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ELVIS DID IT

By Ron Grant

Time: Thursday evening during the 1960s

Place: The John Golden living room *aka* The Golden Gospel House. It is a modestly furnished room with some religious pictures on the walls and religious artifacts lying around the room in various places.

CHARACTERS

BROTHER JOHN: He is the plain-clothes dressed bishop of a local church. He is a beekeeper by trade. He views the members of his “flock” as he does a hive of bees. He is the authoritative Patriarch of everyone around him as he is with his hives of bees. No one escapes his rule, especially his family. He sees himself as a visionary and speaks mostly in metaphors and self-envisioned quotes on any subject.

SISTER SENECA: She is the dutiful wife of brother John. She lives in her own fantasy world of poetry, song and an imagined non-existing perfect life. In reality, she relates to her son, Apollo, with much more attention than she does with her husband.

APOLLO – STUD: He is the only son in the family. He has animal sex appeal and uses it on any occasion to get whatever he needs at the moment. He fantasizes himself to be the ultimate male.

MELODY: She is the older sister of Apollo. She lives through her brain and avoids any event or occasion containing emotion or real feeling. Books are her wonderland and a library or art gallery is her house and home.

DAWN: A neighbor woman who is consumed with lust. She would like to conquer any and all men just for the fun of doing it. She has a beautiful body and face along with eyes and lips that men would die for. Actually, she is very empty inside but nobody would know it, not even herself.

AUNT PENELOPE: A busybody sister to John. She sticks her nose in everybody’s life. She really believes that “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world” even though she has never been married and has no children of her own.

ELVIS: He appears in person to Apollo to tell him what a great man Apollo is and that he should become a musician.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN: A seedy, sinister looking, scummy-like Doctor.

ACT ONE
Scene I

(Brother John, Sister Seneca, Melody and Apollo listen to John as he practices his sermon for next Sunday's church meeting.)

BROTHER JOHN

And my dear brothers and sisters, the times are changing. The devil's influence is appearing everywhere. You hear this despicable music called rock and roll. It is taking our children away from their family and religious values. This man, Elvis Presley, is an instrument of the devil himself, I tell you. Yes, the devil himself. His sexual gyrations are movements inspired by evil incarnate.

APOLLO

He isn't evil, dad. He's just an entertainer . . . a good one too.

BROTHER JOHN

SHUT UP! You have let the devil influence you through this terrible sacrilege.

APOLLO

That's a crock of . . .

BROTHER JOHN

Don't you dare say that word in my house!

APOLLO

I can't take this anymore. You can't deal with the winds of change. You never could and you never will. Look at Dawn for example. Now there's a real woman. And, she's got it all together. All you have is a sermon.

BROTHER JOHN

You should find yourself someone else to hang around with besides that . . . that Jezebel.

APOLLO

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

BROTHER JOHN

Can't you do something with your blasphemous son, Sister Seneca?

SENECA

Please just call me Seneca or dear wife. I'm not your sister! I have a right to be called by my name, when my husband is addressing me.

BROTHER JOHN

You have the right to help keep this family going down the straight and narrow as instructed in the good book. That's what right you have. You are slipping. You are letting your Indian ways take over.

SENECA

I am only one sixteenth native American. You know that.

BROTHER JOHN

That's one sixteenth of the savage in you. I admit that you do keep it under control most of the time, but sometimes it slips out of you. And this is one of those times.

SENECA

Yes, dear, one of those times.

(Aunt Penelope enters the room. She is obviously flustered.)

PENELOPE

Turn on the TV. Turn it on. Khrushchev has backed down. He's going to take his missiles out of Cuba.

(Melody turns on the TV.)

PRESIDENT KENNEDY (Voice over)

And Premier Khrushchev has agreed to allow us to inspect the ships carrying the deconstructed missiles. Thank you for supporting our government through this terrible crisis. There will be periodic updates as we go along. Thank you again.

(Melody turns off the TV.)

