

**ACT ONE****SCENE 1: WINTER**

*A minor, meditative musical intro plays as lights softly illuminate the stage. There is a rectangular light to signify a coffin.*

*Alone on the stage stands MEREDITH, a woman in her late forties. She is dressed in black and wears a stylish, expensive winter coat. She is at the gravesite of her husband, who died just a few days earlier.*

**SONG: "Stages of Grief"**

*During this first verse, MEREDITH stands still and somber. Her teenage daughter, ALEX, is dressed in hastily-purchased black clothes. Not a dress. Pants and a jacket. She keeps walking in from offstage at a quick pace. Each time she comes back she is carrying more flowers. Many, many flowers. Almost an absurd amount. By the end of the first verse the flowers are in a haphazard pile.*

MEREDITH

*(singing)*

FIRST SHOCK

THEN DESPAIR

THEN DRIVING TO GRAVESITES TO CRY IN THE JANUARY AIR

THEN CONFUSION

THEN I PRETEND YOU'RE NOT DEAD

UNTIL I WAKE UP EACH MORNING TO STARE AT THE EMPTY PILLOW ON OUR BED

WHAT WAS THE LAST THING YOU SAID

I CAN'T REMEMBER

I DON'T THINK IT WAS 'GOOD-BYE'

*MEREDITH closes her eyes to inwardly calm herself. ALEX arranges the flowers, organizing them by color and height.*

ALEX

REARRANGE THE FLOWERS FROM THE DARK ONES TO THE LIGHT ONES  
 PUT THE BLUE ONES WITH THE BLUE ONES  
 PUT THE WHITE ONES WITH THE WHITE ONES  
 A SEPARATE SPOT FOR ROSES  
 A SEPARATE SPOT FOR BABY'S BREATH  
 THE PERFECT REARRANGEMENT  
 FOR HONORING MY FATHER'S DEATH

MEREDITH

ALEXIS, CAN WE PLEASE GO INSIDE  
 THOSE FLOWERS ARE CUT  
 THEY'VE ALREADY DIED

*ALEX is still fidgeting with the flowers. MEREDITH slowly walks up behind her. She wants to hug ALEX. She doesn't ...they don't have that kind of relationship. She has no idea how to relate to her daughter.*

ALEX

*(continues beneath the next verse)*

A carnation...and another carnation...a rose...a lily... a rose...a rose...

MEREDITH

*(turns out to audience)*

AM I ALONE  
 IN THE COLD  
 YES HE LOST HIS LIFE  
 BUT I'M THE ONE STRANDED AND LEFT TO GROW OLD  
 TO HAVE AND TO HOLD  
 FOR ETERNITY  
 UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

*ALEX continues to list all the flowers as she places them*

*in neat piles.*

ALEX

*(kneeling)*

A carnation...a rose...a rose...carnation...baby's breath...  
carnation...a lily...carnation...a rose... a rose... a rose... a rose

***music ends.***

*Enter JACOB. He is late to the funeral. He brings in one last flower arrangement. His. This one is different. Dried stalks of winter wheat interlaced with evergreen and holly berries. JACOB kneels next to ALEX. He gently and respectfully places his arrangement in with the other flowers. ALEX reaches out to touch the arrangement. JACOB smiles.*

*There is a moment of recognition. MEREDITH is still off by herself. She has a scowl on her face. She does not look at JACOB directly as she speaks.*

MEREDITH

You missed the funeral.

JACOB

Sorry.

*(A long pause, as MEREDITH and JACOB look to one another.)*

JACOB

*(goes to leave)*

This was a mistake.

MEREDITH

*(lets out a heavy sigh)*

No...fine. I have some leftovers we can warm up.

**SCENE 2: WINTER (continued)**

*Meredith's house. Suggestions of an upscale McMansion, tastefully decorated with family photos and small statues and souvenirs from family past vacations. There are no pictures of Jacob.*

MEREDITH

I hope you like warmed-up chicken casserole. Not exactly "farm fresh."

JACOB

Whatever you have is fine with me. I don't want you to go to any trouble.

MEREDITH

Oh, I'm not. This is just crap people brought to the funeral. Would you like a drink? Beer? Wine? Moonshine, or whatever you drink?

JACOB

A beer is fine.

*MEREDITH leaves the room.*

JACOB

*(continued)*

How was the service?

ALEX

Sad. Sudden. Can we talk about something else?

JACOB

Yes. Let's.

*(pause)*

*(MEREDITH returns with drinks. Her wine glass is very full. She carries the bottle as well.)*

ALEX

*(staring at JACOB, studying his face.)*

You're my Uncle Jacob. From up north.

*(pause)*

How is it up there? I bet it's...unrestrained.

JACOB

*(chuckles)*

It's a little wild, but it's as good a spot as any. A little better, actually.

