

Madonna of the Autoshop

by Ken Prestininzi

kprestinin@aol.com

<http://newdramatists.org/kenneth-prestininzi>

Characters:

Bobby...mixed race, born in Reno, Nevada.

Ria.....mixed race, born in Belize.

Bo.....Chicano, born in Howard, California; never learned Spanish.

Jerry...older, Irish, born in Dublin.

Scene One: Ria and Bo

A yellow and green motel in Sacramento, California.
Ria and Bo in bed after sex.
Sound of the air-conditioner.

Bo turns to Ria and watches her. Grins.
She sits up.

RIA
I'm all sweat.

BO
Come're.

RIA
I don't need that. The cuddle after crap. I don't need that.

She sits.
Bo takes her hips in his hands.

BO
(somewhat singing:) He's got the whole world in His hands.

Ria climbs out of the bed and wipes her body of sweat. She
sits at the foot of the bed and stares into the wall mirror. Bo
moves to get close to her, cautiously. He plays with her hair.

RIA
I should buzz off my hair.

BO
No, don't. I like it.

RIA
I'm not a teen-ager.

BO
Lots of old ladies have long hair. I like it.

RIA
I'm not your old lady.

BO
Not yet.

RIA

Not cute.

BO

I don't like when women do that short look, why look like a man?

RIA

I need to grow up, for chrissakes.

BO

Me too. Maybe I'll shave my head. You cut your hair and I'll shave my head.

RIA

What I do has nothing to do with you.

BO

Could've fooled me ten minutes ago.

Ria gets out of the bed, starts to dress.

RIA

I'm done with it. Her.

BO

Done?

RIA

With the old me. Victim me.

BO

Me too.

RIA

You too what?

BO

I'm done being a boy. Time to be a man. You did that for me.

RIA

Made you want to be a man?

BO

Yep.

RIA

Go to it. Shave your head.

BO

A man is someone who knows who he is.

RIA

I'd rather not talk.

BO

You're lucky being a woman and all that, you know, you always know what you are, you girls understand things about yourself from the moment you're born. You're lucky.

RIA

O yeah, I'm real lucky. I'm all luck.

BO

You always understand you're not a man. Makes things easy. But for us boys, it's all about getting there, becoming a man, it's all about living up to the potential.

RIA

Good luck with that.

BO

I've saved up money. And I want something I can call my own.

RIA

Buy a truck.

BO

I already have one...you said you like my truck.

RIA

Yeah, I said that.

BO

I like you.

RIA

Yeah.

BO

You ever want a man to take care of you? Call you his own?

RIA

Never.

BO

Bullshit.

RIA

I know better.

BO

You liked it when I held you. With these hands. See these hands? They've got my father in them. When he died I held his hands in mine. All through the funeral and mass, I held his hands in mine. People thought I lost it. But no. I was putting his power, his love, in my hands. I knew I had to. He tried to be beat me into the man he wanted me to be. And when he died, I took the love and power he never gave me while he was alive and let it change me, took the love he wanted to give me but never knew how into my hands. And these loving powerful hands held you while you cried. You tried to hide it. When it's right, we all cry. We're right. You felt it too. You felt us. You felt us happen.

RIA

Listen, we fucked. I needed it. And I cried because after we did I knew I would be okay. I'm grateful it helped but that's it. End of story.

BO

End? How can this be the end?

RIA

Listen, you're a sweet boy.

BO

Man.

RIA

And you were real nice to me in bed. Not every man would have held me like that while I...felt right like you said.

BO

I kinda love you, Rita.

RIA

Ria.

BO

Ria. I kinda love you, Ria.

RIA

Stop talking like a girl.

BO

And I want to be a man for you. With you.

RIA

Okay, listen. You're a man. There. What's that?

Nothing. A bruise. Don't look at that.

BO

He puts on his shirt.

It's a beauty.

RIA

You're the beauty.

BO

Get off. What're you doing? Were you trying to kiss me or something? Enough with that. Okay. I mean really. Enough.

RIA

Can't I want to kiss you? Not just now, but tomorrow morning. And the morning after that.

BO

No. Listen, we picked each other up at a bar. It was good exercise. Let's leave it at that.

RIA

You picked me.

BO

You want to start dating or something? O, baby. That's so sweet. Thank you. But that's not what this was about. Not what this is about.

RIA

We can make this be anything we want.

BO

I'm pregnant.

RIA

What.

BO

I said it out loud. I made it real.

RIA

What's real?

BO

RIA

Me. Pregnant.

BO

You can't know that right after, I know we didn't use anything, but you said we didn't have to. This really kills the moment, you know. And I was really enjoying the moment.

RIA

Aw, but baby, that moment was ten, now fifteen minutes ago.

BO

Not the minute. The moment. I was having a really nice time saying nice things to you. But maybe you're the type that needs to make jokes and take things down.

RIA

Just shut up.

BO

Don't say shut up to people.

RIA

You didn't get me pregnant, cowboy. God, you're stupid. You have nice hands, nice lips, and a nice enough cock, but you are thick in the head. Thick like a brick.

BO

Omigawd, I did it with a mother to be?

RIA

Why'd I open my mouth?

BO

Are you happy about it...about being...? Are you married?

RIA

Am I happy about it?

BO

Yeah. Are you keeping it? You want to be...want it? Want the baby?

RIA

Do I want it? God, no.

BO

O, man, but you're going to keep it, right?

Keep? RIA

Yeah. BO

I'm going through with it, yeah. RIA

Good. I mean, it's good you want to. It'd be bad to be pregnant and not want to be. BO

You think? RIA

Yeah. Congratulations. BO

O, god, shut up. RIA

Don't tell me to shut up... BO

And stop looking at my belly. Jesus. RIA

I'd like to be pregnant one day. I mean. Get to be a father. Get someone with child. So, you're happy? And the father? What about the father? BO

What about the father? RIA

Is he...? BO

Is he happy about it? Yeah, he's real happy. Ha. He doesn't know. He doesn't even know where I am. You're the first person I told. RIA

Me? I'm the first. BO

Yep. RIA

BO
 He doesn't know?

RIA
 Who?

BO
 The father. The father's got to know. He's got to know he's got a kid.

RIA
 Why?

BO
 Why?

RIA
 I can't tell him. I have my reasons. Can you get dressed?

BO
 Sure.

RIA
 Listen, I've another favor to ask you.

BO
 You want me to tell the father?

RIA
 Are you just retarded or something?

He hits her.
 Then he pulls her close and holds her.
 He smothers her to his chest as she sobs.

BO
 I don't do that. O god. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

She pushes away from him.

I don't hit. I don't know what happened. I never hit a woman. I would never hit a pregnant woman.

RIA
 God, I know how to pick 'em. Damn it.

BO
 I'm sorry. It's me. I'm sorry. I can't be called retarded. I...

RIA

You think that's being a man? Hitting a pregnant woman? Huh?

BO

That's not me. I wouldn't. That's not me. O god.

He crumbles on the bed.

I'll make it up to you. Let me make it up to you. I'm a good guy. I am. Please. Believe me. You have to believe me. Please.

RIA

Okay, listen up. I'm in a bad place. And I need to get out of my present situation. And I need your help. I need the help of you and your truck. I need you to get me out of...I want to leave California, okay? I need you to drive me to Reno. Or somewhere close. Reno. Nevada.

BO

Are you going there to...

RIA

What? No, I 'm having the kid. I told you. But not here.

BO

Reno?

RIA

Yeah, Reno. Will you drive me?

BO

Are you a wanted criminal or something?

RIA

You hit me. And I'm pregnant. You owe me.

