

# **Rubber City**

a play

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## THE CHARACTERS

5m 1f or 4m 2f

CHET	An Elvis impersonator
BETTY	His wife, a Marilyn Monroe impersonator
MOMMA & PAPA	Chet's MOMMA and Papa. Played by either a man or woman.
JACK G. KENNEDY	A local politician
OLD SHEP & JESUS	Chet's loyal hound dog, sidekick, and backup guitar. Later he is the Son of God.
ABE	A vinyl window salesman

## THE SETTING

The Rubber City, Akron, Ohio, in the not too distant past. Set in the Galokowski living room and dining room, which is set on a two-lane blacktop "highway" with a broken white line running down the middle – at the end of the highway a guardrail and dead end.

There is an old style television set, a sofa, a big comfortable chair (Chet's chair), and a dining table with a few chairs on the "highway". Beer cans and ashtrays are here and there. Maybe to the side of the "road" some tumbleweed, highway litter, discarded car parts, soda cans and other such street trash. There is a sense of wear, fade, and fatigue, as if having lived through, and being eclipsed by a more prosperous time.

The backdrop is a wall with two windows and a door that sorta look like a face. The windows have pull down shades and curtains. At center of the stage is a microphone stand.

**Optional:** Above or at the top of the wall, or the wall itself, is a large projection screen—the dream screen. The projections can alternatively be presented on a portable tri-pod type screen.

If projections are used they should have the look and feel of home movies, snapshot and scrapbook pictures. The images are off in color, either too saturated or alternatively too faded and scratched.

**Note:** Depending on interest, talent, and wherewithal, the lyric and musical elements of the play can be realized in few different or combination of ways: 1) No instruments are used and the lyrics indicated by the script are presented in a talk-singing fashion. Elements of karaoke-style singing might also be used. 2) As a sort of play with live music, in which guitars and amps are also located on stage. In this scenario CHET, OLD SHEP, BETTY, and MOMMA are actor-musicians-singers.

## ACT ONE

At open, the Elvis concert theme song from Holtz's "The Planets" (aka the song from the movie "2001 a Space Odyssey") plays loudly over the sound system as concert lighting comes up to discover Chet in his bath robe and pajamas. Chet is middle aged and stoned; he is wearing flashy mirrored sunglasses.

He plays a wild and stoned guitar riff (with a real guitar or air guitar) oblivious to anyone or anything. He completes the riff with a flourish then bows humbly, then raises his arms up outstretched welcoming a swell of canned audience applause and cheers. Chet is obviously moved by the approbation and wipes tears from his misty eyes. He is honored and humbled by the applause. He bows again, waving to the audience members with recognition. He is in a dream of glory. After a moment the applause and cheers fade. He goes to his microphone.

CHET

Thank you, thank you all so very very much! You'al are wonderful, beautiful people here at da...Cumberlin' Gap Hotel and Travel Park, yeah! God bless y'all! ... All right! Back on the road again! Hi everybody! Let me tell you it feels real real reeeeeal good to be back her with y'all again.

(He recognizes people in the audience—or thinks he does.)

Hi there! Good to see you, been some time, thanks for coming out ... I'm just dandy, you? ... Haven't seen you in a dog's age! I am honored, deeply moved. All right, down ta business, been a long time! Suppose you all know by now why y'all's here? Why I'm here! This here is my comeback concert!!!

WHOOOEEE! Retirement has been was nice, but I really missed all the action, you know, being up here on the stage, feelin' good ... BOY O' BOY THIS HERE FEELS GOOD! Was down, but I AM not out! All I gotta say is ... y'all are in for one heck of a HOT DANG show! Let's have a drink.

(Betty enters.)

BETTY

Hello, Chet.

CHET

Howdy do! ... Betty?

BETTY

You know what you're doing?

CHET

Talkin' ta my fans!

(to the Audience)

Ain't that right!

(to BETTY)

What is it, sumthin' ain't right...

BETTY

I was out with that big lady that talks real loud, the one with the big fat poodle, it got me thinking everything is right then all of a sudden, ooh, here it comes. I thought that lady was my friend, she started saying things, like I was bimbo, I sleep around. I aspire to be a fine actress, an entertainer, and, you know, it's disappointing. I don't understand why people aren't a little more generous with each other. I don't like to say this, but I'm afraid there is a lot of envy, disappointment, and meanness in the world.

CHET

We start out doin' somethin', meanin' no harm, somethin' naturally in us to do, most folks get confused, upset...you're my special girl, Betty.

BETTY

You struggle, you build, you try, you turn yourself inside out for your public, aspiring to make the world a more beautiful place...

CHET

But it's never enough.

BETTY

Damn 'em all!

CHET

Mmmmm. What is that beautiful? Smells like green perfume.  
Whooowee!

BETTY

Ahh, you know that talk makes me goose-pimply all over.

CHET

Oh, yeah?

BETTY

It's sage.

CHET

Woman like you, sweet all the time!

BETTY

Lots better.

CHET

Gee, it's heaven in here.

BETTY

You know, with you I forget myself, don't know where I am, or who I am, or what I'm doing. But don't stop, don't stop. Don't ever stop saying nice things to me. Promise?

CHET

Yes, ma'am, promise.

(Pause. Chet tries to figure out how best to break the news.)

Ah...ahem...I ah...hey there...baby, honey pie?

BETTY

Why did you stop, you promised.

CHET

Because ... now I'm going to kiss you...

BETTY

...very quickly and really hard.

(They kiss)

BETTY

Chet, I been meaning to tell you something.

CHET

Baby, remember when we was touring? We're in a town, we did a show, come off then ride with the top down, go to the next town. We really had a ball. I wish - we've been so lucky. I just can't believe it sometimes. Things have happened so fast that I...

BETTY

...but somehow its time to move on?

CHET

That's right, every performer likes to, needs to...

BETTY

Chet! I'm coming down with the seven-year itch. What am I going to do?

CHET

If something itches, you gotta scratch.

BETTY

Really?

CHET

We got us a gig for tonight!

BETTY

What?

CHET

Get you party clothes on!

BETTY

Have you looked at your bloodshot eyes?

CHET

I see fine.

BETTY

Yeah...gosh, sure....

CHET

Somthin' wrong?

BETTY

A gig? I...I can't...

CHET

Look at you, I got me hot girl sweet enough to eat, a fine lookin' woman.

BETTY

What's the big idea?!

CHET  
I thought you'd be happy!

BETTY  
I should be.

CHET  
Ain't too big, on the road to our comeback.

BETTY  
Comeback?

CHET  
Baby, get all gussied up n' all, wear your glad rags, that'll cheer you up...what'ya think?

BETTY  
...I just don't know what to say about how I feel right now.

CHET  
You're a fine woman, my special gal!

BETTY  
Things are happening so fast...

CHET  
(With an Elvis attitude and pout)  
Hey baby, I ain't askin' much of you No no no no no no no no baby, I ain't askin' much of you Just a big-a hunk o' love will do.

BETTY  
How's 'bout tomorrow night?

CHET  
Tonight's ta night!

BETTY  
You're havin' fun with me!

CHET  
After the show we're gonin' dancin' until you're ready to drop. I'll kiss your sweet red cherry lips until you holler stop!

BETTY  
This ain't happening...

CHET

Well lawdy, lawdy, lawdy miss clawdy. Girl you sure look good to me!

BETTY

You are, aren't you?

CHET

Look at you, smiling up so shy.

BETTY

This ain't shy!

CHET

(As if in an Elvis movie)

We got us an invite today to perform, "Elvis and Marylyn, Together at Last" at the seventy-third annual Civic Costume Gala, Akron Chamber of Commerce. What do you think of that, baaay bee? We have been called upon to fill a last minute vacancy! Our comeback concert! Ahh, your beautiful eyes gettin' mighty big. Them tickets cost two hundred and fifty, that's t-w-o- a-n-d-f-i-f-t-y U.S. American dollars. Everybody knows about it, all over the teevee. Gonna be live on PBS! Baby girl, I love you so.

BETTY

How did everything got all changed around so fast?

CHET

Gotta roll with the punches.

BETTY

I'm scared.

CHET

I'm kinda nervous, too, been kind of nervous all my life, but you learnt to make do.

BETTY

I need to talk to my spiritual advisor, Miss Irene.

CHET

Miss Irene knows.

BETTY

Darlin'?

CHET

All you gotta do is say yes.



BETTY

...Give me five minutes...

CHET

(As Elvis)

Well, it's one for the money, Two for the show, Three to get ready, Now go, cat, go! But don't you step on my blue suede shoes. You can do anything but lay off of my Blue suede shoes. The king is back!

(CHET staggers and is a disoriented looking for BETTY.)

BETTY

I'm over here!

CHET

I'm so keyed up that I just can't relax...

(Strikes a series of Elvis poses then staggers.)

YEAH!

BETTY

We gotta talk.

CHET

Talked with Skippy, J.D., Jack, the whole mafia, and, ahh, let me ... yeah! Freddy...they're gonna back me up. Baby, when we first started doing our performances, everyone was happy. We're gonna keep singing the songs everyone liked, and keep doing what we always been doing on stage. Five minutes' up, get ready!

BETTY

Don't want nobody makin' up my mind for me.

CHET

I thought all the excitement...we have tremendous personal magnetism...

(To the audience)

Ain't that right folks! Shouldn't she...Man, what more could a girl want from a guy!

(To BETTY)

Baby, don't be cruel to a heart that's true!

BETTY

I need some oxygen.

(BETTY runs off stage. CHET follows her for a few steps then staggers.)

CHET

Hey, Betty' ... Remember, how we used ta smile, look at one another?

(Looks upward)

Please Elvis. Please help me through this moment of momentary uncertainty.

(Then he finds and hears a response)

Jesus! Yes, sir, I hear ya, now you hear me, give us the strength to do that show tonight.

(Looking at and responding to another point in the sky)

Ain't that right Elvis?

(Turns back to the point were the imagined Jesus is located)

Please, pretty please make Betty understand.

(Talk singing)

Love me tender, love me sweet, never let me go. You have made my life complete, and I love you so. Love me tender, love me true, all my dreams fulfilled. For my darlin' I love you, and I always will. Love me tender, love me long, take me to your heart. For it's there that I belong, and we'll never part.

(As he sings MOMMA enters. MOMMA is Polish-born and stocky and short and wearing a housedress and apron. If played by a man every attempt to make her as believable as possible should be made. Her hair is in a hair net. Her feet in house slippers, her legs wearing rolled down support stockings. MOMMA slowly approaches CHET without his seeing her. The singing ends with an applause track. CHET bows.)

MOMMA

(With a Polish accent)

Chetty, why you so sad?

CHET

I got the blues mama.

MAMA

All time you have blues.

CHET

Lot more here lately.

(BETTY re-enters)

BETTY

I do not appreciate you two talkin' behind my back!

MOMMA

We no talk about you!

BETTY

Who's talkin' to you anyways?!

(BETTY exits)

CHET

Please, I gotta a lot of work ta do, whew weee, concentrate on the show.

MOMMA

(Going in the direction of BETTY'S exit)

I no talk to you Miss Hollywood! Why must you take bubble bath all time!?

CHET

Momma, be cool! "Jail House Rock"!

(CHET positions himself in front of the TV set and moves with Elvis and the scene he is seeing.)

MOMMA

I no like that woman.

CHET

Let's rock, everybody, let's rock. Everybody in the whole cell block was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock.

MOMMA

If you papa live he no like that woman.

CHET

Sit down, Momma. Take the load off...

MOMMA

He no alive, but if he be alive.

CHET

Everybody in the whole cellblock was dancin' to the Jailhouse Rock...Y'all makin' me nervous!

(MOMMA goes to CHET and feels his head for a temperature.)

MOMMA

How you feel?

CHET

I'm feel in' great. I never felt ...  
 (Suddenly feigning sickness)  
 I need something...