*(music starts)*

MEREDITH

Yea, how is our little plot of land? Last I saw it, it was an overgrown weed bed and a rundown shack.

JACOB

Oh, I think you'd be surprised.

**SONG: "Farmhouse"**

JACOB

PICTURE A WEATHERED OLD FARMHOUSE  
ON ACRES OF MUD AND SNOW  
THE WOODS TO THE EAST ARE A FORAGER'S FEAST  
MUSHROOMS AND WALNUTS THERE FOR THE TAKING  
ALONE  
GO AND GATHER THEM  
BUT YOU'RE NEVER ALONE

THERE'S CHICKENS OUTSIDE AND CATS IN THE BARN  
AND TRACKS OF A BABY DOE  
YOU FOLLOW THAT DEER TO A CREEK AND A CLEARING  
YOU SILENTLY WATCH AS IT DRINKS FROM A WATERFALL

*(reacting to MEREDITH's doubtful looks)*

FINE

IT'S JUST A TRICKLE IN A STREAM  
BUT IT'S MY LITTLE STREAM

MILES FROM TRAFFIC AND BILLBOARDS  
WHERE LIFE'S NOT A VIDEO GAME  
THE SEASONS KEEP SHIFTING  
BUT SOMEHOW THE LAND IS THE SAME

AWAY FROM THE CONSTANT COMMERCIALS  
FOR PILLS AND RESTAURANTS AND CARS  
THE STREET LIGHTS THE MOON  
THE SKY IS BURSTING WITH STARS

ALEX

STARS

JACOB

STARS

ALEX

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO LOOK AT THE STARS

JACOB

IN MARCH

ALEX

MARCH

JACOB

MARCH

THE FIRST WEEKS OF MARCH

BEFORE DAYLIGHT SAVINGS IS BEST  
IT'S NOT ESPECIALLY COLD  
BUT THE NIGHTS ARE STILL LONG

*(MEREDITH gets a text message. SHE carries on a  
texting conversation throughout the next verse)*

JACOB

YOU AWAKE TO THE ROBIN  
IN THE PINK AND BLUE DAWN  
YOU CAN STILL SEE THE MORNING STAR  
THE PERENNIAL FIELD IS SHOWING ITS YIELD  
ROWS OF ASPARAGUS  
READY FOR PICKLING  
FRESH  
YOU GO AND GATHER THEM  
THEN SUDDENLY IT'S SPRING

*(MEREDITH's phone rings once. SHE answers.)*

MEREDITH

*(While walking off-stage to take the phone call)*

Bryan, this isn't brain surgery. Just send me both designs and I'll  
take care of it.

JACOB

OUT THERE YOU CAN SENSE A CONNECTION  
WITH NO WIRES OR KEYBOARD OR SCREEN  
IT'S A GRAY LITTLE WORLD  
THAT'S SUDDENLY CHANGING TO GREEN

IN THE CITY WE'RE RUSHING TO BOX STORES  
LIKE MOTHS FLYING INTO A FLAME  
THE WHOLE WORLD IS CHANGING  
BUT SOMEHOW THE LAND IS THE SAME

*(MEREDITH enters. SHE watches and listens.)*

JACOB

AND THERE'S NO ONE ELSE THERE

ALEX

THERE'S NO ONE ELSE THERE

JACOB

AND YOU CAN SEE THE STARS

ALEX

YOU CAN SEE THE STARS

JACOB

AND WE LIVE HOW WE WANT TO

ALEX

WE LIVE HOW WE WANT TO

JACOB AND ALEX

AND YOU CAN SEE THE STARS

ALEX

Can't wait to see them.

JACOB

You'll have to come up some time.

ALEX

Spring break is Friday, March 26th through Monday, April 5th. They



added that Monday for teacher in-service, which would give us ten full days on the farm.

JACOB

Oh. Um.

MEREDITH

Alexis, why don't you take mine and your Uncle Jacob's glasses to the kitchen.

*(ALEX exits with glasses.)*

MEREDITH

*(cont'd)*

Stop putting ideas in my daughter's head.

JACOB

She's seventeen years old. She already *has* ideas in her head. They need to be nurtured.

MEREDITH

You want to start this now? We just buried her father...my husband.

*(pause)*

JACOB

You're right. I'm sorry. I should leave. Tell Alex I said goodbye.

*(As he leaves Meredith calls out to him...)*

MEREDITH

Wait.

*(abruptly and with a tone)*

You can spend the night tonight, but I want you out of my house first thing in the morning.

*(Too late. Jacob has left. She is left standing alone for several beats. Music. Her lights dim as a solo light comes up on Alex.)*

**SONG: "Farmhouse (Reprise)"**

ALEX

*(singing)*

PICTURE A WEATHERED OLD FARMHOUSE

*(the music continues through the scene change)*