

Cold Keener, a Revue

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I.C.

COLD KEENER

A REVUE

by

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Skits

SKITS

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Filling Station

FILLING STATION

Time: Present.

Place: A point on the Alabama-Georgia state line.

Setting: A filling station upstage center. It stretches nearly across the stage. The road passes before and through it. There is a line down the center of the stage from the center of the filling station to the footlights that says on the left side, "Alabama state Line", and on the right, "Georgia State Line". The name of the station is "The State Line Filling Station". There are two gas pumps equal distance from the center of the station, so that the door of the house appears between them.

Action: When the curtain goes up a fat Negro is rared back in a chair beside the door of the station asleep and snoring. There is an inner tube lying beside him that has fallen out of his hand as he slept. It is a bright afternoon. There is the sound of a car approaching from the Alabama side and a Model T Ford rattles to the pump on the upstage side of the pumps and stops at the one nearest to the left entrance. He stops his car with a jerk. The proprietor is still asleep. The Ford driver blows his horn rigorously and wakes him. He picks up the tube beside him and arises with it in his hand, stretching and yawning.

Proprietor (Sleepily): How many?

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Ford Driver: Two.

Proprietor: Two what?

Ford Driver: Two pints.

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(The Proprietor gets a quart cup and measures the gas and wrings the hose to be sure to get it all, then he pours it in the tank.)

Ford Driver: You better look at my water and air, too.

(He has a very expensive and ornate cap on the radiator, but otherwise the car is most dilapidated. As the Proprietor pours the water into the radiator, the driver gets out of the car and stands off from it looking it over.)

Ford Driver: Say, Jimpson, they tells me you got a new mechanic round here that's just too tight.

Proprietor: That's right. He kin do more wid 'em than the man that made 'em.

Ford Driver: Well, looka here. My car kinda needs overhauling and maybe a little point. Look her over and tell me just what you could make her look like a brand new car for.

(Proprietor lifts the hood and looks. Walks around and studies the car from all angles. Then stops at the front and examines the radiator cap.)

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Proprietor: Well, I tell you. You see it's like this. This car needs a whole heap of things done to it. But being as you'se a friend of mine--tell you what I'll do. I'll just jack that radiator cap up and run a brand new Ford under it for four hundred and ninety-five dollars.

Ford Driver (Indignantly): Whut de hen-fire you think I'm gointuh let you rob me outa my car. That's a good car.

(A car enters from the Alabama side with a good-looking girl in it alone. She stops on the downstage side of the pumps, but somewhat ahead of the Ford. The Proprietor rushes over to the

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left side of her car.)

Proprietor (Pleasantly): Yes, ma'am!

Girl: I had a flat down the road and I changed it, but it's not fixed. Do you vulcanize?

Proprietor: We do everything but the buzzard lope--and that's gone outa style.

(He takes the tire off the back and goes inside, and comes right out again with it.)

Proprietor: Do you want it on the wheel or on the spare?

(Girl alights and goes round to back of car.)

Girl: On the spare, I guess.

(The Proprietor tries to put it on. The Ford Driver tries to help. They get in each other's way.)

Proprietor: (peevd) Man, let go this thing.

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Ford Driver: (peevied) Don't you see I'm helpin' you?

Proprietor: (Angry) Leggo! I can't utilize my self for you!

(Ford Driver lets go so suddenly that the tire falls to the ground. The girl grabs it before either of them end lifts it on the rack and gives it a good kick and the tire goes into place perfectly. She gets into the car, hands the Proprietor a dollar and drives off.)

Proprietor: (admiringly) That's a tight little piece of pig-meat! Damned if I don't believe I'll go to Georgia!

Ford Driver: She ain't no pig-meat. That's a married 'oman.

Proprietor: You know her?

Ford Driver: Nope, never seen her before.

Proprietor: Well, how can you tell she's married?

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Ford Driver: Didn't you see that kick? A woman that can kick like that done had some man to practise on.

(Enter from Georgia side a man driving a Chevrolet--old and battered. He stops on the downstage side of the right hand pump.)

Proprietor: (advancing to the car) what's yours?

Chevrolet Driver: Make it a gallon--goin' way over in Alabama.

(He alights and strolls towards the center of the stage where the Ford Driver is already standing.)

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Chevrolet Driver: 'Lo stranger, how's Alabama?

Ford Driver: Just fine--couldn't be no better. How's you Georgy folks starvin'?

Chevrolet Driver: Starvin'? Who ever heard tell of anybody starvin' in Georgy--people so fat in Georgy till I speck Gabriel gointuh have to knock us in de heed on judgment day so we kin go long wid de rest.

Ford Driver: He might have to knock some of then Georgy crackers in de head, but you niggers will be all reedy and waitin' for de trumpet.

Chevrolet Driver: How come?

Ford Driver: (snickering) Cause dem crackers y'all got over there sho is hard on zigaboos.

Chevrolet Driver: (peevied) Lemme tell you something, coon. We got nice white folks in Georgy! But them Alabama red-necks is too mean to give God a honest prayer without snatchin' back amen!

Ford Driver: Who mean? I know you ain't talkin' 'bout them white folks in my state. Alabama is de best state in de world. If you can't git along there, you can't get along nowhere. But in Georgy they hates niggers so bad till one day they lynched a black mule for kickin a white one.

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Chevrolet Driver: Well, in Alabama a black horse run away with a white woman, and they lynched the horse, and burnt the buggy and hung the harness.

Ford Driver: Well, in Georgy they don't low y'all to call a white female mule Maud.

Chevrolet: What they call her then?

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Ford Driver: Miss Maud--and you know it durn well, too.

Chevrolet Driver: Well, they tell me y'all can't go into a store and ask for a can of Prince Albert tobacco--not wid dat white man on it--you got to ask for Cap'n Albert.

Ford Driver: Well, they tell me they don't 'low y'all niggers to laugh on de streets in Georgy. They got laughin' barrels on certain corners for niggers, and when you gets tickled you got to hold it till you can make it to one of them barrels and stick yo' head in. Then you can cut loose. Laughin' any old place just ain't allowed.

Chevrolet Driver: Well, over in Alabama, if they tell a funny joke in the theatre, y'all ain't allowed to laugh till the white folks git through. Then a white man way down front turns round and look way up in the peanut gallery and say, "All right, niggers, y'all kin laugh now." Then y'all just "kah, kah"!

Ford Driver: That's all right. They don't 'low y'all to ride no faster than ten miles an hour. If you ride any faster--you liable to get in front of some white folks.

Chevrolet Driver: Well, they don't 'low y'all to ride nothin' but Fords so you can't pass nobody.

Ford Driver: Now, what's de matter wid a Ford?

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Chevrolet Driver: What you askin' me for? I ain't no dictionary.

Ford Driver: Naw, you ain't nuthin--do you wouldn't be drivin' dat ole money rattler you drivin'.

Chevrolet Driver: You can't talk about no Chevvie now. They got everything that a good car need. Speed! Oh, boy!

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Ford Driver: Yeah, 'bout eight miles a week.

Chevvie: Still every time I look back I see a Ford--way behind.

Ford Driver: And every time I look in front I see a Chevvie--in my way. On every highway, at every turn, on every hill, on every side road, you see a Ford hitting it up.

Chevrolet Driver: And a Chevvie passing it.

Ford Driver: Dat's a lie and otherwise you ain't really seen a Ford run yet. Now I was going down to Miami and I had dat old car doing seventy-eight, man.

Chevrolet Driver: I went dat same road and had mine doing ninety.

Ford Driver: I mean I was doin' seventy-eight on the curves, otherwise I was doing a hundred and fifty.

Chevrolet Driver: That was draggin' along. I was doin' two hundred and wasn't pushin' her. Fact is, I was in second.

Ford Driver: Man, I was doin' one hundred fifty in first. By the time I got as far south as Jacksonville, I was really running. Man, I come down that Florida Number Four going faster than the word of God!. I was doing three hundred in second.

Chevrolet Driver: You ain't lying--you sho was doing dat, cause I remember passing you just before we got to Daytona Beach--I knowed I had done seen you somewhere. I'm a Chevvie-shovin' fool.

Ford Driver: You'se a Chevvie-shovin' liar, cause I wasn't on Number Four, I was on Number two, and I passed everything on de rood.

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Chevrolet Driver: Aw, yeah, you was on Number Four. I seen you. I was goin' four hundred miles an hour when I passed you and I thought you was having tire trouble. I didn't know you was moving.

Ford Driver: You'se a seven-sided liar. I passed you before you got to St. Augustine, and I was airing out at eight hundred miles an hour.

Chevrolet Driver: And I come by you so fast till my wind said "wham"!

Ford Driver: (picking up a wrench) Halt! Don't you drive dat damn Chevie another inch--do, I'll comb yo' head wid dis wrench and part it slap in de middle! Put her in neutral!

Chevrolet Driver: Aw, man, don't be so evil! You know I got de best car.

Ford Driver: I don't know no such a thing. You'se just a great big old Georgy something ain't so..... And look who buys 'em! (Sings:) I got a Ford, you got a Ford.....

Chevrolet: (sings) Everybody who couldn't get a Chevie got a Ford...

Ford Driver: Know what, man? De angels in heben ain't flew a lick since de new Ford come out.

Chevrolet Driver: How come?

Ford Driver: Cause de minute God seen them new Fords, he called up Detroit long distance and told Ford, "Send up ten thousand brand new Fords for my angels to get around in." And, man, them angels is giving Jerusalem Street and Amen Avenue an acre of fits..... Anyhow, nobody can't beat Ford at nothin' he start. Know what he said to John D. Rockefeller?