MOMMA

You have pain?

CHET

Yes, terrible. It's terrible, ooow, sharp, can barely stand it.

MOMMA

(Suspicious)  
 You want red and white one?

CHET

The blue with the white stripe, please!

MOMMA

OHHHNOOOO' Doctor say those be special pill. You no hurt like that.

CHET

Yes I do ... Don't be a stingy little Momma, you're 'bout to starve me half to death, well you can spare a kiss or two and still have plenty left, no no no baby, I ain't askin' much of you just a big-a big-a hunk o' love will do  
 (MOMMA twists his ear)  
 Okay! Okay! The candy canes!

MOMMA

You be nice to you MOMMA?

(MOMMA offers her cheek to be kissed. CHET knows the game and kisses her.)

CHET

Okay. Now hurry up, pleaseeeeeee!

(MOMMA exits. "Jailhouse Rock" swells, playing via the television. CHET struts his Elvis stuff around the living room loosing all sense of time and space.)

The warden threw a party in the county jail. The prison band was there and they began to wail. The band was jumpin' and the joint began to swing. You should've heard those knocked out jailbirds sing.

(MOMMA re-enters with a tray with pills and a glass of milk.)

MOMMA

Like Christmas cookie, you feel better.

CHET

Bugsy turned to Shifty and he said, 'Nix nix, I wanna stick around a while and get my kicks.' ... Wha?

MOMMA

Want glass milk?

(MOMMA gives him a pill.)

CHET

(Examines the pills)

I'll go with the red, stop with the green! All right momma!

MOMMA

(She strokes his hair)

You feel better now, my baby.

(CHET takes a drink from a *Papst Blue Ribbon* beer can on the table, then spits).

CHET

SHIIIIITTTT!

MOMMA

Drink milk.

CHET

Gimmie that one...

MOMMA

Where one?

CHET

Over there where! DAMN! TASTES LIKE SHIT!

(Searches for a can with beer in it)

MOMMA

It be warm.

CHET

Be okay.

(CHET takes the beer and drinks as MOMMA looks on with admiration.)

MOMMA

You just like him.

CHET

Wha?

MOMMA

Stefan, you Papa. How you feel now?

CHET

I'm rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy teddy. I'm rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy teddy. I'm rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy teddy. Rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy to Rock'n'roll!

MOMMA

You no ready.

CHET

Near 'bout as ready as I'll ever be!

MOMMA

You handsome boy.

(She touches him gently)

Soft skin, big eyes.

(CHET takes MOMMA in his arms and spins her in a dance.)

CHET

Gonna kick off my shoes Roll up my faded jeans. Grab my rock'n'roll baby. Pour on the steam. I shuffle to the left. I shuffle to the right. I'm gonna rock'n'roll. Till the early early night 'cause I'm rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy teddy. I'm rea-dy rea-dy rea-dy teddy!

MOMMA

You always love sing.

CHET

I just love caressing people with my voice.

MOMMA

I know you be good tonight, Chetty, you no worry.

(CHET is drawn to the television, its light magically flickering.)

CHET

Look at him. Momma, his every gesture, his every move.

MOMMA

I so happy you go back work.

CHET

I'm so light, I walk right, oh let me, oh let me, let me do what you know I love to do!

MOMMA

You get money from Elvis job then you promise start bakery again.

CHET

Never said that.

MOMMA

Yes, you say!

CHET

Pill talk...

MOMMA

Ohhh, no, pill talk!

CHET

I'll get ya some bucks, hire somebody, what d'ya say, Momma?

MOMMA

OH NO! You must to open again! You, you Chetty!

CHET

Momma. com'on, you're interrruptin' my flow here, got to get my groove groomed. Go on now, go watch your teevee, that Sony I got ya with disability money.

MOMMA

I no like my room. I afraid I die, you no hear I die.

CHET

Play your radio.

MOMMA

Radio talk to me all time.

CHET

Yeah, what it say?

MOMMA

Foreign trade import deficit, jobs go to China, America dollar is no good, decline confidence, environment collapse, aliens from outer space run government, world end everyone go to hell...

CHET

No way!

MOMMA

We no make nothing no more no make anymore steel, no shirt, no tires, no bread! Only take now, get fat with chemicals die with heart disease.

CHET

Momma, you're depressin' me, real, real busy right now.

MOMMA

Busy? You do nothing!

(The telephone rings)

BETTY

(Off stage)

Chet honey, get that, I'm takin' a bubble bath!

CHET

Okay sweet thang, bay beeee, I love you so!

(The phone is still ringing as MOMMA picks up the phone without answering. She walks away from CHET.)

CHET

Lemme have that telephone... Momma!

MOMMA

Why you so crazy like dis?

(As the phone rings its volume increases.)

CHET

My boys, the mafia, the posse, they're calling!



(The sound of the bathtub stopper being lifted and water draining. The phone continues to ring. MOMMA plays a little cat and mouse with CHET.)

BETTY

(Off stage)

Chet? You gonna get the damn phone?

MOMMA

YOU ASSHOLE, YOU! Singing is no real work! BAKING BREAD IS REAL WORK FOR MAN!

BETTY

CHET!

CHET

(Anxious)

Momma! Please, pretty please, I need that phone!

(The phone ringing gets louder still.)

MOMMA

Look you, you crazy for telephone. Stupid!

BETTY

CHEEEETTTTTT! GODDAMNIT! I'm expectin' a phone call!

MOMMA

Promise you be nice to you Momma?

CHET

Pleaseeeeee, cross my heart, hope to die.

(MOMMA gives CHET the telephone. As soon as CHET picks up the phone the room transforms with BETTY entering and stepping into an isolated light. She looks like Marylyn Monroe, the iconic sex goddess, her hair is wrapped in a towel and she is wearing a white terry cloth robe. CHET is swimming, trying to find figure out what is real. Only he sees BETTY and JGK.)

BETTY

Hello, mister Kennedy.

(JOHN G. KENNEDY, a local politician looking and talking a lot like John F. Kennedy is discovered at another part of the stage in an isolated light.)

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Marilyn, sweetheart?

BETTY

(Gushes)

Gee Jackie, I can't really talk, if you know what I mean.

JOHN KENNEDY

Darling, I had to hear your voice.

MOMMA

Who that be, Chetty?

CHET

(Covers the receiver)

Shhhhhh! Momma...

BETTY

I can't go through with it, he can't live without me.

(BETTY cries theatrically.)

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Marilyn, please, this is a critical moment.

BETTY

I'm having a crisis.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity.

BETTY

Wow, I really love an intelligent man.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Our hopes, our dreams...

BETTY

...my prince charming.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

We will be strong in adversity.

BETTY

But I'm scared, Jack.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Tomorrow belongs to those that have the courage to live it.

BETTY

All I want is to be loved.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.

BETTY

He knows were in cahoots.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

We have the power to make this the best romance in the history of the world or to make it the last ... He does?

(BETTY and JGK vanish as the room returns to normal. CHET is shaking his head and hides his eyes. MOMMA, concerned, goes to him.)

MOMMA

Hey, Chetty, you be all right?

CHET

Huh? Momma ...

(To where BETTY and JGK were previously)  
Y'all go away!

MOMMA

Who dat be?

CHET

I'm oh so lonely, so sad and blue ...

MOMMA

What dey say?

CHET

I'm caught in a trap.

MOMMA

You got suspicious mind!

CHET

(to MOMMA)

I gonna settle this up!

(Calling to BETTY off stage)

Hey Betty, honey, sweetheart, baby! Who was on that there telephone just now?

BETTY

(Off stage)

Wrong number.

(CHET staggers)

MOMMA

Chetty, sit, you no look good.

CHET

Thinkin' Momma.

MOMMA

Thinking no good for you, Chetty.

(BETTY and JGK appear outside one of the room's windows -- the window shade rolls up loudly to announce them. BETTY and JGK are kissing wildly, their clothes half off.)

CHET

MOMMA SEE THAT!! This is how thinkin' starts' One thought leads to another.

MOMMA

What wrong' you talk to you Momma!

(MOMMA goes to the window and pulls the shade down. That action snaps CHET out of his manic disturbance.)

CHET

My Momma's so sweet, Momma's so nice.

MOMMA

If be trouble take Momma's advice! You come, sit, take ease.

(MOMMA guides him to a chair and sits him down.)

CHET

Thinkin' ain't where it's at.

(CHET waves his arm as if waving bad thought away then notices the trails.)

Yeah, see that ... Whoa...Momma, I'm gettin' off now I'm seeing trails, colorful colors...

MOMMA

You go see Doctor Duslack.

CHET

Don't you have to soak your teeth, pray to the pope, take a nap, somethin'?

MOMMA

I be with my family. No make fun pope.

(The room is transformed into a mirror ball dance floor. JGK and BETTY enter. JGK is not wearing pants. BETTY is in a very sexy outfit. CHET is spinning with disorientation. MOMMA sees nothing and is concerned for CHET. JGK sings to BETTY then they dance to the instrumental version of the song "Fly Me To The Moon".)

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Fly me to the moon, Let me play among the stars, Let me see what spring is like, On a-Jupiter and Mars, In other words, please be true, In other words, in other words, I love ... you...

CHET

I mean, I can take all the, you know, I can take ridicule, slander. I've been called names you know right to my face and everything - that I can take! I CAN'T JUST STAND HERE AND TAKE THIS I'VE GOT TO DO SUMTHIN'!

MOMMA

CHETTY! YOU SIT! No good for you, pressure blood high.

CHET

(To BETTY)

Hey, you breaking up the act?

BETTY

(Continues to dance)

If you wanna make somethin' else out of my dancin' ...well, I can't run the world.

CHET

Who's that guy??

JOHN G. KENNEDY

(To BETTY)

Fly me to the moon...

BETTY

I haven't danced like this in years.

CHET

You smell like a dime store. You know what that means?

BETTY

I'm dancing with somebody. I'll dance with anybody. Why? Because... we're all dying, aren't we? Every minute we're dying.

CHET

I'm going crazy!

MOMMA

Chetty, take ease!

CHET

Momma! Things is fallin' apart.

(MOMMA goes to the area and sweeps her arms to prove to CHET the space is empty. BETTY and JGK dance around her.)

MOMMA

Chetty, NOBODY HERE!

BETTY

(To JGK)

All I want is to be loved!

JOHN G. KENNEDY

You make a man very happy.

CHET

Can't you tell I love you from the beating of my heart? Come on home, girl.

BETTY

(To CHET)

Oh, isn't that the dearest dog? Look how sweet.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Let me take you back, get your things.

CHET

You just shine in my eyes. That's my true feelin', Betty.

BETTY

Here. Puppy...we may not be anything anymore, but we'll always be a good friends.

CHET

I ain't gonna keep hanging around!

BETTY

You're a big banana-head.

CHET

Banana head?

BETTY

If you really loved me I'd be wearing real diamonds! Drinking Champagne.

CHET

Momma! Tell her to stop!

(BETTY and JGK continue to dance and joyfully spin through the living room.)

MOMMA

(Very angry as if a new personality)

Chetty, You no man no more. No give me grand children. Dis family die with you. You are nothing! So far we come but everything fall down now, everything old garbage all over. I pray, pray all time to Jesus, Virgin Mary and Saint St. Stanislaus. Signs of the times no good. The end of the world, Chetty, Antichrist come, turn from wicked ways, then Lady Fatima hear from heaven, forgive sin, heal dis land. She begs to pray, pray for sinner selves for soul salvation, take rosary. No, you no know do nothing. Sing, play guitar, think you something but you nothing!

CHET

Whoa...I gotta think all this over once ... think it over twice.

MOMMA

No think no more!

CHET

Momma, why does confusion hurt so so bad? Did I lose what I never had? I don't have the right to cry, I believed in my own lie. I thought she was mine 'n things were just fine.

MOMMA

(Suddenly caring)

Chetty! Chetty! What wrong?

