

EUNA MOBLEY  
by  
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(Based on his play, SABINE STORY)

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FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL SABINE PARISH, NW LOUISIANA - THICK UNDERGROWTH SURROUNDING THE MOBLEY PLACE, ISOLATED ON ROUTE 6 BETWEEN ROBELINE AND MANY - 1933 - DUSK

STALKER'S POV

We do not see the stalker; we see only the brush he pushes aside as he makes his way to the Mobley house. We hear his GRUNTS, the SOUND of dry branches breaking, the NIGHT SOUNDS of NW Louisiana and rolls of DISTANT THUNDER as he advances.

As the house comes into view through the thick undergrowth, the speed of the advance slows; he finally stops.

The stalker quietly pants.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

STALKER'S POV

Through underbrush he sees the dilapidated home of EUNA and ELLERT MOBLEY.

In the dirt yard there is a small grave; next to it is another small grave which has just been dug.

CYE and EMMA STEWART, Euna's parents stand near the open grave. A few feet from them is the fidgeting twelve year old WILLIE ETOILE MOBLEY (mispronounced, 'ee-toil).

On the porch, near the water well, Ellert attempts to construct a small coffin. He is a tall half-Indian man who is quite striking in appearance in spite of his wasted condition. He wears overalls and no undershirt.

Ellert's SAWING and HAMMERING create a counterpoint to the cadence of the scene.

The stalker continues to move slowly and observes the following through weeds and brush:

EMMA

Papa, did he dig it out deep enough? It don't look hardly deep enough ta'me.

(pause)

Etoile? Hun, you doin' alright in school?

BACK TO SCENE

ETOILE

Yessum.

EMMA

You still keepin' up with ya'  
music?

Etoile sighs, must she answer yet another needless question?

STALKER'S POV

The stalker moves stealthily through the brush around the edge of the dirt yard to be closer to Ellert, who takes an occasional swig from a pint whisky bottle.

ETOILE

Yessum.

Through the stalker's POV we now see Euna through the screened front door and a window.

She stands near a small wooden kitchen table holding an infant wrapped in a thin blanket

At the table sits J.T. STAGNER, a doctor, who completes paperwork.

EMMA

Well, I wouldn't know lest I ast'ya  
seein' how you never come up t'play  
the piano for me no more.

BACK TO SCENE

EMMA

I swan, t'loose two babies an' both  
of 'um boys.

Ellert delivers a loud frustrated blow to the casket.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Papa, why don't you help Ellert out  
with that little casket. He's been  
drinkin' an'no telling' what  
manner'a box he'll piece together  
an' that grave don't look hardly  
deeper'n two foot. Papa --

CYE

Hush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

I'm gunna go see if Mama needs any help.

EMMA

Euna don't want no help.

CYE

We're waitin' on the coffin.  
Ya'Mama's been ready a long time.

EMMA

I tried to help'er dress'im, but she brushed my band away like it was a fly — an' she don't talk. Didn't talk the last time neither for 'bout a week.

Etoile moves away from her grandparents to a rope swing hanging from the limb of an Oak at the edge of the yard. She is very close to the unseen observer.

STALKER'S POV

He pulls back a bit into the brush. He watches as Emma's relentless drivel continues:

EMMA

I reckon t'was 'bout a week. Maybe it weren't a week, might'a been several days. Well, I know for certain it was several days she didn't say a single word.

CYE

You don't know nothin'.

EMMA

I never see my grandchildren. I know that. I'd walk up here, but I'm old, an' you used to come see me a lot, didn't you?

Euna appears at the screened front door of the house, and is now clearly visible to the stalker.

BACK TO SCENE

Etoile swings. She has stopped listening.

CYE

Answer your Grandmother!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Yessum?

CLOSE UP - THROUGH THE SCREEN DOOR

Euna holds her baby and observes Ellert's futile attempt to build a coffin.

BACK TO SCENE

EMMA

I wonder why she ain't here?

ETOILE

Who?

EMMA

Ya'sister. Verna.

ETOILE

(impatient)

I reckon she doesn't know about it.

The noise of J.T.'s CHAIR SCOOTING on the floor inside the house causes Euna to turn away from the screen.

INT. PARLOR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

J.T. rises from the table and gathers his things. The talking outside continues:

EMMA (O.S.)

It ain't more'n a mile an' a half'a road between our place an' this'un, but my hips is weak an' go to hurting' an' --

J.T.

I'll file these papers at the courthouse in the mornin'.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

J.T. moves out onto the porch. Euna remains inside, but stands at the screen staring out as if she is might be somewhere else.

EMMA

You don't take me nowhere's in the Ford. Why don't you never ride me in the Ford?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYE

Shut up.

EMMA

(To J.T.)

You goin' now?

J.T.

Yep.

EMMA

We thank you for comin' out.

J.T.

Euna, I'll be droppin' back by t'check on'ya is a few days.

He observes Ellert; to Cyé:

J.T. (CONT'D)

Can you see to the rest of it?

CYE

I reckon so.

J.T. walks across the yard to a path leading to his car.

EMMA

Who was that?

CYE

That's J.T. You know J.T.

EMMA

J.T.?

CYE

Emmitt Stagner's boy -- ya' known'im all'is life!

EXT. CLEARING NEAR THE PATH TO THE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T. appears from the path to the house. He stops, turns as though he might go back, then after a moment, opens the door to his 1930 Greater Eight Hudson, tosses his bag in and then unable to contain his frustration, BANGS loudly once on its roof.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

EMMA

When our Earleen died, papa, you stopped talkin' too.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA (CONT'D)

I thought I felt a drop. Did you feel a drop? Papa, I thought I --

CYE

Ellert! You gonna' finish that thing today or tomorrow?

They hear J.T.'s car door SLAM shut and the Hudson PULL AWAY.

EMMA

There. I felt it again, I felt --

ETOILE

-- I reckon --

EMMA

-- better hurry, Ellert --

ETOILE

-- I reckon he's doin' his best.

CYE

Do ya'now?

ETOILE

Yes, I do.

EMMA

He ain't doin' no good with that thing, shoot. It's gonna' pour down on us like beasts in the jungle. Why'd that lil' baby have to go an 'die?

(indicating the older grave)

That one lyin'n there weren't never healthy neither. We all knew he's gonna' die. Now this'un, goin' on a week old an' then struck down.

CYE

Hush up.

There is a moment of complete silence except for a distant THUNDER ROLL.

EMMA

Verna still workin'?

ETOILE

I guess so. We don't hear from her anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CYE

I can smell it now. It ain't  
rainin' far from here. Ellert!

EMMA

The wrath'a God's what it is. The  
sins of the father done visited  
down on the house'a the sons.

CYE

Ahh, he's drunk.

EMMA

Yep, the sins of the father done  
visited on his sons --

CYE

Emma, I want you to shut 'ya mouth  
for a while.

EMMA

It's the Bible truth! Why else  
would the Lord give two sons an'  
stike'um -- just turn right around  
an'strike'um both dead?

ETOILE

Mama!

EMMA

Leave'er be --

CYE

-- hush, girl!

ETOILE

Hush, yourself! Mama doesn't  
want you here, an'neither do I.

Ellert in a fit of frustration, smashes the coffin with a  
terrific blow of his hammer.

Euna comes out on the porch. She stops for a moment, then  
moves to the open grave.

STALKER'S POV

Ellert, drunk and humiliated, leaves by way of a path at the  
side of the house.

The stalker eases in that direction.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Euna inspects the grave, hands the baby to Etoile, picks up the spade and begins to dig.

EMMA

Oh, my Lord. I told ya'it ain't dug out deep enough. Cyrus, you dig that out for'er. Go on.

Cye makes a move for the spade, but Euna recoils. She continues to dig.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Euna, what's the matter with you?

CYE

Best we go up t'the house. Euna girl, we'll see ya' inside.

Cye and Emma move to the porch. Etoile eases close to her Mother.

ETOILE

I wish they'd go home.

Cye enters the parlor; Emma stops at the doorway to call to Etoile.

EMMA

Etolie, hun, you come on in. Come on.

There is no response; Emma goes in.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cye rolls a cigarette. The house is quite dark now.

EMMA

What's the matter with them?

CYE

Hush.

EMMA

(looking around)  
Papa, this old place is just'a rottin'in. Just'a rottin'in.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna lowers the body of her child into the grave using it's blanket as a sling. She begins to fill the grave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE  
 (fighting tears)  
 Where'd Daddy go off to?

Etoile cannot bear to watch and breaks for the porch.

EMMA  
 (at the screened  
 door)  
 You ain't stayin' out there no  
 longer, girl, you come on in here  
 an'talk to ya' grandmother.

Etoile reluctantly submits.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

EMMA  
 If standin' didn't go so bad on my  
 hip bone, I'd'a stayed out there  
 with'er an' mourned for a while,  
 but shoot. Where's ya' mama keep'er  
 oil? This lamp's 'bout dry.

ETOILE  
 Don't know.

EMMA  
 You don't see none do ya' Papa --  
 no, you ain't lookin'. Maybe it's  
 in the back somewhere's.

Etoile now attempts to engage in conversation in order to  
 ease the discomfort of being with her grandparents.

ETOILE  
 There's no tellin'. Mama changes  
 things around so much -- I always  
 did hate'er rearrangin' moods.

EMMA  
 Well, I'll take a look-see.

Emma goes into the back hall way, stumbling into furniture as  
 she goes.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND THE MOBLEY HOME - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert leans against a tree. He is throwing up, heaving  
 badly. He stops and turns, as if he has heard something.

There's rustling in the bushes. He stands very still; he  
 hears a soft PANTING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ellert stumbles into the woods trying to put distance between himself and the sound. He stops.

There's silence for a moment and then the sound of something moving in the leaves.

STALKER'S POV

Ellert stumbles away into the woods; the stalker follows, never losing sight of his prey.

Ellert picks up a limb and throws it in the stalker's direction.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cye smokes. He glares at Etoile, who is clearly nervous in his presence.

ETOILE

Even when Verna was home, Mama'd have us workin' our tails off at least once a month switchin' the place'a this an'that, an'movin' this old furniture around, an'the place never did look any better. That is, of course, my opinion.

She pauses and clears her throat; Emma re-enters empty handed, but continues to search.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Ha! I remember one night Daddy came in real late an' real drunk an' we'd spent the day cleanin' an' rearrangin' an' he fell over that ole poof we used to have. It was real funny now when I think about it.

CYE

An't nothin' funny 'bout a drunkard.

EMMA

Junk's junk no matter which way ya' turn it. Found some oil.

CYE

Better sniff it.

EMMA

It's oil. Ain't much left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Daddy never hid'is liquor in  
anything but the bottle it came in.

EMMA

So dark I can't hardly see t'pour.

CYE

Goin' on seven-thirty.

He moves to the screen and peers out into the darkness.

CYE (CONT'D)

Unnatural dark for this time  
a'year. Unnatrual dry, too. Rain  
threatens, but won't come.

Emma lights the lamp. She places on the piano.

EMMA

Etoile, honey, play something for  
us.

ETOILE

Now?

EMMA

Somethin' sweet.

Emma guides Etoile to the piano. Etoile opens the keyboard and begins to play from memory, Erik Satie's "Gymnopedie No. 1" as softly as she can.

The camera slowly pulls away, out of the house past Euna, who is almost finished filling the grave. Without hesitating, the scene floats along with the fading strains of Satie through dense woods, along dark pathways leading from the Mobley place, slowing and then stopping at an open field.

