

# **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** *¡*. 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**