(She slaps him across the face)

Sit down in you papa's chair!

CHET

(To BETTY)

The girl I'm mad about is just a gadabout! I know you've made your plan!

(BETTY and JGK dance off in a flourish. The "Fly Me to the Moon" fades. The living room returns to normal.)

I know now her love's not real.

MOMMA

You no play tonight.

CHET

I gotta, I gotta, no, no, I need ta, my come back!

MOMMA

Here. You take ease. I get warm cloth for head.

CHET

Thank ya, thank ya very much.

MOMMA

(As she exits)

I tell you no be happy with dat woman. Why no marry Sophie Sadowski nice Polish girl from Parma like I tell you!

CHET

Momma...

MOMMA

I know, I know, you no want to hear!

(MOMMA exits. BETTY enters from another direction wearing a bathrobe, her hair in towel.)



BETTY

There a party going on out here?

CHET

Please, pleeeeeeassse come here and touch me!

(BETTY goes to him and touches him with concern and a little amusement. CHET is relieved.)

BETTY

You're flying tonight, ain't ya?

CHET

Fly me to the moon, let me dance among the stars!

BETTY

She gettin' you all worked up about the pope again?

CHET

(To MOMMA)

The pope, Poland, baked goods!!

BETTY

You don't even like bread.

MOMMA

(From Off Stage)

You be nice to Pope!

CHET

I ain't all washed up...am I?

BETTY

You're just hittin' you prime. Ta be honest, I kinda miss bein' on stage, the lights, everybody looking at me, admirin' feeling beautiful. I do.

CHET

We really had it goin' didn't we?

BETTY

First time I saw our names up in lights at the Holiday Inn, I said, God, somebody's made a mistake. But there it was, in lights, no mistakin' that.

CHET

You lookin' mighty sexy.

BETTY

Why do you feel we's always running into people's unconscious?

CHET

I don't really know.

BETTY

People look at me like, like you just did, like I'm a symbol, their mirror instead of a real person. They see what they wanna see, usually its lewd weird fertility dream, all about desire but they won't admit it.

CHET

When I was a boy, I always saw myself as a hero in comic books and in movies. I grew up believing a dream When I got outta High School I was driving a truck. Ya know, I was just a poor-boy from Memphis. I was driving a truck and training to be an electrician. I suppose I got wired the wrong way round somewhere along the line. One day, I went into a recording studio and made a record for a guy named Sam Phillips on Sun Records. He put the record out in about a week. I went back to driving a truck and just forgot about it. Man, that record came out and was real big in Memphis. They started playing it, and it got real big. Don't know why?

BETTY

Chet, you're doing too much doctor dope, your mind is gettin' like the furry end of a lollipop.

(MOMMA enters and puts a damp washcloth on CHET'S forehead and then goes to her chair to rock.)

CHET

You know, sometimes ... I sort of get tired of being Elvis.

BETTY

I like being who and what I am and then I don't. I don't like all the lies that have been said about us. It ain't true what people think about either one of us, we're just ordinary everyday people.

CHET

An image is one thing, human being another. I find it very hard to live up to an image.

BETTY

I think the only reason people are attracted to me is because I'm vulnerable. The world is needy and feels what I feel, I guess I just feel more intensely, I don't know, maybe I'm way too sensitive and loving for my own good...Chet,

can we go to Vegas, the lights always make me happy.

CHET

Viva Las Vegas! VIVA!

BETTY

I think all the dreams in the world are between Las Vegas and Hollywood.

(CHET thinks he's on stage, waves to his audience. BETTY'S attention is drawn to the flashing television set.)

CHET

God bless and thank you, thank you very very much, ladies and germs...

BETTY

(Points to the television)

Ain't that man magnificent?

CHET

Thin as a rake and more handsome than ten movie stars.

BETTY

People who knew Elvis said you was a better performer than he ever was. He got all fat, ugly, full of dope before he died.

CHET

Now don't be cruel...

BETTY

Audiences lovvvvvved our act.

CHET

(Waving to an audience member)

That's right! Good to see y'all!

BETTY

With the good lord's understanding, forgiveness and guidance we can be a stars!

CHET

My greatest moment was playing the Great Plains Savings and Loan Convention at the Great Western Hotel, Omaha, Nebraska...

(Music and lighting sweeps over the stage transporting CHET to time and place.)

BETTY

Instamatic flashcubes flashin', men sending me flowers wanting my panties ... I was their goddess.

CHET

Women tearin' my clothes! Screams screamin' I WAS THE KING!!!

BETTY

But Diamonds...are a girl's best...best friend. Diamonds... diamonds... I don't mean rhinestones... but diamonds... are a girls best... best friend"

CHET

A well I bless my soul. What's wrong with me? I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy tree. My friends say I'm actin' wild as a bug. I'm in love...I'm all shook up. Mm mm oh, oh, yeah, yeah!

(Canned applause. Then CHET goes to MOMMA and bows to kiss her hand and gives her a scarf.)

CHET

But the king is dead. There was a time when I couldn't imagine life without him. When he died something died within me. Before I had hope, a desire, a reason to get up outta the bed in the morning. The glory is gone. What was will never be again. I sincerely believe my industrial accident is directly connected to that momentous historical event ... Now I proudly wear a permanent reminder of his passing ... You know he comes to me to reassure me ... he enters into me. He'll always be with me, amen.

(MOMMA and BETTY vanish. CHET'S faithful dog and longtime backup OLD SHEP enters through the front door in an excited dog flourish, barking and jumping on the furniture and finally goes to CHET and licks him.)

CHET

Hey!! Old Shep! Ole buddy, where ya been?

OLD SHEP

Chasing some cars, takin a dump on Martin's lawn, humpin' the cute bitch Samantha down the alley.

CHET

That's my boy!

(OLD SHEP barks excitedly, rolls on the ground, as CHET pets and scratches him.)

CHET

Revved up about the gig tonight?

OLD SHEP

Like a puppy!

(Barking wildly)

How you hangin'? Ahhh, sorry Chet.

CHET

(Holds out his hands)

Shep, my heart is beating so much it scares me to death!

OLD SHEP

Like ole times!

(Howling)

CHET

That's right, we's goin' to the top! Have all sorts of money to do whatever the hell we want to! Simulated diamond-el collar for all yer bitches, what'ya say?

OLD SHEP

(Howling with excitement)

You wanna warm up?

CHET

Now we're talkin'.

(CHET and OLD SHEP go to their respective microphones.)

OLD SHEP

I feel good.

CHET

Let it rip.

OLD SHEP

Check, one, two buckle my shoe. Juan, does tres...

CHET and OLD SHEP

You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, cryin' all the time. You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, cryin' all the time. Well, you ain't never caught a rabbit and you ain't no friend of mine.

When they said you was high classed, well, that was just a lie. When they said you was high classed, well, that was just a lie. You ain't never caught a rabbit

and you ain't no friend of mine.

(MOMMA enters with a rolled up newspaper and goes after OLD SHEP who runs away from her whining and cowering.)

MOMMA

Get off dog! You stay off furniture!

CHET

MOMMA! PLEEEASE SHEP'S my backup!

(OLD SHEP whines as he runs and hides in a corner.)

MOMMA

Chetty, it no good you talk to Shep. He dog. Talk to you Momma.

CHET

Momma, I wanna be what I use to be!

MOMMA

You need vacation, Chetty.

CHET

Remember that vacation...

(The sound of the wind blowing.)

MOMMA

Family have good time.

CHET

Air Stream camper mirror distortion of the undulating desert sun.

MOMMA

You papa was strong, powerful man, he so full of so many ideas he have and dreams...I so sad.

CHET

Mountains in the hazy distance. There was nothing but miles and miles of miles and miles.

(MOMMA transforms into PAPA with a heavy male voice and stern demeanor).

MOMMA

(As PAPA)

I no know why you buy guitar, Chester Jerzy Zilvinas Galokowski.

CHET

Don't call me that. Papa.

MOMMA

(As PAPA)

It name I give you from my great great grandpapa. Why you buy guitar in pawn shop?

CHET

I wanna be a rock n' roll star. I believe all good things come from God and if God and Elvis didn't want me to sing I wouldn't be.

MOMMA

(As PAPA)

How come you no play accordion, sing nice polka?

CHET

Listen, papa, the mountains are echoing rock n' roll music. Its something that makes me move inside and outside, it's my religion.

(A guitar flourish echoes).

MOMMA

(As PAPA)

I still no know why you want to be like Elvis pelvis.

(PAPA transforms back into MOMMA).

MOMMA

Chetty, I miss you Papa, long time he be gone.

CHET

He worked for what? Died face down in the basement flour room.

MOMMA

No talk like dat, poor Papa work hard for family.

CHET

Listen, Momma, do you hear what I hear?

MOMMA

No.

CHET

Are you lonesome tonight, do you miss me tonight? Are you sorry we drifted apart? Does your memory stray to a brighter sunny day. When I kissed you and called you sweetheart? Do the chairs in your parlor seem empty and bare? Do you gaze at your doorstep and picture me there? Is your heart filled with pain, shall I come back again? Tell me dear, are you lonesome tonight?... Elvis filled that desert, freed me from pain and loneliness...leading me back to Graceland. White columns in the sky, shrouded in the dawn mist with pink faced cherubs hovering welding fender electric guitars. A string quartet of sixteen pink caddie limos in the driveway. Pretty little wide-eyed girls with wet cotton panties waiting for a glimpse, a per chance smile, a slight wave from the King!

(The phone rings. CHET freezes in horror.)

CHET

Momma, I'm havin' a big problem with that phone today.

(The phone is picked up in another room.)

MOMMA

We work so hard. When we first come to dis country we stay with family. Papa make bread, bad white bread for Americans, Wonder Bread! We no happy, work hard all time, save penny, nickel, dime be happy in America, no take bus, walk all time, I give music lesson, want best for you and you dead brother, Stanley and grandson, Anthony. Pioneer Save and Loan give money, we open bakery in 1958. We very happy buy house, shop, Goodyear Tire factory workers buy bread...now look, we sit in dream. This. I old, you sick, you brother, son Little Anthony, papa dead. I afraid go outside, teenager want to take my purse knock me down when I go to grocery store.

(BETTY enters with CHET'S Elvis costume in a dry cleaning bag. The concert chants of "We want Elvis, We Want Elvis!" are heard. BETTY is very excited.)

BETTY

Chet, Honey'?

MOMMA

I know I die soon.

(MOMMA exits sadly)

CHET

Baby, you are beauuuuutiiiiiiifulllllll!



BETTY

You looked so good, so handsome and masculine. Everybody thought you was really famous, thought you was him. All the girls was screaming, "Elvis the pelvis!"

CHET

I am deeply honored. Baby, yous and me gonna take our act back on the road, whatya say?

BETTY

Please accept my apologies, don't, don't, don't, don't be angry with your baby, she loves you.

CHET

That's my girl.

BETTY

Let's have some fun!

CHET

Baby, when you smile ... it's like the sun comin' up.

(MOMMA enters happily carrying a loaf of Vienna Rye bread.)

MOMMA

Look I find!

CHET

What the hell's that?

MOMMA

Vienna Rye.

CHET

Vienna Rye?

MOMMA

I find in shop, behind oven.

BETTY

Looks like petrified dinosaur turd.

MOMMA

It only be old!

(BETTY leaves in a huff.)

CHET

(Appreciating the loaf)

Best Vienna Rye in the Akron-Canton area, shit, the state of Ohio!

(BETTY enters with a loaf of sliced Wonder Bread.)

BETTY

This is what bread is supposed to look like!

MOMMA

'Dis is bread! 'Dis! 'Dis! Good bread for you.

BETTY

It ain't even sliced!

MOMMA

You slice with knife or take with hand like Jesus!

BETTY

You belong in a nursing home.

MOMMA

No! I belong here! 'Dis my home, it no you home!