EXT. A FIELD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert, drunk and winded runs across a field. He has a limb in his hand. He stops and swings the limb in all directions as if fending off invisible forces. He drops to his knees, takes a pint bottle from his pocket and drinks.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile closes the keyboard.

EMMA

I remember ya'mama used to play  
that. She play anymore?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

No. I wish Daddy'd come back -- I don't know how he can lay out on nights like this.

CYE

Hell, when ya Daddy's full'a liquor he don't know night from day.

Etoile wants to bite the old man's head off, but manages to hold her tongue. Cyé stares at her, daring her to do it.

CYE (CONT'D)

I told ya'Mama she'd better get shed'a Ellert Mobley; she didn't listen to me one iota. Got herself in a fine mess.

ETOILE

(quietly, but distinctly)  
Toot. Toot. Just listen to 'im toot.

EMMA

What she say?

ETOILE

If my mama's in a mess, you put'er there. Everybody knows you threw'er out. Shoot, she had ta'marry somebody.

CYE

That's a damn lie. Hell, I didn't want my own kin marryin' up with a drunken half-breed.

ETOILE

He didn't drink much then an' you know it!

CYE

Well, he surely does now -- an' you raise ya'voice ta'me again an' I --

ETOILE

-- Go to the Devil!

Cyé slaps Willie hard across the mouth.

Emma pretends this has not happened, and speaks to Etoile with a gracious smile which had not made an appearance tonight before now, a smile which quickly deteriorates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

Well, Etoile girl, it was so lovely  
t'visit with ya'. We best be goin'  
now. I wan'a go home, Cyrus. I  
wan'a go home.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cye moves onto the porch. He is followed by Emma and Etoile,  
who brings the lantern.

CYE

Euna? You gonna' stay out there all  
night? Euna!

EMMA

Lordy mercy, Euna. Your Papa is  
taking to you.

ETOILE

I reckon she'll stay out there 'til  
you go home.

EMMA

(to Etoile)  
You come see us, hun.

Emma takes Cye's arm; they start for the path leading to the  
road.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Why didn't you bring us in the  
Ford, papa?

CYE

Hush.

They are gone.

Ellert's cough alerts Etoile that he has entered through the  
rear of the house. She moves to the screen door and peers  
in.

ETOILE

Daddy?

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert doesn't answer; he goes into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ellert stumbles over into the bed without removing his clothes.

Etoile, lantern in hand, appears in the doorway to the bedroom.

                                ETOILE  
Daddy . . . ?

CLOSEUP - ETOILE

Etoile's eyes fill with tears as she watches her father who stares at the ceiling, determinedly unaware of her.

EXT. PORCH AND FRONT YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The baby is buried. Euna kneels by the grave in silence.

Suddenly there is a loud and forceful thrashing in the bushes near the path leading away from the side of the house.

Euna rises and peers into the darkness, but is unable to see anything.

Fearing a predator might try to dig up her child, she places a wheelbarrow upside down over the small grave.

STALKER'S POV

He pants softly, and watches Euna move to the porch. He sees her turn and again peer into the darkness.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile prepares a scrub bath for her mother, consisting of a shallow basin, liquid soap in a canning jar, washcloth and towel.

Euna enters from the porch.

                                ETOILE  
Mama, you want the water heated?

Euna shakes her head "no".

                                ETOILE (CONT'D)  
There's wood back there. I don't  
mind.

Euna shakes her head impatiently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

                          ETOILE (CONT'D)  
  Alright.  Good night.

Etoile goes to her room. After a beat:

                          EUNA  
  You didn't practice today.

                          ETOILE (O.S.)  
  No ma'm.

                          EUNA  
  Tomorrow. You'll practice tomorrow.

                          ETOILE (O.S.)  
  Yessum.  Night.

Euna, slowly as in a ritual and still without expression, strips to her slip and bathes.

Her bathing movements are slow and take on the character of one gently soothing with great pity the separate parts of her body.

Ellert, who has come to the bedroom doorway, watches her bathe.

When she has finished, Euna moves past him, taking the lamp with her.

Ellert follows.

INT.  BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna turns the wick down. The house is in darkness. She undresses her husband. They retire. The NOISES OF THE NIGHT grow louder.

EXT.  PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A small dark figure moves in the grave area. It is the stalker, BEAU RAY CLOUD.

He is a small man with dark hair, thick brows and a heavy beard which has gone unshaven for days. He's filthy.

He wears oversized overalls and no shirt. The galluses of his overalls slip easily off his naked shoulders.

He moves quietly across the yard and crouches by the edge of the porch. He listens for a moment, then slides onto the porch and lies on his back.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

His BREATHING becomes audible; it is fast and heavy. He crawls close to the screened door and curls up like a cat, as if going to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

It is early morning, a week later.

Ellert lies in bed. He can hear Euna PREPARING BREAKFAST in the parlor, which is also the kitchen and dining room of the small house.

Ellert pulls on his overalls as he listens, happily, to the SOUNDS of his wife and daughter.

EUNA (O.S.)  
Etoile? Etoile, are you up?

ETOILE (O.S.)  
No.

EUNA (O.S.)  
Well, get up.  
(pause)  
Etoile--

ETOILE (O.S.)  
I am, I am!

EUNA (O.S.)  
It's a little early to be getting smart, young lady.

Etoile sticks her head in her parents' bedroom and crosses her eyes.

ETOILE  
Good lord, Mama, this early I don't think at all.

Euna appears behind Etoile and smacks her on the behind. Then to Ellert:

EUNA  
Good mornin'.

ETOILE  
Mama. That hurt. How come you smacked me so hard?

The two move away from the doorway back into the parlor.

INT. THE PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EUNA  
I smacked you for being a smarty.

ETOILE  
(whispers)  
Daddy was smilin'!

EUNA  
(quietly)  
I noticed. Go draw up the milk.

As Etoile moves to the screen door:

ETOILE  
Etoile do this, Etoile do that. . .

She exits letting the screen SLAM.

EUNA  
Don't slam the screen! How-many-  
times-do-I-have-to-tell-you . . . ?

EXT. PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile draws the milk up from the well. Speaking through a yawn:

ETOILE  
Good grief, when are we ever gunna'  
have ice again?  
(under her breath)  
When hell freezes over.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert enters the parlor then immediately exits out the back door.

EUNA  
Well, is he off already? Ellert?

Euna looks in the direction of his exit. Then, angrily goes to the screen and shouts.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
I need that milk!

EXT. PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile struggles with a large bucket full of water as she withdraws the jar of milk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Yessum. I'm doin' it right now!

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna wipes tears from her face hurriedly as she continues to prepare breakfast.

Etoile enters the parlor.

ETOILE

Pooh! This milk smells like clabber.

The screen almost slams, but she catches it in time.

EUNA

Did you see which way your Daddy went?

ETOILE

Nope. Mama, the milk stinks.

EUNA

Did you hear him mention having chores somewhere this morning early?

Etoile beats a biscuit with her fist.

ETOILE

No. He never talks to me.

EUNA

What are you doin'?

ETOILE

I'm experimentin' on this biscuit to see if it can be broken with the human hand, 'cause I'm sure not gunna' eat it if I can't break it.

EUNA

I'm savin' those stale biscuits for the chickens! When did I ever serve you anything like that?

ETOILE

My God, Mama, you're liable to kill our chickens.

EXT. TOOL SHED - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert makes his way from the tool shed behind the house to the side of the house carrying a hoe and a rake.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert begins to clear the graves of weeds and dead branches.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile bounces a biscuit off the table. She hears the sound of Ellert's raking.

ETOILE

What's that?

She hurries to the screened door; Euna follows.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

What's he doin'?

EUNA

Shhh.

They watch him in silence for a moment through the screen.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert pulls weeds from the older grave, and tidies the new one.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

He was home all night, an 'when I woke up this mornin' he was holdin' on to my hand.

ETOILE

That's sweet, Mama.

EUNA

You'd never know he'd ever mourned them. Honey, why don't you go out there an' keep ya'Daddy company.

Etoile looks at her mother incredulously.

EUNA (CONT'D)

Just until breakfast.

Euna stamps her foot, and Etoile scoots.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Yessum.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile goes out into the yard, but stops at a distance from Ellert.

ETOILE

Hi.

There is no response.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Mama told me ta'keep ya' company.

Ellert works silently.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Did ya' know I was watchin' you?

He appears to be ignoring her, and attempts to pull a sturdy young plant up by the roots.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

The reason I asked is 'cause ya' never seem to notice me, an' how's a girl to know if she's bein' ignored or just goin' undetected?

(no response)

Why don't you cut that thing down? Ya' gunna'strain a gut tuggin' on it like that.

He looks at her at last, then resumes his business. She persists.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I don't think I have ever heard you say my name.

He stops his business, but does not look her way.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

(pronounced correctly)

It's Etoile. Ms. Jenkins at school taught me that. Means star . . . in French. Mama says my music will get me a scholarship to college, and when I get there no one will be allowed to mispronounce ma'damn name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stares at her for a moment, then looks away again.

ETOILE (CONT'D)  
Would you stay sober if I was to  
die?

Ellert tosses the rake to one side and looks at her again,  
then throws a handful of soil at her.

They are still for a moment, then without breaking her stare,  
She slowly gathers up a handful of soil of her own.

ETOILE (CONT'D)  
I can cuss better than Verna.  
Ya'want to hear me?

Euna appears at the screen door.

EUNA  
That's enough. Etoile, wash up.

ETOILE  
Yessum.

She moves to the porch, stops and turns to her father.

ETOILE (CONT'D)  
Daddy. If you're drunk when Mama  
buries me, I'll come back an' haunt  
ya'.

With a squeal, she flings the handful of soil at Ellert and  
runs to the house.

Euna comes out onto the porch as her daughter passes; she and  
Ellert stand for a moment looking at each other.

WILLIE (O.S.)  
Ya'll come on, I'm starved an' I'm  
gunna' be late.

Euna holds the door open for him.

EUNA  
Ellert why don't you wash too.

He enters the house. Euna gives a last look to the graves and  
follows.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ETOILE  
Can I feed the chickens?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

Yes, if there's time -- hand that towel to ya' Daddy.

ETOILE

Good, 'cause I know they'll go straight into conniptions an' I don't want to miss it.

All three are seated.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Seems funny all of us eatin' at the same time.

There is a brief silence.

Etoile rises on impulse, gives her father a quick hug then re-seats herself and continues as if nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I think it's horrible an' tacky 'a Verna not to ever come home. I'm in a talkin' mood. Yep, tacky, tacky, tacky.

EUNA

Hush and say the blessin'.

ETOILE

Yessum -- Daddy, you should'a told Verna she couldn't marry that squirt, Harley Foshee. You know what I told her the night she ran off with'im? I told'er she wouldn't be caught dead doin' it except'er brains weren't developed yet. An' you want to know what she said to me?

EUNA

Etoile.

ETOILE

Oh.

EUNA

Chatter. Chatter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETOILE

(a fast rattle)

Oh dear Lord and sweet Jesus they  
son an' precious savior, bless us  
all to the nourishment of they  
body. . .

Euna raises her head to look at Ellert; their eyes meet;  
Ellert bows his head again.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

An' thank you for leadin' my Daddy  
home sober ta'breakfast an' forgive  
Verna for what she said to me for  
thine is the kingdom, Amen. You  
want to know what she said?