BO

Did you kill anyone?

RIA

Not yet.

BO

You scare me.

RIA

Is that why you liked fucking me so much?

BO
Don't talk like that. I don't talk like that.

RIA
Okay, I won't talk like that, if you...

BO
We made love...

RIA
Okay, okay, okay. Listen up. Lover. Are you going to help me or not? You can drive me there and be back in one day. And then we both can call it even, forgive each other, okay? Okay? You do this, and I promise, you'll feel like a man.

BO
How about I don't come back?

RIA
What do you mean?

BO
What if I want to stay in Reno? Help you out?

RIA
I'm asking for one ride, that's all.

BO
But what if...

RIA
You going to help me or not?

BO
I am.

RIA
Thank you.

BO
I think you should tell him.

RIA
Tell who?

BO
The father.

RIA

He doesn't need to be told shit. He thinks he's all knowing any way. So I don't have to. Some men just don't deserve to be told shit. If you were a woman, you'd agree with me.

BO

Okay. I get it.

RIA

Like hell.

BO

I'm not as retarded as you think I am.

RIA

I'm sorry I called you that.

BO

There were times I wished no one told my Daddy shit. Wished no one told him shit about me.

RIA

He beat you?

BO

But I put his power in my hands after he died, and I'm turning it into good.

RIA

I need some good to come my way.

BO

Somebody offed my Daddy when I was fourteen. And everyday from that day on my granny would hit me with a stick between my shoulder blades. "That's where he got it," she'd say, "In the back. A bad man always gets it in the back." She'd hit me and make a welt. "I'm marking you," she'd say. "I'm marking you bad."

He shakes the memory off.

I'm not bad. And I'm not retarded.

Ria rubs his back.

RIA

Is this it? Is this your mark?

BO

It's my ruby.

He kisses her.

BO

Let me be good to you.

RIA

What was your name again?

BO

Bo.

RIA

Bo? Like in Bobo? Bobo the clown.

BO

No. It's short for lobo. Lobo: a lone wolf. I don't want to be that any more.

RIA

Lobo? We'll see how this goes. You're going to drive me to Reno.

BO

Yeah. You, me, and whatever it's going to be.

RIA

You don't need to worry about it, Bobo. You only need to drive.

End of scene.

Scene Two

Squeal of tires.

Truck doors slamming.

Ria cussing.

She has grabbed her bag and is walking away from the truck.

Bo comes after her.

She stops and stares him down.

He stops.

RIA

I should know by now. Never ask for anything, not even from a sucker you think you can control. Because even the suckers think they're the ones who should run your life. Where do you think you were taking me? I said Reno.

BO
Why can't you let me take you someplace better?

RIA
Did I ask for someplace better? No. That's why.

BO
Let me help you.

RIA
Where were you taking me?

BO
My mother's.

RIA
Your...? You are loco, Mr. Lobo. Loco.

BO
I'm only trying to help you and your kid.

RIA
Hell.

BO
Ria.

RIA
Does the bus come by here?

BO
You're not legal, are you?

RIA
Go to hell.

BO
My mother has a community.

RIA
Does the bus come by here?

BO
And she's got a big house all to herself.

RIA
Take me to a bus stop.

BO

My Mama's a loving and generous woman, and if we say the kid's mine...

RIA

Fucking Christ.

BO

Don't talk like that. She's also Catholic.

RIA

You are not what I want, you hear me? I want you to hear me. I was using you. Using you. I can't even do that right. Everything backfires on me. I'm not going to your mother's.

BO

Okay, okay.

RIA

And we are never pretending the kid is yours.

BO

That's cool, that's cool.

RIA

Why am I even negotiating with you?

BO

Because you know I'm going to help you. And no one else will.

RIA

I know how this help thing works. I start to think I'm going to get a deal, that I'm going to make out good, that you're some kind of good Samaritan, that you want to help me because that's the kind of man you are.

BO

The kind of man I want to be.

RIA

And I start to like that. Feeling taken care of. Feeling like you care. That I come first. And then what happens? You're calling all the shots. I'm dependent on you. I lose all my ability to take care of myself, and soon enough, I even lose all rights to make decisions for myself. And then when I'm dependent and have no ability or rights to decide things for myself, you realize I'm not anything you want, and you throw me out.

BO

Whoa. I just wanted to take you to my Mama's because you're pregnant and all.

Reno. RIA

BO
But I don't want you to have the baby in Reno. Whoa. I give. I give. I'll take you. I'll take you.

RIA
You're trouble.

BO
No, I'm not. I'll take you.

RIA
Why?

BO
You picked me. I'm good with that. What else do I got? And if every now and then, you could just let me...look at you, maybe hold you, only if you feel like that might help, like before you fall asleep...

RIA
I'm not promising you that.

BO
No problem.

RIA
Fuck.

BO
Let me take you to Reno.

RIA
I can't figure you out. Nobody's good just to be good.

BO
How come you're so negative?

RIA
I'm a very positive person. Fuck you. I wouldn't be in this godforsaken country if I was so negative. I'm Polly Positive.

BO
Great. Let's go to Reno.

RIA
What's in it for you?

BO

I know what my life will be like if I don't take you to Reno. I don't know what it will be like if I do.

RIA

You got any water?

BO

Back in the truck.

RIA

What if I'm the worst thing that could ever happen to you?

BO

The worst things have already happened.

RIA

I wish I believed that. How come you believe that?

BO

Faith.

RIA

You believe in yourself that much?

BO

Nope. Not me. You. I believe in you. What do you believe in?

RIA

Fear. I believe in fear. Fear keeps it real.

BO

Let me carry your bag.

She gives him her bag.

RIA

What about God? You believe in Him?

BO

God doesn't need a ride to Reno. I believe in you.

RIA

Enough with the you believe in me.

BO

So will your kid.

RIA

I'm not feeling too good. I need to sit down.

BO

You want me to get you the water...?

RIA

Let's make a deal. I don't meet your mother and you don't meet my kid. We get to Reno. We have a little fun. You hold me for three nights. And then you go back to your mother. You leave me in Reno. Deal?

BO

You can't predict the weather. That's what my father always said.

RIA

Is it going to be difficult to get rid of you?

Ria stands and walks away back towards the truck. Bo watches, then follows her.

BO

Have faith.

Scene Three

Labor.

Ria, in darkness.

RIA

We're doing it. We're doing it. We're doing it. We're doing it. Think positive. Think positive. Fuck. BUT YOU. I never wanted to be a mule for no baby. BUT YOU. BUT YOU. I crossed the border for you. C'MON. COME OUT. Do it. Doitdoitdoitdoit. Make a difference. Make some change. Change the world. Have faith. FAITH IN WHAT. MOTHERFUCKER. FAITH IN WHAT. GET THIS THING OUT OF ME. Think positive. AH, FUCK. From what rat hole under the kitchen, what sewer pipe, what toilet, no, no, no, positive things, think positive. Think: these are a few of my positive things. GIVE ME SOMETHING. GIVE ME. HERE WE GO. HERE WE GO. Baby in the U.S.A. Here we go. Baby in the U.S.A. Miracle baby. U.S.A. baby. God is my shepherd baby. C'mon, baby. HERE WE GO, BABY. HAVE FAITH, BABY. FAITH IN THE U.S.A. O BABY. CHULO. CHULO. CHICA CHICA CHULO BOBO! BOBO, BOBO! KILL ME NOW!

Somewhere else, Bo is singing:

BO

He's got the tiny little baby in His hands,
He's got the tiny little baby in His hands,
He's got the tiny little bay in his hands

RIA'S VOICE

No name. Don't write anything in. He doesn't have a father.