BROTHER JOHN

Let us give thanks to the Lord for saving us from the dogs of war.

(All bow their heads.)

BROTHER JOHN

Oh, Lord. We thy children offer to You, the benevolent creator of mankind, our heartfelt thanks for inspiring our leaders to take us away from the brink of war and the devastation it would cause our family and our country. You, the almighty, have shown us the way, once again. We pour out our thanks to you. Amen

ALL

Amen.

SENECA

I have an idea.

MELODY

What's that, mother?

SENECA

I'll write a beautiful, poetic song about the end of the crisis. We can learn it and all sing it next Sunday in church.

BROTHER JOHN

That's a fine idea, Seneca, a very fine idea.

SENECA

I could make it almost a sonnet, yes a sonnet. I could let the words and the music cascade out of my soul like water over Niagra falls . . . or descend like the mist over the rain forests of Brazil. The music would resound through the trees as if it were a bird in flight.

BROTHER JOHN

Don't forget God.

SENECA

Yes, God. God would watch over the forest and the mist and the rain and would make the world a beautiful place to live.

MELODY

Your sonnet should be published and put into libraries all over the world.

BROTHER JOHN AND PENELOPE

Amen.

BROTHER JOHN

Write that sonnet, Sister Seneca. Write that sonnet. The church will resound with the Spirit for the entire service.

APOLLO

Make it an Elvis Presley song. Then you can make some money with it.

BROTHER JOHN

You try my patience, Apollo. You would try the patience of Job. If you were not my son, I would condemn you to the depths of hell . . . for all time and eternity.

PENELOPE

For time and eternity!

APOLLO

It's true. Just ask my sister, Melody.

MELODY

No . . . no! That would truly be evil.

(Apollo laughs.)

APOLLO

Just kidding.

BROTHER JOHN

Think before you speak! Don't let the devil speak through your mouth.

APOLLO

OK.

(DAWN enters the house. She is dressed as seductively as she can get away with when coming into this environment.)

DAWN

Anyone want to go to a sex party?

APOLLO

I volunteer.

SENECA

That's not nice, son.

DAWN

How about you, pops?

BROTHER JOHN

Dear God, please show this Jezebel the error of her ways. Help her to LEAVE MY FAMILY ALONE!

DAWN

No prayers for me today. I'm afraid that lightening might strike me dead.

BROTHER JOHN
(Mumbling)

We should be so lucky.

DAWN

What?

BROTHER JOHN

I said, very humbling.

MELODY

Do we have to disagree? I read in a book at the library that people can learn to get along without stating their disagreements. I would like that if everybody would just try.

DAWN

Sex . . . sex . . .sex . . . sex!

MELODY

STOP IT! STOP! I don't want to hear this.

SENECA

Don't. You're harming our child.

DAWN

Bodies . . . writhing . . . one on top of the other. Sounds of moaning and groaning. Colored lights on a kaleidoscope going round and round.

(Apollo laughs hysterically. Brother John covers his face with his hands.)

APOLLO

Yeah, yeah!

(PENELOPE lets out a blood-curdling scream.)

AHHHH!

PENELOPE

(Everyone freezes for a moment. Dawn grins as each person comes out from their own personal hiding place.)

DAWN

My cousin, Harold, you know the talent agent, got me a couple of tickets to the Elvis concert.

(To John)

You want to go?

BROTHER JOHN

NO! I DO NOT WANT TO GO!

DAWN

I guess I'm stuck with super stud. C'mon, Stud. Let's go to my place and listen to some Beatles rock and roll and "prepare" for the concert.

APOLLO

I'm still worn out from last night.

DAWN

I'll revive you.

(Dawn and Apollo exit. Melody is very, very nervous.)

MELODY

She didn't have to be so rude. She didn't have to direct her thoughts at me. She didn't have to. . .

(Melody begins to sob. Seneca takes Melody in her arms and comforts her.)

SENECA

There, there. It's all over.

