

Skinwalkers

by Murray Mednick

Skinwalkers had its world premiere at 7 Stages Theatre, Atlanta, Georgia, on January 29, 2005.

Directed by Del Hamilton

With the following cast:

Myra: Maia Knispel

Don José : Normando Ismay

Aurora: Rachel Mewbron

Kathrine: Sandra Leigh Hughes

Tom: Daniel Pettrow

Sidney: Pierre Brulatour

Hartley: Michael Hickey

Frank: Isma'il ibn Conner

Stage Manager: Heidi Blackwell

Assistant Stage Manager: Jennifer Brown

Set Designer: Rochelle Barker

Props Design: Elizabeth Cooper & Justin Welborn

Mask Design: Michael Hickey

Costume Design: Johanna Schmink

Light Design: Jessica Coale

Sound Design: Brian Ginn

Technical Director: Mack Headrick

Production Assistant: Morgan Irwin Whyat

Characters

Myra

Aurora (*13 years old*)

Kathrine

Tom

Sidney

Don José

Hartley

Frank (*Blind*)

Alberto (*O.S.*)

Voice Off

Scene

On SIDNEY and KATHRINE'S ranch near Lamy, New Mexico; MYRA and TOM'S cabin; DON JOSÉ 's parlor; a saloon in Lamy. Sets and props are minimal.

In the distance: SOUNDS of coyotes, dogs. As though from the past: a CAR CRASH.

LIGHTS. MYRA, TOM, KATHRINE, and SIDNEY.

Sidney Judge Bixby was driving home from Farmington. He was driving down a dark and desolate road. A dog ran out in front of him and Bixby stopped. The dog had a human face. “You’re coming with me,” the dog said. “No, I’m not!” shouted the Judge, “I got a wife and grandchildren and I’m the Santa Fe Judge!” And he slammed on the gas pedal and took off. It was the shock of his life, and he soon retired. His wife will swear to it. Two weeks later an Indian woman and a child were hitchhiking on the same road. Anglo couple picks them up and they all crashed—right there on the same spot as Bixby had his encounter with the dog.

Myra Good ghost story, Dad.

Sidney Well, you can all make up your own mind, whether you think it might be true. Bixby is an outstanding member of the community, and his wife has never been known to lie.

Myra Dad? (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on TOM sitting with DON JOSÉ .

Don José How do you know Sidney Manning?
Tom He's my father-in-law.
Don José Health problems?
Tom Him?
Don José No. You.
Tom I'm fine.
Don José I know your wife.
Tom Myra.
Don José Sensitive woman.
Tom Yes. She is.
Don José Do you feel that women have understanding?
Tom What?
Don José Women.
Tom Is that a trick question? Ha, ha.
Don José Do you feel trapped?
Tom Trapped?
Don José In the body.
Tom In the body? No.
Don José What do you want?
Tom Would you mind being interviewed?
Don José For what?
Tom For the radio. KPFK. In San Francisco. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and SIDNEY.

Sidney Cattle equals grass, which equals rain. We've had good rain. Grass is up, everything green, cattle sleek. I'm gonna leave this place alone. Let the grass come back. You can see the seed sometimes, blowing across the fields in a cloud.

Myra Dad?

Sidney People talk about species dying out. One day, people will die out. Nothing stays the same, you can't keep everything the same. No point in trying to save species, though there'll always be those worried about that. Can't be helped.
(OUT)

LIGHTS UP on TOM and DON JOSÉ .

Tom You have a reputation.

Don José Ha, ha. *A brujo.*

Tom Well, okay. A man of knowledge.

Don José A sorcerer. Means I can turn myself into animals.

Tom Oh. Is that real? *(Pause)*

Don José I'm honored. I'm flattered.

Tom I don't know much about these things.

Don José You don't?

Tom No.

Don José Would you say you were a humble person?

Tom No.

Don José Would you say you were a spoiled person?

Tom No.

Don José A vain person?

Tom Yes.

Don José A special person?

Tom Uh, no.

Don José Marriage. There's the cure. But you got to work it. Big payoff and reward, then. Bearing the mate. Let the Wolf lie down with the Lamb.

Tom I'm sorry...?

Don José Two sides of a man.
Tom You mean...?
Don José Like an alternating current. Two natures. *¿Entiende usted?*
Tom Would you mind if we recorded this?
Don José Not really.
Tom It'll be on the air.
Don José On the air?
Tom Around Christmas maybe.
Don José On the air. Fantastic. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and SIDNEY.

Myra Something happened.
Sidney It's a gamble on the weather. Rain. You've got good years and bad.
Myra I think Tom...uh...Tom and I...
Sidney Weather changes. Market goes up and down. Had a late freeze this year, altered the food chain. Bears coming down out of the mountains for something to eat.
Myra I think we hit someone on the road.
Sidney But a man's character won't change a hell of a lot. It'll stay more or less the same. Throughout his life, it'll be the same. I'm sorry, honey—what did you say? *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and DON JOSÉ .

Don José You see, there's Body and there's Mind.
Tom Okay.
Don José Go ahead. Turn that thing on.
Tom Okay. *(Turns on recorder)*

Don José You believe your thoughts.

Tom Do I?

Don José Yes. Big mistake.

Tom Why?

Don José You think about yourself.

Tom Oh.

Don José I'm not saying you're stupid.

Tom You mean like a commentary?

Don José Yes. That's it.

Tom It's a story, really.

Don José Yes.

Tom The story of my life.

Don José That's right.

Tom Why we're interested in local traditions.

Don José Why?

Tom Something real.

Don José Go ahead. Ask me something.

Tom Is there a true indigenous religion?

Don José 'Course there is. We got our own here. Santos. Could be Jews, for all we know. Ha, ha. The hidden ones. Marranos, *conversos*, exiles. Sixteenth century. Ended up in Pueblo land. Took to cattle. Indians were astounded. We have *remedios*. Would you like one?

Tom What are they, exactly?

Don José Herbs.

Tom Could you say more?

Don José Plants. They push up out of the ground toward the sun.

Tom Local?

Don José Grown here and in old Mexico.

Tom How did you learn your knowledge, Don José ?

Don José From my father. My father learned from his father. The aim is wholeness, or unity.

Tom I see.

Don José Do you read? I recommend Spinoza. He was one of us. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and SIDNEY.

Myra It was pitch black. We were coming down into the basin over the narrow overpass near Lamy.

Sidney Dangerous intersection there.

Myra And we hit something.

Sidney What?

Myra I don't know, Dad.

Sidney Did you get out and look?

Myra Yes.

Sidney Did you see anything?

Myra No. But it was so dark.

Sidney Bear or coyote?

Myra No, Dad.

Sidney Another animal?

Myra We didn't see one.

Sidney Any sign of blood?

Myra No.

Sidney You find a dent? On your car?

Myra No.

Sidney That's all right, then. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and MYRA.

Tom I didn't see anyone.

Myra I did.

Tom How? You couldn't see. You couldn't see a thing. I didn't see anything. What did you see?

Myra I saw a face.

Tom You saw a face?

Myra Didn't you?

Tom I don't think so.

Myra What did you see?

Tom I didn't see nothing.

Myra We hit something.

Tom I didn't see a face.

Myra Something hard.

Tom What face? Whose face?

Myra I don't know. Like a mask, or a grin.

Tom A mask? A grin?

Myra Teeth.

Tom Teeth?

Myra Eyes.

Tom Eyes?

Myra Just for an instant.

Tom A dog?

Myra You didn't hear it? You didn't feel it?

Tom I heard something. I did hear something.

Myra What did you hear?

Tom You know, like an animal.