BO

He's got the whole world in his hands.

Scene Four

Bobby is eighteen and in a green and yellow motel room. Time-wise, it's after the play, but we are seeing his scenes in motels now. Perhaps images of him in a variety of motel rooms and in front of motels and gas stations along the highway are projected. They may be selfies. All the motels look like the motel of the first scene in some way.

Bobby might be in his underwear, white briefs.

BOBBY

I think I was five when I first realized I could be the new Jesus. Not the old one come again. But a whole new one.

But how would I know? I decided to make friends with a priest, because a priest should be able to recognize Jesus if he got born today. I made a greeting card for this one priest on the anniversary celebrating his vows. I cut out chalices and lilies from yellow and white construction paper and pasted them on purple, writing "Happy Anniversary, Mr. Priest, I love you". And then on the inside of the card I asked: Do you think I might be a new Jesus waiting to happen all over again?" But I didn't give the card to him. I decided if I was the new Jesus it should come as a revelation. It should be a surprise to everyone.

My name's Bobby. That's my real name. Do you have one? A real name? You don't have to tell me. You don't have to talk. Or touch me. You can just look at me.

The thing is, I knew if I didn't wake up one morning and be Jesus I was going to be in a lot of trouble for thinking I could. I knew at age five this was a very vain thing. It might even be frowned upon. In fact, I might have been chosen to wake up and be Jesus but since I was so vain, God would change His mind and someone who was truly holy and humble would wake up and be Jesus and I would wake up and be nobody. An illegal. Or gay or something.

Because if you let God know you're thinking how cool it's going to be when you wake up and everyone realizes you're Jesus, well, God will smudge your name off the list of Jesus possibilities. So, I did the only thing I knew to save me - I tried to hide my thoughts from God. Of course, that's impossible, right? So I tried not having these thoughts.

We don't have to have to have sex. We can watch TV. That's the best thing about motel rooms. Cable and clean sheets. And the little soaps. *Dancing with the Stars*.

I got into your car because when you rolled down the window and looked at me without saying anything, I thought you saw that part of me. The part of me that could love you.

I could love you. What's holy in us has to be loved. Right? That's what my Dad said. Except he wasn't really my Dad. He was more like...my watcher. My Guardian Angel. Or my Secret Service. You know, looking out for me. He loved me like a puppy loves his master, like a prisoner loves his prison guard. No wait, it was the other way around. Everyone loves the one who can watches over them, even if it's only for a half hour. Because they see you. They see you are someone who can be saved. If only. Is that what you want from me? You want me to see what's special about you? What's holy? Let me look at you. And you can look at me. It'll be good. Let's try it and see.

A time of looking in quiet.

I had a real Mom. But she had a hard time seeing me, she didn't believe in loving the holy in anybody.

Scene Five: Bea and Jerry

Jerry's Auto Garage, Reno.
Jerry and Bo.
Bo's head is shaved.

JERRY

Pussy. Look at you, big as you are, you're her man-pussy.

BO

I'm not...

JERRY

Not what? Say it. You can say it. Her man – puuuu....sss....

BO

I don't talk like that, Jerry.

JERRY

Like what? Like a man? When are you two getting married?

BO

You know what she's like.

JERRY

You need to take better care of them, Bo-Bo.

BO

Lay off me, Jerry.

JERRY

They're your family.

BO

She lets me stay over sometimes. She lets me take him places. She's never been nice to me. She's never fixed me eggs in the morning or anything.

Ria enters, her hair is short.
The men are quiet.

RIA

Feffer's coming back at four for the Chevy. Is it going to be ready?

JERRY

It's done. Bo's taking it for the test drive.

RIA

Then let him test it already.

Ria exits.

BO

See that. She doesn't even look at me when she comes talk to you.

JERRY

You're such a pussy. Aw, don't you cry now. What's wrong with you? You know what I would give to be with my Melanie and my two girls? And here you are, being all crybaby and hurt feelings. Suck it up, that's all I'm saying. The woman is keeping you around. A man doesn't have to be told he matters all the time. That's woman shit. She's keeping you around. That's what counts. You're nice to her. You're good to her kid. She gets that. She trusts you. That's all that counts. That's all she wants. That's all they ever want. How come guys like you never see what you've got?

BO
Because I “don’t appreciate shit.”

JERRY
That’s right. How long you been here?

BO
About an hour, I guess.

JERRY
Not today, you idiot. How long you been working for me, you and Ria?

BO
I don’t know, about six months.

JERRY
And you haven’t learned any of this in that time? What a waste. You were my project. I took you on. And what do I have to show for it. Nothing.

BO
What are you talking about? I know everything about engines now. I can fix anything. You taught me everything.

JERRY
That’s it? That’s what I taught you? Engine blocks? See this battery, take it home and fuck it if that’s all I taught you.

BO
Why are you mad at me?

JERRY
You think I devoted my time and effort to you so you could rev up an engine? You think that’s what’s important to me. Get out of here.

BO
Don’t be mad at me.

JERRY
Wasted. I wasted my time.

BO
You saved our lives, Jerry. I love you.

JERRY
O holy Jesus, I’m not asking you to tell me you love me, what’s wrong with you?

BO
I got nothing.

JERRY

You got her and the kid. I just got done telling you that. Where's my baseball bat.

BO

I know they deserve better.

JERRY

They're lucky they got you. No man would put up with her shit like you do.

BO

She never learned how to be nice. I understand that. Some people aren't born with the ability. They try, they'd give anything to be sweet and kind and loving, but that part of them's been ripped out. She tries with the Kid, but it's like someone's pulling her nails out one by one when she does. That's where I step in. I got the talent. Yeah, it's more than an ability, it's a talent. She sees me loving him the way she knows she should. That's why she keeps me around. I'm not as dumb as everyone thinks I am.

JERRY

That kid. He's different.

BO

Yeah, he is.

JERRY

Why does she call him the Kid? What's she going to call him when he grows up - Goat?

BO

He's a smart kid. Sensitive.

JERRY

All he'll learn growing up around here is how to squeeze tits and beat on girls.

BO

He's not going to beat on girls. That's why I'm here. He's going to get a real education and a real religion. He's loving. I'm not going to let that get messed up.

Ria enters.

RIA

The school called.

BO

What is it?

RIA

He's crying again. Won't stop.

BO

What happened?

RIA

I know she judges me. I hate those teachers.

BO

The Kid? What did they say about the Kid?

RIA

Someone was being mean. During recess. And the Kid, he tells some bully, "God's watching you." God's watching you. And the bully laughed and said if God's watching He could watch this and punched the Kid right in the face. God's watching you and he gets punched in the face.

BO

Don't laugh.

RIA

Who taught him to say God's watching you? On the playground.

BO

I'll go get him.

RIA

Did you teach him that?

BO

Don't blame me, I'll go get him.

RIA

That's not the end. The Kid takes off his belt and starts whuppin' the bully with it. Guess he doesn't like getting socked in the face after preaching about God.

BO

What?

JERRY

Go Kid. Who knew he had it in him?

RIA

I taught him that. We practiced on the flat tires out back. So, he's suspended. Someone's got to pick him up. I'm not going. They'll just lay into me.

BO

I said I'm going.

Bo exits.

RIA

Be back in time to test drive that repair...He spooks me.

JERRY

Who? Your kid?

RIA

No. Bobo the Good.

JERRY

He's faithful. He's good to you. You women drive us crazy . You're never happy. A good man comes along. Melanie was crazy too. I was devoted to her. To her and the girls. Devoted.

RIA

The Kid should love me, not him.

