, but... sometimes, when I let myself, the only thing I can think, when I think about that kid, is I want to... I want to hurt him. I want him to...

(he stops himself, looks away)

I wish I were like you.

WOMAN

(coming towards him, reaching out, apologetic)

Oh no... I didn't mean to...

MAN

It's not you. I promise, it's not you. I'm not mad at you. I'm just... I'm just confused.

WOMAN

Do you need to go back? Maybe I can see him alone.

MAN

Maybe. Maybe I do. But what are you going to say to him? I mean, what could you possibly say to him? What good is that going to do?

WOMAN

I don't know. I'm sorry. Maybe this is just too much. You know, I just think about him, and his voice when he called us, what the little girl said. I think he's scared, I think he's all alone, and I wonder if what he needs right now is a mother. I don't think that's bad to think, is it? I mean, maybe I'm confused. Maybe it is bad. I don't want to hurt anyone.

(SHE falls into his embrace. HE hushes her)

MAN

No, no, of course not! Of course not! Of course it's not bad. Of course it's not... I just wish... I just wish I was as strong as you is all.

WOMAN

I don't feel strong at all. I feel so helpless... like maybe it'll all go away if I just see him and talk to him. I don't know why. It's dumb. It's just dumb.

MAN

You want to call the police in?

WOMAN

I don't know. Maybe that's the right thing. But I keep feeling like, suppose the police come in, and arrest him... if it had been back then, I might have been relieved, I guess. I might have felt a sense of, I don't know... closure, then. But since he called, I just have this intense feeling, like, that's not enough. They could lock him away forever, they could sit him in the chair, and I think, when it was all over, that empty feeling would still be there, eating me alive. I think I need to talk to him. I think I have to. Is that... ok?

MAN

If you have to, then you have to. But I can't. Not now. Maybe not ever. I just can't. I'm not... I don't think I'm strong enough.

WOMAN

Please try. For me.

MAN

I don't know. I want to. Understand I want to. But there's so much--

(The BOY appears on the other side of the space. He's disheveled, dirty, and covered in red paint. THEY freeze. The MAN and the BOY stare, wide-eyed at each other, for a long, silent moment, before the BOY turns and starts to run. The WOMAN reaches out and grabs him by the arm, holding him tight. The MAN quickly exits the other way)

WOMAN

Wait, please, don't... please stop! I want to talk to you! I just want to talk to you!

(HE stops, refusing to turn towards her or look at her, completely frozen)

WOMAN

Please don't leave... I promise I won't hurt you. Please... look at me... look at me...

(HE trembles, still looking away from her, for a long time, before HE turns, looks at her, and collapses, sobbing. She rushes forward and grabs in her arms, as he repeats "I'm sorry." THEY sink to the floor - SHE cradles him against her chest, hushing him, and after a moment, opens up her purse and pulls out a case of wet wipes. HE starts to regain his composure a little as SHE slowly and methodically begins wiping the red paint off his skin. When she has finished, the ground around them is littered with used wipes)

BOY

You used up all your wipes...

WOMAN

It's all right. I can always buy more. They're not expensive.

(HE starts to cry again, but SHE hushes him)

WOMAN

It's all right... it's all right...

BOY

No. No, it's not all right. How can you say it's all right?

WOMAN

Because I'm the one who gets to decide if it's all right or not. Not you. And that's what I decide.

BOY

Why are you doing this? I don't understand.

WOMAN

You know what? I don't really either. Maybe you can answer a question for me? Can you do that?

BOY

I guess...

WOMAN

Where are your parents?

BOY

I don't know. I kind of ran away... I don't know where mom is. Feels like so long ago...

WOMAN

What about school? You go to school?

BOY

No.

WOMAN

You live here? This is where you live?

BOY

Sometimes. It's not so bad. I've got paints and stuff. I don't understand why you're asking me all this... aren't you gonna lock me up?

WOMAN

Do you talk to anyone? Do you have any friends?

BOY

There's this girl. I think she's my friend.

WOMAN

Yes, we met her. Is there anyone else?

(HE doesn't answer for a moment, and then kind of shakes his head and starts to cry again)

BOY

(sobbing again)

I was hiding... I didn't want anyone to find me... I just wanted it to stop. I wanted it be ok. I don't know how to make it ok.