Myra Like a bear?

Tom No, no.

Myra You didn't hear a scream?

Tom I wouldn't call it a scream.

Myra What would you call it?

Tom Like a whine, like an engine, a motor.
Myra It was a voice. I heard a voice.
Tom A human voice?
Myra You're in denial, Tom.
Tom There was nothing out there.
Myra Okay. That's not what you said.
Tom What did I say?
Myra You said a whine, or an engine. Or an animal. Okay?
Tom Nothing, Myra.
Myra Okay. I heard the darkness. Okay? (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and AURORA.

Aurora Skinwalkers. You gots to check it out. Could be a hex or a spell. A curse or an implant. We check you out. Entry could be made at birth.
Myra Who are they?
Aurora Could be a consciousness left its body through death and is now an invisible entity. Earthbound.
Myra Why?
Aurora They don't want to leave. They are emotionally attached to their former habits.
Myra Oh, my goodness!
Aurora They jump into a living person so they can enjoy their habits vicariously.
Myra Oh. How?
Aurora Sometimes it's an accident. Then they find themselves locked in there and they can't get out.
Myra Locked in where?
Aurora In the living body. They get in through a crack in the aura.

They can be inside the aura, or attached to it outside, which is when they have the least influence.

Myra Oh, my goodness!

Aurora *(Laughing)* AuraCleanse.

Myra What's that?

Aurora My new company. I'm serious. There are also some who hang around due to fear of hell and eternal damnation. Sometimes a part of your shell is left over from a former life. It is still animated and magnetically attracted to the body and hard to get rid of. Most common entry is made through mind-expanding drugs and alcohol. But they can also come in when a person is anesthetized.

Myra Or emotionally—?

Aurora Or momentarily unconscious from a blow to the head or a fall.

Myra Strong emotions?

Aurora Strong emotions—strong emotional outbursts like anger attracts them. You are beside yourself or out of your mind.

Myra What can one do?

Aurora I urge you to practice control of thoughts and feelings. Takes time. Lots of time. These things been around long, with established habits and patterns. Gots to reprogram.

Myra I see. *(Pause)*

Aurora Forgive. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and FRANK.

Frank It's hard. You work your ass off, raise a family, have a decent old age. It's hard, *amigo*. *Duro*. Why people are irritated.

Tom There's tension.

Frank *Eso es*. The good life's scarce. You got these three different ethnic groups, ¿*verdad*?

Tom The Spanish, the Anglo, the Indian.

Frank No love lost there, I can tell you. Are you taping?

Tom Yes.

Frank They turn to alcohol and drugs. What the fuck, right? Relief. We ain't seen the bottom of it yet.

Tom Go on.

Frank Everything turning to shit. Taco Bell. No way out. So.

Tom Santa Fe has the highest crime rate in the country.

Frank I can hear that.

Tom New Mexico: highest suicide, highest incest.

Frank Yeah. Guys beat their wives and fuck their daughters. It's traditional, some of these families here. *Ai*.

Tom Tailgating is the worst I've ever seen.

Frank What's that?

Tom These pickup trucks cruise up behind you with their high beams on.

Frank *Ai*.

Tom Won't let you pull over. (*Looks around*)

Frank What are you looking for?

Tom Me?

Frank Just now.

Tom You could tell?

Frank I'm blind, but I can hear. I can sense. *Ayudame*.

Tom I'm sorry?

Frank Listen up. You watching for someone?

Tom There's a face. I'm looking for a face.

Frank Whose face?

Tom Just a minute. Too much noise. People in bars. Quack, quack. You know? Just a minute. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Myra We may have hit someone. On the road.

Kathrine When?

Myra The other night.

Kathrine Where?

Myra We came over the hill and across the bridge—at the turnoff to Lamy, near the railroad tracks—

Kathrine Oh, that's a dangerous spot.

Myra We didn't see anyone—

Kathrine Well, you're imagining things.

Myra And it was so dark!

Kathrine You would know it if you hit somebody.

Myra I don't know it!

Kathrine We would all know it by now. What about Tom?

Myra He doesn't think so.

Kathrine Well, there you are.

Myra But he doesn't know.

Kathrine Doesn't help to imagine things.

Myra He's asking around. Down at the depot. Down at the railroad tracks. At the hotel there. There's a restaurant and an antique bar.

Kathrine Oh, yes. Antique.

Myra The "Legal Tender." (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on TOM and FRANK.

Tom This is great.

Frank Oh, yeah, this is terrific.

Tom Great bar.

Frank This is my home, right here.

Tom I started drinking when I was fifteen. Before that, I was always looking. Milkshakes, whatever. Anything to distract the pain. Medicate. We used to go to this roadside pizza joint and drink the hard stuff: rum, vodka, Seven-and-Sevens were popular then. No questions asked.

Frank *Eso es.*

Tom It's a miracle more of us weren't killed on the roads.

Frank Many are.

Tom Reminds me of a friend of mine. He was a cowboy type. Richard. He'd like this place. He liked to go to bars. It's the American Way. Guys communicate to guys in bars. You just turn yourself into a stupid shit. Play games. He liked to go to bars and shoot pool. Gets to be all about winning, and acting tough. Shuffleboard. Darts. Play the juke. Got American songs on there, full of alcoholic sentiment.

Frank What happened to him?

Voice Off Things are slipping away, Tom!

Tom Someone call to you?

Frank No, I don't think so.

Tom I heard something.

Frank On my beeper? I would hear that. I don't miss much. Your friend?

Tom Killed in a crash. Drunk. Up in Michigan. In the dead of winter, in the dead of night, an icy night, shining white. We were in separate cars. We see his Ford smashed up against a tree and we scrape him off the road and bring

him in. No head. Cops out looking for the head. He must have screamed, crashing through. The strange thing is: the sky went dark. I can't get over that: the sky went dark the moment he died. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and AURORA.

Myra Tom was at the wheel.
Aurora Drunk?
Myra Yeah.
Aurora You, too, eh?
Myra We were drunk. It was so dark you couldn't see a thing. Hairpin turn beneath a dangerous hill. Narrow bridge. Dark and misty. Something appeared in the road. Like a light.
Aurora Eyes?
Myra We hit him and we ran.
Aurora Did you see a look?
Myra A look?
Aurora Was there a look?
Myra A face.
Aurora He saw you.
Myra Yes. I felt seen. It was unreal.
Aurora No. In the real world, there is a light, there is a look.
...*(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM taping DON JOSÉ .

Don José People are blind. I say to a person, look, you have a tendency, an attitude, a predisposition, it colors everything in your life. And they look at me and nod and say—"Yes, I

see that, I understand, I see what you're saying, of course it's true—" And they go on as before. How can they help it?

Tom How can they—uh—help it?

Don José There is another reality. It has neither shape nor form, but it can appear to man, or it can come down through the top of his head like a thunderbolt. There is a door there.

Tom What?

Don José The thunderbolt.

DON JOSÉ turns to face TOM: His face—a mask—is the face of an ancient Tewa petroglyph. TOM jumps.

Tom Don José ?

Don José The thunderbolt can transform a man through the door on the top of his head. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and AURORA.

Aurora I'll need time on this.

Myra Yes?

Aurora See if I can clear it for you.

Myra Oh. Can you? Clear it?

Enter KATHRINE. AURORA slips away.

Kathrine Oh. Is that the girl...?

Myra Yes, she works for the Saunders. Aurora.

Kathrine That's right.

Myra She takes care of their kids.

Kathrine Is she Indian?

Myra I don't know. I don't think so. Maybe half?

Kathrine Yes, you can't tell, can you?

Myra Mom?