Chevrolet Driver: Naw, what was it?

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Ford Driver: Well, they was sittin' around woofing one day 'bout how much money they had. So John D. told Henry, says, "I'm the

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richest men in the world! I got enough money to build a solid gold highway clear round the world." Know what Ford told him? "Go 'head and build it, and if I like it, I'll buy it and put one of my tin lizzies on it."

Chevrolet Driver: Know what they're going to have on the new Chevviess?

Ford Driver: A lot of debt.

Chevrolet Driver: Nope. They're going to have a piano attached to the steering wheel and a radio in the ceiling.

Ford Driver: Ford is goingter put twin beds on each running board and a bath over the spare tire.

Chevrolet Driver: And General Motors is going to put a horn in the back so you can tell the road hogs what you think of them after you pass.

Ford Driver: The Ford is going to be so you won't have to tell 'em. It will know what you're thinking and tell 'em itself..... Tell you how fast a Ford is--a gang of hants passed my house while I was sittin' on de porch. My car was parked out front. Well, them hants was going at de rate of ten miles a minute. My old man been dead 'bout three years and I seen him wid these other hants and I wanted to ast him something he forgot to tell us before he died, so I jumped in dat Ford and run dem hants down and overtook 'em. Yessuh! Dat Ford is a hant-catcher.

Chevrolet: They's too slow for my line of work. Me, I had done put in a order for a car when I seen dat hant-convention comin' down de road bout two thousand miles a hour. So I run

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to de Chevvie factory and I says, "Got my car ready?" Mr. Sloan tole me no, but he was working on it. I says hurry up, I got to make it to a hant convention before they assemble, and they's on de way right now.

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Mr. Sloan molded me a motor and put it together and equipped her, and I throwed in some gas and oil and led dat hant parade into diddy-war-diddy.

Chevrolet Driver: That's right! Stand there with your mouth lookin' like a hole in the ground and lie like the cross ties from New York to Key West.

Ford Driver: Dat ain't no lie- dat's de truth, man--and the gear-shift and everything is going to be solid silver.

Chevrolet Driver: The new Chevviess will be solid gold with diamond wheels.

Ford Driver: And the new Fords will have a lawyer in the tool box--as soon as you have a collision, the lawyer will spring right out and begin to collect damages.

Chevrolet Driver: You mean the garbage man will start to collecting junk -otherwise the new Chevvie's can't have no collision.

Ford Driver: How come?

Chevrolet Driver: Because- they're built against it. They got two sets of wheels. One set is put on crossways and they fit up under the housing. On a straight road, when you see somebody about to hit you, you just press a button and the non-collision wheels will hit the ground and run the car right off sideways. And on a curve it's got low compression springs so it can just squat level with the ground and run right under any car that's too far to the left.

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Ford Driver: (menacing) Git dat damn Chevvie up off dat ground and outa them woods!

Chevrolet Driver: (seizing a jack handle) Come on and make me. I dare you to move! Fool with me and three years from now, you'll

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be a three year old hant!

Proprietor: (coming out of door) Boys, boys, don't get too tonic, now.

Ford: Tell dat crazy guy something. I ll lam him wid lightning! (Glares a while) Nohow, no Ford don't have to go squattin' round no curve--cause the new Ford's got wings and they flies round all curves and over bad places in de road.

Chevrolet Driver: (looks angry for a moment, then laughs) You way late wid dis flyin business, big boy. De Chevrolet been flyin --dat's whut Lindbergh flew to Paris in -a Chevvie.

Ford Driver: (rushes at Chevvie) Pull dat damn Chevvie down out de air! Put it on de ground before I send you to hell! (The Proprietor has a hard time restraining him.) Stop dat lyin on Lindbergh and de ocean before I lam you so hard till I'll kill de governor of Georgy.

Proprietor: (separating them) Aw, y'all cut it out! Cut it out before I gets mad, too. (They back off from one another.) And gimme my tools, too. (They lay down their weapons.)

Ford Driver: You low-down Chevvie-shover.

Chevrolet Driver: You dirty Ford-owner!

(They feint at each other and both climb hurriedly into their cars.)

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Ford Driver: I'm going home and get my 38 Special- and you better not be here when I get back. (He starts his motor.)

Chevrolet Driver: (starts his) Yes, and I m going to get my 44 Burner and you better not be gone.

They simultaneously back off, glaring at each other.)

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Cock Robin

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COCK ROBIN

Place: Any city.

Time: Present.

Scene: A city street in colored town.

Setting: Straight across the stage, upstage, are (1) a cheap restaurant with a crude sign on which is written "The Grease Spot"; (2) a cheap pool hall called "The Eight Rock"; (3) a dingy rooming house, "The Shimmy Shack". All have practical doors and windows. All are two-story buildings with numerous small-paned windows. There is a generous sidewalk and the rest of the stage is street.

Action: At the rise there are characteristic noises from each of the places.

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Grease Spot: (voice) Adam and Eve on a raft--wreck em! Clean up de kitchen for one! Let one come gruntin', one come switchin , snatch one from de rear!

Pool Room: (voice) Now, I m going to show you some of Blue Baby's stuff..... (Another voice:) Aw, shut up! You trying to show yo grandma how to milk ducks--shoot! (A crack of balls)

Shimmy Shack: (Somebody playing blues on the piano.)

There is a sudden turmoil in the shack and three shots are heard. The door flies open and Cock Robin staggers out with three arrows sticking in him and falls dead on his back on the sidewalk. All the windows fly up and heads are thrust out. Crowds pour out

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of the doors. The Bull is looking out of the second-story window of the Shack.)

Jaybird: (standing over Cock Robin) It s Cock Robin!

Beetle: (gazing down on him) Dat's him all right, and murdered in de first degree.

Owl: Who! Who! Who kilt Cock Robin?

Mrs. Blackbird: I just knowed something bad was going to happen--I dreamed last night the air was full of feathers.

Beetle: I don't know who kilt him--but I do know he was due for a first class killin . He give these married man more aid and assistance than de ice man.

Sister Buzzard: (belligerently) I don t keer who kilt him..... But nobody better not cast no slams at my hotel. (points to shack) They bet not say my shack ain't respectable and they bet not tell me my eye is black.

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Owl: (officiously) Hey, Sister Buzzard, let's squat dat rabbit and jump another one. What we wants to know is- who kilt Cock Robin?

Sparrow: (Has a bow and quiver of arrows, coming out of shack to center stags. Very belligerently) I, the sparrow, with my bow and arrow, and I kilt Cock Robin--who wants to know?

Owl: (warily) Course we don't keer nothin' 'bout you killin' him, Brother Sparrow, we wants to know how come.

Sparrow: Well, I'll tell you. When me and my wife first started to nestin' she never laid nothin' but plain white eggs. But since Cock Robin been hanging round our place--every time I go out on a worm hunt, when I come back, she'll done laid another blue egg.

Jaybird: (Begins to pick feathers violently) Now, you done got me to scratchin' where I don't itch--come to think of it, I done

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seen two or three blue eggs in my nest.

Crow: (glaring at his wife) You been complaining 'bout my singing ever since this guy (points at Cock Robin) has been round here. Nother thing--I ain't never brought home nothin' but worms, and I been seeing a powerful lot of grasshoppers bones around lately.

Mrs. Crow: (crying and trembling) Oo-oo, you done got me so nervous --I got de haystacks. (She flutters and an egg falls to the floor.)

Chorus of voices: She's lain a egg! And it's blue-robin egg blue.

Jaybird: Dere now! De mule done kicked Rucker!

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Owl: Let's get dis killin' straight. Brother Sparrow say he kilt him for just causes.....

Crow: And I don't blame him--when they get so they kin lay mo eggs in my nest than I kin--they's got to be some changes made.

Owl: Who saw him die?

Fly: I, said the fly, with my little eye. I saw Cock Robin die.

Owl: Tell us bout it, Brother Fly.

Fly: I was in de Grease Spot when Mrs. Sparrow and Cock Robin passed, and I heard him say something was on fire--I don't know what--and he says to Mrs. Sparrow, "Come on up in the Shimmy Shack and let's put it out" and she says "All right". So they went on up--and the next thing I know, Bull Sparrow was killin' him.

Owl: Who caught his blood?

Mrs. Fish: I did, Brother Owl--in my little dish. (Wiping a tear) He had such a lovely voice.

(A general skeptical titter runs around.)

Owl: Since y all done voted me in as chairman of dis committee--we better make some arrangement bout funeralizin' him. Who'll

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make his shroud?

Mrs. Beetle: I, Mrs. Bettle, with my thread and needle--I ll make Cock Robin's shroud.

Owl: Now, since I got a spade and shovel, I ll dig his grave. Now who'll bear his pall?

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The Wrens: We, said the wren, both the cock and the hen--we ll bear Cock Robin s pall.

Owl: Now, who ll mourn his love?

(All of the females present come rushing up to the owl. All the characters come down out of the building and crowd up close.)

Voice: Me, Brother Owl, I'll mourn his love! I really can mourn, too. (They push and jostle each other.)

Owl: Here! Here! Let's have some order. Don't need but one chief mourner. I'm going to put this thing to a vote and give the job to Sister Dove--she's had more experience in mournin' than anybody else, so she'll mourn Cock Robin's love..... Now, who'll toll the bell?

Bull: I'll toll dat bell, Brother Owl.