(Sound music "I Don't want It You Can Have Her" plays with BETTY, CHET, OLD SHEP and MOMMA singing along. The women dance happily. Then MOMMA grabs the white bread from her hands, chases and pelts BETTY with slices.)

CHET, BETTY, OLD SHEP, MOMMA

Oh, I don't want her, you can have her, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me, I don't want her, you can have her, She's too fat for me, She's too fat, She's too fat, She's too fat for me.

MAMMA

(To BETTY)

You like 'dis bread, you like 'dis bread Miss Hollywood! Full of air with pretty wrapper!

(The Polka music continues. CHET and OLD SHEP sing and clap with encouragement.)

OLD SHEP and CHET

I get dizzy, I get numbo, When I'm dancing, With my Jum-Jum-Jumbo

BETTY

Chet, do something!

CHET

Hey Shep, this is fun...Momma, knock it off!

MOMMA

You no do nothin' no more, Chet! I still can do!

BETTY, MOMMA, OLD SHEP and CHET

Oh, I don't want her, you can have her, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me...

BETTY

Call her off Chet!

BETTY, MAMMA, CHET and OLD SHEP

Can she prance up a hill? No, no, no, no, no, Can she dance a quadrille?  
No, no, no, no, no, Does she fit in your coupe? By herself she's a group  
Could she possibly, Sit upon your knee? No, no, no.

MOMMA

(Hitting CHET with the Vienna Rye loaf)

You Papa make 'dis Vienna Rye, Chetty, you Papa. You make too!

CHET

I don't wanna make no bread...

BETTY

I am so tired of this shit!

MOMMA

Three hundred years you family be baker!

BETTY, MOMMA, CHET and OLD SHEP

Oh, I don't want her, you can have her, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me, She's too fat for me, I don't want her, you can have her, She's too fat for me, She's too fat, She's too fat, She's too fat for me.

(MOMMA shuffles off upset.)

BETTY

It's getting so you can't hold a decent conversation around here!

MOMMA

(From off stage)

I no talk to you! You make Chetty be crazy. Miss Hollywood!

(MOMMA re-enters.)

MOMMA

It you fault he no be baker! You fault he make tire, work for Uniroyal. Because you want money money money!!! Now he industrial accident, Uniroyal move to Brazil, now he be nothing! I so mad now!

BETTY

I was pregnant! A union job with benefits?

CHET

It was TEMPORARY! I WAS LAYING LOW, WORKING ON THE NEW ACT!

BETTY

(To MOMMA)

He's all upset, are you happy now?

MOMMA

Chet, you nobody now!

CHET

(Yelling)

I aint' no baker, ain't no rubber work either! I'M A ROCK N' ROLL ENTERTAINER! I AM SOMETHING, SOMEBODY! I KNOW I AM!!

BETTY

(Holding her ears)

I don't need to hear this again!

(The phone rings.)

Hello?

(JACK G. KENNEDY appears. BETTY immediately becomes like Marilyn.)

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Marilyn, you bear heavy responsibilities these days and are reminding me of how particularly heavily the burdens present day events bear upon us all.

BETTY

(Singing)

I wanna be loved by you, just you, And nobody else but you, I wanna be loved by you, alone! Boop-boop-de-boop! I couldn't aspire, To anything higher, Than, to feel the desire, To make you my own! Ba-dum-ba-dum-ba-doodly-dum-boo.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Yes, there is a brighter tomorrow, a new frontier and it is time to travel to our destiny. Ask not what you can do for anyone else, but what you can do for yourself.

BETTY

There must be thousands of girls sitting home alone like me, dreaming of becoming a movie star. But I'm not going to worry about them. Wanna know why?

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Why?

BETTY

Because dreamed the hardest.

(JGK drifts into darkness. Marilyn returns to her BETTY self.)

CHET

(Angry)

Who was that on the phone?

BETTY

I ain't been on the phone.

CHET

You were just now on that telephone!

BETTY

I gotta do my hair and make-up.

CHET

Ain't it time for my injection?

BETTY

(Looks at her watch)

Sit down, fasten your seat belt.

(CHET sits and prepares himself. BETTY exits happily, then re-enters immediately with a syringe.)

BETTY

Candy Lady is here! Squirt! Squirt!

(BETTY injects CHET then exits in slow motion.)

CHET

Hey, Shep, hop on goin' for a joy ride...woowiiiiiiiiiiii!

(OLD SHEP barks for joy and is behind CHET in his chair as if riding in the back seat of a car. CHET slips on his shades and there is the sound of an auto starting and slipping through gears.)

CHET

In gear approaching the interstate ramp. The rumble of acceleration excites me. The engine roars, I'm driving. Wanna go so fast the broken lines will fuse into one continuous high voltage highwire. Somethin' I can hang on to. Somethin' I can trust. Somethin' anythin' to take me through my days. Slip into fourth, the dual carburetor is sucking it in, the engine roars! My balls are wired to the transmission, feelin' vaarrooom then ahhhhhh. Hot damn! American automobile ingenuity!

OLD SHEP

Chet, we got a gig tonight.

CHET

I hear ya ...Yeah!

(CHET and OLD SHEP react to the sharp turns of their imaginary auto.)

CHET

Hang on!

OLD SHEP

(Howls)

Stickin' my head out the window!

CHET

I see the future and the past on the super highway interstate turnpike throughway, the arteries are open, peeling rubber, roaring, pumping four barrels high octane.

(CHET is looking outside his "car"window.)

Heavenly songs everywhere... Why lookie there, what's that I see?

OLD SHEP

(Yelping approval)

The King!

CHET

Bright light city gonna set my soul, Gonna set my soul on fire, Got a whole lot of money that's ready to burn, So get those stakes up higher, There's a thousand pretty women waitin' out there, And they're all livin' devil may care, And I'm just the devil with love to spare, Viva Las Vegas, Viva Las Vegas!

OLD SHEP

Watch that turn!

CHET

What's that? Big wide fin, flashy cars, heavy-duty clothes, women, women 'n more women, all over the place!

(Looking out of his "car")

Hey, cute stuff! Honk Honk! Well, ain't you kinda beautiful or something outrageous like that! Red Heads with freckles, big titty blondes all waving, looking...that's right you better believe it!

(BETTY enters wearing a blond Marilyn wig and a dressing gown.)

BETTY

Chet! What the hell you and that dog doing?

CHET

Sorry, no hitchhikers!

BETTY

This what you do all day?

CHET

Drivin'!

BETTY

What'dya think about my new wig?

(BETTY does a little dance to show off her wig.)

CHET

You're nothin' but a whirl of color.

BETTY

Ya still think I'm beautiful?

(Sound of saxophone off stage.)

Must she play that thing!

CHET

Little Anthony's music lesson.

BETTY

Start gettin' ready.

CHET

What's it like outside?

(BETTY looking out the window.)

BETTY

There are two shining stars... so far away... by the time the light from them reaches us here on Earth...they might not even be up there any more.

(CHET is transfixed by the images from the television. A song from the Elvis film, *Blue Hawaii*, is heard from the television.)

BETTY

Chet, you gotta get ready.

CHET

This is what it was like when the cavemen first saw fire.

BETTY

Your head is all blendered together.

CHET

Let's go to Hawaii. Always love them little red sports cars.

(CHET does a little Hawaii hula dance as best he can.)

BETTY

Just drop me off in Hollywood!

CHET

Seminole Holiday Inn! Hollywood, Florida!



(An Elvis musical moment for CHET as he dances, as best he can to his microphone. CHET waves to his lounge act audience.)

CHET

Hi everybody! Where am I?

(Hearing a response)

What's that? The Parrot Lounge? Boy, you folks look like parrots!

(Laughs)

I thought it was the Bunker Hill Room, somebody told me it was Bunker Hill. Well, anyways, thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen, Y'all are a wonderful audience. All ten, eleven, twelve of ya ....

(Seeing an imaginary patron leave)

Hey. man. Don't leave, the fun is just about to begin! What's the matter you gotta get home early? Your wife know you're out with that slut?

(Reacting to the imaginary patron)

Hey man, keep your jacket on! Can't take a joke can ya? Bye!

(Calls to the back of the room)

Bartender! Some more of that fire water up here...

(Hearing the bartender's response)

What da ay mean enough, what's enough? Well, fuuuuuuck you!

OLD SHEP

Chet, the owner just walked in.

BETTY

You feelin' all right?

CHET

Okay, let's play, tuned up?

OLD SHEP

Ready to rock.

BETTY

What's the playlist for tonight?

CHET

(To the audience)

We're gonna do some ole ones, new ones, some in between ones. It's one for the money, two for the show, three to get ready and four to go! 'Cause it's Saturday nite and I just got paid,

BETTY

Chet...sweetie?

CHET

Fool about my money don't try to save, My heart says go, go, Have a time 'cause it's Saturday nite. And I'm feelin' fine. I'm gonna rip it up, I'm gonna rock it up, I'm gonna shake it up, I'm gonna ball it up, I'm gonna rip it up, And ball tonite!

(CHET becomes distracted. Then through the fog notices a woman in the audience.)

CHET

(To BETTY)

Hello sweetheart, I see you.

BETTY

You doin' okay?

CHET

My brain cells suddenly got tired. I just love the ... Man, sweating' like a pig...

BETTY

Chet, honey...

OLD SHEP

We're caught in a trap...

CHET

I can't walk out, Because I love you too much baby. Why can't you see. What you're doing to me. When you don't believe a word I say? We can't go on together, With suspicious minds, And we can't build our dreams, On suspicious minds...

BETTY

I think we shoulda rehearsed.

CHET

Alright! Now we are rockin and a rollin'!

(To the audience)

What you people starin' at! Y'all never seen Elvis play before? I am the King of Rock n' Roll! You ain't seen shit yet! Just gettin' agoing...

OLD SHEP

Hey...

CHET

Wha?

OLD SHEP

Shut up.

CHET

(To BETTY)

Have you ever played in a band?

BETTY

Who me? I've worked with six different ones in the last two years. Oh, brother!

CHET

Rough?

BETTY

I'll say.

CHET

You don't trust those band guys.

BETTY

But I have this thing about Elvis.

CHET

Really?

BETTY

I don't know what it is, but he just curdles me. All you have to do is sing and my spine turns to custard, I get goosepimples all over...

CHET

That so?

BETTY

Every time.

CHET

What about your family, sweet stuff?

BETTY

Never had anybody much. And here I am.

CHET

You had your mother, didn't you?

BETTY

How do you have somebody who disappears all the time? You know how long three months is to a kid? I didn't like the world around me because it was kind of grim, but I loved to play. I could make my own situations, pretend, making the world just like I wanted it. I just want to play can play. My foster families used to send me to the movies. I'd sit all day, way into the night. Right up in front, there with the screen so big, a little kid all alone, I loved it, anything that moved up there. I wanted to be there. How about you? You ever been lonely?

CHET

Guess maybe I'm lonely for home. I haven't been there much in the last two years. Funny thing, When I get home, after a week or so I'm itchin' to hit the road again. Someday, I reckon I'll settle down. You think about settlin' down?

BETTY

I've always had too much fantasy in me to be a housewife.

CHET

How about we do an act together?

BETTY

I bet you got plenty of girl friends.

CHET

We'll clean up on the money.

(To the audience)

You know you folks look like frogs ta me!

(To OLD SHEP)

Shep, feelin' like headin' home to Akron. Try to put things back together, catch my breath, little tired. I can't help it. I just feel restless sometimes. I don't know what it is, a lonesome feeling.

(To the audience)

Okay, thank you I had a wonderful time. I gonna leave ya with one more song...

(To BETTY)

This goes out to my true love, Miss Betty Jean Parker. Love me tender, love me sweet, never let me go. You have made my life complete, and I love you so.

(CHET collapses on the floor still singing. OLD SHEP goes to him and howls with sadness.)