MELODY

Nobody ever, ever talks like that at the library. They never do, mama.

BROTHER JOHN

That Bitch!

SENECA

Don't swear, dear. God doesn't forgive people who swear.

BROTHER JOHN

That good for nothing bitch!

(Melody still sobs.)

MELODY

What would happen to me if the library burned down? Would I ever have any more books to read? Would I? Would I?

SENECA

Of course you would, dear.

MELODY

Would another Hitler come along and burn all the books? All of them . . . even the books with cartoons in them . . . or with old black and white pictures in them? Do you think that could happen, Mama?

SENECA

I don't think that could happen. After all, this is America.

PENELOPE

Stop blubbering. If there's one thing I can't stand it's someone always blubbering.

MELODY

OHHHH! I don't want the library to burn down, Aunt Penelope.

PENELOPE

Nobody's going to burn down the dumb library. Now, stop blubbering.

MELODY

You don't know that. You don't know if another Hitler might come along and burn down all the libraries.

PENELOPE

You're nuts. Why don't you go upstairs and sleep it off? Burn the libraries . . . my ass.

MELODY

OHHHH! OHHHH!

(She gets up and starts to leave the room.)

SENECA

Wait, dear. I'll come with you. You should be ashamed of yourself, Penelope, scaring a young girl like that.

PENELOPE

She's nuts, 100 percent nuts . . . text book over the edge and falling fast. Besides, she's not so young anymore.

SENECA

Some day the Indian will come out in me and I'll take your scalp.

PENELOPE

And the glaciers will melt in Alaska. Uh huh.

(Seneca and Melody exit the room.)

BROTHER JOHN

I wish I had a horse whip. I'd show that jezebel. Dawn a lesson or two or three or more.

PENELOPE

I know. She really is a threat to the good and righteous way of life.

(Pause)

I was just thinking. Do you remember the right Reverend Grant?

BROTHER JOHN

Well, yes of course. He was my mentor you know. He guided me around the temptations that a young man faces at the beginning of his life. Those awful temptations of the flesh and of liquor and other things.

PENELOPE

I wish he was still around.

BROTHER JOHN

He's in a better place now.

PENELOPE

What a good man, he was. There wasn't a single thing that he wouldn't do for you. How many men are there around today that would be like that? Not many, I'll be the first to say.

BROTHER JOHN

It's a horrible sin what they did to him.

PENELOPE

HORRIBLE!

BROTHER JOHN

It isn't as if he really did something terrible.

PENELOPE

Nothing that he should have been put in prison for doing.

BROTHER JOHN

Everybody brews up a little white lightning sometimes. I know lots of good people who use it just for medicinal purposes.

PENELOPE

. . . just for medicinal purposes.

(Pause)

I'm feeling kind of ill right now, myself. Especially after that whore came in here and fouled the clean air.

(Pause)

You wouldn't happen to have a little of that medicine lying around here, would you?

BROTHER JOHN

I believe I just might.

(John gets up and pretends to look around the room.)

BROTHER JOHN

I wonder where Seneca could have put that bottle? She really knows how to hide things. It's in her Indian blood. Hah, here it is. See, it says for medicinal purposes only.

PENELOPE

Let me have a little taste of that to clear my throat. I've been having a sore throat now for the last couple of hours.

(John pours a healthy amount into two glasses.)

BROTHER JOHN

Here's to good health.

PENELOPE

To good health.

(They both down their respective glasses of booze all at one time.)

BROTHER JOHN

Now, about Reverend Grant. He certainly was a good man.

PENELOPE

I remember when he actually took me out on a date. That was some date. Uhh huh.

BROTHER JOHN

Where did he take you?

(John pours another round of drinks. Both down them immediately.)

PENELOPE

He took me to the annual church social.

BROTHER JOHN

Did he now?

PENELOPE

Yes, he did, and some social that turned out to be.

(They are starting to feel the effects of the booze.)

