

**FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY**

**A MUSICAL**

**ORIGINAL TEXT AND LYRICS BY FRANK GAGLIANO**

**MUSIC BY CLAIBE RICHARDSON**

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## CHARACTERS

(Played by a company of **eight to ten** actor/singers)

Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview

Gussy (Woman)

Barney Coglin

Irene Pallazzo

Father Paulus

Lureen Little

Roger Bromley

Florence Coldwell

Charlene Smedley

William Kinsolving

Ziggy Kellmer

Tom Anderson

Marian Axelbean

Remo Cramer

Mr. Tarlton

Sonny

David

Mrs. Carrington

Eubie Copocolo

Old Matilda Trimble

Joy

The Poster Girl

Vivian Grady

Alzheimer Mary

Benjamin Bernhard (played by Jonathan Overview)

### Time

The Present

### Place

“Despair Lookout” on Limbo Hill  
overlooking Bodoni County, USA

Original Book and Lyrics by Frank Gagliano / Music by Claibe Richardson  
FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY

“An aura of melancholy hangs in the air,  
 There’s a funeral going by in Bodoni County.  
 A daughter of Alzheimer Mary is buried today:  
 Alzheimer Mary cannot comprehend the news. . .”

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY is a 21st Century combination  
 Our Town/Spoon River/Jacques Brel on acid.

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY was first developed at the Eugene  
 O’Neill Theatre Center’s Musical Theatre Conference, then at the Vineyard Theatre’s  
 Musical Workshop in New York, and then, by a Workshop in Pittsburgh.

FROM THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY is a musical revue (of sorts), in  
 which the inhabitants of a mythical American County (most of whom want to get out)  
 step out and sing their angst away. Songs range from the opening number, “BUY ME A  
 TICKET OUT,” — to the Bush-era anthem, “REAGAN’S LEGACY: I DON’T GIVE A SHIT  
 ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME,” — to the sung monologue, “A SONG OF LIFE FOR  
 ALZHEIMER MARY” — to the realistic sung scene, “CUL-DE-SAC,” in which a bunch of  
 teenagers and a grieving mother explore Perry Carrington’s suicide — to the satiric and  
 surreal sketch, “DANCING WITH JOY,” in which two innocents, Eubie Copocolo and Joy,  
 walk into a travel poster to escape Bodoni County, and which features Joy’s raunchy  
 song, “SAND DUNE BLUES.”

Overseeing it all is the Master of Ceremonies Jonathan Overview, who chronicles the  
 fables and foibles of Bodoni’s inhabitants, and whose need to become more than a  
 Point Of View, culminates in his haunting song, “NOVEMBER IS MY TIME,” an autumnal  
 moment that changes Jonathan forever — and which poignantly, and lyrically, brings  
 down BODONI’s curtain on a note of compassion.

## **MUSICAL NUMBERS**

(Sung words indicated in script by ALL CAPITAL LETTERS)

### PART ONE: SLOW PAN

#### FIRST ENTRY: GUSSY TRIES TO GET OUT!

“THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR”. . .Jonathan Overview

“A TICKET OUT”. . .Florence Coldwell

#### SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS

“MARIANNA”. . .Harry Grunding

“AND ANOTHER DAY GOES BY”. . .Mary Beth Scott

#### THIRD ENTRY: BODONI COUNTY FABLE #1: THE LAST HURRAH OF HAROLD HUBRIS:

#### FOURTH ENTRY: ROMP

“CARDBOARD CITY ROMP”. . .Tom Anderson and Ensemble.

#### FIFTH ENTRY: JONATHAN OVERVIEW MAKES A DISCOVERY

#### SIXTH ENTRY: GUSSY'S FATE/JONATHAN'S HOPE (PART ONE FINALE)

“A TICKET OUT” Reprise. . .Ensemble.

### PART TWO: CENTERS OF PAIN

#### SEVENTH ENTRY: FANFARE

“AN AURA OF MELANCHOLY”. . .Overview and Ensemble

“IT WAS IN FACT A DEER”. . .Marian Axelbean

#### EIGHTH ENTRY: TESTIMONY

“I DON'T GIVE A SHIT”. . .Ziggy Kellmer

#### NINTH ENTRY: CANTO

“ALZHEIMER MARY SPENDS THE DAY. . .” (Aria). . .Nurse Vivian Grady

#### TENTH ENTRY: BODONI COUNTY FABLE #2 (DANCING WITH JOY)

“SAND DUNE BLUES”. . .Joy

#### ELEVENTH ENTRY: PERSONHOOD?

“NOVEMBER IS MY TIME”. . .Jonathan Overview as Benjamin Bernhard

#### FINALE

“A LOT OF UNHAPPY NEIGHBORS”. . .Ensemble

***At curtain: Upstage center, on a platform, a Door-Sized Book that will be opened, and with pages that will be turned, throughout. On the cover is printed: "The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology."***

***Jonathan Overview enters, holding a large quill pen.***

***Throughout, Jonathan will narrate from this platform, from other spots on the stage, and from the aisles.***

***Until indicated, Jonathan stays apart from the ensemble.***

#### JONATHAN OVERVIEW

"From The Bodoni County Songbook Anthology."

Coming to you from "Despair Lookout" on Limbo Hill, overlooking the entire County of Bodoni; from whence, Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview, will proof read, —as he is required to proof read— the ten entries in this pretentious, but admittedly, theatrical, oversized gaudy, giddy, gilt book! —and to make corrections with the use of this outdated, but admittedly, theatrical quill—

in order to chronicle a day in the life of an American County—BODONI COUNTY!

—whose residents will step forward and sing their angst away!

So that said, proof-read Songbook Anthology, can be interred in the Celestial Musical Library of Human Folly.

(JONATHAN OVERVIEW opens the Anthology. On left side is printed: "Part One: Slow Pan." On the right is printed: "First Entry: Gussy Tries To Get Out.")

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

PART ONE: "SLOW PAN."

FIRST ENTRY; —GUSSY TRIES TO GET OUT!

(SOUND: The loud shuffling footsteps  
of the ENSEMBLE, off stage)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THAT SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS--NERVOUS  
FOOTSTEPS—ON SPIKED HIGH HEELS, TOO SPIKED FOR SUCH A TINY WOMAN.

(GUSSY enters, miming the carrying of two large  
valises. When she gets stage center,  
she stops and walks in place.

The shuffling footsteps continue off stage)

SHE'S WALKING DOWN A DOWNTOWN STREET, CARRYING TWO LARGE  
VALISES; HEADING FOR THE GREYHOUND—THAT'S GUSSY, ALL GUSSIED UP,  
GUSSY; PROBABLY THE BEST CLEANING LADY THIS  
COUNTY HAS EVER SEEN. . . THOSE OTHER SOUNDS, THEY'RE OTHER  
FOOTSTEPS, TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH GUSSY.

(The ENSEMBLE enter, still shuffling;  
position themselves around the stage,  
and focus on GUSSY. They keep shuffling in place)

THEY ALL KNOW WHAT SHE'S UP TO, WHERE SHE'S GOING, WHO SHE IS GOING  
TO—BECAUSE GUSSY WROTE A LETTER TO THE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. . .

(The ENSEMBLE stop shuffling)

## GUSSY

To all to who it may concern: Gussy's leavin' this burg forever. I'm leavin' my husband,  
Marvin, an' I ain't even gonna take care of his mother no more neither —buttin' into our  
lives like she does all'a the time— *and* livin' under the same stinkin' roof, mind you! An'  
I'm leavin' all you cheap-O's, too; with your superior ways and grand houses an'  
apartments that break my back; *an'* I'm leavin' for the man I love—an' who loves me —  
**an'** who ain't doin' me no damned favor! — **Mr. Harold Hardy**—that's who loves me—  
**Mr. Harold Hardy**; the Bob Edens top sausage salesman for this region—who loves me  
and—yes!—made love to me—on my own special self. — **Well here's Gussy's bulletin,**  
**folks!** —On Monday mornin' next, **Harold Hardy**, Mr. Bratwurst-Of-The-Year,  
will step off one bus—at the downtown Greyhound—and take Gussy onto another bus  
—one that will take the happy couple to private parts unknown! **Unsincerely yours,**  
Gussy.

(GUSSY joins the ENSEMBLE, who again shuffle  
and make machine noises as they regroup)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR, ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE PRESS GAZETTE;  
THAT'S THE BUILDING ALL THAT CROWD FOLLOWING ARE  
NOW PASSING. LISTEN OUTSIDE THE BUILDING, SOUNDS OF MEN LOADING  
PAPERS ONTO TRUCKS. INSIDE, IN ONE LITTLE  
CLOSET-SIZED OFFICE, THE SOUND OF ONE EMPLOYER THINKING. . .

(BARNEY COGLIN, wearing a visor shade  
and sleeve garters, steps forward  
from the ENSEMBLE, as the ENSEMBLE  
stop shuffling, and focus on BARNEY)

BARNEY COGLIN

Everyday, in every way, I, Barney Coglin, wait for people to croak! I write obituaries.  
"Obits?" For the Bodoni County Press Herald Gazette? The perfect job. For me.  
Because I love dealing with dead people. Because live people turn you down—or  
suffocate you—or make demands; sit at nearby tables in cafeterias, slurping soup at  
you, with frightened eyes that HATE you, want REVENGE on you and— as mother so  
delicately puts it! - —"they eye your crotch for a well-aimed kick in the Brussel Sprouts."  
But her—well—I have lots of obits started on the El Dispicableus, Scumbagius,  
Populius Bodonius!—who are still alive; and it's my job to keep their files updated  
until they--"buy the farm?"—"eyeball the slugs?"—"suck the Chemlawn?" So what I do  
is, I create fantasies! —devise app-ro-priate, soul-satisfying finitos!  
**for all of them!** —Here's one I'm working on for Vincent Cromley. **Soooo**—Mr. Furniture  
Store, Commode-Face CEO: you would not take back that defective couch, huh? —  
therefore—tsk tsk—you'll have to get yours in one of your own ADJUST-O-MATIC beds!  
—**by being BENT to death!**—during one of your nightly attempts at **auto fellatio!**  
AHha!—**AND** —as my grand finale—I'm taking one of those perfumed insert **mailers**—  
the kind you can tear out? —and I'm going **to poison** EVERY BODONI COUNTY,  
TURNED UP, SNIFFING NOSE—**PERMANENTLY!** . . .God, I love this job!

(BARNEY rejoins the ENSEMBLE,  
who shuffle again as they regroup)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUNDS YOU HEAR ARE THE SOUNDS FROM THE CHURCH BELLS--FROM  
SAINT ALEXANDER'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH. OUTSIDE, GUSSY AND HER  
PILGRIMS, PASS BY; INSIDE, THE SOUND OF FATHER PAULUS IN THE PULPIT--  
LAUGHING!

(FATHER PAULUS, wearing a Greek Orthodox cross  
around his neck, steps forward from the ENSEMBLE, as the  
ENSEMBLE stop shuffling, become parishioners, and focus  
on FATHER PAULUS)

## FATHER PAULUS

My dear—Faithful—parishioners! How delighted I am, this morning—that you're here. . .after what happened last night! We were hosting a dinner for that group of God's Gay children who had fled the persecution in Red County —when we were attacked! YES! Some strangers—and some parishioners, I'm sorry to say—invaded—our dinner, and threatened God's Gay children and us—physically. But, as if divinely inspired—Mrs. Pataurus—at the Moussaka tray?— took a spatula of her excellent dish and **slung it** into the face of one of the invaders! And before you knew it—the hot lemon soup, the steaming meat balls, the chicken with oregano, and even the apricot pastries were **FLYING ALL OVER THE PLACE!** **And when** Mrs. Cotsorilis started advancing on those invaders with her shish kabobs—**still on the skewers!**—well, those cowards retreated! And my soul was given a reprieve. . . .For, I must confess that I have been on the verge of leaving this parish. . . .I have lived and seen many sad things in my many years—but the fear and hate so many of our Bodoni County Christians *have* for the weekly influx of God's Gay children seeking a haven from persecution — and the attack against us last night because we were ministering to, and comforting, them. . .tested my faith, as it has never been tested before. —But last night's fight—for the moment, anyway!—has made me **want** to stay. —And so—just in case!—I'm asking for many more cook/soldiers for tonight's special service and Social. I especially need some young marksman with a slingshot, to man the calamata olives! . . .—**Theodore Pakadapalopolis?** —Ah. Bless you.