Love me tender, love me true, all my dreams fulfilled. For my darlin' I love you, and I always will. Love me tender, love me long, take me to your heart. For it's there that I belong, and we'll never part.

MOMMA

(With a microphone)

Chetty, you come home, rest.

BETTY

(Sharing MOMMA'S microphone)

Your Momma gives me the creeps.

MOMMA

You come home, start be baker like you family always be.

BETTY

I'm pregnant. What you gonna do for money Chet? I don't wanna do electrolysis the rest of my life! What about my show business career?

(CHET struggles to get to his feet.)

MOMMA

Chetty, you be alright?

BETTY

Get a job at the tire factory, pays real good.

CHET

Where am I?

MOMMA

You in hospital. Doctor say you be alright, you live from industrial accident.

BETTY

We should sue that tire company, loss of a penis must be worth millions and millions of dollars!

MOMMA

Chetty! Chetty! Look in Akron Beacon Journal: Uniroyal move to Brazil! Goodyear move to China, Firestone to Philippines, now no more tires made in Rubber City! What happen now?

CHET

I gotta, rest, recuperate. Betty? Momma? Don't you know me anymore? Love me tender, love me dear, tell me you are mine. I'll be yours through all the years, till the end of time.

(The concert lighting fades and MOMMA shuffles off.)

I think you know what it is to get all tied up in something, to get lost in it. That's what singing and music does to me. Makes me forget everything else. It tells how good, how great it is just be alive. Hey baby, let's get to that Gala! Gonna make us a comeback!

BETTY

I'm ready!

CHET and BETTY

And a one and a two ... A well I bless my soul, What's wrong with me?  
I'm itching like a man on a fuzzy tree, My friends say I'm actin' wild as a bug,  
I'm in love, I'm all shook up, Mm mm oh, oh, yeah, yeah!

(CHET suddenly stops. Little Anthony, a dummy of young child that looks a lot like its been mummified and covered in flour is brought on by MOMMA.)

CHET

Hey, it's little Anthony!

MOMMA

Chetty, you son no look good.

BETTY

Little Anthony is lookin' just fine. I fixed dinner in the kitchen, Momma! Com'on Chet let's go, it's getting' late.

(MOMMA puts "Little Anthony" on the chair then exits).

CHET

Little Anthony's gettin' big, ain't ya? How was school today? I remember when I was your age, sitting in class, staring out the window and daydreaming and now, here I am. I've been lucky in an awful lot of ways. All of my life. I never was in any school plays or recited a line other than the Gettysburg Address for my sixth-grade homeroom class. But always sticking in the back of my head was the idea that somehow, someday, I could fulfill my dream, and here I am. Baby, tonight, do I ever feel like gettin' reeeeeaaaaal gone!

(CHET and BETTY exit. From the opposite side of the stage MOMMA enters with a MacDonald's Hamburger bag and goes to Little Anthony. The song, "Tears On My Pillow / Two People In the World" by Little Anthony and the Imperials, plays).

MOMMA

I know.

(Opens the bag)

Cheeseburg again ... This bread is like Betty, cheap, white, fake, fluffy, no nourishment. But you eat, eat to live...

(Motions to OLD SHEP with her hamburger.)

Here Shep, I no hungry.

(MOMMA sits exhaustedly with the Little Anthony dummy on her lap. In Little Anthony's lap rests the MacDonald's bag. OLD SHEP, acting very much like a dog, enjoys the offered cheeseburger).

(The lights fade to blackout. END OF ACT ONE)

## ACT TWO

Late that night and before the next day. Concert lighting washes over the stage. CHET is wearing his glittering Elvis jumpsuit that reflects the lights. On his head an Elvis wig; on his fingers, glittering rings; on his feet some fancy shoes. The song "Heartbreak Hotel" opens then fades to CHET.

CHET

Well, since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell. It's down at the end of lonely street at Heartbreak Hotel. You make me so lonely baby, I get so lonely, I get so lonely I could die.

(CHET bows and waves thankfully, humbly to the audience. Sound of the fans cheering and applause.)

Thank YOU and goodbye everybody! This concludes my comeback concert! Y'all been such a wonderful wonderful audience. I shall always remember with fond memories the Chamber of Commerce Costume Gala!!!. Thank you, THANK YOU! EVERYBOOOOODDDDY!

(Recorded applause swells)

Thank you, thank you very much ... you know when I was a little boy in Mississippi, I had certain dreams and beliefs. I believed in comic book heroes and movie stars. Now I know it was my destiny to share in that dream.

Suppose all I'm saying is that every dream that I dreamed over the years has come true because of you. Thank you!

(Points to audience members)

And you, you and you! I really really mean it truly sincerely...

(CHET imagines seeing BETTY at the back of the audience.)

That goes for you too, Marilyn! You think I don't see you, yes I do see you! You're gonna be sorry for treating me this way...

(MOMMA enters wearing a hair net and night robe. She is half out of it with sleep. MOMMA'S entrance changes the lights to a harsh reality.)

MOMMA

CHETTY! You sick, time to rest!

CHET

I know I'm sick!

MOMMA

No wake up neighborhood play music so loud!

CHET

I'm sorry, Momma.

(CHET begins to cry.)

MOMMA

Why you be so sorry?

CHET

Don't know, just am...

MOMMA

How you get home?

CHET

Took a cab.

MOMMA

Cab no come to dis neighborhood no more.

CHET

Then I walked.



It rain.

MOMMA

I'm all wet!

CHET

But you dry!

MOMMA

Momma, I'm in a state of confusion here.

CHET

Chetty, it no good you walk lot.

MOMMA

Needed ta do some thinkin'.

CHET

No good you think!

MOMMA

Thought about my pain, being lonesome in the world, feeling down, feelin' blue.

CHET

Den you Momma help you.

MOMMA

If ya love me Momma, pills, get me some of dem nice ones with the stripes.

CHET

Ohhhh, I don't know 'bout dat!

MOMMA

Momma, that weren't no light at the end of the tunnel, it was another train!

CHET

My poor baby, Chetty, no like you like dis.

MOMMA

How'd things get all messed up?

CHET

No talk like dis! Where be you fancy wife?

MOMMA

CHET

We got a diiiiivorce!

MOMMA

Where you get divorce?

CHET

Pill Momma. The one with the white stripe! PLEEEEEEASE!

MOMMA

Okay, Okay...You rest, take easy.

(MOMMA exits. CHET stumbles, tries to focus on something, anything. BETTY enters. CHET puts on his Elvis persona, BETTY her Marilyn. She has a bottle of Champagne and a glass; she drinks and pours throughout the scene. They play out a movie scene that never made it to film.)

BETTY

Hey, mister.

CHET

Oh, yeah?

BETTY

I forgot my toothbrush...need some things.

CHET

Don't wanna see you again.

BETTY

Then close your eyes.

CHET

I'm hurtin', baby, real bad.

BETTY

Ain't easy for me, either.

CHET

So this is what its come to?

BETTY

I don't know what happened.

CHET

Yeah, suppose somewheres we took a wrong turn down a one-way street.

BETTY

Fun while it lasted.

CHET

Shit, after all I did for you...

BETTY

When I first saw you, you just walked in, a stranger out of nowhere...and for the first time the world lights up for me.

CHET

All the shit you put me through...

BETTY

That light's gone out.

CHET

And you know something? I just feel sometimes like it's all a dream, like I'll rub my eyes and wake up and it'll all be over. I hope not. I hope it never happens. I hoped it never ends. I'd do it all over again!

(BETTY begins to exit)

Don't you wanna...

BETTY

Wanna what?

CHET

One last song?

BETTY

Here's to your life, Chet. I hope it goes on forever.

CHET

Betty. I'm gonna be honest. It's been very very hard for me to live up to that image of myself. I'm broke down, crying.

BETTY

You think being a sex symbol is easy? It's a heavy load, especially when you're not so smart, hurt and bewildered. You have your Polack home. The rest of us, we're still lookin' for a place to hide and make sure we don't get hurt.

CHET

We had it figured out. What happened to the rules?

BETTY

I don't care about rules! I just want to be wonderful.

(MOMMA enters with a pill. BETTY and CHET drop their alternate personas).

CHET

Momma, that woman 'over there is tearin' my heart out!

MOMMA

Here, you take pill, better feel.

CHET

I appreciate it.

(CHET takes the pill)

MOMMA

(To BETTY)

You sit! I must now talk to you!

BETTY

I am sorry, but I am very busy right now.

MOMMA

Why do this you to my son?

BETTY

He did It all by his lonesome.

CHET

Ain't true!

BETTY

Do you wanta know what your baby Chetty did at the costume Gala? Huh? Do ya?

MOMMA

Chetty...

(Turning suspiciously to CHET)

What you do?

CHET

Two timing Jezebel!

BETTY

We started out real good, everybody was dancin' havin' a good time carefree, everybody looked real nice in their costumes. We took a break to powder my nose, I'm coming backe from the ladies room he's startin' without me, getting' fancy, showin' off, doin' things he had no reason to be doin' you know moves he use to do in the old days. Chet, ya can't do what you use to do! Started slurring, slobbering, getting' all pissed off. People was embarrassed, everybody 'cept Chet. He thought everythin' was fine and dandy!

CHET

I understood every word.

BETTY

Glad somebody did! Then he called my name on the microphone so I...

CHET

Tell her what you was doin'.

BETTY

I loved you too much.

CHET

Shittttt, don't give me that shittttt!

BETTY

Chet, you ain't the only one with a story to tell.

MOMMA

What you do, Chetty?

CHET

Don't know what she's talking about.

BETTY

He's up there exposin' yerself under the stage lights, acting the fool showing your industrial accident, waving like a horror movie.

CHET

Oh yeah, how's 'bout the guy you was French kissing' in the back?

BETTY

That was after. Gal gotta look out for herself. Ain't gettin' no younger.

CHET

(Pulling out his gun)  
I should kill you!

BETTY

Shoot me, then yourself, we'd look real good in a coffin.

(As the gun goes off MOMMA deflects the shot.)

MOMMA

Chetty! NO!

(To BETTY)

Get out of here Miss Hollywood! If I be young I punch you in nose! I no like you. I no never no like you.

BETTY

Chet, I've never dropped anyone I believed in. I'm droppin' you.

(The two women are at a standoff.)

CHET

Didn't know it was loaded, sorry baby!

MOMMA

Chetty! You all right? You all right?

(To BETTY)

You get out here! Pack you bag, get out of house!

BETTY

We just gotta find another way to be alive now, that's all.

(BETTY exits)

CHET

Everythin' is distortin', Momma. Can't feel anythin' anymore. My hands shake like they belong to somebody else. Mouth is dry, I slouch down, eyeballs heavy. I look at my crotch, it used ta mean so much, now it just scares me.

(Looking at his stomach surprised)

Lookie there, I can see my intestines moving and steaming, digesting junk food, what happened to me? I don't even care. Committed suicide but I'm still alive.

MOMMA

No, no, you no talk like dis!

(MOMMA Hugs him)

You no do nothing I be right back!

(MOMMA exits. OLD SHEP, his loyal dog, goes to CHET.)

OLD SHEP

Sit down, taker easy.

CHET

Shep, ya see what happen?

OLD SHEP

Bitches.

CHET

Is it me? Tell me the truth!

OLD SHEP

She's just square, Chet.

CHET

Yeah, absolutely right! She don't like crazy music. She don't like rockin' bands. She just wanna go to a movie show, And sit there holdin' hands...

CHET and OLD SHEP

She's so square. Baby, I don't care...

CHET

(Petting OLD SHEP)

I feel a little better Shep...

OLD SHEP

Can you scratch behind my left ear....yeah, there you go. Ahhh, yeah.

CHET

Shep, tonight's one of them nights, stick close.

OLD SHEP

Got your back.

(BETTY enters, suitcase in hand and puts it down.)