BROTHER JOHN

What happened?

PENELOPE

Well, somebody put something in the punch.

BROTHER JOHN

Yes . . . Would you like another . . . for that sore throat?

PENELOPE

Don't mind if I do.

(John pours another healthy round. They both down the round simultaneously.)

BROTHER JOHN

Ahh! That's good medicine!

PENELOPE

Anyway, people started disappearing out the side door of the church. There were a lot of trees and shrubbery out there. And, there wasn't any moon that night.

BROTHER JOHN

Then what happened?

PENELOPE

The couples started coming back inside 'cause it had started to rain. The girls' hair was all messed up. They blamed it on the rain water, but I knew better. Yes, Lord did I know better. Reverend Grant ask me if I'd like to go out "for a stroll? I was shocked . . . totally shocked . . . that a man of the cloth would ask me to do such a thing. I gave him a look that could put him straight to Hell. Well, he never asked me to go out on a date with him again. And, that was all right with me.

BROTHER JOHN

You can't blame just him. That was the devil talking right through that spiked punch.

PENELOPE

Well he talked loud and clear that night. He talked so loud that the police had to be called. Did you know that three of those young girls turned up pregnant a few months later?

BROTHER JOHN

I did hear about that. But, I didn't think that the right Reverend Grant was there.

PENELOPE

Well, he sure as hell was. Oops, excuse me. Later on, some of the people "accidentally" found a half empty bottle of Russian vodka lying on the front seat of his car.

BROTHER JOHN

I always wondered why he left town so abruptly and never was seen again by any of the folk in these parts.

PENELOPE

Whew! I'm really feeling that medicine. I think I'll just take a little nap . . . right here. Yes, right here.

BROTHER JOHN

Me too!

(They both pass out in their respective chairs.)

End Scene I

Scene II

(Brother John enters the room. He has a bee veil, a hive smoker and a hive tool in hand. He lays them down in the room. He seats himself at the table.

Seneca brings breakfast into the room and places it on the table.)

SENECA

Mmmm, bacon and eggs, just like you like them.

BROTHER JOHN

Couldn't be better.

SENECA

It's a nice day. I went out in the garden before you got up. I picked some carrots and squash. I'll cook them for dinner.

BROTHER JOHN

I hate squash!

SENECA

You need to have vegetables, dear.

BROTHER JOHN

Vegetables, not rabbit food.

SENECA

You're the one who told me to be practical and plant healthy food.

BROTHER JOHN

Carrots and squash are healthy for rabbits. This bacon is cooked just right.

SENECA

It should be after all these years of cooking for this household.

BROTHER JOHN

You know, in the bee hive, the drones do all the cooking . . . well cooking of honey for the queen bee. The workers bring it in and the drones do the cooking.

SENECA

Yes, you've told me that before . . . at least a million times.

BROTHER JOHN

Maybe we should hire some drones to help you.

SENECA

I like to cook. I don't need any help.

BROTHER JOHN

In the hive, the queen rules the world. But, I am their God. I control when the honey should be harvested and how tall the boxes of frames with honey combs are . . . not anybody else, even the queen, can break my authority.

(He rises from the table. He is now in church on Sunday giving a sermon, at least in his own mind that is where he is.)

BROTHER JOHN

I rule . . . with absolute power . . . the absolute power of a God. No one should or will question my power as no one should or will question the power of our God. Those who challenge the power and the authority that is mine shall pay a terrible penalty. That is a direct quote from the good book of rules. God tests us by sending a Jezebel, like that next door neighbor, to try our very souls. Such an invasion creates foul brood in the bee hive and foul brood in our families. IT MUST BE DESTROYED before it destroys us. In times gone past, the foul brood was burned out of the colony, burned at a stake while the good souls cheered on the flames.

SENECA

Now, we have no more burnings.

BROTHER JOHN

Only in the hives if the foul brood should attempt to destroy the colony.

SENECA

Only in the hives . . .