JERRY

He's a good kid, don't put him in the middle.

RIA

There is no middle. The Kid's mine. There's not even one inch of middle. None. Zero. Glad we all understand.

JERRY

What's wrong with you?

RIA

You think I'm a cunt? An ungrateful bitch?

JERRY

I don't use that kind of language. But yes. Yes, I do.

RIA

Why's he trying to make me paranoid all the time?

JERRY

Bo makes *you* paranoid?

RIA

No. The Kid.

JERRY

What are you talking about? We got Looney the Madonna in one corner and Bobo the clown in the other. I just hope the Kid makes it through high school.

RIA

He's getting through high school. He's going to Harvard.

JERRY

He's too good for them. Send him to the Vatican.

RIA

I don't like that kind of talk.

JERRY

What? He might become Pope. Why not? You don't know.

RIA

God ain't taking the Kid.

JERRY

It's not up to you, is it?

RIA

Yes, it is. If it's between me and God, I have last say.

JERRY

And where does Bo fit in?

Ria is quiet.

RIA

I never expected there to be a Bo. And then one day, one night, one bar night with nowhere to stay, I find him, waiting for me almost. Like someone sent him to me. Like when I was a little girl back home, and they tell you, you have a guardian angel. Uh-uh. Bullshit. It's all bullshit.

JERRY

Yeah, most of it is. But a family. A family's not bullshit.

RIA

Bo's not family. He's someone I picked up in a bar. He gave me a ride. That's all. You didn't have to hire him on my account. I told him if he came to work for you, he would have to hold his own. I do my job. He does his. If he's fucking up in your shop, you can get rid of him.

JERRY

You want me to get rid of him? Huh? Say the word.

RIA

That's not what I'm saying.

JERRY

You know, if you married him, you wouldn't have to be so afraid all the time. You'd have rights too then.

RIA

What are you talking about?

JERRY

What am I talking about?

RIA

I have rights now.

JERRY

Of course, you do.

RIA

I was born in Detroit.

JERRY

What's your baseball team?

RIA

I could get kicked out at any time, that's what you're saying. I don't have the right to stay. Like you and Bo. And my Kid. Kid U.S.A.

JERRY

Make life easier if you can. That's all I'm saying.

RIA

That's not all you're saying.

JERRY

Don't tell me what I'm saying or what I'm not saying.

RIA

Don't tell me who I'm marrying or who I'm not marrying.

JERRY

A guardian angel comes along, and what do you do? I asked him why he puts up with it. You know what he told me? He says in the mornings he watches you and the Kid sleeping together, all peaceful and cuddled together and he says it's as if angels had just been there - singing. Singing! How about that? He's a real poet. Your Bo. I'd swear he was Irish, you know, if he wasn't so...you know, not Irish.

RIA

He better not talk that way to my Kid. You old ladies can talk that way, get all sentimental in your beer after a long hard day. But me and the Kid, uh-uh. I teach him he's got to watch out for himself. We're our own fuckin' guardian angels.

She spits.

JERRY

Don't spit in my shop. What is wrong with you?

RIA

It's a grease pit.

JERRY

So's your mouth, but I don't spit into it. This is my shop. Show respect.

RIA

Sorry.

She gets a rag and spray soap.

JERRY

Leave it.

She cleans her spit.

RIA

It would mean too much to him. It's a sacrament. I'm not going to use Bo like that, Jerry. I'm not like that. I do have limits.

JERRY

I thought you didn't believe in all that. Sacraments. The way you talk.

RIA

I believe in all of it.

JERRY

None of my business. I'll stay out of it.

RIA

I appreciate your help, Jerry. But family isn't the answer to everything.

JERRY

Let Bo help you and the Kid. That's all I'm saying. You fight like five year olds. You have to be role models.

RIA

I bet that bully grows up to be border patrol. Bobby can't wear a belt to school anymore. But you know what? I'm proud my Kid used his belt on that American bully. Do you think she's going to turn me in? That teacher?

JERRY

I've no idea what you're talking about. I was showed ID. You're a Detroit girl. That's all I know. I just pay in cash. I always have.

RIA

Belize.

JERRY

Police?

RIA

Belize. Came up through Mexico.

JERRY

I can't hear you. Belize? Is that a country? I don't even know where that is. And I don't need to know. And with those teachers, the less trouble you make, the better for everyone. Make life easy. Try being nicer. That's what being in this country is. It's what makes being here worth it. Being nice.

RIA

I'll be nicer to him.

JERRY

That's all I'm saying.

RIA

Was Melanie nice?

JERRY

I've got brakes to check.

RIA

Tell me why you married Melanie.

JERRY

Melanie...she was more than nice. She was blond. I'm joking, Ria.

RIA

Did you pay her? To get your card. But you said, we're in love. Let's make this real. Let's seal this deal. And you had a couple of girls. And one day Melanie decided maybe she fooled herself. Well, not one day. Over many days. She wasn't in love, but she had let herself be fooled she was. She had wanted to believe it was love. You wanted her to believe it, didn't you, Jerry?

JERRY

It was true for me.

RIA

But you knew it wasn't true for her, deep down you knew, but you married her. And you let it hurt you, because you knew you let yourself believe she really did love you. That's all I'm saying.

JERRY

I will love her even when I'm dead. Who are you taking to your grave?

Silence.

I'm proud I got hurt.

Jerry exits.

RIA (*to the absent Jerry*)

I'll try. I'll try to be nice. Or at least pretend.

Ria goes to the mini-fridge and gets a beer.

RIA (*to the garage*)

But I won't fall for it. I won't confuse what I want to be and what I am. I know the difference.

Ria drinks her beer.

The sounds of church and a mass for young children fill the garage. Ria drinks her beer.

Scene Six: Ria and beer

Ria talks to the audience as she drinks her beer.

RIA

They picked Bobby, my Kid, to put the crown of flowers on the statue of the virgin Mary during their May day parade. I have to sneak cigarettes in the garage now, because my Kid, he doesn't like me to smoke. And when he gets on me...well, it's best to let him think he's getting his way and just smoke at work. Jerry's old school Irish. He thinks smoking's good for the soul.

The Kid is too much. It hurts. So, I smoke.

Bo was sneaking him off to Catholic school. Thought I didn't know. Thought I believed that he and the Kid were going off to play baseball. The Kid still can't even throw a ball. I let them go. I let them have their secret. Let the male bonding begin. The Kid needs a father figure. So, I keep Bo around. The Kid's smart. He'll figure it all out in the end. Lobo and the lost lamb. That's my two. The trouble is...

Everyone sees that the Kid is special, not just me. I tried to cover it. Keep it on the low down. But...

I find out, but I don't tell them I find out. So, I just sit back and watch him suffer, trying to figure out how he's going to get the Kid in a little suit and to the holy day parade without my knowing. He's near tears, because he can't figure it out and he's too afraid to tell me. Hell, I'd be too afraid to tell me.

I take pity. I take pity on the clown. And I'm proud. I admit. I'm proud they picked my kid.

I bring them the suit I charged at Sears and slick Bobby's hair, shine his new shoes, and walk him to the truck, and I get in the cab too. Aren't they surprised? I loved the look on their faces. Caught, but forgiven. I think it's all bullshit, but hey. I mean they picked my Kid. Picked my Kid because he's the holiest one around.

We go to the church, and get in line in the parade. All the other mothers are staring at me, because no one expects me to be there. They all talk about me behind my back, how good Bo is, and what a bitch I am, and why doesn't he just leave me and climb into one of their beds. I want to get out of there, I can't stand bitches judging me, but I look at Bobby in the sunlight, in his white shirt and little blue striped tie, and I stay. I don't even light up. And God knows I want to. God knows.