Crow: How come I can't toll it. I ain't been 'signed to no duty yet.

Bull: I said I was going to toll that bell, and that's all there is to it. I can pull and it takes pull to toll bells. (To owl) Just put my name down as bell-toller.

Owl: Now, we got things ready, what hall is we goin' funeralize him from?

Crow: He was a Great Grand Exalted Ruler of the High-Roostin' Crows--we oughter conduct de funeral.

Beetle: He was a Prime and Supreme Butler of the Noble Mucky Beetle Bugs--turn over de 'rangements to us.

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Jaybird: I know so well, we re going to have something to say over Cock Robin when he was Superior subordinate Exalted Contaminator in the Personal Parading Jay Birds.

Owls: We, order of Night-Stepping Owls, better take over this whole thing to keep peace. He was a member in good standing.

Fish: We certainly going to put a word in, cause he was a Bottom Ruler in the order of The Never Been Caught Fishes.

Black Birds: Everybody knows de Ever Blooming Black Birds really puts 'em away. A heap of you folks that's whooping for dis funeral don't know what to do wid one when you gits it.

Owl: Dat s a good idea! Everyone of you lodges parade yo material and de best one gits de funeral. (Great cheers and hubbub) Now, you crows, got first chance.

(Everybody exits but the Owl and the Bull. The Owl takes a high chair and sits in front of the Eight Rock to review the parade. Enter the Crows with a band.)

Chief Crow: (salutes Owl) We're going to put Cock Robin in a bronze casket wid ten carriages and strut like this. (The band strikes up, the Chief Crow is the drum major, and they do a hot strut across the stage.)

(Enter the Beetles. Salute Owl.)

Beetles: We'll put Cock Robin in a copper casket wid fifteen carriages and romp like this. (They do their stuff and take places beside the crows.)

(Enter the Jaybirds and same business)

Chief Jaybird: Mr. Chairman, we ll put him in a silver casket wid twenty carriages and spread our junk like so. (They join Crows and Beetles.)

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(Enter Fish--same business.)

Fish: We'll put him a crystal casket and have thirty carriages. (Begin to prance) We're gointer strut our stuff, we're gointer strut our stuff, Good Lawd! we're gointer spread our mess.

(Enter Blackbirds--same business)

Blackbirds: We'll put him in a solid gold casket wid fifty carriages, and we'll do the Palmer House and strut like Stavin' Cheney. (Boston tune: Oh te dee ta ta de ta a putzy wanza.)

Owl: I don't know who to 'cide on.

Bull: I don't keer who gits de funeral. I'm going to march in front.

Owl: How come, Brother Bull? You don't belong to none of these lodges.

Bull: I know it, but, Brother Owl, you know very well that Bull goes in front of everything.

Owl: Dat's de truth..... Now, which one of you lodges think you kin do de best job?

All: Us! We! Me! Leave de Crows have him!.... Give him to de Blackbirds..... De Beetles is the only ones!..... Let de Fishes funeralize him!..... Etc., etc.!

Owl: (after rapping for order) Well, whoever pays de bills can have de body. Who gointer pay de bills?

(There is profound silence for a moment, then Brother Crow speaks up.)

Crow: Well, brothers and sisters, since we'se all here at one time, you know Sister Speckled Hen is having a grand barbecue and fish fry down on Front Street and Beale--

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why not let's have one grand consolidated, amalgamated fraternal parade down to her place and enjoy the consequences?

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All: Yes, yes! Let's go! (They begin to organize. The Bull sets his hat at a reckless angle, seizes an elaborate baton and begins to line up the lodges. Then he places himself at the head. The owl brings up the rear.)

Bull: We're all set! (To orchestra) Turn it on, professor, and let the bad luck happen! (They strut off.)

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Heaven

HEAVEN

SETTING: Heaven, showing the Tree of Life and the intersection of Hallelujah Avenue and Amen Street. The pearly gates stretch across the stage like a curtain. There is a peep-hole in the door. A flight of golden stairs ascend from the orchestra pit in mid stage. Just inside the gates, JOHN has a jewelled pulpit that holds the record books.

ACTION: At the rise the gates are closed, but a listless drone of "Holy" can be heard and the sound of crowns being cast and retrieved. There comes a sound of a mouth organ being played in a blues mood way down the golden stair. Enter by the stairs a sour-faced man, neatly dressed and knocks at the gate. The peep-hole flies open and St. Peter peeps out and looks doubtfully at the candidate.

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ST. PETER

Well, who is it?

MAN

One Charles Knowles

ST. PETER

What do you want?

KNOWLES

I want to enter.

ST. PETER

You don't look just right to me. What good have you ever done?

KNOWLES

(thinks a moment) Well, one time I met a little girl and she was crying because she had lost her money so I gave her three cents.

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ST. PETER

(over his shoulder) Look on the books there, John, and see if it's there.

ST. JOHN

(after a short pause) Yes, it's here.

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ST. PETER

Well, what else did you ever do?

KNOWLES

One time I met a little boy crying because he had lost his money and I gave him two cents.

ST. PETER

(over his shoulder) See if that's there, John.

ST. JOHN

(after a pause) Yes, it's here.

ST. PETER

Is that all you ever gave away?

KNOWLES

Yes.

ST. JOHN

(after a pause) Well, Peter, you gointer let him in?

ST. PETER

No. Give him his nickel and let him gwan somewhere else. (He hands the man a nickel. and slams shut the peep-hole. The man turns slowly and descends the stairs. The music of the month organ is much nearer now. St. Peter opens the peep-hole and looks out with pleased interest as a Negro with a torn hat and the general appearance of a roustabout

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ascends the stairs and stops before the gate. A dead silence falls. He wipes off his mouth organ and puts it in his pocket. He takes his hat in his hand and faces St. Peter timidly.

ST. PETER

(amiably) What's your name?

NEGRO

Jim - thass whut they call me - Jim.

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ST. PETER

(opening the gates) Well come in, Jim. We're mighty glad to see you. (Jim steps timidly in.)
Where did you come from, Jim?

JIM

(gazing awed upon the magnificence) From Johnstown. Didn't you hear bout de great flood?

(Enter four angels walking two and two. One couple enters left one couple enters right and meet at the tree.)

COUPLE

Ooo ooh! Y'all ain't seen no water!

ST. PETER

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That's all right about the water. We all seen it. Just go with John and get fixed up. Everybody will be nice to you. (to John) Take him and dress him up.

(John takes Jim's arm and starts off right.)

JIM

Man, dat water was ten foot deep! You ain't never seen no water lessen you seen de Johnstown flood! (They exit right)

(Angels pass and repass, all gorgeously clad. Re-enter John with Jim elaborately gowned. John leads him to a seat, places a golden harp beside him and goes back to his post.)

JIM

Man, dat was some water! (feels his pockets as if hunting for something, looks worried for a moment.) Oh, John, where's my harp?

JOHN

There it is right on the seat beside you.

JIM

(picks up the golden harp and looks it over) This here ain't my harp. Where's de one I been playin' all de time?

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JOHN

Oh, that's in your robe pocket.

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(Jim feels and pulls it out and wipes it off and blows a chord or two. All the angels look interested.)

JIM

As I was sayin', I ain't never seen it rain lak it rained in Johnstown. (He commences to blow and all the angels tune in with him and heaven is full of harmony. Two huge black angels fly out from the back of heaven and seat themselves beside Jim. Both of them play guitars. John keeps time with his foot. Peter jingles his keys. This keeps up till an old patriarch with a long beard and crooked staff enters at left and proceeds slowly to the Tree of Life. There he pauses, looks pensively about. Jim notices him and stops the music and approaches him.)

JIM

Hello, old folks, how long you been here?

OLD MAN

Oh, a long time.

JIM

I just got here from de Johnstown flood. Man, dat was some water! Chickens floatin', folks floatin', horses floatin', houses floatin'! Man, dat wuz water.

OLD MAN

(starting away in disgust) Aw, shucks, you ain't seen no water. (He exits right. Jim looks hurt and puzzled for a moment then cells out to Peter.)

JIM

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Say, Peter, thought you said everybody here was nice and sociable. See how dat ole man treated me when I tryin' to show him manners and politeness by tellin' him 'bout de flood?

PETER

You can't tell that man bout no flood that's Noah.

(Jim sits down, crushed.)

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ONE BLACK ANGEL

That's all right, Jim, you'll know better next time. Come on, let's play some more.

JIM

Never mind, I wantsto fly some.

SECOND BLACK ANGEL

You can't fly till they tell you.

JIM

Oh yes, I kin, too. They my wings, ain't they? Y'all just lak colored folks - let 'em be round de place awhile and they tries to boss de job. (He gets up and starts off upstage center.)

FIRST BLACK ANGEL

Now, where you goin'?

JIM

Library of Congress

I'm goin' to climb up on some high tower of elevation and fly all over heben.

SECOND BLACK ANGEL

You better wait. You gointer break up somethin' and they'll sho take yo' wings off and Lawd knows when you'll git any more.

JIM

Aw, y'all just jealous - done got too old on de job. I'm goin' try my wings. (He exits.)

(The other angels shake their heads sadly and turn again to music. There is a series of tremendous crashes and John and Peter rush off stage upstage center and return with Jim very mussed up. They lead him solemnly to the same seat and snatch off his wings and seat him, frowning disapprovingly upon him all the while. They return to their posts. Jim sits quiet for for a moment then picks up the golden harp.)

FIRST BLACK ANGEL

Unhunh, I told you you was gointer git yo'self into all kinds of trouble flyin' so fast!