Kathrine How's your project going?

Myra We're meeting with people. Gathering material. I'd like to look at archives. Talk to the hands. Do some more interviews.

Kathrine You should talk to Hartley. He knows a lot.

Myra He's on my list.

Kathrine He's a real cowboy, that one.

Myra And I'm really interested in the archaeology.

Kathrine Oh, yes. That's the main thing.

Myra I thought I was pregnant.

Kathrine Did you?

Myra Yes. I'm not. It was false.

Kathrine I'm sorry, dear.

Myra I miscarried.

Kathrine I'm sorry.

Myra Are you?

Kathrine Well, yes, dear.

Myra I'm not. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and SIDNEY.

Tom Can you make a profit?

Sidney Well, you can. Depends greatly on the rain. Price of cattle dipped ten points awhile ago. Nobody knows why. Could've been speculators, buying futures. Nobody knows. There's foreign competition as well. 'Course, it's also real estate.

Tom I saw where they're widening the road out by the gate.

Sidney Yes.

Tom Myra went out there, saw they got a dig going.

Sidney That's right. Many's the skeletons they're digging out of there. It's the law of the state. If you're gonna lower the grade of the roadbed, and it's on an archaeological site, as this one is, then you got to let in the archaeologists first. And then they set up a dig before the road can proceed. It's state law.

Tom Myra says they're taking out whole skulls and femurs—

Sidney That's right.

Tom Old Tewa people buried in trash. That is, they're buried in these pit houses with the trash.

Sidney That's right, buried with the garbage.

Tom Myra says the archaeologist—

Sidney That's Wayne Early. Fine man.

Tom He says the Indians then had a different idea of trash than we do.

Sidney How different?

Tom Well. I don't know how. Like it was sacred trash, or the trash was sacred, or something.

Sidney There's trash people and there's "made" people. Trash people are throwaways, no accounts. "Made" people are a higher class of people.

Tom I see that.

Sidney Wayne says that whole other side of the road there's a pueblo. The petroglyphs themselves are up higher, in the rocks.

Tom I know. Myra was telling me—

Sidney Wait here a second, will you? (*Exits*)

Tom (*Aside*) Sidney is a "made" person.

Voice Off You're a fucking worm, pal. You're a piece of shit. You are trash. You got no reason to live at all.

TOM stands, looks, sits. SIDNEY re-enters with a map.

- Sidney** See, you look at a map, and you see where the land's all cut up, those are homesteaders. Then you see these open areas, those are either state land or they're old land grants from the Spanish days. Most of the land is owned by the state.
- Tom** It's amazing.
- Sidney** Sure. So you look at this map, and right here is the ranch. You can see—there's hardly a mark on it, it's almost exactly the original land grant from the King of Spain.
- Tom** Amazing.
- Sidney** See, the United States came in, and they said—all the original deeds, we'll respect those, everybody's got title, they'll keep their title.
- Tom** Are there problems with that?
- Sidney** Well, you'd best have title insurance, but the U.S. made a deal with New Mexico, they said all's clear and all's safe. So it's usually all right. Now, you look at the map, and there's the old pueblos spread out over the ranch. And here's the rock art, and so on, and so on.
- Tom** I'll be darned. So you got three or four levels of history right here on this map.
- Sidney** You bet we do. And here's the road, goes right through the one here, and here's the dig.
- Tom** I see.

They stare at the map.

That's really something.

They stare.

Tom Yeah. *(Sits)*

Sidney And here's the house. Same as it was. *(Looking around)*
We had all this rain, hands afraid I'll raise hell, they
watered on top of the rain. Now, you see those ash, the
young ones there? I put those in in '87. ...*(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and MYRA.

Myra You know why they got a dig out there?

Tom Because they're widening the road.

Myra You know why they're widening the road?

Tom For the trucks heading down for I-40.

Myra No, for WIPP. You know what WIPP is?

Tom We ain't been here that long.

Myra Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Tom What's that?

Myra To do with the nuclear waste, coming down from the
north. They're widening the road to minimize the chance
for accidents. Avoid poisoning the whole countryside.
Man, beast, and bones of the old dead people.

Tom Bones, too.

Myra Everything.

Tom You have an appointment with José Ortiz?

Myra Yes.

Tom Why?

Myra I know the man. He sells *remedios*. Did he do anything weird?

Tom I don't know.

Myra What did he do?

Tom At one point he put on a mask.
Myra He has masks.
Tom You don't think it's weird?
Myra I think he's for real.
Tom He likes you.
Myra Oh?
Tom He scared me with that mask. I don't know why he did that. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on SIDNEY and KATHRINE.

Sidney There'll be scarcity and a husbanding. It's a natural law. The strong will eat the weak. I say eat.
Kathrine What'd you say, dear?
Sidney Resources. I like this guy, Rainwater. I like his name. Rainwater.
Kathrine Oh. Is he the one...?
Sidney Yeah, he's got a billion. Microsoft, oil and gas, etcetera.
Kathrine Oh, yes.
Sidney And land. Land's a commodity resource.
Kathrine That's what you always say, dear.
Sidney That's why I like him. He agrees with me.

Both laugh.

Knows how a fortune's built. Stick with one or two things. Systemic change. Things change and open up. Get in on it early, and stick with it.
Kathrine That's right, dear.
Sidney Understands capitalism, does Mr. Rainwater. And this is

the place to be. Right here in America. We understand it here. We have the data here.

Kathrine Well, definitely. *(Pause)* Now, Tom...?

Sidney Tom? Yeah? What about Tom?

Kathrine Well, I don't know. Does he have a plan? Do you think he has a plan? *(Pause)* I'm worried about those two.

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and DON JOSÉ .

Don José See there's a force on the land, all over, on the surface of the land, in the holes, the crevices, the hot lava of the earth, and in the air—it's the force that's built up from the slaughtered beasts. It's starting in to fill up the atmosphere. You get to saturation, it causes drought and disease and body formation. Let the blind see, and the deaf hear.

Myra Body formation? Like ghosts?

Don José No, like bodies.

Myra Like...?

Don José Karma. You understand karma? Means my actions in this world have a consequence in the spirit world. Cause and effect. In fact, it's what I am. *(Silence)* Yes?

Myra I think so.

Don José The animals are slaughtered, by the millions, the tens of millions, without thought, without respect, without payment, and after much suffering. This leaves a residue on the land, and a cry in the spirit world. Poisons are formed on the earth, and bodies are made in the spirit world.

Myra Like the Skinwalker?

Don José Some people say the Skinwalker, some say it's Coyote, some say it's the guardians.

Myra The guardians?

Don José Yes, everything in nature has a guardian, an ally, in the spirit world. The trees, the insects, the mountains, the water, all things. Some people say. You see all these herbs? Herbs are interesting. They are there for man. Nature has prepared them as help for man. They are the little healers, from nature to man. If man will take care of nature, then nature will provide for man.

Myra Have you seen the petroglyphs on my father's ranch?

Don José Yes.

Myra How do you see them?

Don José There are certain places where the spirit world and this world meet. There are some of those places on your father's land.

Myra I feel that.

Don José Yes. Two worlds. *Así es.*

Myra The petroglyphs?

Don José *Así es.*

Myra Thank you.

Don José You have a path. You have work to do.

Myra Thank you.

Don José *De nada.*

Myra And my husband? Tom?

Don José *Tiene vergüenza.*

Myra Pardon?

Don José He has shame.

Myra Yes. He...

Don José *Y miedo.*

Myra I'm sorry?

Don José Fear. He has work to do. *Tiene trabajo.*

Myra What should he do?

Don José *Entrada es subida.* Yes?