BROTHER JOHN

But we can stamp out the pestilence as it begins.

SENECA

How so, my God-like husband.

BROTHER JOHN

By protest, by resisting the times of change God has put on the earth to challenge us. By preaching it in my sermons on Sunday . . . by not buying those damned Elvis Presley records.

SENECA

. . . Or going to his concerts.

BROTHER JOHN

Yes, by not going to his concerts.

(Pause)

My breakfast got cold.

SENECA

Here, I'll warm it for you.

BROTHER JOHN

No, the bees are calling for me to attend to them. Can you hear them calling?

SENECA

Yes, dear, I can hear them.

(MELODY enters the room. She is half awake and very disheveled looking.)

SENECA

Why didn't you get up and come down for breakfast?

MELODY

I didn't feel good.

(Brother John gathers up his bee equipment and leaves the room.)

MELODY

Goodbye, daddy.

(Brother John ignores her and exits.)

MELODY

Why did he ignore me, mama?

SENECA

He's gone to communicate with the bees.

MELODY

Oh. I read a book at the library that said communicating with nature revives the soul. Is that true, Mama?

SENECA

I guess so. No, I think that's true.

MELODY

Then why doesn't daddy communicate with me?

SENECA

He's very busy with his work and his people at church.

MELODY

Why doesn't the church pay him something?

SENECA

That would be giving him money from the Church tithes. And, that is the Lord's money.

(Pause)

You look a little pale this morning, Melody.

MELODY

I don't feel good.

SENECA

What's the matter?

MELODY

I don't know. I've been sick to my stomach for the past few days, especially in the morning.

SENECA

In the morning? . . . just in the morning?

MELODY

(Quickly)

Well, sometimes in the afternoon too.

SENECA

That doesn't sound good. Maybe I should take you to the doctor.

MELODY

No, no. I'm not that sick, at least not yet.

SENECA

What do you mean not yet?

MELODY

I didn't mean anything.

SENECA

You're hiding something from me. What is it?

MELODY

Please, mother. It's nothing.

SENECA

If you've been throwing up morning and afternoon, then it's something, something maybe serious. What is it?

MELODY

NEVER MIND! I'll be fine, just fine.

SENECA

You're going to see the doctor.

MELODY

NO! NO! Leave me alone.

SENECA

I've never seen you act like this. What could make you this way? What?

MELODY

(screaming)

I'm PREGNANT! I'm going to go straight to hell!

(Melody begins to sob.)

SENECA

You're what? You're pregnant?

(Melody throws up.)

MELODY

Yes.

(She throws up again.)

MELODY

I'M TWO MONTHS PAST DUE!

SENECA

Oh my God.

(quickly)

Forgive me Lord . . . and forgive my wicked daughter her transgression.

MELODY

I'm not wicked! Somebody made me drink some alcohol and then took advantage of my natural impulses, the bastard.

SENECA

Watch your tongue, young lady or the Lord might strike you dead. Who was he?

MELODY

I can't tell you.

SENECA

What do you mean you can't tell me?

MELODY

I can't. I just can't.

SENECA

You mean you won't.

(Melody throws up again.)

MELODY

No, I can't and I won't.

SENECA

You get down on your knees and beg for forgiveness.

MELODY

I'll just throw up again. I'm going to go to the library.

SENECA

How many times did you do it?

MELODY

Just once . . . I swear, only once.

SENECA

Don't you dare go anywhere until this matter is cleared up. And, DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT TELLING YOUR FATHER.

MELODY

I won't. I promise. I won't.

(Apollo enters the room looking very disheveled.)

SENECA

Look what the cat dragged in.

APOLLO

The cat had a hard night.

MELODY

What happened? Did the she wolf rough you up a little?

APOLLO

More than a little.

MELODY

Why don't you improve your mind instead of destroying your body?

SENECA

Or you could get a job.

APOLLO

And give up partying? Not even a consideration.