TRACK 13: "THE OFFER"

WOMAN

Hush... hush... it's all right. You can't make it ok. There really isn't anything you can do. But maybe there's something I can do. I think maybe there's something you need and something I need and that maybe there's a way to make it work for all of us. Ok? I want you to listen to me, all right? I want you to listen to me, and look me in the eye, all right? All right?

I THINK BACK
I THINK BACK
TO THAT DAY...
TO THAT DAY...
ALL THE ANGER...

THAT ANGER
STAYED WITH ME
FOR SUCH A LONG TIME...
FOR SO LONG...
AND I'M DONE WITH IT.

I HAVE THIS FEELING
BUILDING INSIDE ME.
PERHAPS I'M CRAZY.
PERHAPS I'M FOOLISH.
PERHAPS IT COULD BE
THE MOTHER INSIDE,
LIKE THE BREATH OF GOD
A MERCIFUL GOD

WE HAVE THIS
OLD BEDROOM
IT'S KIND OF BEEN EMPTY
FOR SO LONG.
AND I'M TIRED OF THAT.

SO LISTEN
YES, LISTEN,
I'LL MAKE YOU AN OFFER,
LOOK AT ME
LOOK IN MY EYE!

I WANT TO
CHECK YOU IN
TO A HOSPITAL...
FOR A WHILE
AND WHEN YOU'RE BETTER...
I WANT YOU
TO COME LIVE WITH US...
AND WE MIGHT FEEL
HAPPY
MIGHT BE
HAPPY
AT LAST

So is that ok? Would you do that? I need to hear it from you.

(HE nods vaguely)

WOMAN

I need to hear it. I need to hear you say "yes."

BOY

Yes.

WOMAN

All right, then. Now I have to talk about this with my husband. And I want you to know, that I can't promise you he'll be ok with it. But I'm going to try. And I think he'll say yes, because I think, deep down, he wants what I want. Ok? Can you stay here for just a minute while I go talk to him? I think, finally, things are going to be ok. They're going to be ok...

BOY

(softly, ashamed and overwhelmed)

Thank you...

(SHE exits. HE stands, straightens his hair,
looks at the wall, and goes to his paints and
brushes, fingering them. HE looks off to where
the WOMAN went to)

TRACK 14: "BACK TOGETHER"

BOY

I KNEW THIS KID ONCE...
I KNEW THIS KID ONCE...

HE HAD THIS LITTLE TRUCK,
BUT WHEN HE SAW A WHEEL HAD GOTTEN STUCK,
HE THREW IT AGAINST THE WALL.
BROKE IN A HUNDRED PIECES IN THE FALL.
SO HE ASKED HIS DAD,
CAN YOU PUT THIS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE DID.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE FIXED IT FOR HIS KID.
THOUGHT IT'D BE THROWN AWAY...
THOUGHT HE'D SAY THAT'S NOT HOW YOU'RE S'POSED TO
PLAY...
BUT INSTEAD HE SAID,
I CAN PUT THIS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

PIECE OF CRAP
PIECE OF JUNK
PIECE OF WORTHLESS JUNK
JUST A TRUCK
CAKED IN MUD
AND SPATTERS OF BLOOD
AND WHY
WOULD ANYONE SAVE THAT?
SHOULD'VE BEEN TOSSED OUT!
SHOULD'VE BEEN GARBAGE!
SHOULD'VE BEEN THROWN AWAY!
BUT INSTEAD HE SAID
I CAN PUT THIS BACK TOGETHER AGAIN.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE DID.
I DON'T KNOW WHY HE FIXED IT FOR HIS KID.
OR WHAT I'M ASKING FOR.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING ANYMORE.
BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW

CAN YOU PUT THIS
BACK TOGETHER?
CAN YOU PUT THIS
BACK TOGETHER?
CAN YOU FIX IT?
CAN YOU FIX IT?
CAN YOU FIX IT?
CAN YOU FIX IT?
CAN YOU PUT ME
BACK TOGETHER
AGAIN?

(HE picks up a brush, and heads to the wall with it, his hand trembling like an addict's, when HE stops himself and throws the brush to the ground.)

BOY

No! No more. No more. I'm done with that. I'm done...

(HE takes the cart and starts to push it offstage, when the MAN and WOMAN enter. The MAN grabs the cart by the other side and stops it.)

MAN

Where are you going? We need that.

(THEY stare at each other across the paint cart for a long moment, before the BOY releases his end)

WOMAN

Thanks. Stand there for a minute, would you?