Myra What does that mean?

Don José The way in is the way up. Your father, got to give the man credit. What he's achieved. No room for the ego, or petty fears. Takes nerve, courage, character. You must appreciate a man like that.

Myra Thank you. I do. And my husband, Tom?

Don José Tell him to give himself up. Tell him to get down on his knees and surrender. *Es paria. Orgullo. (Laughs)*

Myra I'm sorry?

Don José Write it down.

Myra And my work...?

Don José Stop. Think. Think it through. People don't think. At night, before you go to bed, you think about the next day, what you have to do, how you will do it, in what order, with what aim.

Myra Sometimes I do, but—

Don José That's what we're here for, to take care. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM, recording.

Tom I saw a man in a tree. When the wind blew, he talked soundlessly and made faces at me. He jabbered in the language of trees and old gods. He wore an ancient headdress and had arms like wings. Disdainfully, he mocked me for an idiot, and warned of sufferings yet to come. *(Exits)*

Enter MYRA.

Myra Tom? *(Out)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and HARTLEY.

Hartley I have a total of 726 arrowheads.

Tom Wow, Hartley.

Hartley Every kind of point. All sizes. Some ancient, some recent.

Tom Where'd you find 'em all?

Hartley Some over in West Texas. But mainly right here. They're all over the place. You just have to have an eye. Especially in the winter, I got time to wander. I'm out there, walking the land.

Tom You ever seen a spaceship?

Hartley Hell, no.

Tom Myra read of one, is all. She believes it was a sighting.

Hartley When was this?

Tom Late eighteen hundreds?

Hartley I'll be darned. (*Silence*) You're welcome to see my collection any time, Tom. More than welcome.

Tom Thank you.

Hartley Been offered tons of money for it. But I won't sell.

Tom I'd like that.

Hartley And I'll take you hunting for arrowheads, if you want to go.

Tom Sure. Are there many accidents out there, Hartley?

Hartley Out where? In the canyons?

Tom On the road.

Hartley Hell, yes. Gets so dark you can't see nothin'. Why they're widening the darn road and turning over all them bones. Digging up a whole pueblo. Talk about artifacts and shit, I'm telling you. Shards and points, all kinds of stuff coming out of there. Got stuff coming out of these digs, even the Indians won't go near it. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on TOM and MYRA.

Myra The wolf—he likes to run alone?

Tom Yeah. Sometimes he can go with a pack. He could even be leader. Like Richard. He was a leader. He was smart and tough. He was canny. He was ruthless. He'd do what he had to. But mainly he goes alone. He likes it alone.

Myra Can he have a mate?

Tom He's looking at it. He goes into it with his eyes open. I see his eyes. He's looking at it.

Myra How did the wolf get wounded?

Tom The wolf is wounded?

Myra Well, he wouldn't be so protective if he wasn't hurting.

Tom He's at the door. The wolf is at the door.

Myra Is he?

They listen—COYOTES, etc.

Voice Off You don't know anything but crime, you fuck!

Tom *(Stands)* Who's out there? *(Looks)* You hear that?

Myra One of the hands?

Tom I don't think so.

Myra It's not just you that's nervous, Tom.

Tom I'm not nervous.

Myra Something's been disturbed. They're finding lots of bones. They've dug into a big burial ground on the side of the road. I feel that something has released. And that's why you're feeling—

Voice Off I feel shut up in a cave.

Tom Did you hear?

Myra I'm not sure what that was.

Tom Did you hear that?

Myra I'm not sure. *(Pause)* What's the matter?

Tom Nothing. We told the sonofabitch not to drive. He was too drunk to drive. Richard. Thought we were friends.

Myra He thought or you thought?

Tom I thought. He had no friends. Loner. Sidney reminds me of him. Man of the frontier. Rides alone. High stakers.

Myra My father is a conservative person.

Tom You got to admire a man like that.

Myra With many friends.

Tom Get loaded and fly down the highway. Ninety, a hundred miles an hour. Richard, I mean.

Myra It was suicide.

Tom In those days you drank and drove.

Myra You do, Tom.

Tom You drove fast.

Myra You do it, now. Nothing's changed.

Tom Couldn't tell him shit.

Myra Can't tell you shit.

Tom Dog eat dog was the world he lived in.

Myra It's not the only world.

Tom It's not?

Myra No. I feel there's betrayal in there.

Tom Where?

Myra I sense betrayal. *(Silence)* I have to go. I'm having lunch with my mother. *(Exits)*

Tom Okay.

He hears ALBERTO and HARTLEY, off:

Hartley ALBERT?
Alberto YO!
Hartley DID YA GO DOWN AND SEE?
Alberto SI!
Hartley WHA'D YA SEE?
Alberto NADA!
Hartley DID YA SEE TRACKS?
Alberto NO!
Hartley NADA?
Alberto NADA!
Hartley NO NOTHIN'?
Alberto NADA!
Hartley HOKAY!

TOM trembles, looks off. (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on TOM and FRANK.

Frank You married?
Tom I am.
Frank Don't take her for granted, or one day she won't be there. You'll be alone with your own skin then, amigo, walking the road. Resentful, dazed, and mainly drunk. Maybe get run over like a dog. (Laughs)
Tom Thank you.
Frank We need to make *muchos amends, amigo. Reparación*. Not just for our own sins, ongoing, but for the sins of the fathers.
Tom I accept that.

Frank Do you? You don't see much. Hard to see. Birth, marriage, old age, death—very strange. If people saw the plain truth, they'd get religion fast, or go mad, or kill themselves. Quick or slow, either way.

Tom I appreciate it.

Frank Sure you do.

Tom I feel like I do.

Frank What you need, what I've been saying, is reparation—so the line's not lost forever. Let the blind see and the deaf hear.

Tom I hear you. *(Pause)*

Frank Do you?

Tom I think so. *(Looking around)*

Frank What are you trying to find with that thing?

Tom My recorder?

Frank *Sí.*

Tom Reality.

Frank *Aí!*

Tom Catch the sound, you know? I believe in that.

Frank You hear yourself, ever? Listen to yourself?

Tom Uh, yeah, sure, sometimes I do. Yes.

Frank Good. That's good. *Bueno.*

Tom Can I get a decent meal here?

Frank Yes, you can.

Tom Who do I talk to? You?

Frank You can tell me. Steaks are good here. You eat steak?
(Pause) Chile sauce, *rojo o verde?* The green is hot, man.
(Pause) What do you want? *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Myra Can't say it was alive, quite.
Kathrine No, dear.
Myra Had a heartbeat.
Kathrine I don't think it was quite alive.
Myra Then they looked in there, it was still.
Kathrine These things happen.
Myra I wonder what it means.
Kathrine They just happen.
Myra Don't you think it's, uh, distasteful?
Kathrine Well, yes. I suppose.
Myra It's distasteful. Like it was a barnacle, or a slug.
Kathrine No, no.
Myra It's more like a current, like an electrical current. Me and Tom, we gave it a start, a jolt, and then its momentum stopped.
Kathrine It wasn't your fault.
Myra I know that.
Kathrine Nor Tom's.

They hear HARTLEY and ALBERTO, off.

Hartley *No hay paso.*
Alberto *¿Dónde?*
Hartley *Allá!*
Alberto *¿En la montaña?*
Hartley *Sí.*
Alberto *¿Porqué?*
Hartley *Dice el patrón.*
Alberto *Hokay.*
Hartley *No hay paso.*

Alberto *Hokay.*

Myra Did you hear someone?

Kathrine Where?

Myra Speaking. Outside.

Kathrine I think it was Hartley and Alberto.