EUNA

I don't --

ETOILE

She said I was a slut an' the yard  
dog knows it --

EUNA

-- Willie Etoile Mobley, you shut  
your filthy mouth --

Ellert slaps the table top freezing both wife and daughter.

After a pause, daring her Father:

ETOILE

She was the one who said it.

Ellert gives her a look which ends all conversation for a  
moment longer.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Oh, Mama, did you hear all that  
carryin' on last night?

EUNA

What carryin' on -- pass the honey.

ETOILE

Scared me t'death but'I forgot all  
about it 'till I said the blessin'  
an then I remembered 'cause I got  
so scared I prayed 'til I fell  
asleep.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

EUNA

Don't talk so fast an' put the  
knife on the side of your plate--

ETOILE

-- Yessum -- well it sounded like a  
bobcat at first. Sort'a sounded  
like, well . . . it sounded like  
cryin'.

Euna senses a tenseness in Ellert, attempts to change the  
subject.

EUNA

(to Etoile)

I ordered a new piano series for'ya  
from the Cincinnati Conservatory.

ETOILE

Mama, I haven't finished the last  
one yet, an' you said I could take  
'til August on it.

EUNA

It's ordered and you'll start it.

ETOILE

Shoot.

EUNA

(to Ellert)

Something wrong with your  
breakfast?

ETOILE

Heard it three or four times.

EUNA

What?

ETOILE

The cryin'' or whatever it was.  
Sounded like it was comin' from the  
porch, then it moved to right  
outside my window -- that's when I  
started prayin'.

EUNA

Hush.

(to Ellert)

What's the matter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ETOILE

Oh, Mama, let me finish! Then after that, I could hear footsteps runnin' an runnin' round the house. Sounded human to me an' I heard the same thing back a couple'a weeks ago only without the cryin'.

Ellert bolts up and out of the house through the back door.

EUNA

Ellert? Why can't you keep your busy mouth shut!

ETOILE

What'd I do? What'd I do? I didn't do anything. What'd I do --

EUNA

-- Hush and get up from there. That school bus won't wait on you an' as soon as you get home this afternoon, you'll put on your work clothes!

Etoile rushes from the table to her room, and speaks on the fly.

ETOILE

Am I being punished?! Shoot, I hate bein' a country hick. I'll never be a lady! You never saw a lady with'er butt stuck up in the air pullin' weeds!

As Etoile complains, Euna goes to the back door with a basin of dirty water.

EXT. REAR OF THE HOSUE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna looks for Ellert, as she tosses the water to the base of a tree.

ETOILE(O.S.)

Well, my butt's been stuck up in the air half my natural life.

INT. PARLOR - DAY -CONTINUOUS ACTION

Euna gathers the stale biscuits, she moves to the front screen and exits.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna walks around the house past a low wooden fenced yard for the chickens, which also encloses their outhouse and a chicken coup. She throws the stales biscuits to the chickens. As she approaches Etoile's window, she speaks to herself:

EUNA

What could have set him off like that?

Euna spies footprints from a small bare foot on the loose dirt under Etoile's window.

INSERT - FOOT PRINTS

EXT. ROUTE 6 BETWEEN ROBELINE AND MANY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T.'s Hudson slows and drives over the cattle gap to the Mobley place.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR THE PATH TO THE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T. parks in a clearing near the path to the house.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna enters from the porch. Etoile is still in her room.

ETOILE (O.S)

That the bus?

EUNA

Don't know.

Euna winds the clock. Etoile darts in from her room.

ETOILE

Mama, I'm wearin' that dirty blouse.

EUNA

No you're not.

ETOILE

I don't have anything else.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR THE PATH TO THE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T. sits in his Hudson. He freshens his breath with cinnamon oil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He tosses the bottle back into his medical bag and leaves the car. As he approaches the path to the house:

J.T.  
Yoooo, Euna!

EXT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EUNA  
Oh, Lord! It's J.T.

ETOILE (O.S.)  
Who?!

EXT. PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna goes out on the porch as J.T. enters the yard.

EUNA  
Mornin' J.T.

J.T.  
How'ya doin', lady?

EUNA  
I'm alright.

Etoile exits the house in a dead run, slamming the screen behind her.

ETOILE  
Mornin' Doc Stagner, I thought you were the bus.

EUNA  
Your hair's a mess.

ETOILE  
I know. I've got my hairbrush in my purse.  
(to J.T. as she exits)  
I'm distracted this mornin'.

EUNA  
Etoile, I forgot to make your lunch.

ETOILE (O.S.)  
It's alright, Mama.

Euna becomes suddenly aware of how she must look; she attempts a quick repair, then gives up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

I guess I'm distracted this morning, too. J.T. sit yourself down an' I'll get you some coffee.

She continues to speak as she enters the house.

We hear a bus approach, stop and then pull away.

J.T. sits on the edge of the porch and fans himself with his hat.

EUNA (CONT'D)

I owe you for the other evening. You like fig preserves as I recall.

J.T.

You are not pay'n me off with figs. Those storm clouds are lookin' mighty angry -- you reckon we'll see rain?

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna searches her cabinets for anything but figs. Placing figs in a burlap bag.

EUNA

It's figs or nothing.

She exits the house onto the porch.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

Aa storm is brewin', but it's takin' its sweet time. I put three pints in.

J.T.

And I thank you.

(pause)

Euna?

EUNA

Yes, J.T.?

J.T.

You are way past due for a thorough examination.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

Am I? You shouldn't say a thing  
like that with a smile on your  
face!

J.T.

Hold on --

She goes back to the screen and opens it.

EUN

-- I'm listenin'.

She enters the house to get the coffee.

He follows to the screened door and addresses her through the  
screen.

J.T.

I'm serious. If you can't come  
into town for a checkup, I figure  
here's as good a place as any.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna pours coffee.

EUNA

No, thank you.

She carries the coffee to the door, J.T. Opens it for her.

EXT. PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

The last time you examined me you  
cut the fool so, I was embarrassed.

He takes his coffee.

J.T.

Hell, how in the world can a woman  
be embarrassed to get dressed  
before the man who just given her  
an examination.

She laughs.

EUNA

You're a rascal Doctor J.T.  
Stagner. Why'd a doctor want to  
watch a woman get dressed anyhow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

J.T.

Different folks do it different ways. Might say I make a study of it.

EUNA

I can remember when we were children how you pestered me to play doctor with you. I never dreamed you go an' get a license permittin' you to do it.

J,T. almost gags, then spits out a mouthful of coffee.

J.T.

That's not coffee!

Euna laughs.

J.T. (CONT'D)

What the hell is that? Tastes like burnt corn!

Euna continues to laugh.

EUNA

It's got a little coffee in it. Drink it, you'll get used to it.

He takes another sip. Shakes his head.

J.T.

Euna.

EUNA

J.T?

J.T.

You're too old an' too poor to be havin' babies, an' I told you after that other boy was born you weren't healthy enough to bare more children, an' I made it damn clear to ya' how it could be prevented.

EUNA

I didn't intend to have another.

J.T.

If the good Lord loved ya' he'd have put ya' through the change by now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

There is a difficult silence.

J.T. (CONT'D)

Euna, I know it can't easy for ya'  
living with a man like Ellert --

EUNA

-- don't start that.

J.T.

If even one tenth'a what I've heard  
about that man is fact, Christ . .  
. You not makin' the first lick' a  
sense sacrificin' yourself for a  
man who hardly earns his keep,  
stays drunk, an' beats on ya' -- he  
still does that doesn't he?

EUNA

That hasn't happened for a long  
time.

There's pause. He's upset her, and proceeds gently.

J.T.

You ever gunna' tell me what  
actually happened between him and  
Beau Ray Cloud?

INT. BACK OF HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Elert enters through the back door of the house. He hears  
Euna speaking with J.T.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

He stops in the parlor and listens.

EUNA (O.S.)

All they could prove was that he  
drank with that man, an' you know  
it!

J.T. (O.S.)

That's not what I asked you.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T.

What kind of man cavorts around  
with an ungodly aberration like  
that Cloud fella'?! Assaultin' a  
boy no more than fourteen--

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

EUNA

You're assignin' guilt by  
association, the same sin our  
ignorant an' mean hearted neighbors  
committed on Ellert!

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert moves closer in order to hear better.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

J.T.

Have you ever put it to him, Euna?  
Have you ever just out an' asked  
him?

EUNA

He never uttered a word in his own  
defense to me or anybody as far as  
I know. I think he was just too  
hurt by it all. . .

J.T.

Or ashamed.

EUNA

My God, J.T., look at what the man  
suffered. Without any proof at all,  
he was locked up for almost a week  
an' then fired from his job. He  
came home covered in hot tar and  
chicken feathers. An' then his own  
daughter, Verna -- so unforgivin'  
an' cruel.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert drops his head as he listens.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

She crosses the porch to the wind chime.

It's made of heavy metal scrap pieces and old farming  
articles including a plowshare and an shovel.

EUNA

Ellert made this wind chime for me  
not long after he brought me to  
this old house.

FLASH BACK

We see what Euna describes in flash back.

EUNA (O.S.)

I was sixteen. He found me walkin'  
down the old El Camino Real to  
Robeline with my little suitcase in  
my hand. He put me on his white  
mule and brought me here. I was  
fascinated by that beautiful blue  
eyed half Cherokee man nobody knew  
the first thing about. He was like  
a wild animal, so unpredictable, so  
free . . . .

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP - ELLERT

He is moved by what he hears and remembers.

FLASH BACK

As Euna continues, we see in flashback, his memories of the things she describes:

EUNA (V.O.)

When we first came here, he'd bathe  
in the creek after workin' all day  
at the saw mill -- he'd wash his  
work clothes out in the creek too,  
an' bring'um home to me all  
squeezed out and rolled in a ball.  
He'd walk home stark naked through  
the woods. Walk into the house  
like that, an' smile. . . . an'  
he'd chase me, chase me down and  
love me wherever he caught me.

BACK TO SCENE

Ellert quietly moves to the back of the house.

EXT. THE WOODS- DAY - CONTINUOUS

He runs through the woods.

EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAY - COTINUOUS

He stops and feels the sunshine on his face. He balls up his fists, thrusts his arms into the air and runs again.

EXT. CREEK IN THE WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert strips, throws his clothes into the water and dives in.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna touches the chime. Then she pushes it hard. It CLANGS.

EUNA

You have to punch it to get a sound  
out of it. It makes pretty music I  
think, but the only time I hear  
that music is when there's a storm.

She eyes the sky, lost for the moment in a world from which J.T. is excluded. After a moment, unable to mask his sadness:

J.T.

Will you heed one bit of advice,  
professional advice?

EUNA

I'll try.

J.T.

You're not well. You have a real  
physical problem, an' you've got to  
do somethin' about it.

EUNA

I will.

Doc Stagner exits with the preserves.

Euna looks toward the grave site, then goes in the house.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna enters the parlor from her bedroom. She holds her pillow in her arms. She places it on the cot in the parlor. She is frightened.

She moves to the piano, opes it and sits. She looks at her hands. They are rough and stiff. She flexes them and massages them. She places her hands at the keys, poised to play, then closes the keyboard carefully.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY

Afternoon of the same day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ellert steps into the yard. He is sober and very handsome, and he is naked. His hair is wet and his body glistens.