(FATHER PAULUS rejoins  
the ENSEMBLE, who become noisy  
City Council Officers and spectators )

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE BUZZ OF THE CITIZENS IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, IN THE CITY HALL BUILDING WHERE GUSSY AND A NOW LARGER ARMY TROOP BY.

(LUREEN LITTLE, wearing trucker's cap, backwards, steps  
out from the ENSEMBLE, who now become City Council  
Members)

## LUREEN LITTLE

—so Barney, Barney Sharkey —and I, Lureen Little—do want to thank you for hearing us. You see, Barney and I got to know each other first from the CB's in the trucks. He owns his truck, of course, and I own mine. And that's how we got to discover—over our CB's?—that we were in the same boat—well, actually, same "trucks," you know what I mean. And we soon discovered that we—each of us—were hauling chemical wastes and—wham!—at just about the time we got to know each other —and I really fell for that nice easy voice of Barney's, and his manners, and the way we liked the same music and stuff—about that same time, everybody stopped letting us

## LUREEN LITTLE

(Continued)

dump our cargo—sometimes they wouldn't even let us drive through the towns at all! **Until** Bodoni County! We heard you all here were considering putting a waste dump in the County--for the Federal revenues and all? That's why we're here—to testify in favor of your doing that. Because you see—you made it possible for Barney and me to meet—for the first time, in the physical flesh—just about ten minutes ago?—outside in the waiting room?— . . .and I mean to tell you, that in his three-dimensional personal self, Barney's even more of a terrific fella than I had even imagined from his voice alone—with those deep dimples and sexy shaved head and truly thick neck. So, if you do see fit to pass the ordinance, well, that means—selfishly—that Barney and I then could, maybe, settle down—open up a garage. Maybe. Here. Maybe. Become a tea—raise a family! Like most of you, never leave Bodoni County—God, I hope so! Cause now, well, Barney and I have finally. . .touched each other. . .kind'a taken joy from each other's. . .—aura. If you follow me.

(LUREEN rejoins THE ENSEMBLE,  
who now march in military fashion)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR--ALONG WITH GUSSY AND HER MARCHING  
ENTOURAGE-- ARE THE SOUNDS OF THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, MARCHING  
INSIDE THE ARMORY, ACROSS FROM THE BUS TERMINAL.

(The ENSEMBLE stop marching)

## ROGER BROMLEY

(Steps forward, wears National Guard hat)

C'mon, Colonel, isn't there someway you can get them to call up the unit? I don't mean you, personally--but somebody?! I mean — why the hell have we been spared? They do need just about everyone: Right?. . . —Are you kidding? "Afraid I'd lose my life?" It would save my life! What a gift! I'd get away from Charlene—from my job! From — What?—- "Snipers?" I don't care about no stinking snipers!— Nobody snipes like Charlene! "The Desert?" What do you think Bodoni County is? "Skin boils?" Hell, Bodoni County gives me crotch itch! Please Colonel! Pull some strings! THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE EVER! —I'd get out! How else could yours truly, Computer-Nerd-on-weekends, Roger Bromley, ever get to do that!?

(ROGER BROMLEY rejoins THE ENSEMBLE,  
as FLORENCE COLDWELL steps forward,  
bringing on her own counter stool,  
as THE ENSEMBLE dematerialize)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THE SOUND YOU HEAR ARE THE THOUGHTS OF THAT WOMAN OVER THERE-- FLORENCE COLDWELL, SITTING IN THE GREYHOUND COFFEE SHOP; HAVING HER USUAL CIGARETTE, OAT BRAN MUFFIN FOR BREAKFAST. ON HER WAY TO WORK, LISTENING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENTS: THE BUS ARRIVALS, THE BUS DEPARTURES—;

(The same woman who played GUSSY now plays FLORENCE. Now she wears glasses, has a shoulder briefcase hanging from one shoulder, and holds a coffee cup in one hand and a muffin in the other. She sits on a stool and looks downstage at GUSSY'S freestanding Valises)

## FLORENCE COLDWELL

—tracking Gussy's journey here. . .I, Florence Coldwell, wait for Gussy to pass by the window out in the waiting room and go through the gate. . .so that she can wait for her man to get off one bus to take her with him—on another bus. —god—I hate her—for catching a man who wants her—a salesman, yet. —But I love Gussy, too! For her guts and arrogance and—god!—I almost did something foolish. Nearly went to the bank—the branch near here opens at 8 AM—to withdraw all the life savings—in seventeen, one thousand dollar bills—to purchase a ticket on whatever bus Gussy and Mr. Hardy get on and sit across from them both and—maybe get some pointers on how to begin all over again. —Isn't that insane? —seventeen, one thousand dollar bills! That's the cushion—Mama's cushion—and if I took it—and I can—the passbook is in both our names—if I took it—just disappeared—well, then—where would Mama be? Back in that low slime-life we left a long time ago, that's where — dumped into some snake pit or other with no loving, close kin—no personal care. *That's where.* And what about my kids? my students? —there in the High School just down the block from here? Ha! Big laugh. This teacher is totally burned out. Burned out in class —burned out with Mama. . .burned out with men. Please. . please. . .please. . .

(SINGS)

SOMEBODY WRITE A CHECK OUT TO CASH,  
AND BUY ME A TICKET OUT.  
BODONI COUNTY GIVES ME A RASH,  
IF I HAD THE BACKIN', THEN I COULD GET PACKIN'!

NOBODY EVER GETS FAR FROM HERE,  
LEASTWAYS, NOT IN THE HEART;  
BUT A TRIP--THAT'LL DO FOR A START;  
JUST A TICKET AND I WILL DEPART.

FLORENCE COLDWELL  
(Continued. SINGS)

OUT OF THIS TOWN.  
OUT OF THAT JOB.  
FAR FROM THE CONSTANT,  
SELF-PITYING MOAN;

HELP ME TO RUN,  
HELP ME TO FLY  
OH, HELP ME TO GET OUT  
—I CAN'T DO IT ALONE!

LOVE WAS A SALESMAN WHO GOT AWAY,  
SO GET ME A TICKET OUT.  
GET ME A TICKET, SO'S I CAN SCOUT,  
A NEW PANORAMA, SOME GLITTER, SOME GLAMOUR.

BUSSES ARE LOADIN' OUT IN THE DOCK,  
WISH I COULD HITCH A RIDE.  
SOMETHIN' SAYS DOWN INSIDE  
GET YOUR TICKET TO GO AND HIDE.

FIND A NEW TOWN.  
GET A NEW JOB,  
GO GET A FUTURE,  
BURY THE PAST.

MEET A NEW LOVE,  
ONE THAT CAN GIVE  
THE ULTIMATE "HOW TO" — LIVE  
A NEW LIFE AT LAST!

THEN, LIKE GUSSY, I, TOO,  
WILL STRUT OUT OF THIS RUT I'M IN. . .  
THEN MY LIFE WILL HAVE THE CLOUT  
AND I'LL NEVER LACK THE GUTS  
TO EVER NEED A TICKET OUT AGAIN. . .

I'LL FIND A NEW JOB;  
GET ME A FUTURE. . .  
BURY THE PAST,  
LIGHTEN THE LOAD;  
LEAVE THE DECAY. . .  
SO GET ME A TICKET — HEY. . .

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

**End--First Entry!**

FLORENCE

(Continued. SINGS)

BUT MAYBE NOT TODAY.

(FLORENCE COLDWELL exits with the counter stool.

THE ENSEMBLE dematerialize)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

Ah, Florence Coldwell—you want a ticket out; while I, Jonathan Overview, want one *in*. I even petitioned to—

**(THE BOOK slams shut)**

Ohoh! He's angry!

**(JONATHAN rushes to *THE BOOK* and opens it)**

Sorry Clarence—Boss. See? I'm back on the job. A P.O.V.—a Point Of View. An omniscient Point Of View—ready for **THE SECOND ENTRY**.

(JONATHAN turns the page)

Ahhhhh—describing what I'd feel—if I could feel. . .

(On the left page is printed:

*"SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS"*)

**SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS.**

(On the right page: "HEAD WALTZ." WILLIAM KINSOLVING steps forward—*just as* a wheelchair rolls out from off stage.

KINSOLVING sits in wheelchair—makes the wheelchair dance. One of the girls leaves the LONGING ENSEMBLE to join him)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

**HEAD WALTZ. As told by CharacterLongingOne; Mr. William Kinsolving.**

WILLIAM KINSOLVING

(SINGS)

SOMEONE IS PLAYING A WALTZ IN MY HEAD DOWN ON THE STREET.

I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHERE IT'S COMING FROM,

BUT IT EXCITES MY FEET.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT A WALTZ ONCE AGAIN FILLS THE AIR.

BUT SUDDENLY ONE TWO THREE  
WALTZES IN FROM EVERYWHERE.

## WILLIAM KINSOLVING

(Continued. SINGING)

WHIRLING AND SWIRLING ON SIDEWALKS OF MIRRORS THAT SHINE.  
 HUNDREDS OF BODIES ARE SPINNING THERE;  
 CAN I CUT IN WITH MINE?  
 WILL THEY ALLOW ME TO LEAP OUT AND JOIN THE FUN?  
 AND SWAY WITH THE PRETTIEST, WITTIEST,  
 BEATING OUT ONE TWO THREE  
 ONE.

I WANT MY DANCE TO BE GOING ON DAY AFTER DAY.  
 EVEN THE BARS ON MY WINDOW LEDGE  
 CAN'T KEEP MY WALTZ AT BAY.  
 I'LL GET THE WHEELS ON MY CHAIR TO GLIDE THROUGH TO THE SUN;  
 AND FOREVER WE'LL ONE-TWO-THREE,  
 ONE-TWO-THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE  
 ONE.

(Stands with great difficulty;  
 attempts to waltz with  
 LONGING ENSEMBLE GIRL)

EVERYBODY IS NOW VIENNESE!  
 EVERYBODY NOW TWIRLS ONCE AGAIN!  
 TEENAGE GIRLS WEARING GOWNS OVER JEANS  
 TURN AND DIP IN THE BREEZE  
 IN THE ARMS OF THEIR LYRICAL MEN!

SO I'M ONCE AGAIN IN GREAT DEMAND!  
 AND THE ELEGANCE I KNEW BACK WHEN—  
 IS THE SOUGHT-AFTER THING THEY NOW WANT,  
 AS THEY TAKE MY FRAIL HAND,  
 AND I LEAD THEM AS I LED THEM THEN!

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH--

(Falls back into wheelchair. LONGING ENSEMBLE  
 GIRL rejoins The ENSEMBLE)

I WANT MY DANCE TO BE GOING ON AFTER DAY!  
 EVEN THE BARS ON MY WINDOW LEDGE  
 CAN'T KEEP MY WALTZ AT BAY.  
 I'LL GET THE WHEELS ON MY CHAIR TO GLIDE THROUGH TO THE SUN;  
 AND FOREVER WE'LL ONE-TO-THREE,  
 ONE-TWO THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE ONE

## WILLIAM KINSOLVING

(Continued. SINGS)

ONE-TWO-THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE,  
ONE-TWO THREE, ONE-TWO-THREE  
ONE

(KINSOLVING stands, rolls wheelchair  
offstage and rejoins the "LONGING" ENSEMBLE;

as CHARLENE SMEDLEY steps out from

The "LONGING" ENSEMBLE. She has on  
a telephone operator headset and mouthpiece

JONATHAN Walks to The Book and turns the page.  
On the left page is printed: "SECOND ENTRY: LONGINGS.  
On the right page: "WANTING")

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

**"WANTING:" As told by Character Longing Two; Charlene Smedley.**

## CHARLENE

Telemarketing Headquarters: Charlene Smedley here. In her home away from home. Evening shift. On the phones. Raising money for—whatever. In my very own cubicle. Looking at a glossy, white pegboard wall; putting my own faces on peoples telephone voices. Staccato, confident, ladyCEO voices! Vulnerable, breathy, sexyLadyvoices—that always get their men!! Affluent voices!!!! Advance-in-any-job voices!!!! World Traveler voices!!!! Happy voices!!!! Sitcom family voices!!!! Love themselves voices!!!! Have orgasms every time they sneeze, voices!!!! **VOICES, IN SHORT, THAT HAVE GOT THE UNIVERSE BY THE NEBULA!!!!!!!!**

I DON'T WANT TO BE ME!  
HOW I HATE BEING ME!  
I CONFESS I'M A MESS,  
AND I'M CONSTANTLY BLUE;  
I WOULD RATHER BE—  
(To woman in audience)  
YOU!