(The MAN and WOMAN begin to take down the wall and replace it with fresh, white paper. On another part of the stage, the GIRL appears, with a microphone, before her congregation. SHE smiles perkily, clearly relishing the attention of her church)

GIRL

(reciting smarmily)

Please turn in your Bibles to the book of 1 Corinthians. Today's reading will be from the thirteenth chapter. I will be presenting a song taken from the text. Thank you. Ahem!

(AS she sings, the MAN and WOMAN begin to draw a normal boy's bedroom on the wall, as the BOY watches in stunned silence. The bedroom comes to life. When the song is over, the bedroom is fully assembled)

TRACK 15: "LOVE IS"

GIRL

LOVE IS
LOVE IS PATIENT
LOVE IS
LOVE IS KIND
IT IS NOT ENVIOUS NOR BOASTFUL, NEITHER RUDE, NOR
SELF-SEEKING.
IT IS NOT ARROGANT NOR PROUD, IT IS NOT EASILY
ANGERED.
LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS...

LOVE IS
LOVE IS PATIENT
LOVE IS
LOVE IS KIND
IT IS NOT ENVIOUS NOR BOASTFUL, NEITHER RUDE, NOR
SELF-SEEKING.
IT IS NOT ARROGANT NOR PROUD, IT IS NOT EASILY
ANGERED.
LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS...
NO RECORD OF WRONGS...
NO RECORD OF WRONGS...

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS
LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS
LOVE HOPES ALL THINGS
LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS

LOVE NEVER FAILS
OH...
LOVE NEVER FAILS
OH...

LOVE IS
LOVE IS
LOVE IS
LOVE IS

Thank you. You may be seated. And don't forget that because the indoor yard sale has been extended until 4, there will be no Yoga for Jesus today!

(SHE beams a satisfied smile and exits. The BOY takes in his new surroundings, reaching out to touch the furniture, but not actually touching it, as though afraid to find out it might not be real. The WOMAN exits, leaving the MAN alone with the BOY. THEY look at each other, the BOY terrified. HE motions to a chair)

MAN

Have a seat.

(The BOY sits)

MAN

Now, if you're going to stay here after you get out of the hospital, there's going to be rules, which I expect to be followed at all times, is that clear?

BOY

Yes.

MAN

You'll be going to school. You will wake up at 7, and we will not tell you to get up more than once. (I say that now...) After school, you will do your schoolwork immediately. When you are finished, the time is yours. However, you'll be home for dinner on weeknights at 7. You will sit at the table with us. If you have any trouble at school whatsoever, you will not keep it from us, you will tell us, and we will do whatever we can to help you. You are going to be a part of this family. Is that understood?

BOY

Yes.

MAN

The first and third Saturdays of the month, we'd like you to come with us to temple. You don't have to, but we'd like you to.

BOY

Ok.

MAN

I had hoped to pass my faith on to my son, to teach him, as my father taught me. After he... well, there were many times when I didn't feel I had any faith left to pass on. But I think, somehow, things are going to be different now.

(HE grips the BOY warmly by the shoulder)

MAN

I need to make some phone calls. Why don't you stay here for a bit and play?

(turning to leave)

Welcome home.

(HE exits. The BOY stands in the midst of his room, overwhelmed and guilty. HE reaches out to touch the things. HE opens a chest, pulls out a hat, looks at it briefly, and puts it quickly and gently back in, as though afraid to even leave fingerprints on anything. HE finds a portable game system in a box, and chokes back a sob as he looks at it, and puts it back, shaking his head)

BOY

It doesn't make any sense... how can I take this stuff? All this? How? Seriously, how?

(HE starts to sit on his bed, but stands suddenly, as though realizing he doesn't want to let himself enjoy that either)

BOY

And yet, she said, she gets to decide if it's all right. Do I believe her, or don't I? Why would they give me this...

(picks up the game system)

...if they didn't want me to have it? It seems so absurd but... they said they wanted to. They want me to have this. So, maybe if I just...

(HE flicks on the power switch, and we hear the electronic beeps as it comes on. HE throws himself on the bed with it, when the GIRL enters, completely shocked at what's she's seeing)

GIRL

Oh my goodness gracious... what is all this? What are you doing?

(As though having been caught red-handed, HE throws the game system down and leaps out of bed)

BOY

I'm sorry! I was just... I'm sorry!

(The GIRL ignores him, inspecting the bedroom with wide eyes and an open mouth)

GIRL

You have a bedroom now. A real bedroom. I don't believe it.