His coveralls are wet and squeezed into a ball. His wet socks and underwear are thrown over his shoulder.

He steps onto the porch.

In his free hand he carries a bouquet of Black Eyed Susans.

Euna appears at the screen door. He extends the wet clothes to her. She takes them.

Ellert moves to the graves, places the flowers on the fresh grave.

ELLERT

What happened to 'im?

EUNA

J.T. said it was probably his heart. He was born too early.

ELLERT

I wasn't here, was I . . . ?  
When . . .

EUNA

You were workin'. He passed in his sleep, peacefully. Didn't even cry.

ELLERT

Buried 'im in a blanket?

EUNA

A blanket.

Ellert rises and turns to Euna. After a pause, he touches her face. He looks at her in silence, then:

ELLERT

You still want me, girl?

He waits for an answer. None comes.

ELLERT (CONT'D)

I'm makin' an effort, Euna.

EUNA

I know.

Euna hangs his overalls on the porch clothes line.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Distant thunder rolls.

ELLERT  
You still want me?

His socks and underwear fall to the porch floor. Euna kneels at his feet to retrieve them.

EUNA  
I have to sleep alone for a while.  
I mustn't have another baby.

She rises and takes the socks and underwear to the line.

Ellert is downcast, and now humiliated by his nakedness.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Better find some clothes. . .  
Etoile. She should've been back  
from school already.

Ellert goes into the house. Euna shivers as a wave of fear passes through her.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ellert spies Euna's pillow on the cot. He stares at it for a moment, then goes into the bedroom.

EXT. THE CATTLE AND ROUTE 6 - DUSK

It's almost evening. Euna nervously waits for Etoile to return home from school.

She stands on the shoulder of Rural Route 6 near the cattle gap bridging the Mobley place to the highway.

She sees Etoile far up the road.

Etoile arrives, carrying her school books. She attempts to cross the cattle gap without looking at her Mother.

Euna blocks her way.

EUNA  
Woah. The school bus went by hours ago.

ETOILE  
I walked.

EUNA  
You miss the bus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

No.

She attempts to break past Euna who stops her again.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Let me go -- I need the outhouse.

EUNA

What is it?

ETOILE

Will you just let me pee!?

Etoile runs past her down the path leading to the yard.

INT. THE PARLOR - NIGHT

Later. Etoile plays Bach's Prelude No. 1 angrily from sheet music. Euna removes the sheet music.

She continues to play.

ETOILE

I know it by heart.

Euna takes her hands from the keys.

EUNA

Are you ill?

ETOILE

No!

EUNA

Then what? Somebody say something about your clothes -- is that it?

Etoile bangs on the keys.

ETOILE

Just leave me alone!

She begins to sob.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

It's just that . . . it's -- oh  
Mama, I hate 'um! God'a mighty I  
hate'um all!

EUNA

Who? Who?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Ole Alice Self an' Rita Lynn  
Tarpley -- rubbin' up to me in the  
hall, an' gigglin' an' snickerin'  
an' whisperin' behind my back. God  
I hate 'um! I wish 'um blind an'  
deaf!

EUNA

What happened --!

ETOILE

-- All! All of 'um. Everybody  
talkin' about it, an' laughin' an'  
me not knowin' why an' then that  
bitch Rita Lynn just out an' tells  
me!

Euna shakes her.

EUNA

Tells you what?

ETOILE

It started on the bus this mornin'  
and I thought it was my blouse! But  
then she said everbody in the  
school knows, an' laughin' the  
whole time. I hate'er! I'm not  
goin' back there -- you can't make  
me, Mama, an' I don't want'a stay  
here either! I just want'a go  
away!

She attempts to break past Euna who is hurting her arms.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Ouch, Mama! I hate 'um all an' wish  
'um dead!

Etoile breaks free, starts for the door, clutches her stomach  
then sinks to the floor at one end of the cot.

Ellert has emerged from their bedroom unseen by the women.  
He is freshly dressed. He looks quite smart; his hair  
combed; he wears slacks and his shirt is tucked in.

He is stricken by what he overhears.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I don't believe it, Mama. I don't.  
I don't believe what she said.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETOILE (CONT'D)

God I hate'er! My . . . my Daddy,  
he couldn't.

She grabs her stomach, and breaks for the front door.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I'm sick, Mama!

Euna follows her.

EXT. PORCH, FRONT YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

What did the girl say!

ETOILE

I'm gunna puke.

Euna takes Etoile out onto the yard. She vomits.

EUNA

What did she say about ya' Daddy?

ETOILE

No.

EUNA

I'm waitin'.

ETOILE

It's somethin' terrible. You'll  
slap my mouth. Oh, Mama, she said  
he does . . . things.

EUNA

What things? Tell me. What things?

Etoile is barely able to speak the words.

ETOILE

Dirty things. She said he does  
things with, with some crazy fella'  
who worked over at Peason Mill.

EUNA

Beau Ray Cloud.

Etoile cries softly, relieved that the admission is over.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert, who watches through the screen, quietly turns and  
moves toward the back of the house.



INT. TOOL SHED - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It's dark. Ellert strikes a match and lights a lamp hanging from the ceiling.

He searches for a bottle. He finds one under a pile of lumber covered by a tarpaulin. He quickly drinks half of it.

He spreads the tarp over the lumber again, and fashions a lounge.

A large chicken snake darts across the tarp as he prepares to lie down. He grabs the snake with a lightning fast move, and chokes it to death as it thrashes about and coils around his arm.

He tosses the dead snake out of the shed, turns down the lamp and reclines.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna and Etoile sit on the edge of the porch.

ETOILE

Do I have to go back? Please, Mama, don't make me. Please. Please. I just can't.

Euna is distracted in thought.

EUNA

Hush now.

ETOILE

Please?

Etoile snuggles to her mother, then slowly withdraws.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

(incredulously)  
It ain't true?

EUNA

You wait right here.

Euna goes in.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna takes the lantern and looks through the bedroom door. Seeing Ellert has left, she rests her head against the door frame for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She braces herself and returns to the screened door and opens it.

EUNA

Come on inside. He's not here.

During her Mother's absence, Etoile has realized the worst. She enters the parlor with a stricken look on her face.

ETOILE

Mama, you weren't surprised. You knew' is name!

EUNA

I'm so sorry, honey.

ETOILE

It ain't true?

EUNA

I don't know.

ETOILE

Don't know?

EUNA

I know Ellert drank some with this man, years ago. That's all I know.

Etoile is stunned and bewildered.

ETOILE

--How could you keep on bein' married to'im an' not know about a thing like that?

EUNA

He's embarrassed you, honey. That's no reason to turn your back on him. Verna did that! You will not!

They sit in silence for a moment.

EUNA (CONT'D)

Ignorant people . . . cruel people tried him, found him guilty in their minds. One night a group of men came up to the house yellin' filthy things and threatenin'. One even tried to set the porch on fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETOILE

Good Lord, Mama. When did this happen?

EUNA

You were a very little girl then. You stayed with my cousin, Merle, in Jonesville during the worst of it.

ETOILE

I did?

EUNA

So, now the waggin' tongues start all over again. Good Lord in heaven grant us mercy, the tired old stories still bein' passed around like a dirty book.

Euna rises, takes a deep breath. Euna places sheet music on the piano.

EUNA (CONT'D)

Start in.

ETOILE

Please don't make me practice t'night. Not now.

As Euna prepares to soak dried peas, she orders:

EUNA

You'll fall behind with at piece if you don't stay on it.

ETOILE

I hate Grieg! I don't understand you, Mama? My whole life just --

EUNA

(almost breaking)  
You haven't lived your whole life!

No one breathes for a moment. Etoile finally relents. She struggles with Grieg's Anitra's Dance Op. 46.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cye approaches the porch with a small headstone under his arm. He pauses near the door.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile hears something and stops playing.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Cye KNOCKS.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

ETOILE  
Somebody's knockin'.

Without waiting for a response, she goes to the door.

Cye is visible through the screen.

CYE  
Could'a broke my neck on them  
steps.

ETOILE  
Good evenin', Papa.

CYE  
Ya'Daddy ever gunna replace this  
front door?

ETOILE  
I reckon.

CYE  
Before winter? Where's ya' Mama?

ETOILE  
She's in here.

He kicks a loose board in the threshold as he enters.

CYE  
(to Etoile)  
Those steps need replacin' out  
there.

ETOILE  
I know.

CYE  
You tell ya' Daddy 'bout this here,  
too.

He indicates the threshold with his foot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CYE (CONT'D)

A sober man could break'is neck.

ETOILE

Hello, Papa.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Mama, you still want me to practice?

EUNA

Fetch that basin'a okra from the porch and pick out what's still good. You can practice after that.

ETOILE

Lordy, I don't even like the horrible stuff.

CYE

You want a lickin'?

ETOILE

Who from? You?

EUNA

Willie Etoile.

ETOILE

Yessum. Mama, you won't talk about . . .

Euna is tired and no mood to argue. She gives Etoile a withering look and stamps her foot..

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I'm goin'.

Etoile gives Euna a hug, then exits slowly, casting a challenging look at Cyé.

She lets the screen door shut with a BANG.

CYE

That girl's rotten. Ain't got no respect.

Euna goes about business in the kitchen.

CYE (CONT'D)

Ain't you gonna' thank me for the stone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EUNA

Thank you.

CYE

Ya' Mama's worried 'bout'ya.

EUNA

J.T. was here; he says I'm fine.

CYE

Bet you got no fat back for that?

EUNA

Good guess.

CYE

Wa'hell, ain't Ellert bringin' in  
enough money for fat back?

EUNA

I have money for it, Papa, I just  
don't buy it!

She slams the lid onto the soaking pot.

CYE

What you got, a case of the nerves?

EUNA

Papa, you give me a case of the  
nerves.

CYE

You ain't got no respect neither.

EUNA

You want my respect?

CYE

No respect for ya'self neither or  
you'd kick'im off the place!

(pause)

They's talk.

EUNA

Oh.

CYE

I'm tellin' you they's talk  
a'plenty --

EUNA

-- there's always talk, Papa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CYE

They say Beau Ray Cloud's been livin' with his people near New Orleans. They'd been hidin'im. Seems he got into some trouble with the law down there, too. I thought you'd want t'know. He's back.

He waits for a response.

CYE (CONT'D)

I meant my comin' as a favor.

EUNA

Did you?

CYE

Hell, I don't know why I come. You never showed no regard for me, and that's a fact.

EUNA

No, Sir! That is not a fact.

CYE

I know I was strict, but when was I ever harsh with you that'ya didn't deserve it?!

Cye starts toward the door.

EUNA

Hold on! I am going to answer that question. Remember that Christmas right after you sold your timber.

(pause)

I had just turned ten?

He waves her off and starts for the door.

CYE

No.

EUNA

It'd been an unusually happy day somehow, I hadn't done anything wrong all mornin' -- Mama hadn't said anything stupid. You hadn't hit anybody or yelled at anyone. You smiled when you opened my gift to you. A carved ivory pipe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CYE

No, I don't remember that.

EUNA

An' you gave me that beautiful green velvet dress. Oh, I knew Mama'd ordered it for you, even signed your name to the card.

Cye opens the door to go. Euna approaches him.