I DON'T WANT TO BE ME!  
I COULD BARF BEING ME!  
I'M MOROSE AND I'M GROSS  
AND MY ASSETS ARE FEW;  
I JUST GOTTA BE—

ARLENE SMEDLEY

(Continued)

(To woman in audience)

YOU!

IN MY SHYNESS I HIDE.  
I'M AS FRAGILE AS GLASS.  
I REFUSE TO COMPETE,  
AND WHAT PRIDE I CAN EAT,  
SURE BURNS MY—HEART!

I DON'T WANT TO BE ME!  
I COULD PLOTZ BEING ME!  
GET THE CONGRESS TO PASS A DECREE—  
TO PLEASE NOT MAKE ME ME!

I AM ONE OF A KIND.  
THE CONCEPT, MY FRIEND, IS THE PITS.  
SO, IF I'M FORTUNE'S GIRL,  
WELL THEN, HOW COME THE WORLD  
STEPS ON MY —HEART!

I DON'T WANT TO BE ME!  
IS THAT CLEAR AS CAN BE?  
I WOULD RATHER BE ANYTHING ELSE;  
A CONDOM, A SNAKE OR A SMELTS. . .

MAKE ME ANY OLD THING  
UNDER ROCK, UNDER SEA;  
BUT PLEASE, DEAR LORD,  
PLEASE PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME ME!  
I CAN'T TAKE ME,  
SO PLEASE DON'T MAKE ME . . . ME!

(The rest of the ENSEMBLE enter)

(JONATHAN turns the page. Left Page reads:  
THIRD ENTRY. Right page reads: CUL DE SAC:

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

THIRD ENTRY: CUL DE SAC.

Overview takes the cap-with-ear-flaps from The Book and hands it to SONNY. SONNY places his folding chair on the floor, puts down the seat and stands in front it.)

## JONATHAN

David. . .

(The ENSEMBLE member who plays DAVID enters, carrying a folding chair. Overview takes the balloons from The Book and hands them to DAVID.

DAVID places his folding chair on the floor, puts down the seat and stands in front it, holding the balloons. And Mrs.CARRINGTON—The ENSEMBLE member who plays Mrs.CARRINGTON enters, carrying a folding chair. OVERVIEW takes the black arm band from The Big Book and hands it to Mrs.CARRINGTON.)

Mrs. Carrington.

(Mrs. CARRINGTON places her folding chair on the floor, puts down the seat and stands in front of it, holding the balloons.)

## OVERVIEW

Reverend Tarlton.

(The ENSEMBLE MEMBER who plays Tarlton enters and takes his place)

(The rest of THE ENSEMBLE ENTER quietly, carrying folding chairs, which they line up in second row, open and fold down the chairs, and all sit down. One of THE ENSEMBLE brings on a funeral floral arrangement and places it in front of The Big Book. Each character who performs will rise from his folding chair and move stage center.)

## REVEREND TARLTON

17-year-old Perry Carrington committed suicide, just a week ago today. Many of you—his friends—were at Perry's funeral; and many of you—I know—are still in shock; certainly, we here, at the Unitarian Church, are. The Carringtons, I can tell you, have been upstanding members of our congregation for many years; so we are personally touched, shocked--and perplexed. And perplexed, too, is Perry's mother, Arlene Carrington; sitting here among us. Because the note Perry left simply said, ". . . One way in; one way out." And that's all it said. So we set up this meeting—"Memorial," if you like—to talk about Perry; perhaps get a clue as to why Perry did it; and, perhaps, by talking about it—openly and freely—and honestly—above all "honestly"—say what we feel, not what we're supposed to think—perhaps then we can come to terms with this tragedy.—Sonny, you were one of Perry's friends—and you're good at breaking the ice; Please—you start.

## SONNY

(Puts on the cap-with-ear flaps  
that covers his hair completely)

Listen, Mr. Tarlton. . .Mrs. Carrington—It has been a shock—and, so soon after—well, it's kind'a hard to. . .but, well, okay: Perry was a real cutup, you know; an in-your-face kind'a guy, so—

(SINGS)

THIS MAY HAND YOU A LAUGH,  
BUT I KNOW WHY PERRY IS DEAD.  
MY FRIEND CARRINGTON BLEW OUT HIS HEAD—  
AND IT'S SO BLOODY UNFAIR—  
    BECAUSE HE WAS LOSING HIS HAIR—LIKE ME!  
    BECAUSE HE WAS LOSING HIS HAIR—YOU SEE!  
AND TO COVER IT UP HE WAS ACES AT PLAYING THE CLOWN,  
HE WAS TAKING THEIR MINDS OFF THE FACT  
HE WAS LOSING HIS HAIR.

SO HE PUT ON WEEPING-WILLOW WIGS;  
SHEEP-DOG WIGS;  
RAPUNZAL WIGS;  
WIGS THAT MADE HIM LOOK LIKE A NEANDERTHAL MAN.  
LIKE MY FATHER,  
LIKE MY BROTHERS.  
LIKE MY COUSIN FRANKIE—THE FREAK!  
LIKE ALL HAIRY APES IN MY CLAN.

(SPEAKS)

And the day that Perry put out his lights, he mooned the cafeteria. Some wiseass-geeks smeared beans on my cheeks and something inside Perry snapped; but I kept clowning around; kept stamping and stomping on the ground; kept rolling my bloodshot eyes to the sky, and let a zucchini hang out of my fly. My act, I gotta tell you, was spastic and grand--got lots of laughs and a big big hand; and at one point I even played dog/dead--

## SONNY

(Continued)

and no one ever, ever looked at my head. And when Perry got home, with his stomach in a knot, he had the guts to aim that shotgun at his goddamned balding spot!

(SINGS)

STAYING YOUNG IS THE GAME—YEAH!—  
 AND GOING BALD MEANS YOU'RE OLD.  
 PERRY CARRINGTON'S LAID OUT AND COLD  
 'CAUSE IT'S TOO AWFUL TO BARE!  
 TO FIND THAT YOU'RE LOSING YOUR HAIR—LIKE ME!  
 TO FIND THAT YOU'RE LOSING YOUR HAIR—YOU SEE!  
 AND TO COVER IT UP HE WAS BRILLIANT AT PLAYING THE CLOWN. . .  
 HE WAS TAKING THEIR MINDS OFF THE FACT  
 HE WAS LOSING HIS HAIR.

(SPEAKS)

It's as simple as that. He was losing his hair.

(SONNY sits)

## REVEREND TARLTON

David. Now you, please.

(DAVID rises with his balloons  
 and moves Center Stage)

## DAVID

Balloons! Perry had red, glow-in-the-dark, balloons all over his room. And some of the balloons are on sticks; some are tied to things--and some are just let go, sucking to the ceiling —

(DAVID hands the balloons to OVERVIEW  
 and has a coughing fit)

. . . Sorry about that; that coughing fit: a touch of Asthma. Anyway, Perry, you know, was shy—like me, David—his "acquaintance"—because he doesn't have many "friends;" and is always kind of morose and everyone says that he was 17 going on 60. . . just like they say about me—even used to run his hand through his thick hair all the time—the way I do—am doing now. And brilliant, of course! Top of the class! Top grades in the school! EVEN IN THE COUNTY! Math, English, Creative Writing, Dramatics, Physics—you name it! —Except gym or sports, of course. —Oh—and music! He especially loves music! Gets lost in music—feels safe in music. . . .had no girlfriends. Always at home—in his room—cracking the books or listening to music. Or creating new programs on his Macintosh computer—rolling the mouse around and making all that programming magic. Called his Macintosh, " My Mackie." Because Mackie is really his only "friend." And his dad makes him stay in that room. His dad! —the shoe clerk at the J. C. Penney's in the Mall, yells through the door—because he hates having to box his way through "those damned balloons!"—"Strive! Achieve! Excel,

## DAVID

(Continued)

Excel! You're not going to wind up like me; the only schmuck—the only loser in a family of winners—of professionals!" And Perry has asthma because he feels a great pressure in his chest—in his lungs—and gets more and more depressed —until . . .I fall in love! —with something wonderful!—a beautiful guitar. At a garage sale. Get it for practically nothing. Discover it's a Martin "Dreadnought." With a great bass tone. And the hot shape of it—God!—it has a pinched waist and an ample bottom; and Perry loves ample bottoms. And he calls the guitar "Ms. Strummerpet;" sneaks Ms Strummerpet into his balloon room; and now he has two roommates; MacKie and Ms Strummerpet; so easy to tell them apart: because one becomes Perry's brain. . .and one becomes his heart.

(SINGS)

I SIT IN MY ROOM WITH MY MACKIE AND STRUMMERPET.  
FIRST ROLLING MY MOUSE, THEN PLUCKING A STRING.  
ALONE IN MY HOUSE, NOT A HUMAN BEING STIRRING;  
CREATING MY PROGRAMS--A SONG TAKING WING.

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER;  
AND A TUNE EMERGES FROM MY FINGER TIPS.  
AND THE SONG TAKES OVER--  
STRUMS FROM MY SOUL AND LEAPS FROM MY LIPS.  
WHEN NIGHTMARES ENTER MY DAYS,  
AND THERE'S NO ONE FOR ME TO SCREAM TO--  
THEN THE SONG TAKES OVER--  
AND GETS ME THROUGH

(SPEAKS)

Then he forgets about his Mackie and lives only with—and gently strokes— his Strummerpet;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

(SPEAKS)

and he puts on his black light and smokes some dope

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

(SPEAKS)

and he moves in slow motion through the bobbing balloons;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

(SPEAKS)

and magically makes a melody which he magically works on day after day;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

DAVID

(Continued. SPEAKS)

and he ignores all his other work and he doesn't go out—never needs to go out in all that loneliness again; just works and reworks that melody;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

(SPEAKS)

and the pressure leaves his chest;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER. . .

(SPEAKS)

and I breath easy now and there's no more pressure about anything  
and I'll never leave or do anything but finish, polish and re-polish that melody;

(SINGS)

AND THE SONG TAKES OVER—

(SPEAKS)

And that's when his dad comes home--brakes in the door--stabs the balloons--explodes them!--

(OVERVIEW punctures the balloons with a pin)

grabs the guitar—smashes it! —and says he'll smash any other guitar I bring into the house—forces me into my seat—switches on my Mackie and screams: "You can't beat out the Jap OR Chink kids with a goddamned guitar!" . . .But even without my Strummerpet—without accompaniment—I finish the melody—there among the dead balloons:

(OVERVIEW hands David the dead balloons)

(SINGS)

THEN I DESPAIRED AND WITHDREW,  
CAUSE THE OPTIONS I ONCE HAD GOT FEWER THAN FEW;  
AND THE SONG NO LONGER  
COULD GET ME THROUGH.

(SPEAKS)

And, I guess, that's when Perry killed himself.

REVEREND TARLTON

And now you, Barry—

ARLENE CARRINGTON

NO! NO MORE! Stop! Please! You poor babies! You're breaking my heart—!  
—But, dear God, you're not talking about my Perry! No! My Perry was— . . . what? . . .  
Oh, Lord. . .I'm scared. I—his mother. . .I'm even forgetting what my Perry looked like.  
Was he short? Was he tall? Was he thin?  
Did he sleep on his back, side, or belly? Put his head on one bent arm,  
as soon as he got into bed? But mostly I'm forgetting—and need to know. . .  
the size and the shape of what once was Perry's head. But I'm also scared of something  
else—*someone* else. I'm scared of Carley, Perry's dad.