BOY

They gave it to me. They said I could come stay with them. After I get out of the hospital.

GIRL

Really? They said that? Hospital? I don't get it. They gave you this room... was it his? The boy's?

BOY

I... I don't know... I... I didn't even think to...

GIRL

(finding the game system)
These things are so expensive!

BOY

They are?

GIRL

My parents wouldn't even buy me one. Not that I wanted one. These things are all violence and misogyny, you know.

BOY

I don't know. I haven't played it yet.

GIRL

This stuff... this is nice... I mean, really nice. What could they possibly be thinking?

BOY

They said they wanted me to have it...

GIRL

There's got to be something else going on here. I mean, people don't do that. Not sane people.

BOY

I'll give it away. I don't have to have it! I lived fine without it. Well, not fine, maybe... you know what I mean.

GIRL

Look, I'm not saying you have to give it away. I'm just, you know, shocked is all. Under the circumstances... considering what you *did*... I just can't figure it out. But don't do anything rash on my account.

BOY

But you're right! I deserve to be... and then I have all this stuff now. It's not right. I have to give it back somehow. I have to give it back.

GIRL

You gonna rent the room out to someone else? Hmm?

BOY

No. I guess I can't do that. I can give some of this away, though... I can't give it all. And would that make a difference? Would that be right? But maybe I can give something else!

GIRL

Oh? Something else?

BOY

(fetching her Bible)

Yeah! I could... hey, everybody needs redemption, right? I read that in here, right? You believe in this, right? Oh. This is yours.

(HE gives the Bible back to her)

GIRL

Sounds like you've been trying to interpret.

BOY

I mean, you believe that, right? Everyone needs saving?

GIRL

Well, technically, in one sense, I guess... but the thing is, you can't just say--

TRACK 16: "FILL IN THE BLANKS"

BOY

(ignoring her, growing increasingly excited by the idea)

IT'S NOT JUST ME...

IT'S NOT JUST ME, RIGHT?

EVERYONE NEEDS FORGIVENESS

OR NOTHING WILL BE RIGHT...

EVERYONE HAS HOLES

EVERYONE IS MISSING THINGS

MISSING A MOTHER, A FATHER, A CHILD, A FRIEND?

MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN DO...

WE CAN DO...

TO HELP THESE HOLES TO END?

It's not just me who needs this! It's everyone!

GIRL

Um, I'm not sure that your experience really applies that broadly here...

BOY

COULD WE

FILL IN THE BLANKS?

COULD WE DISCOVER IF THERE COULD BE

SOME WAY TO

FILL IN THE BLANKS?

TO GIVE WHAT THEY GAVE FREELY TO ME...

IF WE COULD SHARE, TELL THE TALE, OF HOW THINGS
CHANGED...

WHEN WE HAD BROKEN THROUGH OUR PRIDE!

HOW WE LOST ALL THE PAIN THAT

TORE US UP, ALL THOSE YEARS INSIDE...

GIRL

Yeah, ok, that sounds nice and everything, but don't you think you're getting just a wee bit overexcited? Just a tad? And stop saying "we" like I'm on board with all this...

BOY

(starting to reach for a paintbrush)

COULD WE
FILL IN THE BLANKS?
TO SOMEHOW SHARE THE FREEDOM WE FOUND?
IF WE COULD
FILL IN THE BLANKS,
I BET THAT LOTS OF PEOPLE AROUND

WILL START TO HEAR HOW THERE'S HOPE FROM BROKENNESS,
IF WE JUST SPEAK A HUMBLE WORD,
SUDDENLY ALL THE PAIN WE'RE CLINGING TO
STARTS TO SEEM ABSURD...

GIRL

(stopping his hand)
Not the paints! No more delusions!

BOY

LET'S GO
FILL IN THE BLANKS!

GIRL

Oh my goodness gracious... how much higher are you going to
get?

BOY

WITH YOU AND ME, JUST THINK WHAT WE'LL DO...

GIRL

You and me? How about just you?

BOY

IF WE GO
FILL IN THE BLANKS!
WE'LL SHARE THE LOVE THAT I NEVER KNEW...

JUST THINK OF IT, THINK OF IT, JUST THINK OF IT!

IF WE FILL IN THE BLANKS...
WE'D UNDERSTAND THAT MAYBE...
WE...
COULD...

GIRL

(stopping the music)
All right, that's enough. I've had it.

BOY

What? What's the matter?