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JIM

Aw, I don't Keer.

SECOND BLACK ANGEL

Yeah, and now you ain't got no mo' wings neither.

JIM

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(makin' ready to strike his harp) I don't keer. I was a flyin' fool when I had 'em. (starts to play and sing)

QUICK CURTAIN

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Mr. Frog

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MR. FROG

All action is seen from actors viewpoint. Full stage.

Time: When animals talked

Place: A Florida swamp.

Setting: Water is seen through the cypress and magnolia and pine trees. Spanish moss hangs from the trees. There is a large hollow log at left near the entrance. A long-leaf pine is down stage center. A huge toadstool is near footlights at extreme right. The lake in the back glints through all this. The pine tree is a girl dancer. Several bird-nests are seen in the tree tops. One large tree near center down stage has a large hollow.

At the rise, the sun is setting. The tree is motionless. With the music it begins to sway slightly, but increases its motion all the time. Enter down stage left, the South Wind and dances with the tree for about a minute. Enter West Wind upstage right and both dance with tree. Enter East Wind upstage, left, and joins the dance, then the North Wind down

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stage right. The tempo increases with the entrance of each wind. The Tree is influenced by each. When all four winds are on, there is a violent wind dance for a minute till the sun finally sets and the winds take their places at their entrances and sink to the ground and remain there.

In the darkness hundreds of fireflies swarm over the scene. The scene is lighted from the ground to indicate marsh gas (Jack O Lantern). There is silence for about thirty seconds, then

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enter a big frog upstage center and leaps to the toad stool down stage right and sits there for a moment staring about him. The voice of an alligator booms from the water. An owl hoots, a chorus of frogs, birds, beetles, flies, a snake, all enter from different points and take places among the trees and bushes. A huge buzzard takes his seat on the hollow log. There is a working door in the log. The frog chorus is down near the footlights in irregular formation. They croak a few seconds.

Frog on toadstool: (sings) Mister Frog went courtin' he did ride.

Frog Chorus: (jumping up and down rhythmically) Unh hunh, unh hunh.

(Enter Mr. Frog down stage right riding a tortoise, dressed in green satin or velvet, white vest, sword, spurs and boots.)

Frog on toadstool: (sings) Mr. Frog went courtin he did ride, sword and pistol by his side.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Frog on toadstool: He rode right up to Miss Mousie s door.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

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Frog on toadstool: Rode right up to Miss Mousie s door where he'd often been before.

Chorus: (All birds and everything join chorus) Unh hunh, hun hunh.

(Tortoise reaches hollow log and knocks on the door. It opens shyly and Miss Mousie creeps out, behaving coyly.)

Frog on toadstool: (singing) And he took Miss Mousie on his knee.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Lover Frog: Oh, I took Miss Mousie on my knee, said Miss Mousie won t you marry me?

Chorus: Unh hunh.

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(The Lover Frog suits the action to the song.)

Miss Mousie: (coyly) Not without my pa's consent.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Miss Mousie: Not without my pa s consent, would I marry the president.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Enter Old Uncle Rat from the log, very jovial. He bursts into a big laugh and everybody joins with him for a half minute. He beams happily on all.)

Frog on toadstool: Old Uncle Rat, he laughed and cried.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

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Frog on toadstool: Old Uncle Rat he laughed and cried.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Frog: Old Uncle Rat he laughed and cried, to see his daughter be a bride.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Frog: Where, oh where will the wedding be?

Chorus: Unh hunh, unh hunh.

Frog: Where, oh where will the wedding be?

Old Uncle Rat: Down in de holler of de ol oak tree.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Bride and groom retire into log. The guests begin to approach the tree slowly.)

Frog: What, oh what will the supper be?

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

Frog: What, oh what will the supper be?

Old Uncle Rat: Good fat meat and de black eye pea.

Chorus: Unh hunh, unhunh, unhunh, unhunh, unhunh, unhunh.

Frog: And the first come in was Mister Bee.

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Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Enter Mr. Bee with a guitar.)

Frog: The first come in was Mister Bee, wid his fiddle on his knee.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Enter bridal couple and proceed to the hollow oak and take their places. Reverend Buzzard performs the ceremony.)

Reverend Buzzard: (to groom) Do you take Miss Mousie to be your wife?

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Bride and groom nod assent in time to the music.)

Groom: Yes, I take this woman to be my wife, to love her and kiss her for all my life.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Old Man Rat tries to cry. Reverend Buzzard kisses the bride. They step away from the altar and seat themselves. General noise of congratulation in various ways- according to the species.)

Frog on toadstool: And the nex come in was Mrs. Snake.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

Frog: And the next come in was Mrs. Snake, pass all around dat wedding cake.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

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(She is passing the cake, decorated with fireflies. Everybody takes a piece.)

Frog: And the next come in was Mr. Bug.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

Frog: And de next come in was Mr. Bug, passed all around dat whiskey jug.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

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Frog: And the next come in was Mr. Tick.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Enter Mr. Tick and start gobbling everything in sight.)

Frog: And de next come in was Mr. Tick, et so much till it made him sick.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Mr. Tick is flat on his back in the center of the wedding party.)

Frog: And then they sent for Doctor Fly.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(Enter Dr. Fly.)

Frog: And then they sent for Doctor Fly, said Mr. Tick, you sho will die.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

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(Mr. Tick is dragged out by his hind legs into the bushes out of sight.)

(The groom loads his wife on the tortoise and they start off right. Everybody throws rice, etc., behind them.

Frog: And that was the last of the wedding day.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

Frog: And that was the last of the wedding day, and that is all I have to say.

Chorus: Unhunh, unhunh.

(The bride and groom exit to a slow curtain and leave the chorus dancing and singing "unhunh, unhunh, unhunh, unhunh.)

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Lenox Avenue

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LENOX AVENUE

Time: Present.

Place: New York City.

Scene: Lenox Avenue at 135th Street.

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Setting: Back drop showing intersection and houses. The autos are on a scenic band and keep whizzing past.

Action: When the curtain rises (children's game insert) there is a traffic officer at the intersection. A very effeminate young man enters left with a large cretonne sewing bag on his wrist. Officer glares at him a moment, then yells at him.

Officer: Come here.

Young Man: (looks all about himself) Are you speaking to me?

Officer: Who else but you? Make it snappy!

(Young man approaches center of intersection where officer is standing.)

What you got in that bag?

Young Man: My knitting.

Officer: (scornfully) Oh yeah? And where are you going with your knitting?

Young Man: To the army.

Officer: (surprised) To the army? Say! What are you going to the army for?

Young Man: Oh well, the boys must have their sox, you know. (Waves a fluffy goodbye)
Toodle-oo, old cabbage, I must try to get the

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boys out of the trenches before Christmas.

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(He exits right. Officer glares after him. Enter right, a man and woman nearing middle age. They are angry. He is walking a little ahead of her and pauses to talk back at her.)

Man: Aw, go bag yo' head, woman! You ain't got nothin' to do wid me. It's none of yo' business where I been.

Woman: (catching up to him) I'm yo' wife, ain't I? I reckon I got something to say 'bout you bugabooing round town all night.

Man: Aw, naw you ain't. God gives every man a lovable chance, and if he don't take it - that's his hard luck. But I'm telling you straight, the world ain't gointer owe me nothin' but a hole in de ground when I die.

(She glares at him, arms akimbo. He starts to walk.)

Woman: You big old evil mule you! You so evil till one drop of yo' spit would poison all the fish in the ocean. Hold on, I ain't through wid you yet!

Man: You might as well be through. I'm through wid you. I got a brand new costume that you don't fit. I'm playin' a brand new game and you ain't it. Bye, bye, mama, you can't snore in my ear no more.

Women: (slurringly) Don't put dat lie out, papa. You ain't near through wid me!

Man: Woman, I'm just too through. You gimme the close up cramps every time I look at you.

Woman: (snapping her fingers) Brother, don't hang dat nasty wash out in my back yard. You ain't through wid me and I know it.

Man: Aw yeah. I don't keer if I never see you no more. That would be soon aplenty.

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Woman: (gets right up in his face) You might as well stop dat wringing and twisting, cause I know you want me some 'gin (again), cause I'm a damn sweet woman and you know it.

(He looks her in the eye for a moment, then grabs her by the arm and faces her about.)

Man: Aw, come on and let's go home, woman. I hates to hear folks fussin' on the streets. (They exit right.)

(Enter a street preacher with two sisters and a brother. The preacher has a pair of cymbols and a bag. The sisters carry tam bourines. The brother has a soap box. He places the box on the curb and the quartet sing a song. "Wouldn't mind dying if dying was all". After this the preacher mounts the box and speaks. A crowd collects.)

Preacher: You folks ain't right. You needs to be born agin. Now I see some of y'all askin' "how kin a man enter de second time into his mother's esophagus and be born agin.....

Voice from the edge of the crowd: What kind of a woman is that!

Preacher: And moreover, you don't pray enough. You get down on yo' knees and mumble something and jump in yo' beds. Why can't you pray in de bed? You know some of y'all does everything in de bed but praise de Lawd. (To the brother) Let's sing "Brothers' get yo' peckers ready, let's peck on de Rock". (The cymbols and tambourines start. The officer runs over.)

Officer: Hey! Get de hell outa here, blocking the street! (They all exit right followed by the crowd. Only two men remain on the curb.)

(Enter left a very slender girl in a form fitting, long dress. It is quite tight about the buttocks. They eye her till she almost reaches the right exit.)