## ARLENE CARRINGTON

(Continued)

That decent man has slept next to me for 19 long long years. And I can read every sigh, every snore, every painful twitch in his arthritic hip; every drip of his nasal drip. And there was a comfort in that. I didn't even know it then, but there was a comfort in that. Since Perry died, however, Carley sleeps stiff as a board. Doesn't even breathe. He even smells different, I think.

(SINGS)

AND ONE NIGHT,  
JUST LAST NIGHT, IN FACT—  
I WOKE UP TO CARLEY'S OPEN EYE.  
(THE OTHER EYE WAS HID,  
SMASHED AGAINST HIS PILLOW CASE),  
I WOKE UP WITH THAT ONE STARING EYE, YOU SEE;  
GLARING AT,  
FLARING AT,  
BLAMING AT  
ME.

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT?  
I WAS THE ONE WHO FOUND PERRY, AFTER ALL.  
BY THE TIME CARLEY CAME HOME  
YOU RECALL, HE WAS OUT OF TOWN—  
BY THE TIME CARLEY CAME HOME. . .  
WHAT REMAINED OF PERRY . . .  
FROM THE SHOULDERS DOWN. . .  
PERRY. . . WITH NO MORE HANDSOME FACE. . .  
THE POLICE HAD TAKEN AWAY. . .  
AND I'D. . . CLEANED UP. . . THE PLACE;  
TIDIED IT, THE WAY I ALWAYS DID, YOU SEE;  
THE WAY CARLEY AND PERRY—MY BOYS—  
ALWAYS LIKED IT TO BE.

THANK GOD THOSE NEW MACHINES  
ARE NOW IN PLACE IN THE STORE;  
THE KIND THAT READ THE LINES ON THE CAN,  
AND RING UP A PRICE FOR YOU?

I STARE INTO MY GRIEF WHOLE DAYS AT A TIME,  
AND NO ONE HAS EVER CAUGHT ON;  
I'M JUST MY SAME OLD CHATTY, CHEERY SELF,  
AND NO ONE EVER CATCHES ON.

BUT CARLEY—. . .  
WELL, A TRAVELING SALESMAN HAS TO TALK AND SELL

## ARLENE CARRINGTON

(Continued)

AND LAUGH AND TALK. . .  
 AND CARLEY DOESN'T TALK MUCH ANYMORE. . .  
 OR LAUGH AT ALL. . .AND MOSTLY SIGHS,  
 SINCE PERRY USED CARLEY'S SHOTGUN ON HIMSELF. . .  
 AND THEY TELL ME THAT NOW CARLEY OFTEN CRIES.  
 AND I'M SCARED.  
 I'M SCARED OF THAT OPEN EYE.  
 AND I'M SCARED BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW. . .  
 WHY MY SON PERRY DIED?

(She exits.

Some of THE ENSEMBLE pick up  
 their folding chairs and props and EXIT.)

## OVERVIEW

Cold. Cold. I describe it. And what I've coldly just described I sense is devastating, but I'm not devastated—I can't be devastated. Because I'm just a Point Of View — Clarence, please, deal with my petition this time and—

## ENSEMBLE

(SING)

LIVING IN A MINDLESS AGE,  
 MINDLESSNESS IS ALL THE RAGE;  
 TO BE A SUCCESS THAN YOU  
 HAVE GOT TO BE MINDLESS, TOO.

## TOM ANDERSON

(Stepping from THE ENSEMBLE)

Hello Everyone!

## ENSEMBLE

Hi Tom!

(JONATHAN walks to The Book and turns the page.  
 On the left page is printed: "FOURTH ENTRY: MINDLESS  
 AGE. On the right page: "CARDBOARD CITY ROMP."

During the following, the ENSEMBLE become  
 Cardboard City revelers, might sing some of  
 the verses, and will create musical instrument sounds  
 with their mouths)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

Back to work. **FOURTH ENTRY: CARDBOARD CITY ROMP: As told by Tom Anderson; and by some citizens of Bodoni County—AND by the citizens of Cardboard City.**

TOM

Wonderful! I see some of you remember me! Well—for those of you who don't--I'm Tom Anderson, former President of the Bodoni County City Council!

ENSEMBLE

Hi, Tom Anderson!--former President of the Bodoni County City council!

TOM

And I'm here to tell ya'--It's that time of year again! And what time is that?

ENSEMBLE

"CC" time!

TOM

"CC!." Right! And what does "CC" stand for?

ENSEMBLE

CARDBOARD CITY!

TOM

Cardboard City. Right! —Six years ago, when I was president of the Bodoni County City Council—living the decent life, and able to pay my mortgage like most folks—just around the time that Cardboard City began to grow, become a permanent part of Bodoni County—I had the pleasure of proclaiming the first "CC" Festivities. Now that I've lost it all and I'm a "CC" resident myself—it's first resident, you might say—I was just made "CC" Mayor! . . .—Thank you, thank you for that generous applause and the cheers— Anyway, your new City Council President, Jimmy Calabres—has designated me the first "CC" resident—*ever*—to kick off the year's "CC" festivities. So I'm proud to be standing here on the steps of my former home-away-from-home, City Hall, with all of you rarin' to follow me —and Frankie Finney and his Homeless Band—down to State Street, my new home. The schools are out! All government agencies and banks are closed! Most businesses have locked their doors—and you're all here! So let's get the drummer to set the marching beat! . . .TERRIFIC! Now the slide trombone. . .WOW--EE! Now the bass. . . OH YEAH! . . .Mix in a hot cornet . . .then sweet clarinet. . .MAAAARVELOUS! Now, everybody—let's march and stomp right down to Cardboard City and let us— PARTY!!

## TOM AND ENSEMBLE

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET FOR ITS ANNUAL ROMP;  
 AT THE CORNER OF STATE STREET.  
 AND THIS YEAR FOR A THEME IT'S A DIXIELAND STOMP;  
 EVERYBODY IS WELCOME.

FAT JOGGERS ARE JOGGIN' ON DOWN.  
 BEAN FARMERS ARE HOEIN' TO TOWN;  
 MISS TRIMBLE IS BUYIN' A GOWN  
 FOR A CHANCE— TO DO A TWO-STEP DANCE.

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET TO RAMBLE TONIGHT.  
 SEE 'EM SCRUBBIN' THE SIDEWALKS.  
 AND EACH SHACK WILL BE PAINTED SUNSHINE BRIGHT.  
 LIVE MUSIC IS GONNA BE GRAND.  
 IT'S FRANKIE FINNEY AND HIS HOMELESS BAND!  
 CARDBOARD CITY IS HAVIN' ITS ANNUAL ROMP!

STOMP, STOMP, STOMP, STOMP!  
 STOMP, STOMP, STOMP STOMP!  
 STOMP, STOMP, STOMP, STOMP!  
 WO-O, WO-O; --OH DO DA DAY!

FORMER TEACHER, MILLY CALLAS,  
 DEMANDS YOU STOMP TO HER SIDEWALK PALACE.  
 GRAND OLE LAWYER, LENNY SCHMASSLE,  
 INVITES YOU TO STOMP AT HIS CORNER CASTLE.

CARRY FRISBEE AND CONRAD CLOUT,  
 URGE YOU ALL TO STOMP ON OUT,  
 AND WARM YOURSELVES AT THE STEAMING GRATES,  
 WITH MICKEY KATZ AND SALLY BATES. . . . .

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET FOR ITS ANNUAL ROMP,  
 AND THEY'RE CLOSIN' OFF TRAFFIC.  
 CARDBOARD CITY'S ALIVE WITH A DIXIELAND STOMP.  
 YOU CAN ASK ANY LAMPPOST!

MEAN PEOPLE ARE LOSIN' THEIR FROWN.  
 PALE PEOPLE ARE TANNIN' UP BROWN;  
 STREET LADIES ARE SHAGGIN' AROUN'  
 WITH A MIND— TO DO A BUMP AND GRIND!

## TOM AND ENSEMBLE

(Continued)

CARDBOARD CITY'S ALL SET TO RAMBLE TONIGHT—  
EVEN SHINNIN' UP TRASH CANS.  
DAY-GLO PAINT ON EACH SHACK SO SUNSHINE BRIGHT.

DON'T MISS IT! IT'S GONNA BE GREAT;  
FUN FOR YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR SISTER KATE—

START JUMPIN'! THERE'S NOTHIN' TO FEAR;  
BRING ALL THE VITTLES, WE'LL SUPPLY THE BEER—

DON'T SWEAT IT! IT'S GONNA BE FINE;  
IF THE BEER DON'T DO IT, THEN WE GOT LOTS'A WINE—  
CARDBOARD CITY—

**CARDBOARD CITY  
IS HAVIN' ITS ANNUAL ROOOOOOOOOMP!!!!!!**

(The ENSEMBLE EXIT—all but two,  
who run up to The Big Book and turn the pages,  
which read:  
on the left, FIFTH ENTRY;  
and, on the right:  
JONATHAN OVERVIEW MAKES A DISCOVERY)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(moving closer to The Big Book)

FIFTH ENTRY: JONATHAN OVERVIEW MAKES A DISCOVERY!

(The TWO from The ENSEMBLE stay, standing at The Big Book—  
keep focusing on JONATHAN)

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(Quick read of the book—then,  
overjoyed and almost breathless,  
to the audience)

Ah! —Finally! —My petition has been accepted! **This** —this Bodoni County is **the** place  
then—It says so in this footnote! Written by Clarence himself

—He who sets down the rules?—"Overview, nudge no more" he writes. God!—look at  
me, I'm talking in emotional exclamation points already! —Can it be?— no more P.O.V.  
for me!?—no more staying above it all!?—no more doing a Pontius Pilot—like what God  
does? —no longer just describe them?—their emotions. . .but. . .become the emotions

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(Continued)

as well. . . .become. . .a real character. . .to really touch. . .experience. . .the real energy. . .their centers of pain. . .

## ENSEMBLE

(Off. SING)

AN AURA OF MELANCHOLY HANGS IN THE AIR;  
THERE'S A FUNERAL GOING BY, IN BODONI COUNTY.

## OVERVIEW

(breathless again)

You can do that—petition Clarence and I did—even though Clarence said I'd hate it—the pain—**but** you had to hit the right place in order to make the leap—Spoon River County didn't turn out to be the place—not even Grovers Corner County—or Allegheny County, which I was sure would be the—but, anyway, **Bodoni County**—it says here—see—-is the place and—

(The rest of the ENSEMBLE enter)

## THE ENSEMBLE

(SING)

AN AURA OF MELANCHOLY HANGS IN THE AIR;  
THERE'S A FUNERAL GOING BY, IN BODONI COUNTY—.

## JONATHAN

No No No! Not now! Not now!

## ENSEMBLE

(SING)

A DAUGHTER OF ALZHEIMER MARY  
IS BURIED TODAY—

## JONATHAN

Save All that for Part 2! That's where that belongs! Besides, we haven't resolved Gussy's story yet. —Remember Gussy?

(GUSSY enters with her valise. Sits on it. Cries)

## JONATHAN

THE SOUND YOU HEAR IS THE SOUND OF SOBBING--HEAVY SOBBING. IT'S NOW TUESDAY AND GUSSY IS STILL WAITING IN THE BUS STOP. BUSSES COME AND BUSSES GO, AND NO HAROLD HARDY EVER STEPS ON DOWN TO

JONATHAN

(Continued. SINGS)

TAKE OLD GUSSY BY THE HAND. . .

JONATHAN

(Continued. SPEAKS)

So Gussy slowly spike heels her way back to Marvin—remember Marvin?—The husband she was leaving?

(GUSSY slowly exits)

And to Marvin's mother. To pick up again—"under their stinking roof." And in Bodoni County—can you hear the sounds?