EUNA (CONT'D)

After breakfast we went to church. We were the last ones in. Everyone turned to look at us — you in your good clothes and Mama, so pretty. I walked into the church right behind you. I remember, I tried to walk like you, an' I set my mouth hard an' at an angle like yours so everyone could see how much like my Papa I was.

As Euna follows and continues to speak as he goes out on the porch, emotion building in her voice.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As they pass Etoile, who sorts through the okra.

EUNA

You were strong an' proud and people respected you. I wanted to be like you, an' I wanted you to like me.

Euna follows him across the yard, talking faster and louder. She grasps his arm to stop him.

EUNA (CONT'D)

I wanted that more than anything. An'then as I sat on the pew beside my strong, proud Papa, you hit me on the back of my head, an' said "swallow it or spit it out!" I didn't know what you were talkin' about!

He pulls away, and continues to the path leading to the road.



EXT. THE PATH LEADING FROM THE YARD TO ROUTE 6 - NIGHT -  
CONTINUOUS

She follows him down the path to the highway. She is becoming hysterical. Cye would run if he could.

EUNA

There was nothin' in my mouth! I looked up at you for an answer, an' you, you hit me again, this time so hard, my face hit the pew in front of us. My nose started bleedin'! I sat there with blood runnin' through my hands an' onto my new dress 'til the service was over tryin' hard to figure out what I had done wrong!

EXT. ROUTE 6 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They cross the cattle gap and Cye walks down Route 6 toward his place, head held high. He does not look back.

Euna follows screaming at the top of her voice.

EUNA

Nobody came to my aid -- not even Mother. No one even looked at me, they just looked away. It was then that I realized people didn't respect you, they were afraid of you! It was that day, that Christmas Day in church that I knew you would never love me, or like me, and that I no longer cared! You walk into my house with a tombstone for a dead baby boy, a thing as cold an' hard as that, to try in your pitiful way to what?!

Euna falls behind -- too overwrought to walk. She sinks to her knees, but continues the shrill tirade.

EUNA (CONT'D)

Show kindness? It's too late! I don't forgive you. You can take your sins with you straight into hell for all I care!

She weeps; she cannot take back what she has said.

Etoile appears behind her and embraces her Mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They watch Cye's rigid figure become smaller in the distance.

Etoile helps Euna up. Euna pushes her away; they walk back to the cattle gap.

EXT. REAR OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Very late the same night. Euna exits the house via the back door with a lantern.

There's a distant lightning strike and a low rumble of thunder.

She walks to the tool shed.

INT. THE TOOL SHED - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna opens the door of the tool shed. She hold her lantern out to light the room.

Ellert is passed out on the tarp.

EUNA

Ellert, wake up.

Ellert does not move. She sits beside him and brushes his hair out of his face. He is startled, and rises defensively.

He stares at Euna for a moment, then looks around and realizes where he is.

EUNA (CONT'D)

I know you heard what Etoile said.  
That must'a hurt you terribly. I'm  
sorry.

Ellert turns to face her.

EUNA (CONT'D)

That man is back. What am I  
supposed to think? Is it the old  
gossip or is it —

Ellert bolts out of the tool shed.

EXT. REAR OF HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert leaves the shed followed by Euna. Beau Ray Cloud hides against the shed in shadows.

Ellert tosses his almost empty liquor bottle away, then walks toward a path leading away from the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

Ellert, come inside. Don't lay out  
t'night. I need t'talk with you.  
It's important. Please.

(pause)

Etoile's asleep.

He stops. Then goes to the back door, opens it. Euna enters;  
he follows.

Once they are inside and the back door is closed, Beau Ray  
Cloud picks up the whisky bottle, drains what's left, and  
then lies on the ground like a cat rubbing his back in a slow  
undulating motion.

He lies near the dead snake. An Owl glides down, picks up  
the snake and flies away.

Beau Ray imitates the owl, spreads his arms and glides to the  
back door of the house and clutches the screen.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ellert sits at the table. Euna serves him a plate of cold  
leftovers.

EUNA

You told me Mr. Shockley's supposed  
to pay you for clearin' that  
pasture end of the month-- I hope  
you did it. Did you do it? Did you  
clear Mr. Shockley's pasture?

ELLERT

I cleared the pasture. He said it  
was good.

EUNA

He still owes you for mendin' that  
sprocket wheel. Ask'im for it,  
please. When he pays you for  
clearin' the pasture--

ELLERT

I will.

EUNA

I think I should send Etoile go  
stay with Merle, for a while.

ELLERT

How come?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

She doesn't want to go back ta' school here. I'm hopin' Merle'll take her in again, an' I'm askin' you please don't drink that money up. Try to remember it has a purpose. We'll have to put Etoile on a bus an' I can't send her to Merle's without a cent in'er purse. Do you understand what I'm saying?

ELLERT

I do.

He starts to go.

EUNA

Wait. I'm not finished.

He waits, his back to her. She finally says:

EUNA (CONT'D)

I don't know how to say this, but if you want to, I give you my blessin' to leave, too, an' I mean for good.

Ellert becomes downcast.

EUNA (CONT'D)

I'd rather you take up with another woman, even -- yes, you'd have my blessin' on that, too -- anything, anything except what happened the last time I moved out'a your bed.

Ellert goes to the bedroom, deliberately knocking his chair over on the way.

Euna turns down the lantern. The house is dark.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Beau Ray Cloud appears out of the shadows at the far end of the porch; he moves stealthily toward the screened door.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna walks through the parlor to the screened door.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As she approaches, Beau Ray quickly and silently moves back into the shadows at the far end of the porch.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna locks the latch hook and lies down on the cot. Tears fill her eyes as she stares into the darkness. NIGHT SOUNDS fill the air.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Beau Ray moves along the edge of the porch into the pale night light. He moves, listens, then moves again until he is at the door.

He tries the door. In a silent rage, he runs his fingers between the door and the door facing, attempting to flip the latch.

Unable to dislodge the hook he stretches his arms out over the screen to their fullest extension; then in the manner of a cat, holds his finger nails very close to the screen and "scratches" with a single, silent downward motion.

As he does this he BREATHES urgent, short breaths. Distant THUNDER rolls.

In an instant, he hides to the side of the door as Euna appears at the screen. After a long moment, the scene dissolves to black.

INT. EUNA'S HOME - PARLOR - DAY

A week has passed. It is a Sunday afternoon. Etoile plays a familiar hymn at the piano, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Euna clears the table of food, dishes, etc.

Tension is building in the house.

EUNA

That's supposed to be pretty, and it would be if you'd check the key signature.

ETOILE

I always do that.

EUNA

No you don't.

Willie speaks under her breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

Well, I guess I'm wrong 'cause you know everything.

Euna hears this, but chooses to ignore it.

EUNA

Have you seen ya' Daddy today?

ETOILE

Course not. He hides from me. Ashamed I guess.

EUNA

You haven't spoken to'im at all?

ETOILE

No! I haven't.

EUNA

Play it over again.

ETOILE

No.

Euna slams a pot down hard on the wood stove. She's at the edge of her limit and Etoile knows it.

It's a stand-off; neither of them dare to breathe. Finally:

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I'm not goin' up to that snotty church tonight.

EUNA

You promised Brother Bush, didn't you? Every third Sunday?!

ETOILE

But hat was before --

EUNA

Then you'll do it. It's your turn and he's dependin' on you.

ETOILE

Half the school'll be there. I'll be sittin' up in the front an' they'll be sittin' in the back whisperin' an' laughin' bout me.

Euna takes a moment to control herself, tries a new approach:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EUNA

Honey, seems like we have done  
nothin' but fuss for so long.

ETOILE

Seems that way 'cause it's true.

EUNA

Can't you just say "yes, Mother,"  
isn't it in you?

Etoile hugs her Mother. Euna hardly knows how to react.

ETOILE

Mama, will you come with me?

There is no response; Euna frees herself.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Mama, you never go anywhere. Are  
you ashamed?

EUNA

I have work to do here and ya'  
Daddy might take a notion to come  
home.

ETOILE

Mama. Mama, please come with me?

She waits for a reply, then with finality:

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Then I ain't goin'.

EUNA

Go get the hairbrush!

ETOILE

How can you expect me to do what  
you're too ashamed to do? That  
isn't fair.

EUNA

I didn't promise the preacher I'd  
be there, you did! Now you march in  
there and get that--

ETOILE

-- You want the hairbrush? You get  
it!

Euna roughly drags Etoile toward her bedroom.

EXT. THE SHOCKLEY FARM - REAR OF THE MAIN HOUSE - DUSK

Still Sunday. Ellert walks from the fields up to the house.

He pauses at the back door, combs his hair with his hand and then knocks.

He's uncomfortable.

BRENDA SHOCKLEY opens the door. She is surprised and annoyed to see Ellert.

BRENDA  
What do you want?

ELLERT  
Mr. Shockley.

BRENDA  
What'you want with'im?

ELLERT  
Ms. Shockley, I need to get paid  
for the work I done. For your  
husband.

She shouts back into the house.

BRENDA  
Henry! You owe Ellert Mobley any  
thang?!

HENRY (O.S.)  
Reckon I do!

BRENDA  
Well, come pay'im an'get him off  
our place!

She glares at Ellert and leaves the doorway.

Henry Shockley comes out of the house and shuts the door. He carries two pints of Wild Turkey.

HENRY  
Here's a dollar for the sprocket.  
You take some whisky for the field?

ELLERT  
Mr. Shockley, I need money for both  
jobs.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Henry starts to make an issue of Ellert's request, but digs in a pocket for cash.

HENRY

Elert, you're a good worker, but I don't want'a see you back here. Understand?

ELERT

Yessir. You said three dollars for clearin' the field.

Henry gives him a five.

HENRY

Don't be tellin' anybody you worked for me. Now git.

INT. PARLOR - DUSK

Etoile plays "The Old Rugged Cross." She is still very angry. Her face stained with tears. The hairbrush in on the piano.

Euna sits in a rocker nearby, mending Ellert's socks.

As Etoile stops playing.

ETOILE

You know, Mama, nearly every Sunday for as long as I can remember some ole lady has asked me how come my poor mother ain't at the church today or how's your poor mother doin'? When I was little I used to wonder how they knew we was poor, but I know now why they always called you poor. I think you're too ashamed on account's Daddy to go to church or anywhere's else.

(pause)

Mama, you cryin'?

EUNA

Yes.

ETOILE

I'm sorry I said it. Forgive me?

EUNA

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETOILE

You don't sound like it.

EUNA

Well, I do -- now will you shut up  
about it!

Etoile nods agreement. Euna takes a breath. After a pause:

ETOILE

Ms. Fedders said you used to play  
every Sunday, both services.

EUNA

What of it?

ETOILE

Why'd you quit?!

Euna picks up the hair brush and jerks Etoile from the piano stool.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD NEAR THE MOBLEY PLACE - DUSK

Concurrent with the previous scene. Ellert walks home from the Shockley farm.

A car passes him. The car stops and backs up stops just ahead of him.

There are three young men in the car; they are drinking.

The DRIVER gets out; YOUTH #1 and YOUTH #2 hang out of the windows.

DRIVER

You Ellert Mobley ain't ya'?

Ellert just keeps walking.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

I believe you are! Where you  
goin'?

YOUTH #1

I bet he's prowlin' for some corn  
hole!

YOUTH # 2

Better hide ya' red-eyes, boys!

The Driver unzips his pants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

I got a big'un -- you wanna see  
it?