It's time for Bobby's turn to walk up to the statue with his crown of flowers. I squeeze Bo's hand. The guy almost freaks out. I squeeze his hand. I love my little boy.

And then I see what's wrong. What's very wrong. I pull Bo close so I can whisper in his ear..."Look at the Kid. Look at the floor. His feet. Look at his feet..." I wasn't the only one who saw. His teacher had stopped walking behind him. Her hand at her mouth.

Three inches. His feet were three inches off the ground.

I hiss to Bo, "Make his feet stay on the ground."

Bo stares at me. He sees that I'm moving towards the Kid and he's pulling me back. And the choir's singing, but they don't sound like a stupid children's choir anymore. Something's happening. The light is changing too. And it sounds like the sky is opening up. The other mothers are softly crying and they don't even know why.

The men are very still and silent. Rigid. And Bobby, he's just smiling. Smiling, smiling. I'm thinking, hell no, this is not what happens. My Kid is not going to be sucked up into the sky. This is not going to be one of those heebie jeebie Mexicana miracles you read about in some drug store magazine.

And I go for him.

I go to get him.

To save him.

And he screams at me. "No!" he screams. He screams at me.

And I think I die. I think I die right there.

But I don't die. I get angry. I grab him. I have his arm and I'm trying to get him out of there, back in the truck. He fights me, kicking and screaming. The mothers, the other mothers come at us, and I tell everyone, "get back! GET BACK. HE'S MY BABY. MY BABY. YOU CAN'T HAVE HIM. HE'S MINE."

And someone knocks over the stupid statue. Mary shatters into a million pieces on the concrete. I look in the mothers' eyes and I see the hate. I see they want to come after me, they're picking up stones and they want to come after me. They want to stone me to death. Bo, I cry. BO!

I don't know how he did it. Did he carry the both of us? We're back in the truck. He drives us away from there. He drives. Out to the desert. Where no one can touch us.

Bobby falls asleep in my lap.

We stop the truck and leave Bobby in the cab. Bo and I sit on the dirt. I want him to hold me, but I don't let him.

"What happened, Ria? What made you...?"

I don't know. Maybe nothing happened. I don't know.

"You didn't see his feet walk on air...?"

He looks at me. We don't say anything. I hear singing. I freak. Bo laughs. It's coyotes, he says. He takes me in his arms. And we make love. Right there on the dirt next to the truck while Bobby sleeps.

We finish. Bo falls asleep.

I smoke.

The teacher calls me the next day. She asks if I'm going to let the Kid come back to his Catechism class. She said the Kid told her he wasn't coming back, and she said that would be a horrible thing. She said if he didn't come back, she might have to report the incident to social workers. Possible child abuse. And that could lead to other questions as well. Other investigations. I want to kill her. She knows I don't have any papers. She knows I don't have rights, once the U.S.A. papi government steps in. She doesn't say that. But I know she knows what she's threatening me with.

I say I'm sorry. I apologize. I say of course the Kid must go back to his Catechism class. She tells me how much they all love Bobby. That they're going to take up a collection for him so he can go to the private Catholic school. Where he can flower.
Bloom.

God works His love for us in mysterious ways, she says.

Don't I know it, I say.

She smokes.

It's all a trap.

Scene Seven

Ria's bed.
Ria and Bo.

Ria is turned away from Beau and has her eyes closed.
Beau is watching her.
Ria suddenly sits up and hits Beau in the ar.

RIA

Stop watching me.

Ria goes back to her previous position.

BO

Loving you has saved me. It's made me good.

RIA

I'm sorry.

She sits up and kisses his arm where she hit him.

BO

Can we talk?

RIA

Just come're.

BO

Are you trying to kiss me? What's wrong with you?

RIA

I'm being nice. Goddamnit.

BO

You have to warn me next time. You can't just take me by surprise. I'm sorry.

RIA

What do you want to talk about? I'll listen. Not about the Kid.

BO

Not about the Kid.

RIA

Go ahead. Talk.

BO

Before I met you, I stole. I got drunk. I beat on people, for no reason. Just like they said my Daddy did. I grew up with a mark on my back. My ruby. A boy shouldn't have to grow up with a mark. When my granny died, I came back and pissed on her grave.

She waits.

RIA

That's it? That's what you wanted to tell me?

BO

My muscles are sore. I'm all tight. Let me stay tonight. Ask me to stay. You never ask me to stay. My body hurts.

RIA

Okay, I'm trying to be nice, but I'm new at it. Baby steps, Bo, baby steps. I can't do a being nice marathon just yet.

BO

Are we staying a family?

RIA

We're traveling together.

BO

Eight years now.

RIA

Your point is?

BO

You're thinking of running away. Taking the Kid.

Silence.

I've been watching you. You're getting ready to run. And you're going to take the little guy with you. Well, what about me? The Kid's first with me. Is he first with you? I put him first.

Bo sits down and cries.

RIA

O god, no. See what being nice does, Jerry. Bo...I can't take care of the both of you. One's too much. N one's going anywhere? Why are you crying?

BO

Here. Here's some money. The Kid needs things for school.

RIA

You kill me.

She throws the money back at him.

BO

Why do you have to be so negative? Be nice. BE NICE TO ME, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO'S GOOD TO YOU. I'VE BEEN NOTHING BUT GOOD FOR YOU.

RIA

Get out.

She stuffs the money back into his pants.
He grabs her, holds her firm.
She twists around and hits him in the back.

Is that it? Is that where you have your granny mark? She was right to mark you.

Bo steps away from her.

BO

Damn, you're mean.

RIA

Yeah? Then leave. No one's keeping you.

BO

You mean that?

RIA

You want me to say I'm sorry? I won't. Sorry is the quicksand of a sad life. God's never sorry and I'm never sorry.

Bo gets up to go.

Don't go. I shouldn't have hit you. I shouldn't have hit you on your mark. Okay? I'm sad. I'm sad and I'm sorry. Don't go. Don't go.

BO

It's gone.

RIA

What's gone?

Bo takes off his shirt. He shows her his back.
There is no mark.

RIA

It's gone. How'd that happen? That's impossible.

BO

The Kid said it would go away and it did.

RIA

The Kid?

BO

He believes in me.

Bo takes his shirt and exits.

Scene Eight

Bobby in another motel room.

BOBBY

Mash-up time. This is my song. It's called "Believe."

Believe.
Believe.
ALL NIGHT LONG!
Yeah...
Believe me when I say
I was born this way.
I was born this way.
Born in the U.S.A.
Mama, I just killed a man
Papa don't preach
I will fuck you up
Fuck you up
I'm the Apocolypse
Rock Lobster.
Rock Lobster

Air guitar riff.
He goes rock crazy.
He trashes the motel room like a rock star.

Fuck yeah.

Scene Nine

Jerry's garage.
Ria and Bo.

BO

Bobby got sent home from Catechism today. For being bad.

RIA

He's never bad.

BO

He said something. He said God was a snake in the grass.

Ria laughs.

You tell him that?

RIA

No.

BO

Yes, you did.

RIA

No, I did not.

BO

Yes, you did.

RIA

I didn't. But it's none of your business if I did.

Jerry enters.

JERRY

Why do you two have to fight?

BO

We don't fuck anymore, that's why.

RIA

That's right, we don't.

BO

I like sleeping in the garage. Bobby likes it too.

RIA

He better not be sneaking out of the house at night to sleep in the garage.

Bo goes to the mini-fridge and gets out a beer.

That's not yours.