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First Man: Man, if these new styles keep on the way they're going, we'll find out that the snake's got hips.

(She keeps right on off right.)

(Enter right two women. One is small and doll-like and the other is tall and masculine. They stroll across, arm in arm. At center they pause and whisper a moment, then stroll on across stage to exit at left. The two men glare behind them, then look at each other.)

Second Man: Well, Bo, I still got this consolation- ain't nobody but a man and the holy ghost been the father of a family yet.

(Enter a man at left with a folded newspaper under his arm. He stands on the corner for a moment, then starts walking rapidly across Lenox Avenue. When he reaches the center, the officer stops him.)

Officer: Where you going in such a hurry trying to get run over?

Men: No, sir.

Officer: Well, then, where you think you going?

Men: To Brooklyn.

Officer: Oh yeah? Have you learned the trade? What do you know about going to Brooklyn?

Man: Oh, I know a lot about it.

Officer: Got your papers on you?

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Man: (embarrassed) I didn't get my diploma. You see, my father died and I had to leave school at eighteen, but I've been taking evening courses at Columbia University. You know, my father was an ambitious man, but life was hard so he never did find out how to get to Brooklyn, but he had high hopes for me. And on his death-bed he made me promise I'd carry on. So I've attended what

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lectures I could afford, read everything I could find, talked with taxi drivers and police officers- so today I felt I knew enough to try it, in spite of the fact that I didn't have my papers. (He wrings his hands and looks exalted and wistful.)

Officer: Spell compressibility.

Man: C-o-m....uh, er...p-e-r...er, oh I don't think I can spell that.

Officer: So you trying to bootleg to Brooklyn, eh? I ought to run you in! The nerve of some of you guys! And can't even spell compressibility. That's what's the matter with the subway and the L- a whole lot of you amateurs trying to use 'em. Get on back uptown before I hang a charge on you. Beat it!

(The fellow turns to run off left and the cop stands akimbo glaring after him. Enter right a good-looking girl walking briskly with a suit-case, followed by a man.)

Man: Lois! Wait there a minute, baby.

Lois: (sourly) From now on, my name's lost so far as you're concerned. And otherwise, I don't want you following me around.

Man: Can't a man follow his wife?

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Lois: He sho kin, but there ought to be a law against it. I done told you I don't want you no more, so give yo' shoe-leather a break.

Man: Don't talk like that, baby. (Reaches in his pocket and takes out a bill.) Here, take this money and have us a good supper when I get home from work.

Lois: When you get home tonight, brother, I'll be spreading my jenk in another town.

Man: Who with?

Lois: You wouldn't know, but, baby, I'm going to throw him some waves the ocean ain't never seen.

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Man: (angrily) Yeah, and you stand up here and tell me that just one more time and I'm going to beat you if they have a lawsuit in West Hell.

Lois: You better not hit me, nigger.

Man: I'll hit you just as sure as Jesus rode a jackass.

(She starts to walk off. He catches her arm.)

Lois: Turn go of me, fool! I dare you to hit me! If you stick your rusty foot in my face you going to jail.

Man: How come I'm going to jail?

Lois: Cause there's a cop right there on the corner and I'm going to holler like a pretty white woman!

(Quick Curtain)

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House that Jack Built

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HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

Main Character: De Otis Blunt.

Time: Present.

Place: Deep South.

Scene: Old-fashioned schoolhouse.

Setting: A platform at left. Two practical windows in back drop with a wall blackboard in between them. Two rows of benches.

Action: At the rise the pupils are all seated and attentive. The teacher is an aging man. They are large children and the girls are pretty. Everyone is neat and tidy but De Otis. He is seated in the last row next the blackboard. One good-looking boy is sitting by a pretty girl and flirting.

Teacher: Remember this is Friday afternoon. As soon as we finish this lesson we'll go into the recitation exercise. (To the flirting couple) Pay attention to the lesson. (There is a general buzz over the room. He raps for order.) Whose doing all this talking? (Fixes his

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eye on De Otis) Come out here, De Otis. I'll teach you how to keep on talkin' when I say quit.

De Otis: Aw, it twant me talkin'.

Teacher: (angrily) Come out here, sir!

De Otis (sulkily rises): Everybody is talkin' but me!

Teacher: Come on out here, De Otis.

(De Otis reaches the platform and gets a couple of licks and starts on back. Several of the pupils make faces at him and he

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makes faces back. His back is towards the platform, but the teacher can see the faces the others are making.)

Teacher: (To De Otis) What are you makin' faces at these girls for? Come on back, De Otis.

De Otis: Aw, they makin' faces at me!

Teacher: Come on back, De Otis.

(He goes angrily back to the desk and gets two more licks.)

Now see can't you behave yourself.

(De Otis resumes his seat. The girl who is flirting, holds up her hand.)

Teacher: (flirtatiously) What is it, Nellie?

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Nellie: May I be excused please?

Teacher: Yes, dear, you may go.

(Boy beside her lifts his hand.)

Well, what do you want?

Boy: May I be excused?

Teacher: NO!

(Girl sitting on front seat puts her foot on top of the desk. Teacher raises the rule to reprimand her, but his curiosity gets the better of him and he sits staring up under her clothes. The school titters. He catches himself and frowns. He glares down at De Otis.)

Come out here, De Otis.

De Otis: Aw, you just pickin' on me cause I ain't got no clothes. I ain't doin' nothin'. (He goes up to the desk. While the teacher is thrashing him the boy on the front seat sneaks out. De Otis returns to his seat and then the teacher misses the boy and looks frantic.)

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Teacher: Where's Walter?

Girl who had her leg up: He excused himself.

Teacher: (Slams his ruler down in fury two or three times and knocks his roll book off the desk.) Come out here, De Otis! Come on and fetch it to me! Don't make me have to come down there after it!

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(De Otis pouts on up to the desk and gets a couple of licks in the hand and returns to his seat.)

Teacher: (To a boy) Go tell Nellie and Walter to come here and don't come back here telling me you can't find 'em.

(The boy exits.)

Now we'll finish this spelling lesson and go on to the recitations. Anybody don't know a speech today will get a good whipping and be kept after school.

(Enter Walter and Nellie and the other boy and take their seats.)

Teacher: (To Walter) Go to the board. (Walter goes.) Spell "mouse". (Walter writes it correctly.) Now spell "cat". (Walter writes "pussy". (Teacher gets very angry) I didn't ask you what kind of a cat! Where is your mind anyhow? (Very wild) Come out here De Otis!

De Otis: Aw, what I got to do wid it?

Teacher: Come out here, De Otis! (He comes grumbling and gets a licking.)

Teacher: Now, we'll have the regular Friday afternoon exercise. Begin at the front seats and go back. (He glances at Walter to begin.)

Walter: (Comes to the platform and bows stiffly) When I was a lil boy the girls all call me cousin now I'm a big man, I love 'em by the dozen. (He bows and resumes his seat.)

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Nellie: (Holds out her skirt and bows.)

Raccoon up de 'simmon tree

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Possom on de ground

Raccoon shake de 'simmons down

Possom pass 'em round.

One Boy: (Comes up dancing and bows.)

Little boy, little boy, who made yo' britches?

Mama did de cuttin' and papa did de stitches.

(He finishes with a "break" and takes his seat.)

Girl: (frightened stiff--she sings-songs it rapid fire.)

I come from haunts of coot and hern

I make a sudden sally

And sparkle out among the fern

To bicker down the valley.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance

Among my skinning swallows.

I make the fretted sunbeams dance

Above my shimmering shallows.

(She vainly tries to remember more, but after two or three false starts and much head and leg scratching, she retires weeping.)

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(All the rest say "I didn't learn none" or "I forgot mine", or "Some done said mine" till one boy on the next to the last seat.)

Boy: Little fishes in do brook Willie ketch 'um wid a hook Mama fry 'em in de pan Papa eat 'em like a man.

Teacher: It's your time, De Otis. Come on out.

De Otis: Somebody done said mine.

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Teacher: Well, you better say somebody else's or get a real good killin' and stay after school.

De Otis: (scratches his head, legs, back--then stands up) I believe I know one, sir.

Teacher: You better had of found one. Come on up here.

(He ascends the platform but does not bow. He puts one hand on his hip.)

De Otis: Oh, this is the house that Jack built.

Oh, this is the malt that lay in de house that Jack built. This is the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Oh-ah-h--this is the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Oh! This the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

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(By this time he is walking back and forth across the platform and gesturing, and the others are keeping time with their feet. Even the teacher has joined in.)

This is the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

(All have left their seats and are dancing in chorus.)

A-ah--this is the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Oh, this is the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled

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horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

A-a-ah this is the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built. Ah, this is the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Oh, this is the fox that lived under the thorn that stole the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed

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the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Ah--this is Jack with his hound and horn that caught the fox that lived under the thorn that stole the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in

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the house that Jack built.

Ah--this is the horse of the beautiful form that carried Jack with his hound and horn that caught the fox that lived under the thorn that stole the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Ah--this is the groom that ever morn curried the horse of the beautiful form that carried Jack with his hound horn that caught the fox that lived under the thorn that stole the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

Ah--this is Sir John Barley Corn that owned the horse of the beautiful form that carried Jack with his hound and horn that caught the fox that lived under the thorn that stole the cock that crowed in the morn that woke the priest all shaven and shorn that married the man all tattered and torn that kissed the maiden all forlorn that milked the cow with the

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crumpled horn that tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat that ate the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.