Ellert walks away.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Don't walk away from me when I'm  
talkin' to you, you Goddamned  
pansy! You gunna suck my cock real  
good for me.

Ellert continues to walk away; the Driver hits him hard in  
the back.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

On your knees!

Ellert swings on the Driver, knocking him down. His friends  
jump out of their car and all three pummel Ellert. Leaving  
him lying in the dirt road.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Awe fuck this fruit.

He spits on Ellert.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Let's go.

The boys get back in their car. It pulls away, then it turns  
around and speeds directly at Ellert, who jumps onto the soft  
shoulder of the road.

The car slows and Youth #2 hurls a beer bottle at Ellert,  
hitting him on the side of his head.

The boys accelerate away shouting and laughing. Youth #1  
moons through the back window.

INT. EUNA'S HOME - PARLOR - DUSK

Etoile plays "Nearer My God to Thee." Euna sits, the hair  
brush still in her hand. Euna interrupts the playing:

EUNA

I got a letter from my cousin,  
Merle, yesterday.

ETOILE

I know -- brought it up from the  
Mail box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

Come on over here. Sit with me for a minute. You have a little time left before you have to leave for the church. I need to tell you something.

Etoile doesn't move.

ETOILE

What?

EUNA

I wrote to Merle several days ago an' asked'er if she'd take you.

ETOILE

Take me?

EUNA

Let me finish --

ETOILE

When?

EUNA

Right away.

ETOILE

No!

EUNA

Listen to me --

ETOILE

For how long?

EUNA

I don't know.

ETOILE

I won't do it!

EUNA

You will! You won't go to school here so you have to go somewhere. You can't drop out of school forever.

ETOILE

School's out for the summer in a week! I don't see why --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EUNA

Hush. Merle wrote me right back.  
She's happy to have you. An'yes,  
honey you will go to Jonesville to  
stay with Merle.

Etoile contemplates the situation. There is a long silence.

EUNA (CONT'D)

She's a kind woman . . . no  
children of her own. She took care  
of you for a while when you were  
little. She'll dote on'ya. You'll  
like that. An' she has a fine piano  
and says she'll get a good teacher  
for ya'.

Etoile tries not to cry.

ETOILE

I changed my mind. I don't want to  
go away.

EUNA

You must -- honey, look at the  
state you're in. Honey, try to  
stop crying, your eyes will be red  
when you get to church.

ETOILE

They all know my Daddy's crazy;  
they all know, Mama, so why the  
hell should I give a damn if my  
eyes'a red?

EUNA

What did you say?

WILLIE

Hell an'damn -- plain as day. Are  
you deaf!?

Euna slaps her mouth hard. Etoile suddenly stops crying; she  
musters great determination to control her anger.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Ellert stands on the porch listening.

Distant thunder rolls; the wind chime begins to TOLL softly.

INT. PARLOR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

We'll spend the next few days  
packin' and gettin' used to the  
idea, then you'll take the bus to  
Jonesville.

She hands Etoile her purse.

EUNA (CONT'D)

I'll talk to you more about it  
tomorrow. You better be on your  
way.

Etoile walks slowly to the screened door. Euna hands her the  
hymnal.

EUNA (CONT'D)

It's gettin' cooler, maybe the walk  
won't make you too hot.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Ellert slips off the porch and around back as Etoile walks  
out of the house. Euna follows to the porch.

THUNDER ROLLS almost continuously now. Etoile walks as  
slowly as she can.

EUNA

You won't get there 'til tomorrow  
if you don't walk faster than that.  
Looks like it might finally rain.

Etoile maintains her slow determined stride as she enters the  
path to the highway.

Euna nurses her hand, which still stings from the hard slap  
she gave her Daughter.

EUNA (CONT'D)

(to herself)  
Damn.

Euna enters the house.

INT. PARLOR - DUSK - CONTINUOUS

Ellert stands in the parlor.

EUNA

I didn't know you were home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ellert stares at her. There's a new tenseness about him.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
 Sit down. I set a place for you  
 just in case. Buttermilk?

She pours buttermilk into a glass.

Ellert takes cash from his pocket and carefully places it on the table, sits.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
 Thank you.

Euna pockets the money.

Ellert crumbles corn bread into his milk.

Euna senses the tension.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
 You'll need a spoon for that.

She joins him at the table, but has trouble breathing.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
 The air is so heavy -- can't get my  
 breath. There's peas. They're cold  
 now, but I'll heat 'um if you want.

Ellert starts to eat a spoonful of milk bread, but forces the spoon back into the glass with a clang.

THUNDER rolls. The storm has grown more active and grows closer now.

The wind chime softly tolls. Euna slowly and carefully clears his plate and glass from the table.

She sits again and searches his face for a connection; he avoids her stare.

The two sit in silence. The storm that has been brewing for weeks is MOVING IN FAST. The scene darkens. Euna moves to the screened door and looks out.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Distant lightning lights Euna's face as she stands at the screened door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

I guess it's finally here . . .

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

She looks to Ellert for a response. Again, He avoids her eyes.

Suddenly Ellert begins to beat the table with both fists repeatedly. She is jolted, but acts as though she doesn't notice.

EUNA

I'd better bring in my violets  
before the wind blows them away.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

By now the scene is almost totally black.

As Euna reaches for the violets, there is a loud clap of THUNDER; a flash of lightning reveals Beau Ray standing at the edge of the porch.

Euna is frozen. Beau Ray, with an awful smile, moves along the edge of the porch toward her.

She slowly withdraws to the door. Beau Ray rushes her; she quickly enters the house and latches the screen.

He grasps the door handle and fiercely shakes the door as if to show that he could rip it down if he wanted. Then he jabs a fist through the center of the screen. He screeches a loud high-pitched laugh, then quickly disappears.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

EUNA

Ellert!

Ellert bolts to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert thrashes about in search of a bottle. Euna enters and watches him. Then softy:

EUNA

Ellert, that man is here. Why?

Ellert doesn't look at her. He sits on the bed, his face in his hands.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Rain is pouring outside now.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna lights a lantern and returns to the front door and peers out.

By now, most of the scene is lit by distant lightening flashes.

A howl is heard from the back of the house.

INT. BACK DOOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna, carries the lantern with her to the back door of the house.

As she closes the wooden door, there is a flash of lightning and Beau Ray leaps up beating on the screen and making a horrible sound. She slams the wooden door and locks it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert stands at the bedroom window looking out.

Lightning flashes light his face. He drinks.

INT. ETOILE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna stands at the door with the lantern. She sees an open window, and SLAMS it closed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Euna enters her bedroom, breathless.

EUNA

What does he want?!

Ellert seems not to hear her. He drinks and stares out the window.

She places the lantern on a table and turns him to her.

She attempts to take the bottle. He pulls the bottle away and pushes her roughly on the bed.

ELLERT

He wants me.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile runs into to the yard. She is wet and winded. She slips in the mud, gets up and moves to the porch.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna enters the parlor with the lantern. She sits at the table, too stunned by the sequence of events to do anything more.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The storm rages. Sheets of rain fall. Heavy winds bang out a MOURNFUL TOLLING from the wind chime.

Etoile withdraws to the outer edge of the porch. As she sits down, she hears a "YAP" behind her. As she turns, Beau Ray grabs her, sending them both tumbling off the porch. She squeals.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna hears Etoile's cry, but is not certain what it is. She stands at the ready and listens.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Beau Ray leaps behind Etoile, who is stunned. He waits. She looks about, but does not see him; then cautiously backs toward the steps. She backs into him. He laughs and grabs her again.

Beau Ray holds her by one arm allowing her an opportunity to free herself; she attempts to do so cautiously.

She begins to cry. This pleases him.

Their struggle becomes more active. Beau Ray releases her for an instant then throws her onto the porch. He immediately falls, belly down on the porch, and writhes and growls, daring her to attempt a getaway.

Etoile jumps up and turns toward the door, but he is on top of her in a flash. Enjoying her struggle he swings her off the porch and warns her keep quite by placing a finger to his lips.

She falls to the ground and rolls several feet in the mud, but before she can get up he is on top of her again. He pulls the skirt of her dress up over her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now Etoile fights wildly. He wraps his arms around her trapping her arms to her sides and pulls her close to him shoving her skirt into her mouth. Etoile wiggles free just long enough to scream loudly:

ETOILE  
MAMA! MAMA!

Beau Ray again forces her skirt into her mouth.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna hears the SCREAMS MUFFLED BY CONTINUOUS THUNDER. She goes to the screened door to look out.

A lightning flash reveals Etoile and Beau Ray. Euna unlocks the screen and rushes out.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

EUNA  
Etoile!

Euna picks up the spade which has remained near her babies' graves. She threatens Beau Ray.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Let'er go! Let'er go an'get off  
our place!

Beau Ray draws Etoile closer to him. He smiles and grunts.

As Euna swings the spade, Etoile breaks free and runs to the porch, tripping and falling.

ETOILE  
Mama!

Euna swings again; he turns away and takes a solid blow to the back.

EUNA  
Now git!

She swings at him again.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Git!.

Beau Ray backs slowly away and disappears into the darkness.

Euna picks Etoile up from the mud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Are you alright, honey?

ETOILE  
Mama, is he the one?

EUNA  
I reckon he is. Did he hurt you?

Etoile weeps.

ETOILE  
I don't know.

EUNA  
Come.

Euna turns sharply toward the house, then enters the parlor.  
Etoile follows.

Int. Parlor - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

ETOILE  
I'm sorry I didn't go to church!  
Mama!

Euna gives her a towel.

EUNA  
Go to your room and shut the door.

ETOILE  
I'm scared, Mama! What if he comes--

EUNA  
--and don't come out, no matter  
what.

ETOILE  
I'm scared!

EUNA  
Obey me!

ETOILE  
Why?

EUNA  
Just do it!

Etoile takes the towel and goes to her room and shuts the door.

INT. ETOILE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile remains close to the door. She dries her hair with the towel and listens for what will happen next.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The storm is very loud now, and although words are exchanged, we hear few of them.

Euna checks the shotgun -- it is loaded.

EUNA

Ellert! Could you not hear that!  
He went after your daughter!

Euna puts the shotgun on the bed and takes Ellert's bottle from him and throws it down.

EUNA (CONT'D)

He went after Etoile and you hide  
in here drinklin'?!

Ellert shoves Euna across the room knocking her down; he leaves the bedroom.

INT. ETOILE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile opens her door just enough to look out.

ETOILE'S POV

Ellert ransacks the parlor searching for another bottle. He is destructive. Euna follows and attempts to control him.

Ellert throws her to the floor and continues to wreck the place.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna tries again to physically stop him. But Ellert's frustration has peaked.

EUNA

It's all gone!

He grabs her roughly and strikes her. She falls back across the table. Euna gets up and slaps him hard across the face. He hits her hard, and she falls on the table again.

Etoile stands near her bedroom door, terrified, observing the violence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Euna attempts to roll off the table, but Ellert strikes her hard, repeatedly beating her down.

Etoile, unable to bear this sight and the sound of her mother's screams rushes into the parlor.

Ellert ransacks the parlor searching for another bottle.

He is destructive. Euna follows and attempts to control him.

Ellert throws her to the floor and continues to wreck the place.

ETOILE

Daddy, please don't! Daddy!

When he finally sees his daughter, he rushes out of the house onto the porch.