GIRL

Look, I know you're excited about sharing what you've got, and all that, and believe me, I appreciate what you're trying to do. I really do! But I don't think you've really thought through what you're saying.

BOY

It seems right to me...

GIRL

Yeah, it *seems* right, but it's not. Look, when you say that everyone needs forgiveness, you *offend* people. Do you understand me? That's offensive.

BOY

What do you mean?

GIRL

Look. I understand this is all new to you, the helping-people-out concept, but it's not new to the rest of us. Not all of us need forgiveness, ok? You know where I was going right after this? I was going to church to put in a few hours at the food bank. That's right. I represent the youth group in four - count 'em, four - social justice committees. You act like helping people is news to me, but it's not, ok? I'm already doing this. But I'm giving people food, not forgiveness. Not everyone needs some grand redemption. I certainly don't need it. Most people don't need it.

BOY

I don't understand why you're so upset! I thought you'd like the idea...

GIRL

What's to like? Forgiveness for everyone? First off, most of us don't need it, and second off, the few of us who do - maybe serial killers and Adolf Hitler and child molesters - *shouldn't be forgiven*. They're bad people, ok? We punish bad people. That's what keeps society good and nice. We don't give bad people bedrooms and video games and pretend like everything's ok because, you know what? It's not. I mean, how do they know that you're not going to hurt them again? How do they know that? What they did, it makes no sense at all! And they probably expect us to look at them

and think, "Oh, how noble, and righteous of them, forgiving that poor boy." Well it's stupid. It's stupid sentimentality, and I don't buy it. And you know what else, the rest of us had to earn our bedrooms and video games, by being good and nice! That's right!

(HE shrinks visibly after this, turns away from her. SHE adopts a menacing stance, growing increasingly agitated)

TRACK 17: "DECENT HUMAN BEINGS"

GIRL

WE'RE DECENT HUMAN BEINGS
DOING DECENT HUMAN THINGS.
NOT TO SAY WE'RE PERFECT,
BUT PEOPLE ARE SLANDERED
WHEN PERFECT'S THE STANDARD
YOU'RE SLINGING
ON DECENT HUMAN BEINGS.

EVERYTHING'S FINE.
PEOPLE ARE FINE.

RAPISTS NEED REDEMPTION.
MAYBE MURDERERS AND THIEVES.
A TINY LITTLE SAMPLE!
DON'T MIX WHORES AND LIARS
WITH CHURCH-GOING CHOIRS
JUST SINGING
TO DECENT HUMAN BEINGS...

MOST OF US ARE FINE.
ALMOST ALL OF US ARE FINE.

BUT NOT YOU...
NOT WHAT YOU DID...
YOU WENT AND YOU KILLED SOMEONE'S INNOCENT KID...

I WOULD NEVER DO THAT.
I'M A DECENT HUMAN BEING.

SO ALL OF THIS CRAP
SIMPLY HAPPENS TO BE ONE MORE
DRAWING
A DRAWING ON THE WALL
YOUR CRAZY LITTLE WALL.

SAYING IT'S NOT SO BAD
BECAUSE EVERYBODY'S BAD
BUT EVERYBODY'S NOT BAD!
WE'RE DECENT HUMAN BEINGS!

But guess what. I have a little drawing of my own for your wall now. Hope you like it.

SO LET'S START ANEW...
TURN OVER A NEW PAGE...
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO TWO FRIENDS OF MINE:
MR. EGGSHELL AND MRS. BEIGE!

(The MAN and WOMAN enter as Mr. Eggshell and Mrs. Beige - two men in painter's outfits and grotesque, formless masks. They carry trays of bland paint and rollers. They start to paint methodically over the drawings on the wall. The BOY leaps to stop them, but the GIRL restrains him easily)

BOY

No!

GIRL

Hey now, let's not get excited! They're just doing their job - making your wall actually tasteful. You like it? I think this was one "Informal Ivory." And by the way, the fact that I have more upper body strength than you, ought to make you feel more than a little embarrassed.

(The MAN and WOMAN finish the job quickly and exit. The BOY pulls away from the GIRL and kneels in front of the destroyed wall. HE covers his head in his hands)

GIRL

WE'RE DECENT HUMAN BEINGS,
DOING DECENT HUMAN THINGS.
EVERYTHING IS FINE NOW.
YOUR COLORFUL PAINTING
WAS HORRIBLY TAINTING
YOUR THINKING.