BETTY

That dog has fleas.

OLD SHEP

(Barking then...)

Hell if I do!

CHET

Baby, I thought we just ... you know...

BETTY

We ain't nothin'!

CHET

I'll sign my disability check over to ya.

BETTY

I want something meaningful.

CHET

We'll do that too!

BETTY

I want a divorce, I'm going to Reno.

(As Marilyn Monroe)

Because I believe everyone is a star and deserves a chance to shine. People are going to look at me and wish they were me because they're going look at me and really see me, star, celebrity personality.

CHET

When you let your head get too big it'll break your neck!

BETTY

I am going to be a star and be free, happy, because I am going to be everything I want to be but can't be staying here.

CHET

People like us don't live long or happy, just the way it is.

(BETTY exits as MOMMA enters with a family photo album.)

That don't mean I don't like you. What about my injection!

(To OLD SHEP)

See what I mean, Shep? I was trying sincerely, wasn't I?

MOMMA

Here is family!

CHET

Momma, what's all this mean?



MOMMA

What you mean what it mean?

CHET

What you mean what it mean what it mean?

MOMMA

It be late, we tired.

CHET

...the weight of the world.

(CHET staggers backwards.)

MOMMA

What wrong? Tell you Momma!

CHET

I need to think. I'll be all right.

MOMMA

You no think.

CHET

I'm gonna think. Please, dearest beautiful Momma, shhh, go to sleep.

MOMMA

I worry 'bout everything. What you do?

CHET

Whatever comes next.

MOMMA

All time thing happen like 'dis!

CHET

Like what?

MOMMA

You wife leave you. Why you be like dis? How come you like Elvis, not be like Bobby Vinton? You look like asshole.

CHET

Shut up!

MOMMA

What you say to you Momma?!

CHET

Sorry, Momma, the medication. All them television...

(Seeing radio waves)

...radio waves running through the room. My brain has lost all its pink contorted purity. It's a dried up brown walnut in a shell now.

MOMMA

No, I no leave. Dis home, you my son...

CHET

MOMMA!!

MOMMA

Okay, you call you need...

(MOMMA starts to leave looking at her photo album.)

CHET

Hey, don't go! Good time Charlie's got the blues!

MOMMA

(Pointing to the photo album)

My Momma and papa die in war by Nazis. We bury them in woods in the winter. Snow was everywhere. Dis all I have now!

(MOMMA begins to cry.)

CHET

Don't cry, you're makin' me depressed.

MOMMA

I no sleep. I sick, my mama and papa...why, why?

(CHET staggers.)

CHET

Momma, help me I'm gettin' dizzy. Shep!

(OLD SHEP goes to CHET and helps him to his chair.)

MOMMA

I no know. I so sick, I no sleep, no eat. No think. Only want to cry. Want to cry for you Papa, for you twin brother who die, cry for you. Look at you, you so

sad, you nothing. I want wish I die but I afraid I nobody care. Want to cry for how come I think for so many years I be happy, work hard, save money, do everything like supposed, everything no mean nothing to nobody. I want to cry so bad I can no cry. Can no sleep, can no do nothing but be sick, walk around look for something to do. I no be mother no more, no be worker, no be baker. No be nothing but old. Nobody to talk to, nobody listen, nobody care. Air is bad. Water is bad, people is bad want to steal. Government want everybody to die in nuclear war. Live in city like war happen, give money to rich people. You have crazy wife, you be like hillbilly Elvis and no want to be proud baker like you family want. Why we no stay in old country? Why we no move to nice house in suburb I tell you Papa be happy like nobody's business. Why, why Chetty?

(The door chime sounds. BETTY enters immediately, fixing her hair and very excited.)

BETTY

I'm coming!

(ABE enters with a large salesman's window display case in one hand, a briefcase in the other.)

CHET

What the hell!

ABE

Hey, just a minute. Are you who I think you are?

BETTY

You're not Prince Charming.

CHET

Hey, Shep, sniff that guy out.

ABE

Gosh, it's Marilyn Monroe!

BETTY

Really?

ABE

Gee, I can't wait to tell my friends.

BETTY

You know it's nice people knowing who you are and all of that, and feeling that you mean something to them.

ABE

You're my fantasy.

BETTY

It's nice being people's fantasies but I also like to be accepted for my own sake. I don't look at myself as a commodity, but a lot of people do. If I'm sounding picked on its becasue I am. What are you doing here?

ABE

My name is Abe and I represent the All-Star Thermoplex Window and Vinyl Company. It's going to be a verrrrrry cold winter, you know with global warming and changing weather patterns....

CHET

What the heck. Who are...

ABE

My name is Abe, and I represent the "All-Star Thermoplex Window and ...

BETTY

My heavens!

ABE

My office called earlier

CHET

That you?

ABE

...and asked if we could demonstrate our new line of fully vulcanized vinyl, winterized, triple duty, double pane, heavy-grade, tongue and groove easy clean, pull type, thermo pane thermoplex UV protected opener windows that come with an unqualified unconditional money back everything and free installation is free. That's right, yessirreee. Free if you order before dawn today...

BETTY

Kinda early in the morning for windows.

ABE

Our regional office is on call twenty-four seven, operators are standing by to better serve the greater Akron area with pleasure and with the confidence you have come to expect. "It's always the right time Vinyl Windows!"

BETTY

Sorry mister, I don't think this is the right time.

CHET

That's easy for you to say! Ain't you leavin'? We gotta worry 'bout the winter. Right, Momma?

MOMMA

You wife about self only think.

CHET

Com'on on in here, fella.

ABE

Thank you, sir.

MOMMA

You wipe you feet.

(ABE does so.)

BETTY

I dropped my cuticle pusher somewhere.

(BETTY exits.)

CHET

Oh yeah? When you gonna shoot me up?

(To ABE)

Don't mind her none, make yourself ta home.

ABE

Really enjoyed her movies.

CHET

Yeah? So did I. Sooo did I.

ABE

"Seven Year Itch," my all-time fav.

CHET

That one with Betty Gable?

ABE

Hummmm...No, don't help me, I know which one you're talking about. Ahhhh...

OLD SHEP

"How to Marry a Millionaire."

CHET

Good boy!

ABE

And how about "Some Like It Hot"?

(ABE points his finger at OLD SHEP who reacts as if being zapped by some supernatural power. OLD SHEP yelps and hides behind CHET who is not sure what just happened.)

CHET

You're a pretty slick fella, ain't ya?

ABE

Hey, wait a minute...let me guess...Oh, no! I don't believe this! Are you ....

CHET

Com'on man, you should a got that one right away!

ABE

Hummmm...I...no...no...

CHET

This ain't a quiz show.

ABE

Liberace?

CHET

Maaaaann, you reeeeeally disappoint me.

OLD SHEP

(Singing)

"My hands are shakin' and my knees are weak"?

ABE

Nooo ... It can't be. Really? ... Elvis?

CHET

Give that man a cigar!

ABE

You look good.

CHET

Just because you look good don't mean you feel good.

ABE

You're really are him!

CHET

I don't want it to get out, you know...

ABE

I thought you were dead.

CHET

Lotta folks think that I...

(OLD SHEP growls at ABE.)

MOMMA

Shep, you leave nice alone man!

(MOMMA hits OLD SHEP on the head with the newspaper; he yelps and runs to avoid her.)

CHET

Momma, pleaseeeeeee stop hitting Shep! Shep, boy, you all right?

ABE

So this is where you've been all these years?

CHET

The legend lives on! Now don't go saying anything to the media an all.

(To MOMMA)

Momma, can you please get something for our guest – some of that “Cheeze Wiz”, Pepsi Cola. Any of that Sara Lee coffee cake left?

MOMMA

Chetty, you be all right?

ABE

He be fine...

MOMMA

He be fine?

CHET

...Yeah, he be fine...

MOMMA

(To ABE)

And you be nice.

(MOMMA exits not entirely convinced ABE can be trusted.)

ABE

Well, well! What have you been doing all these years?

CHET

Oh, you know...don't wanna bore you, had a little accident, a set back with drugs, alcohol, depression, psychological stuff, too many carbs, you know, then an industrial accident, things went to hell, lost my job couldn't get my head straight couldn't gig until tonight! Up to now been laying low, restin' re Cooperatin' catchin' up on my teevee, I don't have to do anything 'cept sit here, you know, I do such things like that, time flies! Things are changed now! Whoowee!!! ... What did I just say? Yeah, okay.

(They watch the television together for a moment. The images from the television flashes like a fire over their bodies).

ABE

Great movie.

CHET

Yeah, don't have cable, but we plan to. You've seen "Viva Las Vegas"?

ABE

No, I haven't.

CHET

My all time favorite. "I'm gonna keep on the run, I'm gonna have me some fun, If it costs me my very last dime, If I wind up broke up well, I'll always remember that I had a swingin' time, I'm gonna give it ev'rything I've got, Lady luck please let the dice stay hot, Let me shout a seven with ev'ry shot, Viva Las Vegas, Viva Las Vegas, Viva, Viva Las Vegas." Feel like masturbating when I see it. Young little tight assed Ann Margret. My my my, hummmmm. I would masturbate right now if I could. But just between you and me, confidentially, I can't. Can't nothin' you know. My pee pee, my dick, my schlong, my cock, my tinkler, my rod. my prick, dipstick, Johnson, lizard, libido, my ding-a-ling, my gee wiz, my smokestack, my masculinity that was is no longer. I'm sorry I should have you show me your windows.

ABE



It would be my honor, sir. Or should I call you King?

(ABE goes to his briefcase and window case and sets up.)

This will only take a few moments, in the meantime, please review the catalog.

(ABE hands CHET a catalogue. CHET opens it and like magic it shines brilliantly onto his face. It is as if eternity has opened up. OLD SHEP yelps, runs and hides).

CHET

Whoa....

(BETTY enters with another suitcase and a tray with an oversized hypodermic needle on it. CHET closes the catalogue.)

CHET

Hey, Marilyn, this guy has some pretty heavy windows.

BETTY

Wanna a little going away present?

CHET

(Sings as he rolls up his sleeve)

"I heard the news, there's good rockin' tonight. I heard the news, there's good rockin' tonight! Tonight I'm gonna rock rock rock the blues away! I heard the news, there's good rockin' tonight. I heard the news, there's good rockin' tonight! Tonight I'm gonna rock rock rock the blues away! Yeeeeeahhhhhhhh! Hey, ain't that a mighty big fix?

BETTY

Sure, but its gonna be fun.

CHET

Hot damn!

BETTY

You ready?

(To ABE)

You're a little scary-looking but really not so bad.

(To CHET)

Okay, get ready, get set here we... GOOOOO!

(BETTY gives him the injection and CHET reacts as if he was just sent to the moon.)

CHET

Huuuuuh? Waaa Whooo? Whoa....

ABE

Do you crave a little affection?

BETTY

A sense of being loved and needed and wanted? Yeah, all the time, non-stop.

(Sound of a subway car passing below.)

ABE

Do you feel the breeze from the subway?

BETTY

Isn't it delicious? Sort of cools the ankles, doesn't it?

ABE

What do you think would be fun to do now?

BETTY

I don't know. It's pretty late.

ABE

It's not that late.

BETTY

I have big night ahead of me.

ABE

Ooh, here comes another one!

(Sound of a subway car then a blast of air that uplifts BETTY'S skirt just like in the movie, *The Seven Year Itch*. CHET is stoned and falls out of his chair.)

CHET

How 'bout another chance?

BETTY

You can't have me now, so you want me, that's all. I'm not blaming you. It's... I just don't believe in us any more.

(BETTY exits.)

CHET

Com'on baby.

BETTY

(Off Stage)

You're not gonna make me feel sorry for you any more.

ABE

(Continuing with his sales demonstration)

This is our new model. The Futura XL 11 comes with pullout sills for easy cleaning and maintenance. TA DA!