MELODY

You know what everybody at the library calls you?

APOLLO

I can't imagine . . . but it must be very complimentary.

MELODY

STUD! They call you stud . . . like an animal . . . a horse or a bull . . . or a mule.

APOLLO

I told you it would be complimentary.

MELODY

Ohhh! You have Dresden china inside your skull. And, it's impenetrable.

APOLLO

You say the nicest things to your sibling brother.

SENECA

She's right. Pleasures of the flesh and of the worldly things that some people call good times are not for the children of God. God has a way of dealing with sinners.

APOLLO

There is no sin in making love. If there were, God would not have made it so enjoyable.

MELODY

You are one sick puppy!

(Melody starts to leave the room.)

APOLLO

Where are you going, dear sister.

MELODY

To the library where there is purity of mind.

(Melody exits.)

SENECA

We must at least try to live a perfect life. If we don't, then the world will slowly destroy itself. People will grow weary of the attempts of the devil to take over the world. And, they will succumb to all the temptations that are put before them..... like that Jezebel puts before you.

APOLLO

That's a crock of bull and you know it.

SENECA

NO IT ISN'T! It's real!

APOLLO

Don't you understand? Times are changing and the world is slowly changing with those times.

SENECA

It's you who doesn't understand. If we strive for perfection, then we will have out Ivory tower to live in. And, it will last forever.

APOLLO

Ohh, man.

SENECA

You mean Amen, don't you?

APOLLO

No, I don't. You're living back in the times of the Puritans, two hundred years ago. Wake up and smell the roses.

SENECA

There are very few roses left to smell in the world today.....

APOLLO

Then enjoy the stench of yesteryear.

(Apollo exits as Brother John comes home from working in the bees. John lays down his bee paraphernalia and glares at Apollo as he exits the room.)

BROTHER JOHN

Our Ides of March have come.

SENECA

Our Ides of March? Have you taken up reading Shakespeare?

BROTHER JOHN

Shakespeare's tragedies would pale compared to ours.

SENECA

What on earth are you talking about, John?

BROTHER JOHN

A tragedy of enormous consequences . . . enormous.

SENECA

You speak in metaphors. I don't understand.

BROTHER JOHN

Imagine that we had no church in which to share the gospel with other folk. How would that make you feel?

SENECA

Awful, I would feel awful. But, we have a church.and, a mighty nice one I might add.

BROTHER JOHN

Not any more. That is the Shakespearean tragedy.

SENECA

What not any more? Did it burn down or something?

BROTHER JOHN

Worse!

SENECA

Stop double talking me. What happened?

BROTHER JOHN

The land that is leased to us, with the church that is on it, won't be ours anymore. The land owners won't renew the lease . . . period.

SENECA

Why not? They are believers in God.

BROTHER JOHN

They are stronger believers in money and sin. Yes, sin!

SENECA

Sin? What sin? You're still double talking me.

BROTHER JOHN

OK, here it is . . . straight as an arrow. They are going to turn the church building into a bar.

SENECA

A bar? Turn it into a bar?

BROTHER JOHN

And that's not all. They are going to hire Jezebel dancers to dance in the bar . . . dancing in skimpy clothing.

SENECA

Lord help us!

BROTHER JOHN

You won't believe what they are going to name the place.

SENECA

I'm almost afraid to ask. What name?

BROTHER JOHN

They're going to call it the "Holy Ghost Bar"

(Lights fade to black.)

END ACT I

ACT TWO
– Scene I

(The next day. Aunt Penelope is in the room. She searches for something.)

PENELOPE

Now, where would he have put that?

(Penelope continues to search. She finds the half empty bottle of “medicine” She takes a long swallow of the contents.)

PENELOPE

Ahhhh, that’s just what the doctor ordered.

(Dawn and Apollo enter.)

PENELOPE

What are you doing here?

(Penelope quickly stuffs the bottle in her purse.)

APOLLO

I live here.

