

tear. So it don't matter if you write her or me. It's all the same. Ain't it?

SYBIL. And sometimes, Baby, I pretend you're right there beside me and I pretend your hands are on me.

TOOD. Oh, Tommy, I have such dreams.

WEETSIE. Tood is still always hollerin' about Lloyd.

SYBIL. Hey Baby, I got a tickle right where I need you to scratch. Ain't nobody can scratch me the way you do, Baby.

WEETSIE. The five acres right next to the landin' on Irvine's Lake come available. Another blessin' from the Good Lord.

SYBIL. Well, anyway, I guess I'm gonna look pretty stupid doin' all that when the moon is up over you. What's it gonna be here, about two o'clock in the afternoon? I can just see old lady McGough comin' up on me in them fields, flat on my back, squirmin' and moanin' and callin' out your name. But I don't care. I'm gonna do it for you.

WEETSIE. Why does everybody want to change things? I liked growin' up in my mamma's house.

SYBIL. God, I love being your woman.

WEETSIE. Tood don't know a good man when she sees one.

SYBIL. I ain't nothin' without you.

TOOD, WEETSIE & SYBIL. God, I wish this war was over.

WEETSIE. I wish you was home and I was in my own house down the road from my mamma and I was sittin' in a rockin' chair, rockin' my baby and Jerry Don, you was layin' on the couch readin' a newspaper or Police Gazette or something. Just plain stuff. Just ordinary. I wish it was just life again. Just plain life. *(Overlapping with SYBIL)* Love, your Baby.

SIDE 6 - Tood Tommy

SYBIL. *(Also overlapping)* You sexy Baby.

(SYBIL and WEETSIE exit leaving TOOD alone on stage.)

START

TOOD. Dear Baby. I come out on the porch to write this.

I was foldin' clothes before. I did Mrs. Holcomb's wash again. That's another seventy-five cents. Three more dollars and I can buy a bond. The clothes smelled so good cause I used lots of Clorox in the white things and they dried in the sun. They smell clean, like just bathed babies with a fresh diaper on. And they feel like a new sheet of paper - you know like from the tablets they give you at school? Not the rough tablets for usin' pencil, but the slick tablets for writing with ink. God, I loved them tablets. The slick ones. They seemed glamorous to me. Special. I thought them slick tablets could take me places I never been. I wish I had one now and it could take me to you. Not just my words, but me. Over Aunt Ola's house, past the courthouse square and on toward Texas and California. I could look down at Hollywood as I headed out over the ocean to some place I can barely dream.

(TOOD starts to dance as if she has a partner. She spins herself around etc. and as she turns one time with her arms outstretched, TOMMY appears in memory. She is swept away in a reverie, thrilling and sensuous. They both stand, looking out, remembering their last time together.)

TOMMY. Hey, look, I'm a sailor now. Bell bottoms and all. How do I look?

TOOD. *(Smiles, moving into a memory of TOMMY)* Like a hero. My hero.

TOMMY. Are you my honey?

TOOD. (*Turns, looks at him*) Always. Always your honey.

TOMMY. (*Indicating uniform*) Now don't you worry about this.

TOOD. I ain't worried. If I had my druthers, I'd had you wait just a little longer before you went in ... until after the baby gets here, but ...

TOMMY. Well, I know. But ... well, you know, with Jerry Don decidin' to enlist first and then Johnny, well, Lloyd thought it would be a good idea if we all went in together.

TOOD. *Lloyd thought.*

TOMMY. Now, you don't worry so much about Lloyd.

TOOD. What does Tommy think?

TOMMY. Come on Tood. Lloyd's gonna take care of things while we're all over there. (*No response from TOOD*) (*Overcome with his love for her*) God, I love you. Do you know Melvin McIntyre saved my life!

TOOD. (*Gentle protest, smiling*) Oh, my brother did not save your life!

TOMMY. He did, too. He said, (*Broadly*) "Hey boy, you got to come to my house and have some of my mamma's blackeyed peas and cornbread. And while you there, you might as well meet my old, ugly sister Tood."

TOOD. And he didn't say tom-turkey to me. Next thing I know I'm sittin' next to one of them good-lookin' Cliffert boys.

(*They embrace, kiss.*)

TOMMY. I'll build you a house from trees I cut down with my own hands. I'll make your ever' dream come true.

TOOD. Well, I got lots of them.

TOMMY. (*Confidentially*) That don't scare me.

TOOD. I'm willin' to work as hard as anybody for them too. (*Pause, looks at TOMMY*) I didn't ever think I'd meet anybody with eyes as blue as my brothers'. Did you know all my brothers got blue eyes?

TOMMY. No. But if they do, they bloodshot too ...

TOOD. Don't be mean about my brothers. They might drink a little, but they got golden hearts. Just like you. You got a golden heart, too. You're strong and funny and kind and ... gentle ... and ...

TOMMY. Shhh ... dance with me. Dance with me.

END

(*They dance the same dance TOOD did alone earlier. Suddenly TOMMY spins off. TOOD looks out as memory fades. LIGHTS begin to dim slowly as the bluegrass MUSIC starts again, hauntingly. LIGHTS out.*)

Scene Five

(*WEETSIE is sewing quilt pieces together.*)

WEETSIE. (*Softly, half humming, half singing*) Shall we gather at the river. The beautiful, beautiful river. (*Or similar hymn*) (*Looking at a piece of fabric, a young girl in love*) Oooh, Jerry Don, look at this piece. Do you remember this piece? It's from the first shirt I ever made you. This is the light blue from the dress Mamma made me when we got married. And this ...

(*TOOD runs in from the porch, holding the mail. She has an almost shocked look on her face.*)