JERRY

He can have it.

RIA

I don't like him thinking he can take things that aren't his.

JERRY

He can have it, Jesus.

Bo opens and drinks his beer.

Don't deny your man everything. You'll lose him that way.

BO

Listen to Jerry.

RIA

Listen to Jerry. Can I have one too? Or just the man?

Jerry throws her a beer.

JERRY

I think we've done enough work around here for one day.

He opens a can for himself.

RIA

Bobby said God was a snake in a grass in school.

JERRY

So what if he did. That's how the Irish talk about God and we love him more than anybody!

He drinks.

RIA and BO

Jerry!

RIA

You taught him that!

JERRY

I didn't mean him to repeat it in front of any nuns.

They all laugh.

JERRY

To the Sisters!

RIA

Here's mud in your eye.

They drink.

BO

To the snakes!

RIA

Snakes in your pants!

JERRY

Saints in your pants!

Time jump.

They are sitting around with their beers.
Sloshed.

JERRY

Do you sing to him? My Ma used to sing to me. Do you sing to him? What do you sing?

Ria starts singing:

RIA

She'll be coming round the mountain, when she comes
She'll be coming round the mountain, when she comes
She'll be coming round the mountain
She'll be coming round the mountain

RIA

She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes

BO

Toot! Toot!

Bo starts snorting. They laugh. He falls off his chair.
They laugh. They rest.

RIA

She'll be riding six white horses when she comes

The men scream and roll around.

She'll be riding six white horses when she comes.

JERRY

Whoa back.

BO

Toot toot!

RIA

She'll be riding six white horses

She'll be riding six white horses

She'll be riding six white horses

When she comes.

The men crawl on each other. They sing:

BO and JERRY

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her, when she comes

Hi babe!

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her, when she comes

Hi Babe!

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her

We'll all go out to meet her

We'll all go out to meet her

When she comes

Hi babe! Whoa back! Toot, toot!

RIA

Look at us. What would Bobby say?

JERRY

We're a family. That's a good thing.

BO

Toot, toot!

Bo drops, drunk, happy to crash.

JERRY

Be grateful. Be a little grateful.

Time jump.

Jerry sleeps on top of Bo.

R!A

(sings to herself.)

We will kill the old red rooster, when she comes, (When she comes).

We will kill the old red rooster, when she comes, (When she comes).

We will kill the old red rooster, we will kill the old red rooster, we will kill the old red rooster,

When she comes, (When she comes).

When you hear the whistle tootin', you can gamble sure as shootin', She'll be drivin' six white horses when she comes.

Go to sleep, Bobby. Tomorrow morning we're getting out of here.

She looks around the garage.

The men gurgle in their sleep and spoon.

She exits.

Scene Ten

Bobby in a motel room.

BOBBY

I can't sleep. My whole body is in pain. A man appears in the motel parking lot, by the ice machine, and says he can cure me of the pain.

He's an African. His name is Jack. His hands touch my lower back - I jerk away. "Relax, relax," he says, "we've got to work this out". The shirt's off my back. Shoulders. The shoulders give to the hands. The muscles let the hands move them. "Yes, yes, relax." I'm watching now. I'm outside my body. Watching a person on his stomach. He breathes deep. He keeps his eyes closed. The hands are a giant's hands. They lift him up and put him in a room, a motel room, a room with a bed, a giant's bed. It takes five minutes to get from one side to the other. The pillows are gi-normous. He falls on the pillow, face first, sinking at least five feet. He feels his stomach lifted. He's embarrassed because it's soft, almost dough, but he lets it be moved. All his muscles are lifted and rolled away from his body. The muscles roll away and bump into things - end tables, door knobs, shoes - and bounce into the air. They float in the air. They float away. He's become thin pillowy clouds, vapor, gone, nothing.

I came out of thin air. I did. Read the papers. It's happening all the time now. Test tubes, thin air... nobody's got parents anymore. You know I'm right.

My non-Mom Mom said she didn't believe in anything. But all the things that were ever told her about God the Father stuck on her, around her mouth, under her eyes, creeping around on her forehead, strung out in her hair - she said she didn't believe in any of it but her face never got rid of even one Jesus story anyone ever told her. Funny.

I drew a picture of God once. He was a little boy. Like me. He lived in the clouds.

When I was little they told me God was bigger than everybody, bigger than all the world, bigger than outer space. I didn't understand that. Was He a monster? Baby Jesus I could hold in my arms. Hold in my heart. And Jesus the Man you could look in the eye. You could go fishing with him. So why does God have to be so big? Because he's a drunk. That's what non-Mom said. A drunk who comes after you after the day is done. She hated God.

But I wanted God to come down and kidnap me.

Take me by force. Put that stuff over my mouth and drive away. When I wake up we'll be in Colorado and we'll only stop when it's dark and I'm weak and need to eat and I'm about to faint and you tell everyone how my mother died and that's why I'm so quiet and now you're going to raise me alone...do it. You can do it. Knock me out. I'm only a skinny kid. You're much bigger than me.

Scene Eleven

Ria, fully dressed, sleeping in her unmade bed.
Bo enters and watches her.

BO

I always like watching you while you sleep.

(sings:) He's got you and me, sister, in His hands.
He's got you and me, sister, in His hands
He's got you and me, sister, in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands.

Ria, I'm sorry. I have to think of what's best for us all. It's my job. Raise the Kid. It's why I'm here. I have to take him. Jerry will go ballistic, but I gotta.

I never wanted to take my shirt off. Didn't want anyone to see. Until...I let Bobby see. Wow, he'd say. Wow.

Redemption is a powerful thing, I remember my father saying. A powerful thing. Grow up and redeem your father, he said. Redeem us all. Redemption will be my new middle name.

Bo speaks to the audience, but is also careful not to wake Ria as he gathers some things for Bobby for their trip.

My father was a bad man, my granny was always saying. He'd spit on us while we were sleeping. When he drank, he liked to hit me while she watched. He wanted her to see, so she'd blame herself. Because she used to hit him. And she couldn't do anything. It was too late. She'd watch him hit me and she'd pinch herself, pinch her arms every time he'd connect. Whack. Pinch. Whack. Pinch pinch. Whack whack whack. Pinch pinch pinch pinchpinchpinch. What a family. Her arms got all yellow, green and pink from pinching herself so much. I never made a sound, after the first time. No matter how hard he hit me. His hands were very strong.

I told Bobby my story. How I held my Daddy's hands in mine during the services. To show everyone that my love was stronger than my Daddy's pain. I showed Ria too. I showed her my ruby. I wanted her to kiss it. I wanted her to take it away. I hit her once. It wasn't her fault. I hit her once. But never again. Never ever hit a woman. Yesterday, the Kid said, go take a look. Look in the mirror, Bo.

The mark was gone. It wasn't there.

I told the Kid I believed he made my mark go away. He just stared at me. I didn't do anything, he said. You did it, he said. Your love for us. Love is stronger than hate.

Bo collects himself.

And that's when I knew I had to save him. That's when I knew I had to pack him up in my truck and drive away. What can she do? Come after us? Call the police? She can't. She's got no right to be in this country. She's got no rights. Not here. She doesn't love anyone. She has no rights at all. She's not nice. The Kid and I. We have rights. We love each other. Bobby has enough love for everyone. He's saving me. He can save the world.

Love is stronger than hate.

He watches Ria sleep.

He kisses her on the forehead and exits.
The sound of a truck pulling away.
Ria wakes. She senses they are gone.

Bo and Bobby's voices sing:

*"56 bottles of beer on the wall, 56 bottles of beer
Take one down, pass it around, 55 bottles of beer on the wall."*

Ria walks out to the desert for no reason.
She speaks to the audience.