DAWN

I’m just visiting.

APOLLO

What did you hide in your purse?

PENELOPE

A medicine bottle, although it’s really none of your business.

APOLLO

Oh.

PENELOPE

Have you two been cavorting again?

DAWN

What’s cavorting?

APOLLO

I don't know.

PENELOPE

You know very well what I mean. If you had any decency at all, you'd be out helping your father try to save the church.

APOLLO

Save the church . . . help us save the church. The church is history.

PENELOPE

Ohhh, you heathen. You ungrateful heathen. You will wind up burning in hell.

APOLLO

I'll be there with my friends.

PENELOPE

There will be no white robes for you.

(Penelope exits.)

DAWN

Should I dump you here or do you just need a little rest and recuperation time?

APOLLO

Uhhh, I'm fine.

(Dawn slinks over to him and puts her leg up into his crotch.)

DAWN

Then you're ready for another round.

APOLLO

Uhhh, soon . . . very soon.

DAWN

What did she mean by white robes?

APOLLO

They're made out of bed sheets . . . like the KKK wear.

DAWN

Hmmm. What a hypocrite. So, how soon is soon? . . . I mean how soon is very soon there, Stud?

(Dawn runs her hand inside his loose fitting shirt.)

APOLLO

I'm only human, you know.

DAWN

Men! You can't keep up with a real woman no matter what you say. I've done as many as five guys all in one night. Can you match that one?

APOLLO

Is this a contest?

DAWN

It was last night until you caved in on me.

APOLLO

I was tired from working all day.

DAWN

Working all day? . . . At what?

APOLLO

I made 273 bee frames . . . and put in the basic bees wax comb.

DAWN

You did that cause Brother John said he'd throw you out of the house if you didn't start earning your keep.

(She puts her hand on his chest again.)

DAWN

If you moved in with me, I'd make you my sex slave. You would be so tired at the end of the night that you'd beg for mercy.

APOLLO

Hah!

DAWN

Want to try another round?

APOLLO

Not right now.

DAWN

Hah! It's sex that makes the world go 'round, not love, not money but just good old fashioned humping and moaning animal sex.

APOLLO

Yeah . . . that's right.

DAWN

I'll bet dear old Brother John couldn't keep up with me . . . the Patriarch, Mr. goody two shoes, leader of his flock would be scared to death of me and probably couldn't even get it up.

APOLLO

He did it at least twice, or Melody and me wouldn't be here.

DAWN

Wham, bam thank you mam.

APOLLO

I once did three women in one night.

DAWN

No kidding . . . three, huh.

APOLLO

And they all called me the next night begging for another round.

DAWN

You didn't disappoint them, did you?

APOLLO

Well, I was kind of tired.

DAWN

From making bee frames?

APOLLO

Uhhh . . . yeah . . . more or less.

DAWN

Well, you're out of practice. Tell you what. I heard about a sex club downtown. Everybody gets naked and does everybody else. Are you game?

APOLLO

Uhhh, yeah. That sounds good. I'll tell dad. That ought to shake him up.

DAWN

OK. I'll go home and make the bed so we can practice before we go.

Oh, God!

APOLLO

(Dawn exits.)

APOLLO

I wonder what Elvis would do in this situation?

(The lights dim and come back up appropriately. There stands Elvis Presley, dressed in his concert clothing.)

ELVIS

Just ask me.

APOLLO

My, God. You're really Elvis.

ELVIS

Thank you very much. Do you have women trouble?

APOLLO

Yeah, plenty of trouble.

ELVIS

Me too.

APOLLO

How do you handle it? I mean, all those women yelling and screaming and trying to tear off your clothes?

ELVIS

I run as fast as I can.

APOLLO

I can't run from this one. I'm too tired when I wake up in the morning lying in her bed.

ELVIS

It takes a real man to handle that.

APOLLO

Do you think I should dump her?

ELVIS

She'd just try harder to land you.