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(De Otis dances till he shudders down to the floor and lies there shivering in rhythm.)

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Bahamas

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BAHAMAS

(All action from actors' right and left.)

Time: Present.

Place: Harlem

Scene: Seventh Avenue at 135th Street. Just a street scene on back crop.

At the rise, several persons are passing up and down avenue. One man standing by himself as if waiting for someone. It is in broad daylight. One man stops and speaks to him.

Man: Hello, Good Black, how you get em?

Good Black: Got the town by the tail, man. How they treating you?

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Man: Man, I got this town so skeered of me till the buildings lean backwards when I go down the streets. (Looks Good Black over thoughtfully) But you look kinda pentecostal to me, brother. What's the matter?

Good Black: (looking at his watch) Joe Wiley told me to meet him here at one o'clock and here it is after two. I hates to wait on anybody--even myself.

Man: (looks off right) Here he comes now. See you later. (He exits right.)

(Enter Joe Wiley with a cable gram in his hand. Very jovial.)

Joe: I bet you done run a hot! (Good Black sulks.) Whew! I can smell the smoke! (Good Black laughs in spite of himself.)

Good Black: Nigger biddy, where you been all dis time? Got me tied

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out here croppin grass like a mule.

Joe: (extends cablegram to Good Black who takes it and reads it.) I got that just as I started to leave home. Ain't that grand?

Good Black: (reading aloud) I am about to sail from the Bahamas for Africa, but I would like to see you again before I go. I am sending my flag-ship, The Bellamina, to bring you and your friends out. Signed: The Emperor Jones. (Slaps Joe on the back) Say, that's all to the mustard! Let's go.

Joe: (Shakes hands and puts the cable in his pocket.) That's copasetty, man, just thirty-eight and two. I'm already pecked.

Good Black: When will the boat be here?

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Joe: Arrives tonight, sails for Nassau tomorrow.

Good Black: (Making an exaggerated motion of tipping away) Excuse me while I take a creep! I'm going to shake hands with the Emperor Jones. (Starts towards right exit)

Joe: (Seizes his arm and joins him) Come, if your re coming, let's go if you're going.

(They tip their hats to the audience and exit joyfully. The curtain descends for a moment. A ship s siren can be heard and the sounds of anchor and chains etc. Shouts of greeting, etc. The curtain arises on the ship warping into Prince George's Wharf. The crew is singing "Ceasar Riley. In the Bahamas. Joe and Good Black are standing on the deck as the boat comes in. The Emperor Jones in all his glory is standing on the wharf surrounded by a group of his nobles and ladies. He is making a speech.)

Emperor Jones: To Africa! When I get there with my conquering black legions I am not going to ask Greet Britain what they are doing there. I'm just going to say "get out!" (Applause) I'm not going to ask

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France "what are you doing here?" I m going to say get out! I'm not going to ask Belgium "what are you doing here? I m going to say get out! (Great applause) Ninety days from now I shall have an ambassador at the Court of St. James (applause). Ninety days from now I shall have an ambassador at the Court of Paris (applause). Ninety days from now I shall have an ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg. (Hurrah!) Ninety days from now I shall have an ambassador at the court of Moscow. (Applause) And ninety days from now, I shall have a Black House, side by side with the White House in Washington. (Great storm of applause) Board the fleet, let us sail for Africa and freedom!

Rise 1. John Canon 2. Gaming

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(The seaman on the wharf sing a salute to the ship as she comes in.)

Seaman's Chorus: Bellamina, Bellamina, Bellamina in the harbor, Bellamina, Bellamina, Bellamina in the harbor. Put Bellamina on de dock Paint Bellamina bottom black.

Oh the Maisie, oh the Maisie, oh the Maisie set me crazy,

Oh the Maisie, oh the Maisie, oh the Maisie set me crazy,

Put Bellamina on de dock

Paint Bellamina, black, black, black.

(As the song ends, Joe and Good Black descend the gangplank and are ceremoniously received by Emperor Jones.)

Emperor Jones: My old friend--Joe Wiley!

Joe: Your High and Mighty Majesty. (turns to Good Black) And this

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is my friend, Mr. Good Black, who wanted to come along.

Emperor: Mighty glad to see you, Mr. Good Black. (to Joe) I thought you might have brought some ladies along.

Joe: Sorry. The ones I could have got to come would have been in my way (he looks meaningly at the ladies) after I got here.

Emperor: I guess it's just as well you didn't. You know the American girls are the snappiest lot on earth but you hove ruined 'em by giving em too much rope. Now they are a whole woman and half a man. But let me introduce you to the court. (He stands between the two

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and grows very rigid. The court circles about him in review, as each passes and bows very low, he bawls out "Mr. Joe Wiley, Mr. Good Black meet the Duke of Egypt, Lady Carrie Hawkins, Sir Willie, Jenkins, K. C. O. C.--Knight Commander of the Sublime Order of the Congo, Sir Lemuel Nixon, General of the Black Legions and Duke of Guinea, Sis Jasper Blunt, Earl of Uganda, Lady Mittie Harris Countess of the Nile.

(They all go back to their places singing "Don't you hurry, worry with me" and pee vee voo. Music of drums and cow-bells are heard approaching.)

Joe: What s that? (Parade passes in review)

Emperor: The John Canoe parade in your honor.

Good Black: Gee, that's swell--can I get in it or is it just private?

Emperor: Save it for tonight. This is going to be tight like so, boy! When night comes, we are holding a fire-dance. To celebrate your coming and my departure for Africa with my conquering black legions. (Drums are heard at a distance as the lights continue to fade. It is dark almost at once.) Hear those drums! Let's go to the fire-dance. (Drums grow louder to a quick curtain. It goes up

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on a clearing in a tropic wood. It is lighted by a large bonfire to one side. Drummers near the fire. They are dancing when the curtain goes up. They are singing: T-i-o, T-i-o, mama say T-i-o, mama say T-i-o." They sing one verse before the Emperor and his party arrive. Enter Emperor followed by party. He is very informal. He is joyfully hailed by the dancers.)

Emperor: (To drummers) Heat up dat drum, boy, and knock me something!

Drummer: (holding drum over fire and tunes it) That s it right now. (When he gets it right he plays a flourish, dances a step, plays flourish again and cries:) Gimbay! (All the dancers

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begin to get excited. Everybody gets in the circle and begins to clap as the drums begin to play.)

Emperor: (gets into the ring to dance)

Song: Wish I had a nickel

Wish I had a dime

Wish I had a pretty girl

To love me all the time.

Down de road baby--

Wish I had a needle

Fine as I could sew

I d sew my baby to my side

And down the road I d go.

Refrain: Down the road, baby--

(Three people dance on this, then the drums flourish and change to:)

Bimini gal is a hell of a trouble

Never get licking till you go down to Bimini

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Eh, lemme go down to Bimini

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Never get a licking till you go down to Bimini.

(Four dancers dance this before the drum changes to:)

Mama, I saw a sail boat

A sailing in the harbor

I saw a yaller boy aboard it

And I took him to be my lover.

It s killing mama, etc.

(Three persons dance this, then the drums change to:

Went to Key West to buy me a dress

How you going to make it ripple tail

How you going to shake it, shake it, shake it.

Song: Lime, oh lime juice and all

Lime, oh lime, 'Dessa hold your back

'Dessa hold your back,

Odessa, Odessa, Odessa.

(This is danced once, then drums change to:

Mother may I go to school?

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Yes, my darling, you may go

You may put on a ribbon bow.

Why you wheel Miss Curry so?

Wheel Miss Curry buck her so

Wheel Miss Curry, wheel Miss Curry,

Wheel Miss Curry, etc.

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Mama, Mama, the old gray cat, she get so fat

She will not run at the old she rat

Children lose de fine tooth comb

And head run away wid de lice

Oh, something in de hand more than common

something in de hand more than common.

(One person dances this, then the drum changes to:)

Mama lay! de drum bust!

Mama lay! de drum bust!

Oh, when I do so, do so,

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Oh, when I do so, do so,

Oh, when I do so, do so

De drum bust!

(Quick curtain. When it goes up again the Emperor is in front leading the crowd.)

Emperor: To the ships. Let us sail for Africa!

Song: "Hoist up de John B. Sail".

(Singing off stage:)

Bellamina, Bellamina, Bellamina in the harbor,

Bellamina, Bellamina, Bellamina in the harbor,

Put Bellamina on the dock

Paint Bellamina bottom black.

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Railroad Camp

-71- RAILROAD CAMP Place: Railroad track in Florida. Time: Present: Setting: Palmettoes, oak trees hung with Spanish moss on the back drop. In the foreground a length of railroad track on an embankment. A hand oar stands at right end of track. Action: Ten men are spiking rails-with sledge hammers. The boss is squatting up the line and

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signalling corrections. The water boy has a pail and dipper and stands in the middle of the track and leads the singing. At the rise they are singing: Dat ol' (wham) black gal (wham) She keep on grumblin' (wham) New pair shoes (wham), new pair shoes (wham). I'm goin' (wham) buy her (wham) Shoes and stockings (wham), slippers too (wham) slippers too (wham) I'm goin' (wham) buy her Draws and dresses (wham) shimmy too (wham) shimmy too (wham). Cap'n: Line it: (They drop hammers and grab lining bars and sing:) When I go and come agin You won't know me from Nappy Chin. Chorus: Boys, can't you line it, boys can't you shake it! (The Cap'n hollers "whoop!" The crew moves to another length.)