Etoile goes to her mother, who pushes her away. Euna starts for the bedroom, but collapses.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Mama!

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A double flash of lightening reveals Beau Ray, whisky bottle in hand resting by the graves licking rain from his lips.

He moves toward Ellert, who has stopped on the porch.

Beau Ray growls hoarsely, extending the vowels, as he shames Ellert with a wagging finger.

BEAU RAY

Elleeeeeerrrt . . . Elleeeeeerrrt

Ellert gestures for Beau Ray to go away, but Beau Ray smiles and tempts Ellert with the bottle.

Ellert picks up a porch chair to use as a weapon; Beau pounces onto the porch, daring him.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile takes a pillow from the cot and puts it under her mother's head.

ETOILE

Mama, wake up! I don't know what to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Etoile runs to the screen and sees her Father with Beau Ray.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Daddy!!

Ellert doesn't respond; she rushes to the kitchen and gets a basin of water. She splashes it in Euna's face to no effect.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

Wake up! Mama, wake up!

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert attempts to hit Beau Ray with the chair but misses him and smashes it against the porch floor.

Beau Ray climbs on Ellert's back.

Etoile comes out on the porch; She picks up the shovel.

ETOILE

Mama's hurt real bad! I don't know  
what to do!

Ellert throws Beau Ray off his back, then picks him up and throws him through the air into the yard.

Ellert turns to Etoile and motions for her to go inside.

Beau Ray flops about releasing a long trailing laugh. Then, after lying still for a moment Beau Ray begins slow, undulating, seductive movements. His sounds are low and moaning.

Ellert tries to hit him with the leg of the broken chair, but Beau quickly rises and backs away.

Ellert swings again at his tempter, but Beau adroitly dodges each attempted blow with mocking laughter.

Ellert throws his weapon aside and lunges for Beau Ray, who makes no attempt to avoid Ellert's grasp. Beau Ray wraps his legs around him and forces his fingers in Ellert's mouth.

Etoile has seen enough; she throws the spade down and runs past them through the rain to the path leading to Route 6.

EXT. CATTLE GAP AND ROUTE 6 - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile runs across the cattle gap and falls. It is raining hard, the storm continues to rage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lightning flashes provide the only light on the dark two-lane blacktop as she runs toward Robeline.

EXT. EUNA'S HOUSE - PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert, nearing exhaustion, throws Beau Ray to the ground and chokes him.

Beau Ray breaks free easily. Beau Ray's laughter is deeper and more sinister than before. There is something painful in the dark sound of it -- a suffering which has not been hinted at before.

Beau Ray holds his bottle out to Ellert, then opens it and drinks himself. Beau Ray pours whisky over his face and chest then sinks to the ground and wallows slowly in the mud.

EXT. ROUTE SIX - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Etoile continues to run. Her shoe is coming apart; she stops and throws her shoes away and continues to run.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert falls to his knees. Beau Ray offers the bottle to Ellert who takes it and drinks.

Beau Ray snatches it back and begins to scoot away along the ground. As he does so, he begins to shed his over-sized overalls.

Ellert follows. Beau Ray then moans a low pitch and begins a series of exotic slow lilting and twisting moves which carry him along the ground.

Ellert picks up the chair leg, but follows like an obedient child.

EXT. ROUTE 6 - NIGHT

Later that night, the storm is still active. Etoile continues to run along the highway.

A car approaches. Etoile stands in the road so winded she can't stand up straight. The car stops. It's headlights reveal Etoile's bleeding feet. GLADYS HUMPHREY rolls her window down.

GLADYS

Is that you, Etoile Mobley?

ETOILE

Yessum. Please help me!

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

GALDYS

What on earth?!

ETOILE

I got to get Doc Stagner at Robeline.

GALDYS

Well, get in, Honey. Robeline's only 'bout a minute up the road.

Etoile gets into Gladys' car. The car turns around.

EXT. A WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Little time has passed. The storm is active. Ellert beats Beau Ray with the chair leg. Beau Ray is naked, but covered with blood and mud lying still in the leaves.

Through the trees a homestead is visible in the distance, the Hatcher place.

Ellert stops. He is drunk and exhausted, but continues to drink.

ELLERT

I got ta'be shed'a you.

Ellert can no longer stand. He plops to the ground, tosses the chair leg aside and lies down.

After a moment, Beau Ray rises slowly. He reaches for the chair leg and then strikes Ellert on the head. Ellert immediately grabs the chair leg from him. Beau Ray screams and runs as best he can toward the Hatcher place.

Ellert follows, staggering.

ELLERT (CONT'D)

I got ta'be shed'a you!

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

Later that night. The storm is still active.

Euna lies on the cot. Doc Stagner enters from Etoile's room with his medical bag.

J.T.

Ran more than six miles in the rain before someone picked'er up. Soaked to the bone an'scared half out of her mind.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

J.T. (CONT'D)

She's still pretty high strung, but I gave'er somethin' that'll put'er to sleep sure enough. Thought for certain her Mama was dyin'.

EUNA

Is she hurt?

J.T.

Scrapes an'bruises. Her feet are a mess, but I don't think he hurt her badly.

Euna sits up.

J.T. (CONT'D)

Hold on, you got a broken rib or two.

EUNA

He's out there in the dark. . .  
He's in trouble, J.T., I can feel it.

He looks closely at her eyes.

J.T.

Look at me. Euna. I'm sot sure about you, or I'd knock you out same as Etoile.

She rises, moves to the door and looks out.

J.T. (CONT'D)

Where're you off to? Ya'need to lie down.

EUNA

Don't baby me, J.T.

J.T.

Go on, then. Go right ahead an'ignore me.

EUNA

Alright.

Euna goes to Etoile's room.

INT. ETOILE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna stands beside Etoile's bed and watches her sleep. Etoile's breathing is deep and irregular. Euna touches her.

EXT. THE HATCHER PLACE - NIGHT -CONTINUOUS

Beau Ray stumbles up to the Hatcher's house. He turns to see Ellert approaching.

The house is dark. Beau Ray raises a window and attempts to crawl in.

A female SCREAMS. Lamp light comes on in the house.

Beau Ray falls back to the ground, then runs. Ellert pursues.

Ole man Hatcher comes out of the house with a shotgun in her underwear. He fires.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT

It's almost 3:00 a.m. by the clock. Euna and J.T. drink coffee. He pours a little whisky in both their cups.

She moves to the screen door, looks out and waits.

J.T.

Won't you let me take you an'Etoile  
to the hospital in Natchtoches?

Still looking out.

EUNA

No.

J.T.

Then come to my house in Robeline  
so I can look after ya' there.

Maintaining her vigil.

EUNA

Go home J.T.

They are quiet for a moment. He cannot reach her.

J.T.

When you were a girl everyone just  
assumed you'd amount ta' somethin'.  
You were smart and beautiful and  
such a fine musician. An' here you  
are livin' in this shack waitin'  
for that man --

EUNA

you've done what you can for us.  
Go on home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She continues to peer out into the darkness.

J.T. gathers his things. After a moment, unable to hold his tongue any longer:

J.T.

You are the most stubborn person I ever knew.

Euna isn't sure what he said -- she continues to stare out.

EUNA

What?

J.T.

Course it don't matter what happens to that child in there, does it?

Euna hears this, and finally turns away from the door.

J.T. (CONT'D)

Put'er through all this an'then send'er off -- yeah, she told me about that. What the hell are you seein' through? You have parental responsibilities to that girl an' you don't act like she counts for nothin'.

EUNA

Don't you dare!

J.T.

Damn your pride! Don't you owe somethin' to ya' daughter?

EUNA

She is strong. She'll find her way in Jonesville. I'm gettin' her out!

J.T.

You're throwin'er out! You are her mother -- you ought'a be goin' with'er! Euna, I can provide for the both a'you --

EUNA

-- Stop right there! --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

J.T.

-- No! You can't keep her out here  
an' you can't send her off without  
you -- she's too young. I can make  
a life for the both of you!

He pauses and speaks quietly:

J.T. (CONT'D)

Euna, I have loved you my whole  
life. Nearly killed me when I got  
back from boardnin' school, an'  
found you'd taken up with Ellert  
Mobley. I'm so sorry I wasn't here  
when you needed me.

There is long silence, except for the storm. He's crossed a  
line and knows it. He stares at the floor.

EUNA

I am doin' my best for Etoile.  
Verna's gone, my boys are with the  
Lord, if he had the good sense to  
take'um. That leaves my husband.

J.T.

You're talkin'bout leavins' -- left-  
overs.

They hear MEN'S VOICES.

EUNA

Like hell I am! SHH. What's that?

They hear the distant sound of men's voices and hounds. Euna  
goes to the screen.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The glow of torches illuminates the entrance of a group of  
men led by HAP BRYSON.

The men begin to congregate on the porch and in the yard.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna moves away from the door and puts her coffee on the  
table.

J.T.

I'll see what they want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

J.T. moves to the door.

Hap appears at the screen and KNOCKS loudly. THUNDER echoes the knock.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Hap addresses the men who are noisily gathering.

HAP  
Ya'll quiet down out'ere!

He shouts into the house.

HAP (CONT'D)  
Ellert Mobley!

DANNY  
Go on in, Hap, he's probably hidin'  
in'ere.

The men ad lib their approval.

HAP  
Miz Euna?

Doc opens the screen door.

J.T.  
Hap, what do you men want?

HAP  
Doc Stagner, what'you doin'here?

J.T.  
Workin'. What the hell are you  
doin' here?

HAP  
Lookin' for Ellert Mobley. He  
in'ere?

J.T.  
It's the middle of the night, Hap,  
can't this wait 'til mornin'?

HAP  
'fraid not.

Euna comes to the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA

Mr. Bryson, what is it you an'  
these men want with my husband?

She and J.T. exit the house onto the porch.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

HAP

Miz Euna, I'd rather not speak of  
it to'ya.

EUNA

You come with torches to my door at  
this hour askin' for my husband an'  
it won't do to tell me why? You'd  
better be on your way then.

VIRGIL

She ain't runnin' us off this time!

HORACE

He's in'ere!

OTHERS

Yeah!

HAP

Miz Euna-

Hap addresses the men who have become loud.

HAP (CONT'D)

Shut up!

EUNA

--Hap Bryson, I have a shotgun in  
my bedroom. I've kept it loaded  
since the last time men came on our  
place in the middle of the night!

J.T.

Now stay calm, Euna --

HAP

-- Miz Euna, please don't do  
nothin' like that -- Henry!  
Tell'em ta'shut up out'ere, I can't  
hear myself talk! Don't do nothin'  
like that Miz Euna, most all these  
men includin' myself is deputized,  
so you can be damn sure we got a  
good reason for bein' here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

J.T. attempts to steer Euna into the house.

J.T.  
You'd better rest --

She slaps his hand away, and moves out to the edge of the porch; the men back off a little.

EUNA  
Ellert is not here.

J.T.  
Hap, for Chrissake, what's happened?

HAP  
That crazy Beau Ray Cloud's been killed. Beat ta'death.

EUNA  
What has that got to do with Ellert?

HAP  
Well, Miz Euna, three different folks seen Ellert with'im tonight.

EUNA  
What of it?

VIRGIL  
They was fightin' an' actin' crazy.

MALCOLM  
I seen'um, Miz Euna.

HAP  
Ed Waters seen Ellert beatin' on'im on the road to Robeline, an' . . .

EUNA  
Yes . . . ?