(THE ENSEMBLE enter, sighing)

Yes. That's the sounds of a lot of people. Breathing a sigh of relief. . .And I do, too, Gussy; I do, too. Because now I'm becoming one of you.

OVERVIEW AND ENSEMBLE

(SING)

WE'LL FIND A NEW JOB;  
GET US A FUTURE. . .  
BURY THE PAST,  
LIGHTEN THE LOAD;  
LEAVE THE DECAY. . .  
SO GET US A TICKET—HEY. . .  
BUT MAYBE NOT TODAY

(THEY slowly stroll offstage)

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(Goes to THE BOOK. Turns the page. It says, "End: Part One")

END: PART ONE!

***(MUSIC: CRASH. BLACKOUT)***

**PART TWO**

**OVERVIEW goes to The Big Book  
and turns the pages.  
(On the left) PART TWO: SIXTH ENTRY.  
(On the right) AURA OF MELANCHOLY;  
A FANFARE OPENING FOR PART TWO.**

OVERVIEW

(Speaks)

SIXTH ENTRY: AURA OF MELANCHOLY—A FANFARE OPENING FOR PART TWO OF "THE BODONI COUNTY SONGBOOK ANTHOLOGY." IN WHICH YOURS TRULY, JONATHAN OVERVIEW, ON HIS JOURNEY TO BECOME A REAL HUMAN BEING, JOINS THE CITIZENRY OF BODONI COUNTY FOR THE FIRST TIME.

(During THE FANFARE opening, three members of THE ENSEMBLE will step into the roles of MARIAN AXELBEAN (wearing kerchief), MARIAN'S DOG (Misha), "Hy" COLONIC (baseball cap) and JACKIE CRAMER (wearing a beanie with a little propeller, that he often flicks and lets spin)

ENSEMBLE

(SING)

AN AURA OF MELANCHOLY HANGS IN THE AIR;  
THERE'S A FUNERAL GOING BY--  
IN BODONI COUNTY.  
A DAUGHTER OF ALZHEIMER MARY IS BURIED TODAY.  
ALZHEIMER MARY CANNOT COMPREHEND THE NEWS.

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

(SINGS)

A FEELING OF JOYOUS WONDER IS ALSO THERE;  
THERE'S A HORN RECITAL PLANNED--  
IN BODONI COUNTY.  
THE GODCHILD OF VIVIAN GRADY IS PLAYING THIS WEEK.  
VIVIAN GRADY IS DREAMING OF GREAT REVIEWS.

ENSEMBLE

(SINGS)

CONTRASTS!  
THEY HAPPEN ALL OF THE TIME.  
MUSIC AND DEATH  
IN BODONI COUNTY.

## ENSEMBLE

(Continued)

EACH DAY  
A MIXED-UP AFFAIR.  
BODONI COUNTY  
IS LIKE COUNTIES EVERYWHERE.

## MARIAN AXELBEAN

"TO THE BODONI COUNTY DAILY GAZETTE, LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

"I wanted to share with all my fellow Bodoni County citizens a truly wondrous and magical sight I saw at twilight—not 25 minutes ago! While walking my dog Misha (poor thing is old; deaf; blind in one eye and limps), we went down to our favorite spot at the bottom of our street, which is a cul-de-sac, with a little park and wooded area off to the left. Suddenly, from behind me I heard this running sound—like a large dog or something, and I got concerned—for poor old Misha's sake. When I turned around I saw that—

(SINGS)

IT WAS IN FACT A DEER!  
A VERY BEAUTIFUL LARGE DEER! IT LEAPED ALONG  
AS GRACIOUS AND AIRBORNE AS YOU PLEASE;  
AND MADE A LARGE CIRCLE AROUND US  
AND THEN LEAPED OFF INTO THE WOODED AREA.

(SPEAKS)

Well—I've been living in the same house on the same street for 45 years; and a live deer—as far as I know—has never been seen. And somehow it was—well. . .very thrilling and marvelous. And I just wanted you all to know. And I just hope that that deer visits your neighborhood.

(SINGS)

BECAUSE A SIGHT LIKE THAT  
MAKES YOU FEEL. . .WELL--YOUNG AGAIN.  
AND THAT THERE'S HOPE."

(SPEAKS)

Signed. "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean.

## HYMEN

"To "Wondrous" Marian Axelbean:

"I'm afraid I saw that wondrous deer, too. In our neighborhood, which is called South Park. I say, "afraid," because a lot of kids threw rocks and bottles at it and then one of our hunter friends got his rifle and took a shot at it. The deer got away; but my guess is someone is bound to kill it.

"Signed. "Realist" Hymen "Hy" Colonic."

## ENSEMBLE

(SING)

THE BELLS OF ST. ALEXANDER TOLL OUT THE FAIR;  
 THERE'LL BE TONS OF SPINACH PIE—  
 IN BODONI COUNTY.  
 THIS PLACE, WHICH IS USUALLY WASPY, IS ALL GREEK TODAY.  
 GRAPE LEAVES AND FETA ARE SPILLED OUT ON THE SHINY PEWS.  
 ONE MORE DAY.  
 ONE MORE TYPICAL DAY  
 IN BODONI COUNTY.

## OVERVIEW

(SINGS)

UP THE ROAD,  
 FIFTY MILES;  
 KEEP ON HEADING NORTH,  
 YOU'LL SEE THE SIGN.  
 ROUND THE BEND  
 TO THE LEFT;  
 PAST THE HOLIDAY INN  
 AND YOU'RE OVER THE COUNTY LINE.  
 MOVE ON STRAIGHT UP THE ROAD.  
 HANG A RIGHT,  
 AND YOU'RE RIGHT IN THE HEART OF TOWN.  
 STOP AT A FIRE PUMP TO LACE YOUR SHOES.  
 LOOK UP AT THE FACES—  
 AND GET THE BLUES.

## REMO CRAMER

“To ‘Wondrous’ Marian Axelbean.

“I hope letter-to-the-editor Hymen "Hy" Colonic is wrong—and that they don't shoot your deer—**but** I wanted to tell you about another "wondrous" sight yours truly has been seeing.

“Last week—at the Bodoni County Mall?—while the Bodoni High School Chorus was doing the Hallelujah Chorus at the Christmas Tree lighting?—I noticed—at the Smoke House store?—this very sad and beautiful lady setting up the free samples of summer sausage. And the thing about her was that there were these holes in the palms of her hands and they were bleeding. While I was getting my sausage sample, I asked her if her hands hurt and she said, not as much as her heart, which would break if she couldn't get out of the Mall—'this Godforsaken Mal'—that's what she called it. I asked her why she just didn't leave through the doors and she said that she was trapped and needed to wait for the 'extraordinary way out.' And cried. I looked away—

## REMO CRAMER

“**because** I couldn't stand the pain she was in; then when I turned around again--she was gone.

“But I see her all over the Mall—all the time. Sometimes she's a manikin. One time she was sitting behind the wheel of a car—on display during Car-Dealer week? And once on all the TV screens at the Appliance City store, she was the lady catching the lottery balls during the State lottery game. But no matter where she is or what her job is at the moment—her hands are always bleeding.

“Most people think I'm weird; so I don't usually tell them about the wondrous things I see. But your letter about the deer made me want to share with you and everyone my meetings with ‘Our Lady of the Mall’ (that's what I call her). Because I think she's special. And ‘wondrous,’ too. Don't you, ‘Wondrous’ Marian?

“Signed. “Weird” Remo Cramer.”

## OVERVIEW

(SINGS)

THE CARRINGTON KID WITH ALL THE BRAINS AND THE CHARM,  
BLEW HIS BRAINS AND CHARM AWAY—  
IN BODONI COUNTY.  
THE PAIN OF IT PAINED THIS TOWN AND ALWAYS WILL.  
FOR THE CARRINGTON KID HAD A SMILE THAT'S SMILING STILL.

## ENSEMBLE

(SINGS)

THE PENNINGTON GIRL IS OUT BEST LITTLE WHORE;  
SHE DOES BUSINESS FROM HER HOUSE  
—IN BODONI COUNTY.  
SHE'S HONEST AND GOES TO CHURCH;  
WHAT CAN ONE DO?  
SHE PAYS OFF HER BRIBES AND GIVES GOOD VALUE, TOO.

## OVERVIEW

(SINGS)

CONTRASTS!  
THEY HAPPEN ALL OF THE TIME:  
SUICIDE AND SEX IN BODONI COUNTY.  
EACH DAY  
A MIXED-UP AFFAIR.  
BODONI COUNTY  
IS SURREAL  
LIKE EVERYWHERE.

## REMO

“To ‘Wondrous’ Marian Axelbean and—ALL AND SUNDRY! —Great news! Our Lady of the Mall got out! This beautiful deer got into the Mall--and I can only guess that it's the same beautiful deer you saw, "Wondrous" Marian; and I saw Our Lady—bleeding hands and all—get onto the back of that deer—and I—!!—opened the large glass doors for them and they galloped—RIGHT OUT OF THE MALL! And I was so thrilled I wanted to shout and scream and laugh and all; but no one else said anything and I sure as the devil didn't want to make a scene; so I just kept my joy to myself and ran out of that Mall and got into my beat up old Bronco and followed them out into the country--and got a blowout!--so I lost 'em. Just my luck! —But wasn't that a sight in a million! Gosh. Signed: ‘Contented’ Remo Cramer”

## ENSEMBLE

(SINGS)

A LOT OF UNHAPPY NEIGHBORS CAN'T STAND IT HERE;  
 THEY HAVE REACHED A DEAD END LIFE,  
 IN BODONI COUNTY.  
 TO OTHERS, THE KIND OF DESPAIR THEY DAILY FACE,  
 HELPS THEM ENDURE WITH COMPASSION, JOY AND GRACE. . .  
 IN THIS PLACE.  
 IN THIS TYPICAL PLACE,  
 CALLED BODONI COUNTY.

## ENSEMBLE

(SING)

LIVING IN A MINDLESS AGE,  
 MINDLESSNESS IS ALL THE RAGE;  
 TO BE SUCCESS THAN YOU  
 HAVE GOT TO BE MINDLESS, TOO.

(JONATHAN walks to The Book and turns the page.  
 On the left page is printed: "SEVENTH ENTRY: On the right  
 page: "TESTIMONY")

## JONATHAN OVERVIEW

**SEVENTH ENTRY: TESTIMONY--in which yours truly, Jonathan Overview takes part in a Bodoni County "high" of total selfishness.**

## ENSEMBLE

(Waving American flags and revealing T Shirts, imprinted with an Annie Rynd likeness—a NEWT GINGRICH face with page boy hairdo, imprinted in a glowing asshole)  
 Ziggy! Ziggy! Ziggy! Ziggy! Ziggy!

ZIGGY

(Stepping out from The ENSEMBLE)

Thank you, thank you for the applause and cheers. Ladies and gentlemen of the Bodoni County cell of the Annie Rynd "Selfishness-Is-Key"—or—"S.I.K." Society. I, Ziggy Kellmer—as I look around this flag-draped auditorium—can't tell you how honored I am to be on the verge of being accepted, by you—the entire local membership—as an active "S.I.K." member.—No no! I should be applauding and cheering and whistling *you*—because, though shunned everywhere else, you've managed to get Bodoni County to give "S.I.K." a home—and, because "S.I.K." showed me the true way. I've passed examination by your Executive Committee; and when I've finished giving you my credentials—and my final testimonial statement—I'm certain you'll give me a rousing thumbs up—and I'll be one of you—for life. So here goes: Ziggy Kellmer. Born upstate, January 18, 1954. Father, Patrick—a do gooder.

ENSEMBLE

Hiss!

ZIGGY

Mother, Molly—a saint.

OVERVIEW

Half hiss!

ZIGGY

I was an only child. No talents. Few smarts. No interests. But do-goodism and saint-hood-ism were drummed into my vacant head from the start. Dropped out of Community College. Finally got work as office manager in the headquarters of this State's American Civil Liberties Union.

ENSEMBLE

Boo! Hiss! Yuck!

ZIGGY

At the age of thirty I won the Reader's Digest lottery. Started getting \$166,000 a year—which I'll continue to get for the next 23 years.