-73- Cap'n: Jonah head! Crew: (sings) Cap'n keep a hollerin' 'bout Jonah head Dis linin' bar 'bout to kill me dead. Boy's, can't you line it, Boys, can't you shake it. Cap'n: Whoop! Center head! Crew: Me and my gal goin' cross de field Heard 31 when it left Mobile Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it. Cap'n: Center back! Crew: Me and my partner and two, three more Standin' on de corner seein' de 'gator roar Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it, Cap'n: Whoop! Crew: Heard a mighty rumblin' round de river bend Must be de Southern crossin' de L and N. Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it, Cap'n: Whoop! Crew: Wake up in de mornin' hear de ding dong ring Look on de table see de same old thing. Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it. Cap'n: Center head! Crew: Tip at de White House, tip at de gate I got a gal got a Caddilac "8" Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it. Cap'n: Center back! Crew: Line it, boys, and don't get lost Ain't no heben for de section boss. Boys, can't you line it, boys, can't you shake it.

-73- Cap'n: Hammer gang! (Men drop lining bars and get hammers.) Crew: Mr. Dugan (wham) on de L. and N. (wham) Got de pay car (wham) on de rear end (wham) Cap'n: Whip steel! Crew: Mr. Davenport (wham) got de new store (wham) Behind de depot (wham) whyncher pick 'em Set 'em over (wham) Cap'n: Whip it hot! Crew: I got a woman she's pretty but she's too bull dozin', I got a woman she's pretty but she's too bull dozin', She won't live long, Lord, Lord, she won't live long' I got a woman, she's got money 'cumulated, I got a woman, she's got money 'cumulated In de bank, Lord, Lord, in be bank.

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Big fat woman shakes like jelly all over, Big fat woman shakes like jelly all over When she walk, Lord, Lord, when she walk. Every pay day de wimmen all call me daddy, Every pay day de wimmen all call me daddy I wonder why, Lord, Lord, I wonder why. Bad Lazarus set on de commissary counter, Bad Lazarus set on de commissary counter And walked away. Lord, Lord, and walked away. High-sheriff told de deppity See can you find Bad Laz'rus High-sheriff told de deppity

-74- See can you find Bad Laz'rus Dead or live, Lord, Lord, dead or live. Deppity ast de sheriff where in de world can I find him, Deppity ast de sheriff where in de world can I find him I don't know, Lord, Lord, I don't know. And they found him way up in between two mountains, And they found him way up in between two mountains With head hung down, Lord, Lord, with head hung down. And they blowed him, blowed him with a great big number, And they blowed him, blowed him with a great big number, A forty-five, Lord, Lord, a forty-five. Laz'rus cried out, turn me over on my wounded Laz'rus cried out, turn me over on my wounded My wounded side, Lord, Lord, my wounded side. And they drug him, drug Bad Laz'rus to his shanty, And they drug him, drug Bad Laz'rus to his shanty On his wounded side, Lord, Lord, his wounded side. Laz'rus cried out, bring me a cool drink of water, Laz'rus cried out, bring me a cool drink of water I'm burning down, Lord, Lord, I'm burning down. I got a wife and two or three chillun on de mountain, I got a wife and two or three chillun on de mountain Cryin' for bread, Lord, Lord, cryin' for bread.

-75- Laz'rus daddy went running to de field and crying, Laz'rus daddy went running to de field and crying Who, har, gee, Lord, Lord, whoa, har, gee. Laz'rus mother come running and crying, Laz'rus mother come running and crying Done kilt my son, Lord, Lord, done kilt my son. I can stand right here and look 'way over in Alabama, Stand right here and look 'way over in Alabama It look so far, Lord, Lord, it look so far. When I get back to Georgy southern Alabama, When I get back to Georgy southern Alabama Be long farewell, Lord, Lord, be long farewell. One member of Crew: Water Boy! (Boy carries him water, he lifts the dipper and drinks and squirts some from his mouth on the ground.) The Drinker: Say,

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nigger biddy, dis water is hotter'n two boxes of matches--go git some fresh water! Water Boy: I'm Mr. Pickhandle slim, when you get time lousy wid bucks! Got money's mama and grandma's change. Crew Man: Aw, boy, go head on get some cool water before I be all over you Just like gravy over rice you must smell yo'self. Rest of Crew: Aw yeah, he's gettin' too mannish. Go 'head and get us a cool drink. (Boy exits left.) Cap'n: Line it! The crew exchange hammers for bars. Water boy returns. The crew take their places and sing.)

-76- When I get in Illinois, I'm going to spread de news about de Florida boys, Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you line it (Shaking rail and grunt at the end) Can't you move it. Me and-my buddy and two, three more Going to ramshack Georgy everywhere we go. Shove it over! Hey, hey can't you line it Can't you move it. Tell you what de hobo told de bum Get any cornbread save me some. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you line it Can't you move it. Cap'n got a burner I'd like to have A thirty-two twenty wid a shiny barrel. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you line it Can't you move it. Cap'n got a special he try to play bad But I'm going to take it if he makes me mad. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you line it Can't you move it. Here come a woman walkin' cross de field Mouth exhaustin' like an automobile Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you line it Can't you move it.

-77- Wake up, Cap'n, and light yo' lamp Highway robbers is in yo' camp. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you move it Can't you line it. Come on, honey, lets go to bed Get a lil baby and name him Red. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you move it Can't you line it. If lil Sissy was a gal of mine She shouldn't do nothin' but starch and iron. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you move it Can't you line it. Whut's de matter wid de Cap'n he must be cross It's done five-thirty and he won't knock off. Shove it over! Hey, hey, can't you move it Can't you line it. (A whistle blows in the distance and the Cap'n signals that work is over. The men hurriedly pile the tools on the hand car and climb on, and four of them get to the handles.) Member of Crew: Come on let's go! I got a belly like Eatin' Flukus today. Another Member of Crew: Who was dis Eatin' Flukus? First Man: He et up camp meetin', backed

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off Association and drank Jurdan dry. Chorus: That's me right now, let's go! (They begin to work the handles and one of the crew sings:)

-78- Oh Lulu, oh gal, want to see you so bad. Another Crew Man: Blow it like an elephant and do it like an airdale, (He breaks out with another song) Gointer see my long-haired babe, Gointer see my long-haired babe, Lord, I'm going cross de water To see my long-haired babe, Whut you reckon Mr. Treadwell said to Mr. Goff Lord, I b'lieve I'll go South And pay they poor boys off. {Slow ourtain as this is sung.} Lord, I ast dat woman To lemme be her kid. And she looked at me And begin to smile Said I b'lieve I'll try you For my kid awhile, (Last two lines ought to be sung after curtain is down.)

Jook

JOOK PLACE: A saw-mill jook house TIME; Present Scene: Interior of main room in the jook. There is a dilapidated piano in one corner. A small rough table against the wall in the upstage corner. There are a few chairs scattered around against the wall, ACTION: When the curtain goes up. Nunkie is at the piano playing and singing. There are three couples on the floor slow-dragging and joining in with the singing in spots. Singing "John Barton" X (Enter Draws-leg at left and gets to the center of the floor. He joins in the song and turns about half dancing.) Draws-leg. Here! gimme a woman. I can't do all this by myself. (To one of the men) Say there Bunk, lend me Planchita for a hot minute, do I won't git well. (He pulls the girl away from the other man who laughs it off. He and Planchita begin to dance fancy. Bunk walks towards the right exit and looks off stage. Nunkie begins to play very fast and the dancers laugh and keep up with the music as long as they can. when Draws-leg and Planchita laughingly give up like the rest, Nunkie stops playing and turns from the piano laughing. xxx & Bunk (looking into the room off right) Hey, Black-Boy, how you doing it? Voice from off stage. come on in here and find out, Bunk: Aw, naw! y'all aint goingter hem me up in there! Come on out here so

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when I wins yo money, I got a running chance. (General laughter and the noise of scraping chairs. Enter Black Boy, Stack-of-Dollars,. Blue-Front and

Muttay. They stroll straight for the table and begin to place chairs) Stack: Now,Bunk,you been bugabooing round here; come here and lemme see if you know anything about skinning. (All the men but Funkie gather about the table. Nunkie plays softly and sings in a wisper along with him.The game begins with Black-

(Boy dealing) Bunk (pointing to his card) See dat deuce? Its going to carry de d eck down. Stack: I dont bleeve it. Blue-front. I bet you a fat man I'11 be here last.

Bunk: A dollar I knows de best one; Stack: A stack of dollars you dont,Deal! (Black-Boy Starts singing) Let de deal go down,boys. Bunk: (threatening) I see you peepin them card,Blackboy! BlackBoy (laughing) Aw, I aint tryin to carry no cub - Yall too wise for dat. Bunk I don t mind you winnin my money, but if you try to beat me out of it, if God send me a pistol, I'11 send him a man. Stack: (to Bunk) You know he aint gointer try nothin funny in here. He know ua aint no fools. They kilt Fat Sam shootin at Big Boy so all de fools in de world is done dead. Let de deal go down,(they continue to sing) Hey, hey! there you go, Bluefront. You done fell. (Two more cards are dealt off the deck) Dats yo cup Sack-Daddy! Here come Bunk! {laugh triumphantly) This must be de fall of de year. Now it me and Black-Boy, So good a man, so good a man! (Another verse is sung and three cards fall,Stack jumps to his feet in triumph) Stack: I'm de best (rakes in the pot) I'm too hard for you boys. Who wants to akin me? Who wants me, any, some or none? Sack-Daady: I hear you cacklin, I know yo nest aint far. Shuffle em, Black-Boy and less go. Big-Sweet (crosses to the table and lays her hand on the cards) Dont skin no more, SackDaddy, Read de deck for me. Sack. I aint goin to read nothin till you tell me who you shacked up wid.