NOW EVERYTHING IS FINE.
EVERYTHING IS PLAIN.
NOTHING IS INSANE.

SO LEAVE US ALONE,
US DECENT
HUMAN
BEINGS!

(SHE storms off, leaving the BOY staring
mournfully at the wall for a long, silent moment.
The MAN enters, looks at the wall)

MAN

What on earth happened here? I'm pretty sure we have a "No
Beige Policy" in this house.

BOY

That girl... she did it. She painted over it. But it
doesn't matter. I'm done with the wall. I'm done with it.
Only reality from here on out.

MAN

What? Because reality's so great?

(The WOMAN enters, kneels next to the boy, and
puts a hand on his shoulder)

WOMAN

Don't let that little girl get to you, ok? She didn't know
how to handle what we did.

BOY

I don't know how to handle what you did...

WOMAN

I know, sweetie, I know... but everything's going to be
ok. The only thing that matters now is we're together and
we're going to work through this together. We're going to
put the wall back.

BOY

It's all lies.

MAN

Well, that depends on what you draw, doesn't it?

WOMAN

I know you're afraid... you know that you've done things,
that you've been given things you don't deserve, and

someone can use that to hurt you. But I promise you. We're going to do our very best to never hurt you, and never let anyone else hurt you. We're together now. We're a family. As far as we're concerned, the slate is clean. We can start all over. Do you understand?

(HE nods shakily, as the MAN starts to clean up the wall behind him, wiping off the beige and preparing a fresh, white surface)

TRACK 18: "FINALE"

WOMAN

YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE SAY,
"I'LL BE WITH YOU ALL THE WAY?"
YOU EVER HAD SOMEONE TAKE YOUR HAND

TO GO WITH YOU, HOWEVER FAR?
YOU'LL SEE HOW STRONG YOU ARE
WITH SOMEONE THERE WHO CAN UNDERSTAND...

AND THOUGH YOU BELIEVE THAT IT'S ALL DOWN TO YOU,
WE WANT YOU TO KNOW IT'S NOT TRUE...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO
DO THIS ALONE...

(SHE kisses him and goes to join her husband in repairing the wall, as the BOY turns away and ruminates)

BOY

I TOOK A LIFE, I COULDN'T MAKE HIM NOT DEAD,
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I FLED, HOW MUCH I CRIED.
I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD ALWAYS BE THERE ALONE,
WITH NO WAY TO ATONE, UNTIL I DIED... I DIED...

AND THEN THERE WAS GRACE...

I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD HAVE NO WAY TO GET THROUGH
ALL THE PAIN THAT I KNEW, THAT I HAD WROUGHT.
IT WAS MY FAULT, THERE WAS NO WAY TO DENY
BUT I DECIDED TO TRY, SO I KICKED AND FOUGHT... I
FOUGHT...

AND THEN THERE WAS GRACE...
AND NOW I'M FREE!

AND THEN THERE WAS GRACE...
AND NOW I KNOW...

I DON'T HAVE TO
DO THIS ALONE...

(HE goes up to the wall, all fresh and white and new, and the MAN hands him a paintbrush. HE turns away from it)

MAN

Come on. Make something good.

BOY

It won't be true.

MAN

Then we'll work until it is true.

(HE takes the brush. The MAN and WOMAN also take brushes, and begin to paint the wall together, a beautiful mural depicting peace and forgiveness - the feeding of the hungry and the healing of the broken)

BOY

IF I SAID THAT I COULD MAKE THE SKY BLUE...
WELL DON'T BELIEVE ME.
IF I SAID THAT I COULD MAKE THE DAY NEW...
I WOULDN'T BUY THAT.

WHAT IF I
BECAME A WE...
A WE?

BOY	MAN AND WOMAN
AND THEN THERE WAS GRACE...	EV'RYBODY LOOK WHAT WE CAN DO:
AND NOW I'M FREE!	WE'RE DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
AND THEN THERE WAS GRACE...	EV'RYBODY LOOK AT HOW OUR DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE,
AND NOW I KNOW!	WHEN WE'RE DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!

BOY, MAN, AND WOMAN

WE DON'T HAVE TO...
DO THIS ALONE...

EV'RYBODY LOOK WHAT WE CAN DO!
WE'RE DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!
EV'RYBODY LOOK AT HOW OUR DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE,
WHEN WE'RE DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!

AND NOW...
NOW...
NOW...

WE'RE DRAWIN' ON THE WALLS!

(The mural is finished)

END.