There is a silence. Euna stares at them, then moves back into the house.

J.T.  
He ain't here, boys. Leave this woman alone.

HAP  
Sorry, Doc Stagner, but we got instructions to search this house.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

HAP (CONT'D)

Mac, you an'Dewey take a look  
'round back.

Two men circle around the corner of the house.

Hap enters the house followed by a few others and J.T.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna tries to stop a man headed for Etoile's room.

EUNA

Don't go in there, my daughter's  
sleeping.

HAP

He'll be quiet, Miz Euna.

J.T. attempts to comfort Euna.

J.T.

I'm sorry it's come to this.

EUNA

Are you?

EXT. WOODS ALONG A LAKE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert is exhausted and winded, but runs along a path at the  
edge of a lake.

A shot is fired at him from a distance. He drops as rolls.

The sound of tracking dogs grows closer. He takes his shirt  
off and rubs it around the base of a tree and then tosses the  
shirt up into the tree branches.

Ellert dives into the lake and swims.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CHARLEY runs into the yard and up to the porch.

CHARLIE

Hap! Hap, you in'ere?

Hap opens the screen.

HAP

Yo!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Got here as soon as I could -- hear  
it's gunna'be a reg'ler turkey  
shoot!

BENSON (O.S.)

Yoo -- Hoo!!

CHARLIE

Benson!

BENSON runs on with two rifles; Charlie jumps down off the porch to meet him and get a weapon.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

J.T.

Hap, what's gunna' happen when you  
find'im?

HAP

He'll be held at Robeline'till'is  
judgment, I reckon, but I  
gotta'tell 'ya, we got orders to  
shoot'im if we have to.

J.T.

Is that so? Well, you better sit  
on those knuckle heads out there!

The men have completed their search.

HORACE

He ain't in'ere, Hap.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As he steps out onto the porch:

HORACE

Hey! Boy's he ain't in'ere. Any  
luck out'dere?

EXT. TOOL SHED - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Dewey steps out of the tool shed.

DEWEY

Hap, he ain't out'here neither!

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Horace yells through the screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HORACE

Hap, ain't no sign of'im out back--

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

At the screened door:

HAP

(also yelling)

-- I heard'im, no need ta'yell  
ya'damn head off, Horace!

Hap approaches Euna.

HAP (CONT'D)

Sorry we had to do this, Miz Euna.  
You got any idea where he might be?

Euna walks away. An excited voice is heard in the distance.

BART (O.S.)

Hap! Hap!

Hap hurries out of the parlor and on to the porch.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Hap meets BART in the yard. Euna and J.T. observe from the front door.

BART

Hap! He's down by the lake! Ole  
man Self caught'im crawlin'in the  
kitchen winder an'took a shot  
at'im!

Waving the men off.

HAP

Hit'im?

Leaving with Hap.

BART

Don't know. Wiley Pritchard  
reckons he migh'a been after old  
man Self's boy. Wiley an 'bout  
four others is trackin' im. I  
reckon he's still down by the lake  
somewheres.

The VOICES trail off. The men are gone. There is a loud CLAP  
of thunder.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

EUNA

They're goin' t'kill him. They'll  
shoot him down like a mad dog, with  
no more thought than that.

Euna moves about with quick nervous steps. Her nervousness  
builds; her breathing becomes short.

J.T.

Euna. Euna?

She is suddenly still.

EUNA

(an accusation)

What?

After a pause:

J.T.

I'll drive down to Sweeny's —  
might be needed. They'll have him  
makin' for every man an'boy in  
Sabine Parish before the night's  
over. They're ignorant men, Euna.  
He'd be better off dead than left  
to answer to all they'll put to'im.

J.T. leaves.

Euna remains very still. Listening.

Rumbles of THUNDER roll in from the distance. The storm has  
moved on, but is active nearby. She listens intently to every  
sound.

The wind chime TOLLS.

J.T.'s car door SLAMS, AND HIS CAR DRIVES AWAY.

Euna sits. She waits quite still for a while, then she hears  
the BACK DOOR OPEN AND SHUT. She also hears Ellert's cough.

Ellert is wet, exhausted, tormented, but no longer drunk. He  
pauses to look at her, then goes into the bedroom.

Euna follows him with the lantern.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He looks at her again for a moment, then moves aimlessly into the parlor again.

INT. PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

He continues to move about tentatively. Euna stands in the bedroom doorway with the lantern watching him.

He moves to Euna and touches her body carefully, regretting every blow. He sinks to his knees and cries softly into her belly.

EUNA  
I'm alright.

She kneels and hold the lantern near his face.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Do you know what's happenin'?

He looks at her, nods yes, then no.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Men will be comin' for you.

He resumes the aimless movement.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
What are you looking for? Are you  
looking for something?

ELLERT  
I'm . . . lost . . .

She puts the lantern down and holds him.

EUNA  
How'd you get so lost, honey?

He mutters something.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
What?

He is almost inaudible.

ELLERT  
I'm sorry.

EUNA  
What? Sorry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ellert nods, yes. The nod becomes pathetic, continuous up and down movement of the head; it seems he cannot stop. Euna stills him by taking his face in her hands.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
So am I, Ellert. So am I.

They hear sound of DISTANT VOICES and TRACKING HOUNDS.

The men are returning. Ellert goes to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ellert stands quite still for a moment, then again moves aimlessly about.

Euna brings the lantern into the bedroom.

EUNA  
They're comin' back.

Ellert turns to Euna. He holds a shotgun out to her. After a moment she takes it. Ellert sits on the edge of the bed with his back to her.

Euna fully realizes his request.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Oh, dear Lord. No! No. I won't.  
Just go. They'll be here soon,  
please. Run, please. Ellert,  
please!

He shakes his head "no". She puts the gun on the bed, then shakes him violently and speaks frantically:

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Ellert! Run. Now. Do this one  
thing for me! Get up an' go!  
Ellert! You don't ever have t'a  
come back -- you could go to your  
Indian people in the Carolina's --  
no one would look for you there.  
Please, get up! Go! Ellert!  
Please!

Ellert drops his head. He is going nowhere. She embraces him, weeping. He gently pushes her away and holds her at an arm's length.

The SOUND of the men and dogs draws close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EUNA (CONT'D)  
I can't. Please don't ask this of  
me.

The VOICES GROW CLOSER.

She realizes what she must do. She turns down the wick of the lamp until they are barely visible.

The VOICES ARE LOUDER.

Euna looks toward heaven.

EUNA (CONT'D)  
Damn you. Damn you for expectin'  
this of me!

Ellert turns to her. He is lit briefly by the soft glow of distant lightning. His face is peaceful.

The voices are very close by now. Ellert turns away again; he waits. Euna takes aim.

The scene is lit by a series of distant lightening flashes. As this happens, we see Euna place the barrel against Ellert's back.

EXT. REAR OF HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The men swarm in from the rear of the house. They are boisterous and celebratory. The hounds bark incessantly now, as they close in on their prey.

A shotgun blast is echoed by soundless lightning flashes. The men freeze.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Euna tries to scream, but no sound will come. Again she screams, but still no sound.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The men having heard the shot have frozen; they point their weapons in all directions. Hap signals for them to stay back and puts a finger to his lips, demanding quiet.

He slips up on the porch, his back to the wall, and inches toward the screened door.

Euna, shotgun in hand, comes out of the house. She holds the screen open for Hap. He tentatively enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

While Hap is in the house, Euna eyes each man. They divert their eyes.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY

Two days later. Ellert's grave lies next to those of his sons'. Near the grave stand Emma, Cy, Euna and Etoile.

EMMA

Don't let it go so hard on'ya  
daughter, he ain't worth it. Papa?  
What was it you gunna'ast'er?

CYE

Hush.

EMMA

Ast'er, Papa.

EUNA

Honey, go in the house and get your  
suitcase. That bus'll pass right by  
if you're not out by the road.

ETOILE

Yessum.

She goes.

EMMA

Don't seem hardly right her go'in  
off today. Ast'er, Papa.

CYE

Euna, ya'Mama an'me . . . we want  
ya'to come home.

EMMA

This ole place ain't never been  
nothin' but a heart ache for ya',  
an'now you ain't got no reason to  
stay noways. If you was to fetch  
Etoile back from Merle's we'd make  
a place fa'her, too.

They wait for a reply. There is none.

CYE

I ain't askin'again.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

EMMA

Don't go ta'gittin' hurt, Papa.  
Euna needs some time to think on  
it.

EUNA

No.

She looks at them for the first time.

EUNA (CONT'D)

Thank you for askin' but this is my  
home.

Etoile comes out of the house with her purse and suitcase.  
She waits on the porch.

CYE

We'll be goin' now. Etoile, I hope  
you'll behave over in Jonesville.

ETOILE

I'll try.

Emma and Cyé cross the yard and exit down the path to Route  
6.

When they are gone, Etoile moves to her Mother.

ETOILE (CONT'D)

I'd better get down there.

Euna nods agreement. Etoile does not move. After a moment:

EUNA

Got your money?

ETOILE

Yessum.

(pause)

Packed my music. I don't think I  
forgot anything.

Etoile approaches Euna, puts her bags down, and stands very  
close to her. Euna doesn't look at her; instead she stamps  
her foot.

Etoile gets her things, crosses the yard, and heads down the  
path to Route 6.

After a moment, Euna goes into the house; She picks up her  
pillow from the cot and walks into the bedroom.

EXT. CATTLE GAP AND ROUT 6 - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile stands by the road with her suitcase. She turns back, hoping her Mother will come out to see her off.

She sees her grandparents, now way up the road, two small old figures -- the heat rising off the road making them look like spectres as they fade in the distance.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna places her pillow on the bed next to Ellert's. When she hears the BUS APPROACHING, she breaks into tears and runs out of the room.

EXT. CATTLE GAP AND ROUTE 6 - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The bus approaches. Etoile waves it down.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna runs from the house across the yard to the path leading to the highway.

INT. BUS - Day - CONTINUOUS

Etoile pays the driver, and finds a seat. The bus pulls away.

EXT. CATTLE GAP AND ROUTE 6 - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna runs into the road..

INT. BUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile begins to cry. She glances back and sees her Mother near the cattle gap. Etoile rushes to the back of the bus and waves.

EXT. CATTLE GAP AND ROUTE 6 - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna see's Willie and waves.

EUNA'S POV

Etoile waves from the back of the bus; Euna watches the bus disappear.

BACK TO SCENE

Euna blows a kiss.

INT. BUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Etoile returns to her seat. She wipes away her tears, and begins to find interest in the world passing outside.

She scoots closer to the window. She's going to Jonesville.

EXT. PATH LEADING BACK TO THE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna moves listlessly back to the house.

EXT. PORCH AND YARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna stops at the edge of the yard.

EUNA'S POV

She looks at the dilapidated house, the graves, the hard dirt yard.

BACK TO SCENE

Euna slowly crosses the yard and goes up onto the porch. She opens the screened door, pauses, and enters the house.

INT. PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Euna stands near the door and searches for anything familiar. The house is very quiet. Finally, she moves to the piano and sits. She stretches her fingers and massages her hands.

She opens the keyboard, and stumbles through the first few measures of the "Reunion" prelude, Chopin, Op: 28, number 1. She stops, then dives in and plays it through, making many errors.

She laughs, surprised at her ability and the feeling of release. She plays it again, joyfully and better.

End