Myra Oh.

Kathrine They talk a lot.

Myra I have to tell you, I have to say it. There are strange things going on, freaky things—chemical things, environmental things, spiritual/criminal things going on.

Kathrine What kind of things, dear?

Myra I just told you—criminal things.

Kathrine Oh. People have always complained, one reason or another.

Myra We don't see it all. We don't know the half of it. There's an invisible world. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and DON JOSÉ .

Tom Don José . *(Pause)*

Don José Yes? *(Pause)*

Tom I need, uh, help.

Don José The idea is to break through. You get your body into the sweat lodge, it's going to suffer. There's your chance. You're making a power, a medicine, spirit world comes into the lodge. But you have to stay in there, with Mother Earth. You pray and you tell the truth. You're not so involved with yourself. Warriors in there, screaming. Outside, shit just goes on, again and again. No will. Warrior has to overcome his weaknesses, his fear, his pain, master his body, touch the power, the thunderbolt.

Voice Off First you have to die, pal.
Tom *(Looking off)* What? *(Pause)*
Don José You have to die. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and MYRA in their cabin. TOM replays:

(Tape) “There is another reality. It has neither shape nor form, but it can appear to man, or it can come down through the top of his head like a thunderbolt. There is a door there.”

Myra That’s good stuff.

TOM turns off recorder. Pause. They hear ALBERTO and HARTLEY, off:

Hartley *No hay paso.*
Alberto *¿Dondé?*
Hartley *Allá!*
Alberto *¿En la montaña?*
Hartley *Sí.*
Alberto *¿Porqué?*
Hartley *Dice el patrón.*
Alberto *Hokay.*
Hartley *No hay paso.*
Alberto *Hokay.*

TOM shivers.

Myra You alright?
Tom It was them again.
Myra They talk a lot.

Tom What is it with that fucking Alberto? He whistles and sings to himself like nobody's in earshot. I can't hear myself think. Is he talking to someone? Who could he be talking to?

Myra That's Hartley.

Tom The fucker can't speak English.

Myra Hartley?

Tom No, Alberto. Hartley keeps saying, "Siesta, siesta," and Alberto says, "No, no." Then he whistles. That's him. Hartley is walking away from him, and Alberto is whistling out of embarrassment.

Myra He doesn't have a car. He can't go nowhere, and it's Sunday.

Tom He should ask for a ride. He walks around whistling and singing to himself.

Myra He watches Mexican television.

Tom He should go back to Chihuahua.

Myra He does go. He goes back down there for awhile, not Chihuahua, Durango. He works hard, then he splits for a couple months, then he comes back again.

Tom Where does he go?

Myra He goes to Durango. I don't know where that is. He's got two families, one here and one in Durango. Nice arrangement.

Tom Fuckhead was in my dream.

Myra Alberto?

Tom No! Richard!

Myra How would I know that? (*Aside*) You shit. You piece of shit.

Tom I don't know what he was doing in my fucking dream, like we were fucking friends or something.

Myra Everybody's you in your dream, they're all you, all the parts.

Tom Richard, too?

Myra Yeah. He stands for something in you.

Tom What?

Myra Tell me the dream.

Tom We were on the run in Michigan. *(Silence)* On the run in Michigan. *(Silence)*

Myra What happened?

Tom Windshield cut his head off. Meat in the machinery.

Myra Oh, my God.

Tom State police hate that kind of thing. Gots to clean it up, look for the head.

Myra Tom?

Tom What?

Myra Bye! *(Exits)*

Tom *(Speaking into the tape recorder)* They were heating the rocks. Big bonfire. Red warriors standing around not waiting for anything. They said Richard was in there and I said, "He ain't. He ain't in there." I was glad he died. Lodge power so strong, bullets can't penetrate the skin. Pray for your relatives. Warriors screaming. All my relations. We're in the dark. You can dedicate here, here you can suffer and make amends. I can't tell if I'm screaming. Take the flesh from my bones, please. I am totally ashamed. Put my bones on them rocks and burn them up with the cedar and the sage. I'm sorry for everything I done. Stupid vanity of it all. Sorrow of the undead, in the rocks. Hot. Scalding. I can't breathe. Sweat leader, let me out. Open up. Try and bear it, white-eyes. Open up, please. Don't think about

yourself. I'm going to die, sweat leader. You won't die, white-eyes, not today. I think I'm going to die. I'm afraid I'm going to die. Then the flap blew open and I spun out of the lodge. I broke the circle. All the warriors looking down and away from me as I passed by them, just above their heads in the black heat, their eyes the colors of coral and jade.

Pause. A PETROGLYPH FACE appears in the window, along with a loud BANG. TOM jumps. (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and AURORA.

Aurora How is your program?
Myra My program?
Aurora Isn't it a radio program?
Myra A documentary.
Aurora Right.
Myra You're in it.
Aurora Cool. Would you like my report?
Myra On tape?

AURORA laughs.

Why do you laugh?
Aurora It's just a level, you know. There are thought tapes, too. In between, like I explained.
Myra I don't understand.
Aurora You can put it on tape.
Myra You do get the impression, you know, that you're sort of unwinding?

Aurora Uh-huh.

Myra Like it's all set up. No, like it has to happen, you know.
Like it's already happened, so it has to happen. I'm sorry.

Aurora No. *Correcto. Eso es.*

Myra Like a replay?

Aurora *Aí.* Gots to get even with the movement down.

Myra What?

Aurora With the movement up. Anyway, it matters. The Skinwalker's name is Richard.

Myra Oh!

Aurora He's a cowboy type.

Myra Oh, my goodness!

Aurora He's not cleared.

Myra What did you do?

Aurora I tried to burn him.

Myra Oh!

Aurora He wouldn't burn.

Myra Oh!

Aurora Gots to be a sword. Be the terrible swift sword of the Lord.

Myra Oh! *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM. Replays:

Don José *(Tape)* "It is not unworthy to sit down and die."

Enter MYRA.

Myra *(Off)* Hi!

Tom Hi, Sweetie!

Myra *(Entering)* Hi!

Tom Was that first “Hi” for me?

Myra No, for Hartley.

Tom You went to the rocks?

Myra Well, yeah.

Tom How was it?

Myra How was what? (*Silence*) It was fine. I followed tracks. There were a bunch of cars. Above me I heard voices, like chanting. OMM, or something. I tracked them. It was a group of women. But it was nice. I didn’t mind. I went my own way, then I came across them again. One of the women was up on the big rock, spread-eagled, naked, singing. I didn’t mind.

Tom Were they all naked?

Myra I don’t know. It was nice, really, she was just spread out naked on the rock, singing.

Tom They were stoned?

Myra No. I don’t think so. Just happy to be up there. Like me.

Tom Who was that woman on the rock?

Enter SIDNEY and KATHRINE.

Sidney (*Facetious*) Well, now you all get to see this work of art I made.

Tom Good job, Sidney.

Sidney He’s the Defiant Indian.

Myra Oh, what’s he made of?

Tom He’s beautiful.

Myra Isn’t he, though? I think he’s made of brass.

Kathrine Well, no. His face is copper, and his shield, his shield is of gold.

Sidney This here is the Defiant Indian.

Hartley (*Entering*) Excuse me. Oh, that's Kwanah Parker.

Sidney Oh yeah, that's who it is, all right.

Hartley He was a great Comanche warrior, and he was half white.

Kathrine Oh, is that so?

Hartley Yeah, his mother was a captive who stayed on with the tribe.

Kathrine Oh, my!

Hartley Yeah, he was a great war chief. Fierce. Hated the whites, and fought for his people, the Comanche side. But he was a smart one, old Kwanah. I think he was one of the few of 'em who died a natural death.