3. A man is liable to- get shot lessen he know something. (Big- Sweet: Aw step woofin and read dein cards. Sack: All right,Big-Sweet.(he takes up the cards and. walks to the cen-ter

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of the stage. As he calls off a card he lets it fall to the floor.) Ace means the first time that I met you Deuce means there was nobody there but us two Trey means the third party, Charlie was his name Four spot means the fourth time you tried that same old game Five spot means five years you played me for a clown Six spot means six feet of earth when the deal goes down Now I'm holding the seven for each day in the week Eight spot means eight hours that you sheba'ed with your sheik Nine spot means nine hours that I work hard every day Ten spot means tenth of every month I brought you home my pay the jack is Three- card Charlie who played me for a goat the queen, thats you pretty mama, also trying to cut my throat The king stands for sweet papa Sack-Daddy and he's going to wear the crown So be be careful y'all aint flat-footed when de deal goes down. Planchita: Now you done gimme de blues. Play some thing, Nunkie. Nunkie: You always holler play, but you dont never put out nothin. Planchita(Akimbo) Who me? I aint puttin out nothin but old folks eyes, and I aint doin that till they dead. I'm like de cemetery, I'm takin in

but never no put out. (Nunkie starts to play) All start to dance and sing "See you when you troubles git like mine." When they finish Big Sweet leans up against the piano and all but weeps.) Big-Sweet: God I wish I knowed where I could slip up on a drunk (sound of a guitar is heard off stage left. She jumps with pleasure) God I blieve thats James Presley, (rushes cross to left exit) Dat James! Come on in here and play me something. Enter James Presley with a guitar round his neck. Everybody greets him, they get him a seat and a drink. He tunes up) James(to Nunkie) You fram behind me Nunkie Allright, less go,Somebody git me another drinki (It is brought)

4. the musicians play "Gold rainy Day" and the others sing and dance. The men yell out in exuberance as they dance slowly and sensously.) Black Boy: Oh, wha evil have I done: Roll yo hips -don't roll yo' eyes.

Sack Daddy: Turn it on and let de bad luckk happen -Shake yo' hips, mama.

Stack: Ten dollars for a whoop, six bits for a squall! If you can't shimmy, shake yo' head.

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Bunk: I hear you ceeklln, mama, I know yo nest ain't far. Don' t |you vip another vop till get in. there.

(As the dance comes to a close, the musicians drift on into John Henry and Willa Ward grabs a guitar out of the corner beside the piano and walks to the center of the stage and put one foot up on the chair and begins to sing the verses to a slow curtain.

THE END THE BSD

// ^OO** pulls the bottom card and place it face down before him. They all select a card. Player: (to man beside him) One dollar I knows de best one! Player spoken to: See you and raise you Make it and take it. Another Player: Come on, Draws-leg -- let de deal go down. (Sings) When yo' card gets lucky, oh partner, You oughter be in a rollin' game. (The cards are being dealt slowly and all watch tensely as they join in the song.) Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go gown. Lost all my money, oh partner, In the rollin' game. Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go down. I'm going back to de 'bama, where They don't want no change. Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go down. One man falls and they laugh.) No mo' rollin' partner, Till de man pay off. Ain't had no trouble, partner, Till I stop by here. Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go down.

-84- When I get in de 'bama, partner, Won't be troubled wid you. Dealer: (exultant) Nearly all you nigger biddies done fell pay off,) One players I'm going to take another card if I kin find a clean one. (They sing on:) Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go down. Let de deal go down, boys, Let de deal go down, (Enter left Muttsy. He stops at center stage a moment and hails the players,) Muttsy: Hey, folks, less start a crap game. (All look up from the card game.) Dealer: Hello, Muttsy, when did you git back from de gang? Muttsy: Yesterday. I been gone three months and I'm low in de pocket. Come over, Let's' get up a rollin game. Dealer: I don't keer. Whut did de high sheriff git you for, Muttsy? Muttsy: You know he grabbed me for vacancy and then he found out I was workin'. And you

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know when these white folk gits you they hates to turn you loose. I had a deck of cards in my pocket. So they / ; \ : charged me wid totin' concealed cards and attempt to gamble. (General laughter)

Dealer: Did you see Emma Hayles while you was in de gang? She been . . . sent up since you been gone. Muttsy: Whut for? Dealer: Selling 'shine. You know she been doin' some business and

De man I love, he don't pay me no mind, Oh, man I love he don't pay me no mind. Oh, de man I love he sho don't pay me no mind. 2. See you when yo' troubles get like mine. See you when yo' troubles get like mine. See you when yo' troubles get like mine. 3, Wonder will he answer if I write. 4. All of my Sunday clothes in pawn. 5. Comin' a time when a woman won't need no man. 6. Don't you hear that last Coast when she blow? 7. Blow like she never blowed before. 8. Make me down a palate on de floor. 9. Laid in jail my back turned to de wall. 10. Going down de long lonesome road. Enter Ella Ward and glares at Planchita who is leaning against Muttsy.) Draws-leg: (To Ella, nodding at Planchita) Look like de 'gator done beat you to de pond. Ella: (Center stage, akimbo) I don't keer nothin' 'bout dat lil / ole narrer contracted woman. She can't beat my time. (Wiggles her

fat hips with her hand.) Not wid de help I got.

Draws-leg: (Admiringly) Come here, Ella, and git yo' money outa my pocket.

Big Sweet: Blow it Ella. know what they say everytime a fat woman shakes her hips (she shakes hers), some skinny woman loses her home.

-88-

1'11 carry her down just like good gas went up. Turn me aloose! I'll make her run through a week in two hours. Planchita: Turn her aloose and me, too so I can make-her ketch mea pair of hants. James: Both of y'all better cool off cause I Just seen de quarters boss out

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side. Anyhow, don't all y'all die over Muttsy, I ain't nothin' but one of y'all kin use me till you kin git yo self some body. Come on, f less sing. (He starts to play and Slim seconds him. They sing:) Cold rainy day, some old cold rainy day I'll be back some old cold rainy day. All I want is my railroad fare, etc. Old Smoky Joe, Lord, he died on the road Saying I'll be home some day. Cold rainy day, some old cold rainy day, I'll be back some old cold rainy day. Oh, de rocks may be my pillow, Lord, De sand may be my bed. I'll be back some old cold rainy day. Big Sweet: Lord, dat makes me so blue! Come on, Muttsy, and jook some. (Muttsy starts to play and the crowd starts to dance, They dance a / full minute before he starts to sing.) You may leave and go to Holimuhfack But my slow drag will bring you back. well you may go, but this will bring you back.

-90- (There is genera conversation and caressing and drinking and loitering going on. For a while Muttsy sits glumly looking down at the pioan keys. Then he begins to play "John Barton".) 1. Babe, I'm lonesome, I'm the lonesomest man in your town. Got experience of women small town turnt me down. 2. Aw, I wants to tell you people whut de Florida East Coast done for me. Took my regular come and got my used-to-be. 3. Say, look here sweet baby, you sho' don't know my mind, When you see me laughing, laughing just to keep from crying. 4. If you ever been down you know just how I feel. I been down so long, down don't worry me. 5. Says, storm is rising, wind begin to blow My house done blowed down, I ain't got no place to go. 6. Roll me wid yo' stomach, feed me wid yo' tongue Do it a long time baby till de sunshine come 7. I'd rather be in Tampa, wid de whip-poor-will Than to be round here, baby, with a hundred dollar bill. 8. I'd rather see my coffin rolling in my door, Than my baby to tell me she don't want me no more.

-91- 9, I'm sittin' here lookin' a thousand miles away, I'm going to pack up my suit-case and make my get away. 10. Says, my heart struck sorrow, tears come rolling down, Says, it seems like, baby, I'm got to leave this town. 11. If anybody ast youf baby, who composed this song. Tell 'em Little Johnny Barton, he been her and gone.

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-92- Ella: John Henry driving on de right-hand side Steam drill driving on de left, Says 'fore I let yo' steam drill beat me down I'll hammer my fool self to death. I'll hammer my fool self to death. Captain ast John Henry What is dat storm I hear. He said Cap'n dat ain't no storm Nothin' but my hammer in de air, Nothin' but my hammer in de air. John Henry had a lil baby Holdin' him in his right hand, Says, lil baby don't you cry You'll never be a steel drivin' man, You'll never be a steel drivin' man. John Henry told his cap'n Bury me under de sills of de floor So when they get to playin good old Georgy skin Bet 'em fifty to a dollar more, Bet 'em fifty to a dollar more. John Henry had a lil woman De dress she wore was red. Says I'm goin' down de track And she never looked back I'm goin' where John Henry fell dead, I'm goin' where John Henry fell dead.

-93- Who gointer shoe yo' pretty lil feet Who gointer glove yo' hand, Who gointer kiss yo' rosy oheek, Who gointer be yo' man, Who gointer be yo' man. My father's a'goin' to shoe my pretty lil feet, My brother's a'goin' to glove my hand, My sister's goin' to kiss my rosy cheek, John Henry gointer be my man, John Henry gointer be my man. Says where did you get yo' pretty lil dress, De shoes you wear so fine? I got my shoes from a railroad man, My dress from a man in de mines, My dress from a man in de mines.

-94- --m