(ABE reveals the window by taking off the black cloth. The window is like a star burst. Projection of the solar system.)

CHET

WOOOOHOOOOO! DAMNNNNNN!

ABE

Nice, isn't it? Frames come in powder coat black, white, silver and electric blue. Or we can custom paint them for a slight additional cost any color you desire. Some people prefer matching the color of their eyes. My personal preference is white haze, like the white haze beginning to clear from your mind. Look through the window...see the landscapes of the west expanding before you.

CHET

Do the whole house dem windows!

ABE

Before you decide, allow me to go through the many features of the Futura XL 11...

(MOMMA enters with a tray of crackers, "Cheeze Whiz" and a can of Pepsi Cola.)

CHET

Hey, man, want food?

ABE

I'll continue. This feature is ...

MOMMA

You eat these crackers good. Whole wheat from Poland old country.

CHET

Com'on, MOMMA, listen up. This man has some niiiiicccccce windows.

(MOMMA forces the crackers on him, ABE takes one.)

ABE

Thank you, you're very kind.

MOMMA

He nice boy, Chetty.

CHET

Momma, why don't you show Abe here that window in the basement, you know, the one where they broke in, with the rag stuffed in the corner, the masking tape all over it?

ABE

I have come just in time!

MOMMA

You come, take crackers, Pepsi Cola. I bring Cheeze Whiz show you how bad window be.

(ABE and MOMMA exit. The lights fade to blackout. Loud marching band music plays as ABE, MOMMA, OLD SHEP and BETTY enter and march around with great enthusiasm waving the American flag and throwing confetti.)

CHET

I love a parade!

MOMMA

Chetty! Dis man want to open bakery again!

CHET

You wanna make some bread?

ABE

I always dreamed of running my own business. I have a MBA from Harvard and a PhD from the London School of Economics, I am a CPA and CFP. I believe the equipment here can be converted cost effectively into a full automated, fully computerized, high-yield below minimum wage operation growing to an off shore production line for Pita bread and English muffins. Organic, wheat and gluten free bagels are a big right now. I'm excited!

CHET

I like those English muffins with the raisins in 'em.

MOMMA

Go on, you tell Chetty 'bout, you know ...

ABE

Yes sir, and you figure into the big picture too. I'm talking branding, product promotion. Your image and public persona are bankable talents, an ideal spokesman for the company. "Elvis Pita!" Franchises all across America, the world, think of it? The ethnic angle, gives things a sense of authenticity, nostalgia, an old world validation. We'll brand Momma ...

MOMMA

Josephine!

ABE

Josephine... make action figures, a cartoon series with a character that her talk like. With you we'll bring in a trendy ironic kitsch appeal, maybe a reality show. People can't get enough of Elvis! If Marilyn were to consider working with us, branding your...

CHET

Whoa! Man, now wait a doggone minute! I thought you was into windows?

ABE

Sir, this a window... of opportunity.

(Sound and atmospheric change of surrealistic distortion.)

CHET

Wooooowooooow! Momma can you bring me some of those cute little pills with the white stripes to balance me out? Please ... now ...

MOMMA

I just give you blue pill.

ABE

He needs the big one, Josephine.

CHET

Damn right I do! Hey man, do I know you?

MOMMA

No be mad Chetty, he nice man. I like, bread we make!

CHET

Momma, I need that pill.

(MOMMA exits happily. CHET talks to ABE man-to-man.)

Let me look at you eyeball to eyeball ... so you's a big fan of Marilyn's, huh?

ABE

Yes sir, I think she's wonderful. "Gentlemen Prefer Blonds." Nice dancing, great singing. I loved the way her ass fit into that silk dress. Wonderful, full, gentle comforting mammaries of life, generations suckled from those breasts.

CHET

You know. I could cry when I think of all the sperm I pumped into her over all these years. It was my sperm made those titties what they are today! That was me! Shit, I give anything to have just a little bit of that sperm back right now.

(OLD SHEP goes to comfort CHET.)

OLD SHEP

Chet, your blood pressure.

CHET

Look at me, where'd all that sperm get me?

(To ABE)

All fucked out an nothing to show for it. Shitttt! Before I met Marylyn, you know we had a very popular act, national tour an all, before but, all that, what was I talkin' about, what .... oh yeah! I used to fuck and fuck and fuck and fuck soooooo much fuckin' much I had to fuck all the time!

OLD SHEP

(Howls)

Couldn't get enough!

CHET

Shep will tell ya. Between gigs, drivin' down Route 66 in the middle of west desolate Texas. Just black top tempo of white lines, sniffing' it up like it was "couldn't get enough" cocaine. The good stuff.

OLD SHEP

(Howls)

Makin' way to El Paso!

CHET

Yeah, picked me up this big fat co-ed at that Holiday Inn near the university.  
Had us a two-week gig at the Wild West Lounge!

OLD SHEP

Making the big bucks!

CHET

Boy, she was pretty but fat, like bein' on a waterbed.

OLD SHEP

(Howls)

And her bitch poodle!

CHET

Yeah, Shep, we's had us some fun. Snorting' poppers and fuckin' that fat  
fleshy MOMMA, biggest mountains this side of the Rockies. Juicy red nips  
like silver dollars. Turbo charged V-8 ass, working through the gears revving  
the engine peeling rubber smokin' dem chrome reverse wheels on my Pontiac  
GTO!

(OLD SHEP howls as if in heat.)

CHET

Riding her was like a '58 Coup Deville, before they started makin' everythin'  
small and plastic. Dem was the days! That's how I use to be when I had a cock  
as big as one of dem factory smokestacks!!! I could do anything I wanted...  
Don't do anything now, do I Shep? 'Cept look at magazines, the teevee.  
Remembering. Man, how much sperm I jerked and fucked away in places all  
over this magnificent land. I don't even wanna think about it. I wish upon a  
star for a little bit of that sperm back right now, I promise ta never jerk that  
precious fluid off ever again!

(OLD SHEP howls like an injured dog. BETTY enters.)

BETTY

What's wrong with that dog?

(To ABE)

Turn the porch light on will ya, huh cuttie?

(ABE, with a flick of his finger, turns on the porch light.)

CHET

Whoa...who are you, man?

BETTY

Fancy!

(BETTY exits. CHET stagger around trying to maintain his balance.)

ABE

Thanks for the opportunity to speak with you alone, sir.

CHET

Call me Elvis from here out.

ABE

(Continues with his demonstration)

I'm going to continue with the Futura XL 11 demonstration, sir.

CHET

Elvis! I SAID CALL ME ELVIS!

ABE

(With a microphone)

ELVIS!!!! This is a great land, the greatest nation on earth.

CHET

We talking windows here?

ABE

You know there's something you can do...

CHET

I don't know what to do, but if I knew, I'd do it.

ABE

Just look into the Futura XL 11.

CHET

What difference would it make?

ABE

Might make all the difference in the world.

(Both OLD SHEP and CHET stare into the window as it comes alive with light.)

What do you see?

CHET



What the...  
 I see misty white clearing on rolling green hills  
 Two-lane blacktop  
 And hundreds of Fords

(A blues guitar “walk” underscores)

Hundreds. thousands of Fords  
 Galaxies and Torinos and LTDs  
 Pick-up and campers and big RVs  
 All comin' Hundred's, thousands of miles from home Just to see the King!

A swellin' sea of American's is gatherin!  
 What that I see?

Shinning Tom McAn shoes reflectin' in the mid-day sun  
 Light colored polyester Sears summer suits  
 New J.C. Penny summer dresses  
 Wigs fresh from the hairdressers  
 Whiffs of hair spray  
 Ban anti-perspiring deodorant  
 Avon lady perfume  
 Old Spice aftershave

Anticipation electrifies the air.  
 Everybody/s standin' goo-goo-eyed, wide-mouthed, waitin' for Him!  
 Ready, waitin' for the King!

Showers of poppin' instamatic flash cubes like sparklin' diamonds  
 Screams, screamin' in pain and joy  
 Is this heaven?  
 Boy do they love Him  
 Boy do they need Him  
 Boy do they believe Him

He's simple  
 He's complex  
 The U.S. of A. itself!  
 He's the embodiment of our kind  
 Will ya just look at how pretty he is  
 Shimmering, glimmering, radiating  
 The stage floatin' like a cloud  
 Somethin' like this ain't never been seen before.

ABE

It's almost kind of an honor being here next to you.

CHET

Hot damn!

ABE

Now, if you'll just sign these papers that vision will be yours forever.

(ABE offers CHET a clipboard with papers and CHET signs.)

CHET

Where do I....okay. Wouldn't happen to have any dope on you?

ABE

(ABE opens his briefcase.)

What are you looking for?

CHET

Nothing specific, just two of anything I don't have to shoot. Needles and me...

(ABE presents the briefcase, which is full of pill vials.)

ABE

Help yourself.

CHET

Why thank you, thank you very much ...

ABE

These are verrrrrry special.

CHET

Merry Christmas, happy Easter, I like the color.

(OLD SHEP attacks ABE. CHET beats the dog back.)

CHET

Old Shep, down boy. I knows what I'm doin'!

OLD SHEP

This guy don't smell right.

CHET

Boy, I know but I need 'em. I really do!

(CHET takes the pills as ABE grabs a yelping and fighting OLD SHEP and drags him off stage. PAPA, played by MOMMA, enters

wearing a white baker's apron, pants, shirt and hat and holding a giant, oversized pill with a white stripe, a spent stogie cigar in his mouth.)

CHET

Papa! Where'd you come from?

PAPA

Through window, Chester. Here, take you pill.

CHET

Whoa, man, what is that?

PAPA

Take pill, Chester! Everything okay.

CHET

Thanks Papa. How've ya been all these years?

(CHET takes the pill and begins to nibble on the large pill as ABE re-enters.)

Shep, come here boy! Com'on on out and see who's here!

(PAPA sits. CHET begins to suspect ABE has done something to OLD SHEP.)

Hey, man, where's Shep?

(OLD SHEP is heard off stage yelping as if injured.)

Hey! What's wrong with my dog! Shep!

PAPA

(Confronting CHET)

I no know why you no want bakery ...

CHET

Papa, I thought you was dead.

PAPA

You no know nothing.

CHET

(To ABE)

...Hey man...now I know who you are!

ABE

Bingo!

CHET

Ain't there nothin' left ta save me?

(Both PAPA and ABE shake their heads, "no." Then BETTY enters.)

BETTY

Jackie's black Lincoln Continental just pulled up, he'll be here any minute now. How do I look?

ABE

It was such an honor to meet you, Marilyn. I'm a big fan. "Niagara" with Joseph Cotton, that final dramatic scene, incredible.

(ABE pulls out an autograph book.)

BETTY

Oh, sure, happy to. To whom is this to whom?

ABE

Abraham.

BETTY

Really?

CHET

How 'bout Marylyn?

ABE

Nope.

BETTY

To Abe...I always liked Abraham Lincoln. I use to pretend he was my father. "To Abraham Lincoln from Marilyn."

(BETTY kisses the autograph.)

ABE

Gee whiz, thank you soooo much.

BETTY

Sure nice meetin' you, mister. You're cute. If you know what I mean...

ABE

Take a look at that window.

BETTY

Wow, will you take a look at this view. Gee. It goes on forever. What a beautiful place. You must be a magician.

(The door chime sounds.)

BETTY

(Excitedly)

Oh boy! How do I look?

(JACK G. KENNEDY walks in waving to the audience as if at a political rally. The sound of cheering and adoring crowds.)

BETTY

Hi Jackie! Finally! I'm sooo excited!

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Marilyn, my love, at long last!

(BETTY and JACK G. KENNEDY embrace romantically.)

BETTY

Just like the movies.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

You're wonderful.

BETTY

Wow.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

This is a time for greatness.

BETTY

I need a little help in the bedroom, pack my bags, get my toothbrush, you know...