Kathrine Is that right, Hartley?

Hartley Yes, Missus. In some town someplace, in Oklahoma I think it was. Used his mother's last name.

Myra That's what the road-workers say over at the site, "Well, did you dig up a chief yet?" That's their attitude.

Sidney What it is, skulls and crossbones, dug out of the refuse.

Hartley Well, they're finding some crushed-up bones, and skulls with scrapes on them, startles their thinking.

Myra How's that?

Sidney (*Signalling to HARTLEY*) Sheer amount of garbage. Just threw it out the front door, I suppose.

Tom But finding a skull's a big thing. A skull is big.

Myra Why is that?

Tom I don't remember why.

Hartley Comanche had regular routes for their raids, and regular times. It was seasonal. Certain time of year, you knew the Comanche were coming through. They went all the way down into Mexico and came back a different route.

Apache had horses, but the Comanche were the real horse people. Apache could run a hundred miles on foot, though, cavalry couldn't keep up.

Kathrine Is that right, Hartley?

Hartley Yes, Missus. They'd kill their horses and run into the Sierra Madre down in Old Mexico. Couldn't be found unless they wanted to show themselves.

Kathrine Well, dinner's called.

Hartley Excuse me. (*Exits*)

Tom This is fantastic wine.

Sidney We'll take it with us, bring your glass.

Tom (*Aside, to MYRA*) Who was the woman on the rock?

Myra Mrs. Saunders. Come on. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on KATHRINE and MYRA.

There was a woman on the rock. Painted, tattooed. She stood up naked in the rain and sang a song.

Kathrine Who was she?

Myra She was...I think she was...actually, I don't know. I'm not sure.

Kathrine What was she doing there?

Myra She was chanting. It sounded Indian.

Kathrine Oh, my.

Myra I was going to tape her, but it seemed wrong.

Kathrine We have a friend, she works with wayward girls, teenagers, Navajo mostly. And she says it's the most remarkable thing, the wind comes up a certain way, and these girls, and they're all assimilated as they can be, they get all quiet and frightened and they're eyes get big...

Myra It's deep. Goes back thousands of years.

Kathrine I know it. But it's only a minority believes in that stuff. It's the old witchcraft. There's some believe in it entirely. Some don't believe it, but stay cautious. Then there's others, they just scoff at the whole thing. *(Pause)* That woman shouldn't be up there, you know. She's trespassing.

Myra They come anyway, Mom. They just climb over the fence.

Kathrine Well, your father's trying to keep 'em out. What if something happened to someone? Or they started a fire? And they leave their trash.

Myra I know. There's just too much out there for people to look at and dig into. There's places even I haven't seen yet. Hartley, he'll come across a new site two or three times a year.

Kathrine Well, your dad is trying to take care of it all.

Myra Hartley says there's old masks they found at Comanche Gap, even the elders won't touch them.

Kathrine Why is that, dear?

Myra They're too sacred. They've got too much power. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and AURORA.

Aurora These people, it's not so cool, they sneak up on me, and they leave money around, see if I'll steal it.

Myra The Saunders?

Aurora Yeah, them.

Myra I don't know them very well.

Aurora *(Bursts into tears)* Them!

Myra Oh! Are they treating you badly?

Aurora *Aí!*

Myra I'm sorry.

Aurora Kids got to suffer, or they won't learn. Real things.
Woman's a hopeless neurotic, trapped in her thoughts
and feelings. (*Weeps*)

Myra Aurora?

Aurora What?

Myra Mrs. Saunders?

Aurora Woman's gone spongy, turned herself into a witch.

Myra I saw her on the rocks, near the petroglyphs.

Aurora That's her. She goes there.

Myra Does she...?

Aurora No, more him. Man's suspicious. Mr. Saunders, he's suspi-
cious.

Myra Suspicious?

Aurora They torture me.

Myra They torture you?

Aurora You know, they want my light.

Myra How do they torture you?

Aurora With mistrust, and with lies. *Celosos*.

Myra Jealousy?

Aurora They're jealous because of the kids.

Myra Oh, I see.

Aurora They're jealous of my light. Kids know. They feel my light.
They look at me, and they lie. I don't like that look.

Myra The kids?

Aurora No, them. The parents.

Myra Doesn't sound good, Aurora.

Aurora He takes his shoes off and he sneaks around.

Myra Mr. Saunders?

Aurora Yes. He'll come in, he'll take off his shoes, and start sneak-
ing around.

Myra Why?

Aurora He's trying to catch me. Thinks I'm a witch, a *bruja*.
Which I am. I have the light. But don't tell them, don't say anything.

Myra I won't.

Aurora Make them paranoid, resentful. I feel sorry for the kids, is all. Day will come, I'll be gone.

Myra Oh, that would be terrible, Aurora.

Aurora Just nice to have a friend I can talk to.

Myra Same here, Aurora.

Aurora I feel better now.

Myra Good.

Aurora I'm tracking the Skinwalker.

Myra You are?

Aurora Yes. He's got to make a move. He's in torment, like me. Stress coming down. Causes a turmoil in the spirit world.

Myra What do you mean? What kind of move?

Aurora A movement down, like I say. He's got to have a body.

Myra Oh!

Aurora Highway accident. Spirit's trying to heal itself.

Myra You see betrayal there?

Aurora I'm not clear on it.

Myra That's okay.

Aurora There's treachery, though, goes without saying. Treachery abounds. It's unconscious, is what I'm saying. Nobody does it on purpose. That's why you get all this fucked up shit out there. Fucked up, if you'll excuse the language. Just fucked up to the max. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and SIDNEY.

Tom These people were here and now they're bones. One day I'll be bones, too. A grimacing skull, half my teeth gone. You think about that, ever?

Sidney No, I don't think about that much. I think mathematically. I work with numbers. Time defeats all. So I get up and I live my days. I don't think about it. I don't worry about it.

Tom I hear you there.

Sidney But it's good policy to preserve your value.

Tom Mathematically?

Sidney So much of this, so much of that. It's an exactitude. Numbers don't lie.

Tom And death?

Sidney Breathing stops. Brain function ceases. Subside back into the earth. Worms start on you.

Tom Thank you.

Sidney What for?

Tom I don't know, actually.

Sidney What saves us is the idea, Tom.

Tom The idea?

Sidney Of property. Who owns what, when.

Tom I see.

Sidney Do you?

Tom I think I do.

Sidney It's what makes this country great. (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and DON JOSÉ .

Don José *Es mucho trabajo.* You work out every day, you make a muscle, okay? *Es lo mismo.*

Myra A muscle?

Don José *Sí*, a part. It's alive.

Myra What is it?

Don José It's something in the brain. It's a part.

Myra Where is it?

Don José In the brain. In the head.

Myra In the head.

Don José It's like a light. You know, like a switch, or a button.

Myra Is it an Indian thing?

Don José It's where we connect.

Myra You and me?

Don José Not only you and me. It's the spirit world. Especially.
(Pause) There's like an inside, and an outside, and that.

Myra That?

Don José Where they meet together. It's the spirit world. *(Pause)* It contains them. *Eso es.*

Myra Do we all have it?

Don José No. Like I was saying. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and SIDNEY.

Sidney A man works hard, makes sacrifices, the land can be his. It's a natural law, you might say. Key idea there is sacrifice. Man's free to risk. 'Course, there are people who think they can do things. People who think wrongs ought to be righted. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on KATHRINE and MYRA.

Kathrine What do you think of that rock art?

Myra The petroglyphs are signs from the Old People. Signs on rocks. I think they are tracks. Traces. Like lines of power, or influences.