RIA

I'm watching this crazy woman in a store parking lot. Standing there in the hot sun with a ball of twine. I see her thinking. I know she's thinking about how much she wants to tie up all the cars. She looks across the street to the playground. She sees the children playing. She wants to tie them up too. Each one. I watch her cross the street and grab one of them. A little girl. The girl screams. Two other kids, bigger kids, go up to her, and say "what the fuck, what the fuck do you think you're doing, crazy lady?" She says: "I'm trying to do you a favor. You brown kids. They're going to catch you and send you back." The older kids just stare at her. You can tell they're hurt. They pick up little pebbles and throw them at the lady. She scrambles back, holding out her twine at the same time. IF I TIE YOU TO SOMETHING THEY CAN'T SEND YOU BACK. THEY CAN'T SEND YOU BACK. They shout back at her: WE'RE AMERICAN, LADY. YOU'RE LOCA. WE WERE BORN HERE. YOU'RE LOCA. LOCA. LOCA. LOCA. The woman goes to a tree and starts tying herself to it. That's when the police cars come. She starts trying to unwind the twine faster, tie herself to the tree faster. The cops talk to her. Soft voices, very soft and polite. They unwind her and get her into their car. They drive away. The kids run after the car as the police drive away with her in the back seat. She's staring out the back window. The children screaming and laughing as they take her away: "LOCA LADY, LOCA LADY!"

When the kids turn round they stop and stare. They're staring at something, and then I realize it's me. They're staring at me. I'm standing at the crazy lady's tree. I have her twine. I'm trying to stuff it into my bag, my pants...my mouth. I'm trying to eat the twine. I see them see me. I didn't know I could be seen. I didn't know. "Hey, you're Bobby's Ma." I run home and shut the door and hide. I can still taste the twine. I can still feel where it made my gums bleed.

Bobby?

Bobby?

Be good. You hear me?

Ria exits.

More singing:

"32 bottles of beer on the wall, 32 bottles of beer

Take one down, pass it around, 31 bottles of beer on the wall."

Sound of time passing and highways.

Years go by.

Scene Twelve

Jerry's auto shop. Eight years later.

Ria and Jerry.

Ria works on an engine. Jerry drinks beer.

RIA

Jerry.

JERRY

Um-mmm.

RIA

I want to make a go of it.

JERRY

Mmmm.

RIA

I want another child.

JERRY

Uh oh.

RIA

I'm still young enough. Maybe that's why I've been having these visions – of my son.

JERRY

You've been having visions?

RIA

I keep thinking I see him. In a store window. Across the park.

JERRY

You can have visions of him, it's okay. What would he be now? Fifteen?

RIA

Sixteen. Today's his birthday.

JERRY

He's a man then. Sixteen. Almost a man.

RIA

I get these...sightings...I see him, I see a flash of what I imagine he'd be like.

JERRY

Birthdays are tough.

RIA

I looked for him for years and never had a sighting, never even imagined one. I used to park in front of schools – nothing. But this last month...

JERRY

It'll pass.

RIA

At Lowrie's, I swear. I saw him watching me from the parking lot.

JERRY

I told you I don't like getting stuff from there.

RIA

On Youtube.

JERRY

Youtube? What are you watching on Youtube?

RIA

I do searches.

JERRY

Honey, I'm sorry.

RIA

I think I've seen him in some news stories, in the background. In the crowds.

JERRY

You don't even know what he looks like now, what kind of haircut.

RIA

Buzzed.

JERRY

You don't know that.

RIA

Because he's been deployed. Afghanistan. I saw a shot of the soldiers. He was in it.

JERRY

You know it wasn't him.

RIA

I saw him. On the TV. A soldier in Afghanistan. It was the Kid.

JERRY

Kid? He'd be twenty-four by now. Why would join up to be to be a desert rat. He escaped the desert.

RIA

Maybe he believes in fighting for principle. For what we stand for.

JERRY

We?

RIA

Yes, us, USA.

JERRY

Okay.

RIA

Protecting our freedoms. Saving the children. Being a hero.

Maybe. JERRY

Do you? RIA

Yes. JERRY

God and the U.S.A.? RIA

Yes. JERRY

RIA
I didn't know they were a package deal. That one swallowed up the other. I thought I could give the Kid all the privileges without having to buy into any of the other stuff.

JERRY
Stuff? God and the U.S.A. aren't stuff.

RIA
You weren't born here.

JERRY
I'm pledged. I'm U.S.A. I'm choice beef U.S.A. I got a tattoo after I was sworn in.

RIA
You did not.

JERRY
I did. Want to see?

RIA
You want to marry me Jerry?

JERRY
You need to go lie down.

RIA
I want a child. Jerry?

JERRY
I'm not a part of this conversation.

RIA

You want a family. What about it?

JERRY

You're crazy. You don't even invite me over for dinner.

RIA

We could get married, if that's how you want it.

JERRY

How I want it?

RIA

I want a second try.

JERRY

Damn.

RIA

Yeah, damn it to hell. I can take care of you, Jerry. I can do that. I couldn't with the Kid. But I can with you. You're manageable.

JERRY

Great. Let's get married. Write your boy in Afghanistan. Maybe they'll give him leave to come home and give his mother away.

RIA

I'm serious.

JERRY

You're crazy.

RIA

You think I like being like I am?

JERRY

You think getting pregnant again will change that?

The sound of a truck.

Truck door opening, someone falling out of a cab.

Bo is heard cursing offstage:

"Sweet Jesus, that fuckin' hurt, son of a bitch, fuck me in the nuts, ow..."

Ria and Jerry stare at each other.

Bo enters, worse for wear.

Ria and Jerry stare at the man backlit in the entranceway.

He is a wreck, his eyes red and pained.
His voice barely exists.

BO

Where is he?

They stare at him.

The Kid. Don't hide him. I know he came back. Where else would he...

They stare at him.

He's didn't run here? You weren't expecting me...?

JERRY

Ria, call the police.

RIA

You come back eight years later asking me where Bobby is?

BO

He ran away. Took the truck. The day after he got his license. I thought he'd come back here. Drive here. He said he was going to join the army! Where is he? He's not here. O my God. He's run away. He's gone. I lost him.

RIA

What do you mean, where is he?

BO

He has to be here. BOBBY. BOBBY.

He howls.

If I can hold him in my arms I can change the world. I had the whole world in my hands and I lost him. I gave up everything so you would have a better life. I saved you, I told him. You didn't save shit, he said. You stole me. **STOLE ME.** He said he had to get going. Get going? What does that mean? He said he had to find his real father, because his real father expected great things from him. Who's his real father, Ria? Who wants more for him than me? If you love someone you have every right. You have every right to do everything you can for them. If they are in danger, you must save them. You must do everything you can. That's what love is. That's what God wants us to be. Love. Nothing but love. Ria? Ria?

JERRY

Give me the phone, woman. I'll call the police.

RIA

Jerry. Wait.

BO

Help me, Jerry. Help us. The Kid.

JERRY

You don't get to come back. You do what you did, you don't get to come here.

Bo tears off his shirt.

BO

It's back, isn't it? See. It's there? See it? My mark. My mark. The red mark.

JERRY

This is my shop and you don't get to step inside it. You get out of my shop.

RIA

Let me. Let me look.

JERRY

You want a mark? I'll give you your mark.

Jerry grabs a crowbar.

RIA

JERRY.

Jerry hits Bo between the shoulder blades.
Bo crumbles.

JERRY

You don't get to come back.