OVERVIEW

Bravo!

ZIGGY

A year later I won the Publishers Clearing House for a lump sum of one million dollars.

ENSEMBLE

Bravo-bravissimo-bravissisimo!



## ZIGGY

(Continued. SINGS)

LIVING ALONE WITH A MIRROR AND CHECKBOOK;  
 HATING THE POOR AND IGNORING THE DEAD.  
 FACING THE FLAG AND SALUTING IT NIGHTLY;  
 DRAPED ON MY TABLE, MY CHAIR AND MY BED.

FILLING MY NOSE WITH THE SCENT OF MY ARMPITS;  
 JOGGING TODAY AND TOMORROW, THE GYM;  
 EYING A TOWNHOUSE, A CONDO, A DUPLEX;  
 TAKING TWO WEEKS IN JAPAN ON A WHIM.

O, I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!  
 O, I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!

SLASH ALL THE FUNDS FOR THE FATHERLESS MOTHERS;  
 WHILE I DOFF MY HAT TO EACH PENTAGON CHEAT;  
 PUSH FOR CONTROL OF THE COMMON MAN'S MORALS,  
 WHILE I'M FREE TO FUCK ANYTHING ON TWO FEET!

BLAME ALL THE PINKOS AND LIBERALS FOR EVIL;  
 BLAME ALL THE HELPLESS FOR BEING ALIVE.  
 CUT ALL THE LOANS SO THE KIDS CAN STOP LEARNING.  
 LET ALL THE FARM'S DIE--AS LONG AS I THRIVE!

O, I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!  
 I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!

MAKE USE OF GOD TO CONTROL ALL THE MASSES  
 (AS LONG AS THAT SAME GOD STAYS OUT OF MY WAY).  
 PASS ALL THE LAWS IN AUTHORITY'S FAVOR--  
 BUT KILL ANY PUNK WHO WON'T GIVE ME MY SAY.

CASTRATE THE PROGRAMS FOR ARTS IN EACH CITY;  
 SCREW ALL THOSE FAGGOTS WHO CONSTANTLY BITCH!  
 I LOVE THIS COUNTRY, BUT WANT IT MADE OVER--  
 SO THERE CAN BE EVEN MORE FOR THE RICH!

O, I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!  
 I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!  
 I SEE NOTHING BUT ME FOR AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE.

**O,O,O I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT  
 (NOT AN IDDY-BIT-ABOUT)  
 ANYONE ELSE BUT ME!**

(ZIGGY and the ENSEMBLE QUICKLY EXIT.)

OVERVIEW SLOWLY walks to the Big Book.  
Turns pages. The Text reads: EIGHTH ENTRY.  
CANTO; A SONG OF LIFE)

OVERVIEW

Wow! Greed and total selfishness— What a high! —like champagne bubbles in my crotch! —**Good God, I've grown a human crotch!** and—

(THE BIG BOOK'S PAGES TURN)

A FAX from Clarence: " Now, Jonathan, a giant step to human pain. Prepare to see if you can withstand the shattering of your soul." That's "Purple-Prose Clarence" for you. "Withstand it?" Clarence, I'll revel in it!

**EIGHTH ENTRY: CANTO. A SONG OF LIFE  
FOR ALZHEIMER MARY.**

(NURSE VIVIAN GRADY enters.  
Wears nurse's cap. She wheels in  
MARY ESPOSITO)

NURSE VIVIAN GRADY

I just got back from the funeral, Mary. See? It's me. Nurse Vivian Grady. Back here at the Nursing Home. And I wish I could get through to you, get you to understand that. . .that your daughter Rose—at the church?—when the lid was up?—looked lovely. Really. I see the resemblance now. And at the Bodoni County cemetery—well, it was classic, really. Rain. Muddy. Hushed people with black umbrellas. —But great hushed energy there. Well, of course. They must all —well, mostly all—have been Italians. Right? . . .I stood apart, of course. Envied that hushed energy. As I've always envied yours. And wondered what you would have said, if you had been there—being sighed on—drowning in their condolences. "Call me Alzheimer' Mary," you might have said—you used to say —to kill the awkwardness—and would have laughed, as you used to laugh, in those. . .lucid-moment days. . . . I haven't been able to contact your daughter Anna yet. No one has. To tell her about her sister Rose—Rose's death. —But I'll keep trying, I will. And I keep feeling that today—of all days—today I need to get to you—get inside of you—reach you—give you something. What? How?

## NURSE VIVIAN GRADY

(Continued. SINGS)

ALZHEIMER MARY SPENDS THE DAY SHINNING HER BOOTS.  
SHE WATCHES THE BALL GAME ON TV,  
(FOR BOTH TEAMS SHE ROOTS).  
MARY'S AT HOME IN THE HOME,  
SHE WATCHES THE WORLD  
FROM THE PLEXIGLASS DOME  
NEAR HER ROOM.

ALZHEIMER MARY SOMETIMES REMEMBERS HER NAME.  
AT TIMES SHE GETS SHARPER THAN SHARP,  
(TAKES PART IN A GAME).  
RECALLS THE MINUTEST DETAIL,  
ASTONISHES FRIENDS  
WITH A HUMOROUS TALE  
FROM THE PAST.

MARY ESPOSITO  
(FOR THAT WAS HER NAME BACK WHEN),  
WAS AN ITALIAN BEAUTY,  
WHO CAME TO THIS COUNTRY,  
AND MARRIED HER FACTORY BOSS,  
BILL FENN.

MARY ESPOSITO,  
HAD SEVEN CHILDREN, THEY SAY.  
THE TWO THAT SURVIVED IS NOW ONE;  
BECAUSE ROSE PASSED AWAY.

ALZHEIMER MARY LISTENS TO VERDI THIS DAY.  
SHE TURNS DOWN THE TV BALL GAME  
TO HEAR WHAT BELLISSIMO VERDI STILL HAS TO SAY.  
THE WORDS DON'T MAKE SENSE ANYMORE,  
BUT THE TUNE SHE RECALLS VERY CLEAR  
(AS HER EYES SMILE AND ROLL).  
AND SHE TALKS OF "UN CANTO DI VITA" —  
"A SONG OF LIFE," THAT MEANS.  
AND "UN CANTO DI VITA," I GUESS,  
STILL LIVES ON IN MARY'S SOUL.

VIVIAN GRADY

(Continued. SINGS)

BUT THE ALZHEIMER MARY'S ALL SCARE ME,  
 WHEN I MAKE MY ROUNDS.  
 SOMETIMES I THINK I SEE THEM  
 (EVEN WHEN I'M AWAY FROM MY JOB  
 AT THE NURSING HOME GROUNDS).  
 THEY HAUNT ME, MORE THAN THE OTHERS;  
 THE ABANDONED OR THE TERMINALLY ILL.  
 WHEN I SEE THE MARY'S GET FOGGED IN BEFORE THEY ALL DIE. . .  
 I STIFLE MY OWN PAIN  
 AND THINK OF THE GOOD THINGS I HAVE;  
 AND I WILL MYSELF NOT TO CRY;  
 MAKE SURE THAT I HAVE A GOOD DAY;  
 AND I VOW THAT I'LL NEVER GET FOGGED IN LIKE THAT. . .  
 IF I HAVE MY WAY--  
 ANYWAY--

I'VE GOT MAXIE!  
 MY LONG-HAIRED,  
 MY MARMALADE,  
 DECLAWED  
 OLD LOVE OF A CAT.

YES! I'VE GOT MAXIE!  
 IF NOBODY ELSE SHARES MY BED,  
 THERE'S MY CAT;  
 THERE IS THAT!  
 THANK GOD!

AH, PERHAPS, IF THE ALZHEIMER MARYS  
 HAD MAXIE'S TO LOVE AND STROKE,  
 THE SMOKE THAT KEEPS FOGGING THEIR MINDS  
 MIGHT START TO LIFT.  
 YES, THE GIFT OF A MAXIE  
 MIGHT OPEN UP HER MIND.

BUT IF MARY'S MIND IS OPENED,  
 WHAT WILL I—AND MAXIE—FIND?

## MARY

(Speaks)

Un canto di vita my Nonna my grandmother used to say and what did that mean I used to know and also said my Nonna did that the dead may be the lucky ones but only the living sing O yes O yes O that was it a song of life un canto di vita like Bill Fenn was my song of life and O how he could sing but made no difference because not being Italian or Catholic was the sin a double sin they said my mama said back then to sleep with a notItalian or Catholicman even though you marry him and look now how you've been cursed because the first one died right off but all right your second's a beauty that's Anna and still lives and Ronnie your third had a crippled foot and diabetes did him in and the fourth one falls on his head from a shopping cart and that was that and the twins of course were stillborn but your last one will survive that's Rosie no matter what they say about the emphysema there's nothing to it my Rosie stopped the smoking stopped three years ago each time I visit I tell her that the smell of smoke in the curtains and in the sheets and on the chenille bed spread is almost gone which Bill could never stand but never complained about because he's sensitive to people's needs and Rosie's hacking cough and knows that Rosie was addicted to a menthol brand but she did stop and he's so gentle a gentle man my Bill O yes he's such a gentle man and so you're all the more confused with such a gentle man when he dies like that on High Street which isn't 42nd Street in New York City after all and did try to calm them down and tried to be obliging and let them have the wallet and the watch and his papa's cuff links the gold ones so why did they have to knock him down and kick him that way but then again the bruises didn't show in the casket that day what day why can't I remember today when yesterday's caskets are so clear O dear another bird just bashed himself into the dome of my home where I did the bead work the piece work dresses Bill Fenn the factory boss sends before I go to work there and fall in love with him or was that my Nonna's time the stories she told the good old days and just stayed home to watch the children die and breathe in Rosie's smoke and even lived through the Latin being ripped out of the Mass so young when the Arthritis settled in my hip and was more comfortable when I got on top of Bill and embarrassed him that first time but the fun of that was tit for tat and gave him pleasure because it gave me pleasure too I knew I knew too it was slipping my mind was when every TV show seemed to be the same but Bill kept saying they were the same so not to worry until they kicked his head in to suddenly find myself ten blocks away from home peeing on flowers in front of town hall where those young Mimes mime for pennies and the fat singer with the pretty face sang what's that aria from Verdi I know but what I wonder Addio something yes addio means goodbye I know O yes addio anyway the tune

## MARY

(Continued)

is nice reminding me of Italy O I know that's where I come from and came here from when I was six or was it eight years old from the Ferry to that trolley in the city with luggage and bundles and heavy coats and hats and leggings in the ninety degree heat and even carrying pans and the family chamber pot that got away from the trolley and rolled and rolled and rolled and all gl'Americani laughed and said addio it's addio Bill O Bill O Rosie O my little dead ones the angels do they forget too their Mama there in heaven for they never knew me long here after all perhaps a little maybe from my breast my overflow of milk back then where it's addio addio to such a lovely tune a lovely lovely song and do they wander off my dead children too and find themselves peeing in the gardens of paradise and what's that snuggling ball of fur against my leg a cat I remember see I'll pet it that's what cat's like I did too I remember and I'll sing to you addio cat for only the living sing O yes. . .

## NURSE VIVIAN GRADY

(SINGS)

I BROUGHT MAXIE IN AND LAID HIM NEXT TO MARY.  
AND HE SNIFFED HER AND THEN KNEADED ON THE BED.  
THEN HE TURNED AND TURNED AND TURNED AROUND;  
AND THEN BECAME A BALL AGAINST HER LEG.  
AND MARY ESPOSITO PETTED HIM—SHE DID!  
I EVEN HEARD HER SAY HE WAS A "CAT!"

BUT SOON THE PETTING STOPPED AND THEN I KNEW  
THAT THE FOG BETWEEN HER HAND AND MAX WAS NOW TOO THICK;  
THAT IT WAS TIME FOR ME AND MAXIE TO MOVE ON. . .  
BECAUSE MARY AND "UN CANTO DI VITO" WERE GONE.

(NURSE VIVIAN GRADY wheels off MARY)

## OVERVIEW

(Stage whisper)

. . ."the shattering of my soul?" . . .to the very marrow of my soul. . .good god, I am growing a human soul. . .hm.