Kathrine Do you?

Myra Yes, Mom. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and SIDNEY.

Sidney It's a question of title to the land. An agreement of law. Anyone can do it. But the main thing is the idea of property, and the rule of law. People tend to undervalue the idea. It's like we're on a raft. Nobody knows where the raft is going. But you can get a more comfortable spot on the raft. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Kathrine Look. You can see the trucks going by on the highway from here, but you can't hear them, I'm glad to say. They look like toys. It's an eerie thing, sometimes. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and SIDNEY.

Tom Car crash?

Sidney Yes.

Tom It's a rainy night in Michigan. Roads are slick. We're drinking in a bar. I see Richard getting into his vehicle. I think to call out: "Hey, Richard, don't drive," but I hesitate. I don't move, I don't say anything, and I have a premonition. I don't know what that is, I don't understand it, like I saw it before it happened, the whole thing, like a

projection or a wish, like a murderous impulse of mine—
fulfilled down the road moments later in a vicious crash.

Sidney Where were you then?

Tom I was in another car. They didn't have seat belts in those days.

Sidney No, they didn't.

Tom He went right through the windshield. He was descended
from the mountain people of Virginia, directly into the
heartland.

Sidney Excuse me. (*Exits*)

Tom Walked around like he had a right to be here. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on HARTLEY and SIDNEY.

Hartley I was talking to Wayne. Early.

Sidney Excellent fellow.

Hartley Marks on the skulls?

Sidney Yes.

Hartley Skulls and femurs?

Sidney Yes.

Hartley Turns out they were eating each other. The Old People.

Sidney Well, now.

Hartley Cannibals, some of 'em.

Sidney Well, now. I'd not tell Myra just yet.

Hartley I won't.

Sidney My, my.

Enter TOM.

Tom Hi.

Sidney We were just saying.

Hartley Scotch-Irish came over in the early eighteenth century, formed the American attitude.

Sidney They were an abused people over in Europe. Hardened 'em up.

Hartley Every man for his self and let the devil take the hindmost.

Sidney Fought and won our independence.

Hartley Indians woke up one day, there was ten thousand Scotch-Irish forming settlements in the Appalachians.

Sidney Woke up too late. Could have been a Balkan situation, with French, Spanish, English, Iroquois and Cherokee nations.

Hartley Stripping the land, corn liquor cutting the fat and gristle in their mouths. Used up the soil and game and moved on.

Sidney People didn't want certain products, other people wouldn't have made 'em. *(Exits)*

Tom *(Aside)* No reason to pollute the waters. *(He looks off. OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Kathrine Look at those truckers, how they do, driving on into the night. ...*(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM, SIDNEY, and HARTLEY.

Voice Off The people have become fat and criminal-minded.

TOM looks over his shoulder.

Sidney What's that?

Tom Nothing.

Sidney I thought you said something.

Tom No, no. That wasn't me. *(Pause)*

Sidney Keep in mind, this whole country was once under water. The earth's axis is not the same as it was. We have satellites now, they span the curvature of this planet. Mathematics.

Tom I was just thinking...

Voice Off New wounds piling on the old.

Sidney What's that?

Tom I don't know what I was thinking.

Sidney It's like we're ants on a raft. No way of knowing where it's headed. Nothing we can do about that. But we can get a better spot on the raft. *(EXITS)*

Voice Off MU-TATED.

Tom Jesus Christ...you hear that?

Hartley Sidney? He's right, more than likely.

Tom Sidney?

Hartley Man knows what he's talking about.

Tom What did you say?

Hartley I was saying, Sidney's right, more than likely.

Tom Oh. I know he is. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Myra You know Aurora?

Kathrine 'Course I do. You've become quite friendly with her.

Myra I have. I was going to ask you about the Saunders.

Kathrine Oh, I think they saved that girl. She comes from the criminal class, you know. They took her out of that girls' home over there and gave her a chance. She ought to be grateful.

Myra I think she's in a situation.
Kathrine What kind of situation?
Myra With the Saunders.
Kathrine Well, she's lucky to have it. That's all I can say.
Myra Okay. Thanks, Mom. (*OUT*)

LIGHTS UP on HARTLEY and TOM.

Hartley That dig out by the road, that was me found the skeleton and the skull.
Tom That was you?
Hartley That was me, scuffling about. Looked down and there it was. Idea is to save it all from destruction. All it takes is one trespasser to ruin it all.
Tom (*Distracted*) Uh, I heard you're a fan of Geronimo's.
Hartley I painted a picture of him once and put it up on a windmill. So you'd see his face as you went by.
Tom Where was this?
Hartley In Texas. West Texas. Apache country.
Tom That's something, Hartley.
Hartley I admire Geronimo as a religious leader of his people. Taciturn old Geronimo. He had a hard job. He was a war shaman. This was a warrior religion we're talking about. This life here is nothing else but a preparation for the spirit world. A test.
Voice Off I've been to the other side, fuckhead! And you don't know shit!
Tom You hear a voice, Hartley?
Hartley What kind of voice?
Tom A human voice.
Hartley No.
Tom Listen. (*Silence*)

Hartley I had a dig in my own back yard.
Tom Where was this again?
Hartley West Texas. Took a mammoth out of there. Could've started a museum of my own, but I got a paleontologist and an archaeologist in there with me and I kept it as it was.
Tom Good for you, Hartley.
Hartley Are you all right? *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Myra We've had some losses, made some mistakes.
Kathrine 'Course you have.
Myra Hard to have a family, keep it going.
Kathrine You will, dear. Just need to settle down, and stay with it, and work hard.
Myra Thanks, Mom. *(Breaks into tears)*
Kathrine Don't cry, dear. *(Pause)* People think they need to pursue their own happiness these days, the children be damned. Think they're entitled, without payment or suffering of any kind. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and HARTLEY.

Hartley I had some Hopi working for me in Texas. Crazy motherfuckers.
Tom Well, they shouldn't drink.
Hartley Hated the Rez.
Tom Sidney?
Hartley He's a boss. You know, a boss. He's a little remote, you might say. But I like it here. He runs a tight ship. You do your

job. It's quiet. Nobody bothers you most of the time. Place is loaded with old artifacts, shards and arrowheads and fossils and such. I like it just fine. I like ranching. I like the West.

Tom We'll be moving on, Myra and me.

Hartley Hey now, Tom, you see that yonder?

Tom Where?

Hartley Right-chare! My lord!

Upstage, an IMAGE appears of a deer-dancer, neolithic, huge rack of antlers, upright on two legs, wide, staring eyes, burning eyes. The eyes should be Sidney's eyes. A FLASH, a LOUD DRUM BEAT, and the IMAGE is gone.

Tom What was that?

Hartley Oh, that was a muledeer, I believe, rose up and looked right at us. Lord have mercy. (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on MYRA and KATHRINE.

Myra Skinwalkers. They come through holes. From the other side. They're like...like threads.

Kathrine Oh.

Myra It's not cheesy, you know, Mom. It's neater than that, it's the coolest idea.

Kathrine What is the idea?

Myra There's a wind, like I told you, or a light, a wind of light, you could say. Incorruptible. And they come through.

Myra What do they want?

Kathrine Another chance is what they want, Mom. (OUT)

LIGHTS UP on AURORA and MYRA.