RIA

I'M CALLING THE POLICE. I'M CALLING THE POLICE.

Jerry exits.

BO

I can't breathe. I can't...

Ria holds Bo.
He wants to bury himself in her arms.

BO

I wanted to save you both, I...

RIA

Shhh, shh...

She sings to him, not knowing that she is singing:

He's got the sun and the rain in His hands,
He's got the moon and the stars in His hands,
He's got the wind and the clouds in His hands,
He's got the whole world in His hands.

He's got the rivers and the mountains in His hands,
He's got the oceans and the seas in His hands,
He's got you and he's got me in His hands,
He's got the whole world in His hands.

Bo collapses in his arms.
Darkness.
Ria holds Bo as he sleeps.
We hear Bobby's voice join in:

BOBBY

He's got everybody here in His hands,
He's got everybody there in His hands,
He's got everybody everywhere in His hands,
He's got the whole world in His hands.

Bobby enters.
The clouds pass and sun enters the garage.

Bobby enters in his army fatigues.
As it's now evening, he is most likely backlit by the yard or
parking lot lights.

BOBBY

It's me.

Ria looks at him.
Bobby sees Bo.
Jerry enters.

JERRY

Kid.

BOBBY

Hey Jerry.

JERRY

You were right, Ria. I'm sorry I doubted you. She thought she was having visions.

BOBBY

No, it's me.

RIA

Is this some kind of game?

BOBBY

No. Is he dead? Did you kill him?

RIA

You shits.

JERRY

He only wishes he was dead.

BOBBY

Wow, I didn't think he'd come back here too. I left Bo. Three months ago. I tried many times. I Left when I was sixteen but came back to him. But this time and I finally did it.

RIA

You're eighteen.

BOBBY

Yeah, I'm that. All that. I joined the USA. The Forces. I'm army now. And before I get sent away I wanted to ask you something. So he came here too. Looking for me? O man. I told him I couldn't save him and I had to go. I never thought he'd show up back here.

JERRY

You okay, Ria?

BOBBY

Can you fix the van, Jerry? It's been giving us a few problems. Exhaust, maybe.

JERRY

Us?

BOBBY

Dana drives. My girl. She's outside. I told her all about you.

JERRY

I'll give it a look-see.

Jerry exits.

RIA

Car troubles, huh? So you didn't come back to see me.

BOBBY

Hi, Mom.

RIA

Jerry'll fix it.

BOBBY

Yeah, Jerry's real good.

RIA

He is good. Real good, with people too. You know, sometimes he gives me a loan I don't have to pay back, lots of times really. He did that even when you were...still here. He's real bad with his checks and receipts so I watch out for him, you know. The IRS, they'll get you if they can. I have to say, Jerry, don't take another step closer to that hood until you tell me are they paying cash or by card, we like it to be cash, it's easier for the books, you think it shouldn't make a difference, but you're wrong. I've been doing this for Jerry for years. You've been gone how long...

RIA AND BOBBY

Sixteen.

RIA

Years. Right? I've been taking care of Jerry. He's possible, you know, manageable. I can do it. With you, I have to tell you, Bobby, impossible. You were impossible for me. Jerry? Jerry's not going anywhere. He, I can do.

BOBBY

Hi, Mom.

RIA

I don't know, I don't know if I want a teen-age boy. I hated high school. I hated all you high school boys.

BOBBY

I don't go to school.

RIA

Good. Hell-holes, every one of them. You don't know what I've survived. I've had a goddamn hateful life, but look at me. I haven't gone fat. If you come back into my life, I'll get fat. I eat a lot of carbohydrates but I burned it off worrying about you. Burns off all my extra calories. If you're back I'll go fat. I will. I'll bloat. I'll have to stop eating. Are you back?

BOBBY

No.

RIA

Let me see your hands.

BOBBY

Why?

RIA

Bo said you had healing hands. He said you took away his mark.

BOBBY

Bo used to be so big when I was a kid. Bigger than the desert. Bigger than God. I miss that.

RIA

Did you miss me?

BOBBY

I'm here.

RIA

Don't be a smart ass.

She touches his face.

It is you.

Bo stirs.

Bobby goes to Bo.
He takes him in his lap.

BOBBY

You have to stop looking for me, Bo. I'm gone.

RIA

I used to call you sweet baby Jesus when we were alone. You hated that. That's not my name, you'd say. On Christmas Eve, I'd put you under a fifteen dollar artificial aluminum Christmas tree. A joke. No one was supposed to take it serious. I didn't mean any of it. Sweet baby Jesus. You joined the army?

BOBBY

I did. I want to see the desert. Do you have my pictures?

RIA

I have your drawings. The first time a little girl kissed you. The first time you touched yourself down there. The first time you thought you could die. That's a whole series. The different horrific ways you were going to die. Hung upside down on a cross. Burnt at the stake. Drowned in oil.

BOBBY

You have them.

RIA

The first time you got mad at God. You don't need them. They're safe. You go on and do whatever it is you're going to do, leave them here with me.

BOBBY

Why'd you have a kid? Why'd you go to all the trouble when nothing in you wanted me.

RIA

I wanted to believe...in something better...

BOBBY

Did you? Believe in me?

RIA

Of course I did. You were never the problem.

Jerry enters, trying to assess the re-union.

JERRY

Your little baby out there's going to be fine.

RIA

You talking about his vehicle or his girl?

JERRY

Dana's a woman. You know what, Ria, I think Bobby's become a man. Am I right, boy?

Bobby slips Bo off his lap and onto the garage floor.

BOBBY

Did you give it to me - the stuff in my head?

RIA

No.

BOBBY

Where's it come from then?

RIA
I've no idea.

BO
You didn't have to run away. You could have asked. You could have told me you wanted to come back to the autoshop. I would have...

BOBBY
You know, I couldn't.

BO
Why.

BOBBY
Why what.

BO
Why punish me.

BOBBY
Pain and love go together. Anything else is a cheat. Isn't that what you taught me?

BO
I wanted to save you from that. So why. You'd be a pitbull dog if it wasn't for me.

BOBBY
I didn't want to be saved any more. Your love was too big. I was just a kid.

JERRY
You were never just a kid.

RIA
My kid.

JERRY
You were always a weird kid.

BO
Just a kid.

BOBBY
Yeah. Who lived in the clouds above the desert where years the big atom bomb went off. That's me.

BOBBY

(to Ria:) Keep my drawings. I want you to hold on to this too. When I come back, I'll come back for them. My portfolio. I'm a photographer. I finished my series: "Motel rooms where I could have been saved." Will you hold on to them for me? For when I come back?

A horn beeps.

I didn't tell her you all were family, in case you weren't here. I didn't want her to feel bad for me or anything. I have to go.

JERRY

Go? You don't have to go. Bo has to go. Invite your girl in and Bo is going.

RIA

Jerry.

BOBBY

Mom, can Bo stay?

RIA

Yes.

JERRY

What?

RIA

Bo can stay.

BOBBY

Thank you. Keep him safe.

JERRY

What.

Bobby exits.

Ria opens the portfolio.

She looks at each picture with care.

She is crying.

Jerry lets her look, lets her cry.

We hear Bobby singing over the sounds of a car going down the highway, perhaps the voice of his girl joins in on a chorus:

*We will kill the old red rooster, when she comes, (When she comes).
We will kill the old red rooster, when she comes, (When she comes).
We will kill the old red rooster, we will kill the old red rooster, we will kill
the old red rooster,
When she comes, (When she comes).
When you hear the whistle tootin', you can gamble sure as shootin',
She'll be drivin' six white horses when she comes.*

End of play.