(Lost in thought, he slowly goes to The Big Book.

Turns the page. It reads:

On The Left: **NINTH Entry: Boy Meets Girl.**On the right: **Dancing with Joy: A Bodoni County Fable)**

JONATHAN OVERVIEW

**NINTH ENTRY: "DANCING WITH JOY." A BODONI COUNTY FABLE. As told by Yours Truly, Jonathan Overview, in the role of the omniscient POV once again and--**

*(JONATHAN clips on a garish bow tie  
as EUBIE, wearing an even more garish bow enters  
riding a small, unicycle that is trailing tin cans)*

Eubie Copocolo always wears a bow tie. And Eubie Copocolo has the most zits of any 23-year-old that ever lived in Bodoni County. In addition—and Eubie will tell this to anyone who will listen—

EUBIE

*(Untying the tine cans  
with great difficulty)*

I was kind of old before one of my testicles descended. But I took shots for that. And it was just a matter of time before my twin jewel stopped playing hide and seek and yo-yoed properly; so I didn't sweat that.

*(Throws the tin cans off stage)*

And I was neat! Inside and out! Always neat. And bow ties seemed the neatest. I went to Bodoni County Junior College for a year.

*(ENSEMBLE run out  
and steal EUBIE's unicycle. EUBIE shrugs)*

But nobody there wore a bow tie. So College wasn't for me.

OVERVIEW

What *was* for Eubie Copocolo?

EUBIE

*(He walks in circles)*

Travel to far off romantic places. Because, in truth, I have a turbulent, romantic soul. Seething. Full of angst-agony; excessive passion; exotic longings—all that.

*(Stops walking in circles)*

But fat chance I had of realizing my exotic angst-potential in Bodoni County. In Bodoni County I was "that neat nerd"—and in Bodoni County I would always be "that neat nerd."

*(ENSEMBLE runs out. One kneels  
behind EUBIE and taps him on the shoulder;  
the other gets in front of EUBIE and  
pushes him over the kneeling EMSEMBLE member  
From the floor, EUBIE shrugs)*

## EUBIE

(Continued)

So one day I said to myself: "Eubie, you're waltzing out of this burg."

(EUBIE rises with great and clumsy difficulty)

## OVERVIEW

He meant that metaphorically, of course. For when he did try to dance, Eubie resembled an arthritic duck with a double hernia, and an inner ear problem.

## EUBIE

So I pack, check out of the YMCA—and if you don't think living at the Y isn't a zits enhancer, you don't know our young Christian men! Then I say goodbye to the only person who ever cared for me, Old Matilda Trimble, the head of the orphanage.

(OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE enters,  
wearing a bow tie)

She cries a little and says,

## MATILDA

Oh, Eubie, life sucks!

## OVERVIEW

Then she straightens her wig, and gives Eubie a new bow tie.

## MATILDA

Here's a new bow tie; special for my Eubie.

(OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE removes the bow tie  
EUBIE is wearing and replaces it with  
the *special* bow tie and exits)

## EUBIE

And it is a big one—neat of course—with red dots!

(He walks in circles)

Then I walk all the way down to the Greyhound and buy a one-way ticket to Corning, New York! Because I love glass.

(Takes out colored marbles from  
his pocket and plays with them on the floor)

Hear they have the best glass; plan to get a job as a Night Watchman at the Corning Glass Museum; and, for the rest of my life,

(Holds colored marbles to his eye)

EUBIE

(Continued)

I'd look at my world through the prettiest colors!

(Puts marbles away as  
the ENSEMBLE  
run out and become a bus)

OVERVIEW

But when Eubie gets right up to the bus—

EUBIE

I put a foot up and I can't put it down! On the step!

(The bus retreats)

I keep trying!

(The bus knocks him backwards)

And falling backwards! And everyone laughs!

(The bus become people who  
laugh at EUBIE without making a sound;  
and mouth what EUBIE says)

And says stuff like, "Is that a new nerd dance?" And those in the bus get ticky!

(Those on the bus get ticky)

Because they want the bus to go!

OVERVIEW

And those waiting behind Eubie get even tickier and begin to punch him and kick him and pull at his "special" bow tie!

(They punch him and kick him  
and pull his "special" bow tie—  
let it snap back hard at his Adams apple)

EUBIE

So I say, ***what the hell!*** I'll hitch out of town. But when I get to the outskirts ***I still can't leave! Something*** stops me again,

(The Bus ENSEMBLE become a wall)

— some kind of a wall or something! And I keep throwing myself forward; but I ***keep — bouncing! —Back!*** To the Bodoni County line!

(EUBIE throws himself against the human wall  
and keeps bouncing off them)

## OVERVIEW

So Eubie gets the message. No escape.

(The ENSEMBLE EXIT. *FAST!*)

Some hidden power does not want Eubie Copocolo to leave Bodoni County. And it's back to old Matilda Trimble,

(MATILDA TRIMBLE enters)

who cries, says it is God's will,

## MATILDA

(Through tears)

—and God's will often sucks, Eubie.

## OVERVIEW

Then she straightens out the "special" bow tie she had given him

(She does; then EXITS)

and let's him stay in an empty basement room of the orphanage.

## EUBIE

(Fetal position, sucking thumb, ETC.)

What to do?

## OVERVIEW

Agonizes Eubie.

(A member of the ENSEMBLE becomes a newspaper boy, delivers a paper to EUBIE and waits while EUBIE reads)

*Then* he sees this ad that says:

(EUBIE mouths, while OVERVIEW recites)

"Night watchman wanted. Prestigious building. Featuring *The Bodoni County Travel Agency*. Perfect for someone who wants 'night's cloak' to hide him."

## EUBIE

Just the job for me!

(Hands the newspaper back to the Newspaper Boy, who quickly EXITS; as EUBIE walks in circles)

So I straightaway apply for the job ***and get it!***

## OVERVIEW

So Eubie night watches

(OVERVIEW hands Eubie a flashlight as the LIGHTS GO TO BLACK and EUBIE switches on the flashlight and pans the audience)

## OVERVIEW

(Continued)

and takes to staring at all the travel posters in the *Bodoni County Travel Agency*.  
***And then one night Joy comes into Eubie Copocolo's life.***

JOY

You there, sir, with the zits and the bow tie? Kindly let me in.

EUBIE

(Catching JOY in the light of his flashlight)

She's tapping on the outside window in a friendly and smiley way.

(Lights increase)

And when I see her. . . my yo-yo's really bounce. She's cute and all; but, mostly, I love her because she's neat. She even wears a little bow tie on her prim blouse. I don't worry if she's a terrorist or anything. I just know that I have to find out who she is. So I let her in.

(Lights increase to romantic level)

JOY

My name is Joy. Say,

## OVERVIEW

Says Joy, ***joyously***,

JOY

(Joyously)

***Aren't you that nerd, Eubie?***

EUBIE

Yes.

JOY

(Joyously)

I thought so!

(Seriously)

—Say do you know the Winona Street Witch—Carmelita Strega? Well, she told me about this certain poster. Beach scene. If it has the serial number 262 49 32, it's a poster you can walk into. I've been looking all over town for that poster. Then I saw it here. Just now. As I was passing. God, I hope this is the walk-in poster!

(TWO MEMBERS of the ENSEMBLE

enter carrying an empty poster frame.

The POSTER ENSEMBLE will move the

empty poster frame as needed in the scene)

JOY

(Continued)

Can I get more light in here?

EUBIE

This late? Better not--but you can use my flashlight.

OVERVIEW

And when Eubie gives her his flashlight, he feels. . . peculiar, somehow; intimate, as Joy fingers his flashlight—and examines the poster.

EUBIE

Listen, Joy. . .do you think you could love a man with zits? —**and** a neat bow tie?

JOY

Sure,

OVERVIEW

Says Joy, —who is having a tough time making out the smudged serial number on the poster.

JOY

As long as he had a turbulent, romantic soul. Seething. Full of angst-agony. Excessive passion. Exotic longings—all that.

EUBIE

Why, Joy! That is a verbatim transcript of my own inner assessment of myself!

JOY

Eubie, can you tell if that's a five or a six?

EUBIE

A six. Listen, Joy; this is important: . . .Why do you need to walk into the poster?

JOY

Because I can't get on busses. I keep falling backwards. And I've got to get out of Bodoni County!

EUBIE

Why, Joy! That's a verbatim transcript of *my* existential quandary! But, tell me, Joy—and this is really important—does your wanting to leave Bodoni County have anything to do with—colored glass?

JOY

No. It has to do with the blues.

(LIGHT CHANGES TO BLUES LIGHTING,  
and follow spot catches Joy, Stage Center))

JOY

(Continued)

—Eubie, I'm a born chanteuse. I sit on pianos and sing the blues. The only place I can chanteuse at in this town is "*The Beer Belly*." Yucko! There's a customer—every night? —when I'm lost in the smoky lyrics of a blues number? —this joker sucks on my ankle—right through my panty hose! Yucko ditto! —Listen Eubie—I can see your seething soul right through your bloodshot eyes, so I can tell *you* about it: I once saw this travel poster. Luxury cruiser. Nightclub aboard it. Gorgeous chanteuse with gorgeous gown, slinky black, with a crimson dragon made of crimson sequins—slit up the side. Tall, gentlemanly Gentlemen, stand around in tuxedos and sip martinis and champagne, and try to keep their erotic thoughts secret—*though* their eyes, focused on the chanteuse—like yours are focused on moi—reveal their simmering smolder. And it's all in glossy color and the chanteuse is caught in the moment of revealing an angst-spasm and—**Oh, look, Eubie!**

(BLUES LIGHTING OUT AND BACK TO  
NORMAL LIGHTING AS JOY MOVES  
TO THE POSTER FRAME AGAIN)

That last number is a **32!** This *is* the poster! **262 49 32!**

OVERVIEW

And she practically rips off her clothes! Down to her delicate see-through undies! And Eubie is speechless!

(A MEMBER of the ENSEMBLE runs out  
with an overnight bag; hands it to JOY,  
then exits)

And Joy pulls from an overnight bag—and puts on—a crimson-dragon, black, slit-up-the-side, gown—identical to the one she described.

JOY

(Dressing)

Listen, Eubie; Carmelita Strega said there's a graveyard of dead poster scenes on an island called. . ."Despair." My chanteuse poster is in that graveyard, on that island. But to get there you first have to enter a *current* poster, with this number and—There! Now I'm ready. See you Eubie—and thanks for letting me in here.

(JOY climbs into the empty poster frame)

OVERVIEW

She is already into the poster and on the beach when Eubie's instinct says,

EUBIE

***Joy! Wait! I'm coming, too!***

OVERVIEW

**And he dives into the poster after Joy!**

(EUBIE dives through the empty poster frame,  
as the POSTER ENSEMBLE exit with the frame

***Beach lighting)***

OVERVIEW

(Continued)

A beach! White, white sand! Lots of blue sky. A mountain in the background. A beautiful woman running down the beach. Very tanned. Enormous breasts. Wearing a white bikini. Her top is in the shape of a slim bow tie.

(BIKINI GIRL ENTERS;  
running in place. Her top, indeed, is in the  
shape of a slim bow tie.)

She is running at the water's edge; kicking some blue-green splash about. Waving. Eubie takes Joy's hand and they run in the splash alongside the woman.

JOY

Say, how did you get that great tan?

BIKINI GIRL

Always had it. Always will. It's my poster tan.

EUBIE

You seem so happy and excited. —I know! You're running and waving **to a lover!** Down the beach.

BIKINI GIRL

No. There's no lover. I'm just running. And waving. That's what I do. Run. And wave. I'm a poster Bikini girl, with a poster tan, and all I do is run! And wave.

EUBIE

How come there are so few people on this beach?

BIKINI GIRL

There are always few people on a beach in poster land!

(BIKINI GIRL and JOY Exit)

## OVERVIEW

Then she's gone. And so is Joy! And Eubie panics!

## EUBIE

***Joy! Joy! Where are you?***

## OVERVIEW

Off poster, Joy shouts—!