Aurora Skinwalker's about to make his move.
Myra How do you know?
Aurora Stands to reason, don't it?
Myra What reason?
Aurora I get into this right state, I can hear his thinking.
Myra His thinking?
Aurora Yes. He's pissed he's cut off. *Está celoso.*
Myra Jealousy?
Aurora Envy and rage.
Myra What will he do?
Aurora I don't know. He's got a body. He's found his body.
Myra That doesn't make any sense at all, Aurora.
Aurora Okay, fine.
Myra And you? What will you do?
Aurora I'm on my way.
Myra Do the Saunders know?
Aurora No, and don't tell 'em.
Myra Of course not.
Aurora Not your mother, neither.
Myra I wouldn't, Aurora.
Aurora *Bueno. Vamos a ver. (OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on FRANK and TOM. TOM is on his hands and knees, beat up, bloody.

Tom My wife was with her mother. I was alone in the cabin.
He just walked in.
Frank Who?

Tom A stranger. I tried to close the door on him and he ripped it off its hinges.

Frank Did he say something?

Tom Yeah, how he wanted to stick me. He wanted to have the experience of killing someone, especially an Anglo like me, a white man—with his knife. “I’m going to kill you now,” he said.

Voice Off I’m gonna cut your throat, you piece of shit.

Frank What did you do?

Tom He charged and I threw the table at him. I kept the table between me and him and I started pleading right away. But he came after me. I ran into the bedroom and tried to close the door on him. We struggled and he tore the door off its hinges. I had this odd thought: “Two doors.”

Voice Off You got no right to live, motherfucker. I’m going to cut your face off.

Frank And then?

Tom Then I got right down on my knees and started begging for my life. I tried to look him in the eye, so I’d be real to him. He had this stare. I had to make eye contact. I knew my life depended on it.

Frank Why didn’t you scream?

Tom It was the wrong move. He’d have killed me. He’d have cut my throat. I had to keep talking, reasoning, begging. Catching his eye. “You don’t want to kill me,” I said. “I’m nothing to you, I’m nothing. You don’t have to kill me, I’m just a nothing.” Be he didn’t care about that. It didn’t matter. He wanted to do me. I kept on talking, and catching his eye, and finally—he saw me. Down on my knees on the floor.

And he took a pause and at last he agreed to some money and I thought I might live. I had about two hundred dollars in my pocket. Funny thing is, I only gave him forty. I worked two twenties off the roll. Trick I learned on the street, as a junkie on the street. He took the forty bucks and the TV and left. I remember thinking, "One second away, a glance away from death." Then I got the ranch hands. The state police came, but I haven't heard another word about it. "He just wanted to kill me," I told them. "He just wanted the experience. The thrill. He was on PCP or something. I had to talk him out of killing me. I made a lot of eye contact. I got down on my knees. He had ripped the fucking doors off their hinges and come at me with a knife. For fun. For the pleasure of it." (*Turns to look*) What? Excuse me?

Frank You talking to me?

Tom Uh, no. Sorry.

Frank What are you doing now?

Tom I'm looking around.

Frank Why?

Tom I wonder if I'll run into that motherfucker again.

Frank And if you do?

Tom I'll hurt him.

Frank No.

Tom No?

Frank You don't want to see him again. And if you do, you'll pretend.

Tom That's right.

Frank You'll pretend you never saw him.

Tom Okay.

Frank You'll look away.

Tom Right.

Frank And you'll never be sure. And you'll never want to acknowledge his power. And you'll go on pretending.

Pause. FRANK takes off his glasses. His eyes are huge, bulging. TOM gasps. FRANK starts laughing loudly. (DIM OUT)

LIGHTS UP on TOM and DON JOSÉ .

Don José People think they are born with power. It's nature's way. It's survival, the effort of survival. But that's not power. It is the chemistry of sex and fear and greed. An illusion. Real power is made of different stuff.

Tom Okay.

Don José Real power comes from the struggle of a man with himself. This will force a man to his knees, where he will beg for help, finally.

Tom From where?

Don José From above. Or he will twist and contort like a murderer at his electrocution, blind, screaming about injustice, defiant, before he is slammed out of existence by a jolt.

Tom I see.

Don José Or he will come unwound in his sleep, like a mechanical doll, and hear the last thump of his heart in a dream.

Tom I follow you.

Don José Or he will be crushed like an animal in a toy and be scraped off the road.

Tom What?

Don José Or he will be tricked by his daughters and suffocate.

Tom I beg your pardon?

Don José Or his organs will rot while he listens to flattery. Lies. His own and others. Lies.

Tom You mean me?

Don José Lies. And then he withers and decays and his last words are gibberish. *(Pause)*

Tom Oh. I hear you now.

Don José The spirit world is indifferent. It is tuned only to the similar to itself, to that which is like, to a power that is corresponding, arising from the earth with a vibration like itself.
(Pause) You get that?

Tom Oh, my God.

Don José You forgot to turn it on.

Tom I'm sorry.

Don José No problem. You missed it, is all.

Tom Can you say it again?

Don José No. *(Laughs. OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and MYRA.

Tom I think we're done here. I think that's all.

Myra Aurora says the Skinwalker's gone.

Tom Aurora.

Myra I know what you think.

Tom What? *(Pause, no answer)*

Myra The skinwalker's you, it's all about you. Your resentments and your pride. *Paria, orgullo.*

Tom What does that mean?

Myra Arrogance. I'm quoting Don José .

Tom I'm done with Don José .

Myra You scared of him?

Tom Time to head back to L.A.

Myra I want to talk to my parents some more. Find out about their lives, their ancestors. They won't be around forever.

Tom What about the car?

Myra You can take the car.

Tom I'll take the car.

Myra You can drive it to L.A.

Tom I'll leave it in a lot. I'll mail you the keys.

Myra You can keep the car.

Tom What about the tapes?

Myra I don't believe in it anymore. Days are too short. Life's too short. People wake up around here, they're aware of the dead, go through their days together, they know, every day is closer to their last, the last one. I want to get to know my parents now, before they're gone. *(OUT)*

LIGHTS UP on TOM and HARTLEY.

Hartley Things work out. They always do. I was fearful of not finding a job. It was very hard to get a job. I'm just the luckiest guy to have this one here, with Sidney. You got to keep on.

Voice Off Get in the fucking car.

Tom I better hit the road.

Hartley What goes around, comes around. You see that with the politicians and such.

Tom You sure do.

Hartley I see that all the time. Same with my wife and kids and me. Can't communicate one with the other. Air won't let the words fly between us or something. We're going

around small for a while, confined. Then the atmosphere changes, and we got a big family life again.

Tom I hear you there.

Hartley So you keep your head up and watch the road, okay?

Tom I sure will.

Hartley And I'll see ya.

Tom You bet. *(A pause)*

Aurora *(Entering)* Can I get a ride?

Tom Where you headed?

Aurora Hollister.

Tom Where's Hollister?

Aurora Hollister, California. It's in the North.

Tom Yeah, sure.

Aurora Okay?

Tom Come on.

They exit. Sound of CAR DOORS SLAMMING. MYRA enters discreetly. CAR ENGINE STARTS. MYRA folds her arms. SOUND OF CAR MOVING off down a gravel road. A pause, then a CAR CRASH, as in Scene One. A pause. TOM re-enters.

Hartley So you keep your head up and watch the road, okay?

Tom I sure will.

Hartley And I'll see ya.

Tom You bet. *(A pause)*

Myra *(Entering)* Can I come with?

Tom Yes. Of course.

Myra I've said my goodbyes.

Tom Well, good then.

Myra Okay?

Tom Come on.

They exit. Sound of CAR DOORS SLAMMING. AURORA enters discreetly. CAR ENGINE STARTS. AURORA folds her arms. SOUND OF CAR MOVING off down a gravel road. A pause, then a CAR CRASH, as in Scene One. DIM OUT.

The End