JOHN G. KENNEDY

I'd love to.

BETTY

Just ignore the house.

(JACK G. KENNEDY and BETTY exit arm in arm.)

CHET

Hey, wait a minute, Marilyn? Let's make a movie or somethin'? Live happily ever after this. I'm sorry, it won't happen again, I promise. What happened anyways?

PAPA

Chester, I tell you long time ago, why must you be like asshole? Why you want to be like hillbilly Elvis? I have many friends in Akron. When the sky is brown, smell like rubber that is good, mean people working and working people buy bread. We work, make Russian, Vienna, French, Italian bread, cheese kuchar, cookies, hot cross buns, make best in city. We busy, happy. In 1958 people from all over city come, buy, and be happy. We make good business, want make franchise all over America. You come from old, strong, proud bakery family from Krakow. We family make bread before there was America!

CHET

In 1958 the king was on top of the world. Who would a thought everything would go kerflue?

PAPA

We nothing, Chester. Like wheat in sun, grow, ground to flour, then nothing.

CHET

Okay! Okay Papa, I'm gonna bake bread and I'm sorry for being Elvis. Just, I'm too young to die.

PAPA

I can no help you no more.

(PAPA moves to leave.)

CHET

Don't go!

PAPA

I no belong here.

CHET

Come here.

(CHET and PAPA hug.)

Papa, real nice seeing you again.

PAPA

Okay, I go.

(PAPA exits. CHET continues to eat his large pill.)

CHET

(To Abe)

Things are way out of control now, aren't they?

ABE

Just beginning. Let me change the channel.

(The window comes to life again.)

CHET

Hey there's Marilyn!

ABE

Jack had to go to Dallas, bad move. Marilyn...opps, things get complicated and she dies. Overdose, so they say. I'm... sincerely sorry. She was due to have a baby...she fell asleep...and that was that. Jack you know, bam bam bam...assassinated.

CHET

Couldn't you do something, call a doctor, call the police, let 'em know...why did everything just happen wrong?

ABE

It does that sometimes.

CHET

She wasn't like any other women.

(BETTY and JACK enter with a suitcase and a very oversized toothbrush.)

BETTY

Well ... we're all ready to go!

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Elvis, heard so much about you.

CHET

(Spitting out bits of his pill)

Suppose I should whup yer ass.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Apologies for meeting under such circumstances.

CHET

You look like a politician.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Thank you...

BETTY

We should be hittin' the road, Jackie...

CHET

I voted for you!

(ABE gets JOHN G. KENNEDY'S autograph.)

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Remember the name come this November! John G. Kennedy! "To Abe....Destiny... awaits."

BETTY

I love it when he says that.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Well, are we ready?

BETTY

I feel funny. I feel like...I don't know, funny....

(To CHET)

Bye Elvis. I certainly want to thank you...what's eating you?

CHET

Just my life.

BETTY

Then what are you lookin' so mad at me for?

CHET

Nothin' like being young, is there? Whole life and possibility ahead of you.

JOHN G. KENNEDY

Come on, there's a world out there to conquer.



CHET

You belong to this guy now?

BETTY

That's just it. I don't know where I belong.

(JOHN G. KENNEDY gathers the suitcases.)

CHET

How come you got such trust in your eyes?

BETTY

A person's eyes tell you more than their words I suppose.

CHET

Like you was just born.

BETTY

I'll always love you.

CHET

I made you a promise. Maybe we're not supposed to remember promises.

BETTY

Are you crying?

(BETTY and JGK exit as ABE carries their bags. Marilyn Monroe's "Bye Bye Baby" plays.)

CHET

(Pulling out his gun)

Didn't anyone ever cry for you before? I'm a dreamer, but there ain't no more dreams anymore, all ran out.

(CHET talk-sings slowly as he brings the gun to his head.)

You're gonna be sorry for treatin' me this way. Don't that sun look good going down. Don't that moon look lonesome when your baby is not around? There'll be a time when you'll be lonesome, there'll be a time when you'll be blue, well, I tell you baby I'm just through with you.

(CHET pulls the trigger to a click. Simultaneously MOMMA enters frantically.)

MOMMA

Chetty, Chetty! I must say to you something!

CHET

Momma, I'm busy right now.

MOMMA

There is man in house! In kitchen! Kitchen!

CHET

Where's that window dude?

MOMMA

How I know?

CHET

Who's in the kitchen?

MOMMA

I no know!

CHET

What's his name?

MOMMA

I no talk to him!

CHET

Momma, what you want me to do about it?

MOMMA

Help you Momma!

(Religious music emanates from the kitchen.)

CHET

You know any prayers?

MOMMA

Chetty!

(The television goes on by itself and the voice of JESUS emanates throughout the theatre).

JESUS

(Voice over)

Thou fool, this night thy shall be recalled to thee. Luke 12:20

CHET

God damn!

(JESUS enters, long hair, beard, sandals, and a three-piece suit.)

MOMMA

Chetty, the kitchen man is here.

CHET

Momma, don't he look a lot like Old Shep?

MOMMA

Be nice, Chetty, talk to him.

CHET

I ain't been to church in years, you talk to him, Momma. Tell him about the pope being Polish 'n all your praying, going to church, that outta mean somethin'.

MOMMA

(To JESUS)

Sir, what be you name, please?

JESUS

Jesus Christ of Nazareth the only begotten son of god, the father all high and mighty!

MOMMA

I no believe...

(JESUS raises his hand to bless MOMMA and she swoons, almost falling down.)

CHET

Damn! Okay...What can we can do for you?

JESUS

(Looking in his notebook)

Are you Chester Jerzy Zilvinas Galokowski? Did I pronounce that right?

CHET

Excuse me, but everybody calls me Chet, if you don't mind, Jesus, your honor, highness most magnificently exaltedness, sir.

JESUS

(Reads the notebook closely)

Yes, I see it now, yes I'm sorry, here it is, prefers... Peter's chicken scratch Latin.

MOMMA

What for you be here?

CHET

Yeah, anything important?

JESUS

(Puzzled by MOMMA)

"What for you be here?" ... Okay. Yes, I understand now, a local vernacular. Yes, I be here for you teevee!

CHET

Nah, ah, com'on, really? The teevee? Give me communion at least, how 'bout confession? Last rites, anything.

MOMMA

You take!

CHET

Hey now, that's a thirteen hundred and forty-eight dollar thirty-two inch chroma corrected color television set! Still payin' on it.

(To MOMMA)

Let 'em take yours.

JESUS

Give onto me freely, my son.

CHET

But, that's the only place where I feel ta home, know my way around!

MOMMA

Dis you home.

JESUS

Hey, wait, let me guess...who you're dressed like? Ah ...

CHET

You kiddin', right?

(JESUS walks around CHET who strikes a few Elvis poses.)

JESUS

No, don't help me ... ahh ... Wayne Newton?

CHET

Elvis, Jesus. Elvis! you should, I thought you knowed everything? ...and I'm all shook up!

JESUS

Uh ha... And how now hast this come to be?

CHET

I hear what yer saying. Suppose I musta thustly took the wrong exit somewheres along the highway of life.

MOMMA

Give to him the teevee, Chetty, please. He right, you watch too much.

JESUS

The time is soon upon us!

CHET

I was planning to watch the season premiere of...

JESUS

Chet.

CHET

Oh, all right, okay. Take it! Ain't nothing but all the same seen it all before anyways reruns, really, know what I mean?

JESUS

These are the end times.

(JESUS unplugs the television set and struggles and finally wheels it to the side of the road.)

CHET

I'd give you a hand your all mighty holy one on magnificent high, sir, but I'm suffering from an injury.

JESUS

Now you are ready to take the journey you must take!

CHET

This here one of those ruptures?

JESUS

Raptures?

MOMMA

Chetty, I scare!

CHET

Don't worry, Momma, death is not the end. Re-incarnation has gotta be real - its why people are the way they are, all that's been happen tonight, I ain't going no where's, just takin' another form, you keep a look out for me, I'll look out for you, okay? We'll bake some bread.

MOMMA

No, no, I no want you go!

CHET

Momma, what can I say to you? All I can say is one thing. Thanks. I know it's not enough, but I want to tell you something. With that one word goes out a big part of me. A part of me that never could have existed at all save for your help, love, and encouragement. And I want you to know that my thanks to you comes from right down here, right from the deep bottom of the happiest heart in this whole great big old world.

JESUS

You need nothing now, except to believe in what you know.

CHET

Believe? I ah...I don't know what I believe anymore! Help me Jesus! Help me please!

(JESUS takes the microphone and sings with CHET and MOMMA. After an audience rousing and clapping rendering of the song.)

CHET, JESUS, and MOMMA

I wanna soothe my my heart, I wanna ease my mind, I wanna move my shoes and see what I can find, I wanna stand up tall and open up my eyes, I wanna reach out my hand until I touch the skies, I was a poor lost lamb in a deep dark hole, But now I've found that light I'm gonna save my soul, I used to drink, I used to smoke, I used to smoke, drink and dance the hoochy-coo, I used to smoke and drink, smoke and drink and dance the hoochy-coo, Oh yeh! And now I'm standing on this corner praying for me and you...I-I-I That's why I'm saved I'm saved, Oh yeh! Because I'm saved, I'm saved!

(At the song's end CHET sits in his chair staring down the highway of life. A guitar walk underscrores.)

JESUS

Chet Galokowski, you know now what you must do!

CHET

Amen!...Lookie there! This he is a slow motion, split second reconstruction of what happens when a pink, 1958 Caddy, travelin' at 55 mile per hours does when it slams into a lonely cactus tree in the middle of Death Valley.

One tenth of a second: The front bumper and chrome grillwork collapses. Now we're talking a large automobile. Silvers of steel penetrate the cactus to the depth of one and one fourth inches.

Two tenths of a second: That beautiful pink hood crumples as it smashes into the windshield. The rear white walls spin as they leave the ground. My legs ramrod straight and then snap at the knee joints. But somehow, someway, the radio is still playing Elvis like nothin' at t'all has happened.

Three tenths of a second: My body is now off of the fur-covered seats. My torso is upright, my bloody broken knees press against possibly the finest lookin' dashboard ever created by the motor city. My head is near the sun visor. My chest above the steering column.

Four tenths of a second: The front 24 inches have been completely demolished, the rear end is still going at a speed of 37 mile per hour, and like a buckin' bronco it rises ten feet off the ground. All my amps and guitars fly out of the trunk and are floatin' with a big blue backdrop. It's all too real to be true.

Five tenths of a second: My fear frozen hands bend the steering wheel into a vertical position. The force of gravity impales me on the steering shaft, jagged steel punctures my lungs and intercostal arteries. Blood spurts everywhere--into my lungs and all over my white leather seat covers.

Sixth tenths of a second: My feet are ripped from my shoes. My head and beautiful hairdo smash into the windshield. The rear end fails to the ground. But in the distance I can still see my guitar floating in the blue, not a scratch on it, not a string out of tune.

(The faint sound of Elvis' song "Can't Help Falling in Love" is heard.)

Seventh tenths of a second: The entire pink dream mobile is forced out of shape and into a junkyard car. But the radio is still playin'! Playin' Elvis. Everything is alright...yeah... everything' is okay. Then the front seat rams forward and pins me against the steel steering shaft. Blood gushes into my mouth. Shock has frozen my heart. I am now dead.

Time lapsed: seven tenths of a goddamn everyday ordinary run of the mill nothing' ta write home about second.

There's not a soul around. The black top road is empty. There are miles in between the miles. Over in the distance the mountains don't even flinch. There's so much desert your eyes can't open wide enough. The wind blows through the silence. I'm just a bloody twisted wreck somebody forgot on a large empty canvas. The motor stalls, the music fades away. How quiet it is here. Sweetest sound there is.

(CHET falls back motionless. The sound of blowing wind is heard moving through and into the distance).

Fade to Blackout.

**FIN**