## JOY

(Off stage)

Here, Eubie! Off poster! —Turn left at the last palm tree in the foreground!

## OVERVIEW

Which Eubie does and—LO! —Suddenly everything is black, shiny black! The ground is a shiny black dance floor with silver sparkles flashing in it, and shafts of spotlights that hit and circle the floor. And there is a fanfare and Joy is in a hot shaft of light and opens her arms and says:

(Lighting—like OVERVIEW just said)

## JOY

Eubie! I think we're in a limbo area between posters. And I'm sure we're meant to dance here. Yes, Eubie! Let's dance!

## EUBIE

But I can't dance!

## JOY

You must, Eubie! One must dance in this place. That's clear. But I can't dance by myself, Eubie.

## OVERVIEW

God, Eubie is depressed. But then a wonderful thing happens! Eubie hears from inside his soul, the voice of dear friend, Old Matilda Trimble:

## OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

(Voice ***amplified***)

The bow tie, Eubie—the one I gave you? Rub it!

## OVERVIEW

And Eubie does and —LO!—his shoes grow pointy and tap heavy. He glides over to Joy, takes her in his arms and —LO! Again— they are Fred and Ginger! Gene and Vera Ellen! Pricilla Presley and anybody! —And first they waltz. Then they do the Peabody. Then it's a seamless transition to all the different ballroom dances that ever were. The Tango. . . . The Rumba. . . .The Samba. . . .The Foxtrot. . . . the Limbo. . . —all of 'em!

(They do them all!)

JOY

Poster coming up!

OVERVIEW

And this time it's a small island full of coconuts. From her overnight bag Joy takes out a little hammer and spike and taps holes in a coconut.

(JOY does all this)

Then she takes two straws out of the bag.

(JOY does this)

Then, like the boy and girl in *Our Town*, they sip coconut juice and make goo goo eyes at each other.

JOY

I feel a chanteuse inspired blues lyric coming on:

(SINGS)

TIDES ROLL IN.

TIDES ROLL OUT.

AND MY LOVE AFFAIRS DO THE SAME.

WHY IS IT THAT NONE OF THEM LAST?

ARE MY LOVERS AT FAULT? OR AM I TO BLAME?

MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I KEEP LOOKING FOR THAT FIRST ONE,

ON THE BEACH WHERE I PAID LOVE'S DUES.

PERHAPS I KEEP ON WANTING THE EXTRAORDINARY PLEASURE

OF FIRST-LOVE'S SAND DUNE BLUES.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

FIRST LOVE IN ITS RERUNS.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

HOT SAND ON MY HOT BUNS.

MEMORABLE DAY.

WE WENT ALL THE WAY!

SAND DUNE BLUES;

SAND DUNE BLUES.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

THE GLOW FROM CAMP FIRE'S EMBER.

SAND DUNE BLUES,

THE LOG THAT WAS HIS MEMBER.

MEMORABLE DAY,

WE WENT ALL THE WAY.

SAND DUNE BLUES.

SAND DUNE BLUES.

JOY

(Continued. SINGS)

BUT IF IT WAS SUCH A MAJOR EVENT,  
WHY CAN'T I RECALL MY FIRST-LOVE'S FACE?

(Discovery)

PERHAPS MUCH OF THE TIME I WAS SITTING ON IT?!  
AH, YES—KNOWING ME, THAT WAS THE CASE!

SAND DUNE BLUES—SWEET PAIN OF FIRST DESIRE!  
SAND DUNE BLUES—GETTING OFF FIVE TIMES  
IN A FIVE-ALARM DESIRE FIRE!

MEMORABLE DAY.

**MEMORABLE LAY!**

SAND DUNE BLUES. . .

SAND DUNE BLUES. . .

OVERVIEW

And then, of course, they make love. And Eubie's world is a kaleidoscope of colors and colored prisms.

(Love and prisms and ETC. happen)

Then, when it all settles back to glossy poster color, Joy says,

JOY

Say Eubie, that was really unique—wearing a bow tie through it all! But now it's time to go!

EUBIE

But, I don't want to leave here. Not now. Not ever.

JOY

Ah, that's sweet, Eubie. But, I know who I am and where I belong. And I belong on my Chanteuse Poster.

Eubie

But I don't know who I am; or where I belong. I don't know *my* essence.

JOY

I'm all dressed now Eubie and need to high step it off to the Island of "Despair."  
Coming?

(JOY tap dances around)

OVERVIEW

And Joy tap-dances away off the poster.

(EUBIE follows)

And Eubie follows onto the black dance floor. And they tap on down the great black way.

JOY

Island ahead!

OVERVIEW

And there is nothing on the Island but pole structures that look like crucifixes. And crumpled up old posters all over the ground. And Joy pokes around and miraculously, immediately, finds the chanteuse poster.

(The POSTER ENSEMBLE enter with  
an empty frame)

JOY

Eubie, help me put it up.

OVERVIEW

And Eubie does. And it is wrinkled and faded; but it is clearly the chanteuse poster.

JOY

Now kiss me goodbye, Eubie.

OVERVIEW

So Eubie kisses Joy

(The POSTER ENSEMBLE frame her  
in the empty poster frame)

and she moves into the poster and—LO!—She slips into the figure of the chanteuse on the piano and she is caught forever, arms shooting over her head, in the high-angst moment of the blues. And Eubie is depressed and his feet start to tap dance away.

EUBIE

To where? Back to Bodoni County?

OVERVIEW

Then—LO!—Eubie hears Old Matilda Trimble's voice saying,

OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

(Voice *amplified*)

Look for the stained glass poster, Eubie.

(Two more MEMBERS from The ENSEMBLE enter with another empty Poster Frame and lay it on the ground—they move back)

OVERVIEW

And there it is. At his feet. A faded ripped poster of a stained glass window. And it is of the naked god Mercury.

EUBIE

With no zits and the most magnificent yo-yo's that ever were. And there are wings on his heels and a little World War I tin hat on his head and he's dashing through a meteor explosion of reds and blues and greens and magentas and oranges!

OVERVIEW

And Eubie's heart idles like a truck, he's so excited;

(The two Poster ENSEMBLE accomplish the following)

and, quickly, he puts up the poster facing the chanteuse poster--and suddenly panics:

EUBIE

Is this what I really want?

OVERVIEW

Then Eubie hears Old Matilda Trimble's voice:

OLD MATILDA TRIMBLE

(Off. Voice Amplified)

It's either this, Eubie; or return to Zitsville. —No, Eubie! There's no choice! And you know it!

(The Two Poster Frame ENSEMBLE frame EUBIE, opposite JOY's frame)

OVERVIEW

So Eubie climbs into the poster and becomes the wingèd God Mercury! And he appears to be dashing toward the chanteuse poster—and will always appear to be dashing that way! And Eubie is finally happy, for he will now look on his Joy, forever and ever—there, on the Island of Despair.

(They SING)

EUBIE AND JOY

SAND DUNE BLUES.

JOY

ESCAPING FROM THE WORLD'S WOES.

EUBIE AND JOY

SAND DUNE BLUES.

EUBIE

THE FREEDOM OF MY YO-YO'S.

EUBIE AND JOY

NEVER A TEAR, FROM YEAR TO YEAR. . .

SAND DUNE BLUES! SAND DUNE BLUES!

OVERVIEW

**And so ends our fable!**

(JOY, EUBIE AND THE POSTER ENSEMBLE EXIT)

I know I know, Clarence, what your next footnote will read: "So you did get caught up in it, eh, Jonathan"

(He goes to The Big Book. Points)

All right. So I did. Big Time.

(Turns the page)

—**And**, it was fun, easy, but—

(On The Left: **TENTH Entry: Personhood for Jonathan Overview?**)

. . . Ah! The final entry. . . which I must do, Boss Clarence notes here.

"Get through this one, Jonathan. . . transcend this one, Jonathan. . . and if you still want your PersonHood. . . it's yours." . . .

(Overview takes a deep breath and announces)

TENTH AND LAST ENTRY: PERSONHOOD FOR JONATHAN OVERVIEW?

"NOVEMBER IS MY TIME." As told by JONATHAN OVERVIEW as BENJAMIN BERNHARD.

(SINGS)

THE LEAVES ARE LOSING COLOR,  
THEY'VE GONE BROWN  
AND NOW THEY'RE FALLING.  
IT'S NOVEMBER.

## OVERVIEW

(Continued. SINGS, as BENJAMIN BERNHARD)

THE BRANCHES LOOK LIKE ARTERIES  
AND THROUGH THEM YOU CAN SEE  
THE STEEL-GRAY SKY.

THE SPECIAL CHILL DEVELOPING  
IS WARMING ME  
BECAUSE IT IS NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER IS MY TIME. NOVEMBER IS MY TIME.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN APRIL  
(THAT CLICHE,  
WITH ITS GREEN PROMISE),  
I'D REMEMBER.

THE PROSPECT OF A WARMING TREND  
WOULD TELL ME  
THAT MY WORLD  
COULD FIND ITS GLOW.  
BUT NOW I KNOW THE BRIGHTENING SUN  
DEPRESSES ME AND I LONG FOR NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER IS MY TIME. NOVEMBER IS MY TIME.

EVERY YEAR,  
THE ROSEBUSHES BLOOM—I KNOW THEY DO;  
BUT TOO SOON THE FLOWERS DIE—AND THE THORNS REMAIN.  
MOMENTS  
IN MY LIFE HAVE BLOSSOMED, TOO;  
BUT PEEL AWAY.  
AND WHAT SURVIVES, I MUST CONFESS,  
IS A LONELY WALK  
THROUGH MEMORIES  
WITH SOOTHING EMPTINESS.

THE WIND CHILL IS INSIDE ME,  
NOW MY SOUL IS BLEAK AND ARCTIC,  
IT'S NOVEMBER.



(The ENSEMBLE enter; watch JONATHAN  
exit from Bodoni County)

ENSEMBLE

(SING)

A LOT OF UNHAPPY NEIGHBORS CAN'T STAND IT HERE;  
THEY HAVE REACHED A DEAD END LIFE,  
IN BODONI COUNTY.  
TO OTHERS, THE KIND OF DESPAIR THEY DAILY FACE,  
HELPS THEM ENDURE WITH COMPASSION,  
JOY AND GRACE. . .

In this place.  
In this typical place  
called Bodoni County.

CURTAIN

(MUSIC DURING CURTAIN CALL:  
"CARDBOARD CITY ROMP."  
AFTER EACH ENSEMBLE MEMBER  
HAS TAKEN A BOW,  
THE ENSEMBLE SING:)

ENSEMBLE

**BODONI COUNTY'S ALL SET FOR ITS ANNUAL ROMP,  
AND THEY'RE CLOSIN' OFF TRAFFIC.  
BODONI COUNTY'S ALIVE WITH A DIXIELAND STOMP.  
YOU CAN ASK ANY LAMPPOST!**

**MEAN PEOPLE ARE LOSIN' THEIR FROWN.  
PALE PEOPLE ARE TANNIN' UP BROWN;  
STREET LADIES ARE SHAGGIN' AROUND  
WITH A MIND--TO DO A BUMP AND GRIND!**

**BODONI COUNTY'S ALL SET TO RAMBLE TONIGHT--  
EVEN SHINNIN' UP TRASH CANS.  
DAY-GLO PAINT ON EACH SHACK SO SUNSHINE BRIGHT.**

**DON'T FRET IT; YOU'LL NEVER BE PURE.  
SO KEEP ON GOING, THAT'S THE WAY TO ENDURE—**

**START JUMPIN'! THERE'S NOTHIN' TO FEAR;  
BRING ALL THE VITTLES, WE'LL SUPPLY THE BEER—**

**DON'T SWEAT IT! IT'S GONNA BE FINE;  
IF THE BEER DON'T DO IT, THEN WE GOT LOTS'A WINE—**

**BODONI COUNTY—**

**BODONI COUNTY  
IS HAVIN' ITS ANNUAL ROOOOOOOOOMP!!!!!!**

**(HOUSE LIGHTS UP.  
AND THE AUDIENCE EXITS)**