APOLLO

I'll be dead by the time I'm thirty.

ELVIS

I'm almost thirty and I'm not dead.

APOLLO

But you're Elvis Presley.

ELVIS

You need to become a musician. Then, everybody will understand. Musicians are known for having ladies chase them. That's why I became one.

APOLLO

Really?

ELVIS

Yeah, really. You're already half way there 'cause you've got the ladies chasing you now.

(There is an O.S noise of the front door to the house opening. Ad Lib Seneca and Melody.)

ELVIS

Got to go now.

(The lights dim as Elvis exits.)

APOLLO

Wait, Elvis. I need to talk to you some more.

(Elvis is gone and the lights come back up Seneca and Melody enter.)

SENECA

Who were you talking to?

APOLLO

Elvis Presley.

MELODY

You're nuts.

APOLLO

Got to go over to Dawn's place and finish what we started last night.

SENECA

The devil will get you, young man. He'll kill you for sure.

APOLLO

I can't think of a better way to die.

(Apollo exits.)

SENECA

That boy will have to face his maker someday. And, when that day comes, I don't want to be around to hear the thunder and see the lightning.

MELODY

Amen! There will be no libraries in the place where he's going.

SENECA

And that place is . . . ?

MELODY

The opposite of where we are going.

SENECA

And that is . . . ?

MELODY

Why do you keep asking me? You know what I'm talking about.

SENECA

You still haven't understood the full scope of that place, have you?

MELODY

Yes I have.

(Seneca begins to go off into her imaginary heaven.)

SENECA

There are beautiful hills and beautiful mountains. You can fly over them like an eagle soaring on the rising winds of the summer heat.

MELODY

It will be beautiful.

SENECA

You really have no idea. We will wear robes of white, sheer cloth . . . robes that remind us that we have become angels and dwell forever in God's presence.

MELODY

Mother, you don't know that for sure. I mean, no one has ever brought back a movie of that place . . . not even a photograph of someone living there and dressed in a white robe.

SENECA

HUSH! That's almost heresy!

MELODY

I didn't mean anything bad with what I said, mother.

SENECA

We won't need food or shelter because our bodies will be perfect just as they are.

MELODY

I've always wanted to ask this but I was always afraid. Uhhhh . . .

SENECA

Go ahead, ask.

MELODY

Well . . . uhhh . . . will there be libraries there? Lots of libraries with more books than a person could read during the entire eternity?

SENECA

You won't need them.

MELODY

What do you mean I won't need them? I'll always need libraries.

SENECA

No, you won't need them because your mind will contain all the knowledge there is. The only one in all the universe who will be smarter than you is God.

MELODY

Dawn says that it's sex that makes the world go around, not love.

SENECA

Don't you listen to that woman . . . ever. It's beauty and holiness and truth and the trees and the flowers and the ocean with all that's in it that makes this world

go around, NOT SEX! NEVER SEX! If it wasn't sex, the devil's way, you wouldn't be in the condition you're in.

(Melody bursts into tears.)

MELODY

I thought we weren't going to talk about it anymore. That's what you said. You said we weren't going to talk about it anymore . . . and now we are.

SENECA

The church will be saved.

MELODY

What's that supposed to mean? The Church and the land are gone. So are the libraries. Everything is gone. Everything

SENECA

I told you that I know of somebody who can take care of all this.

(Brother John surreptitiously enters the room. He is unnoticed by Seneca and Melody. He stays out of sight of the two women.)

MELODY

Take care . . . take care. Those are deceptive words and you know it. If I looked into the big dictionary at the library, the meaning of the words "take care" as you say them , wouldn't even be in there.

SENECA

Never the less, the situation has to be taken care of.

MELODY

DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU FOREVER! What if I would like to keep the baby and raise it by myself. What about that?

(John is visibly shaken by this news.)

SENECA

Don't you curse me. Don't you ever curse me. That's the Devil already taking hold of you.

MELODY

What's worse? To curse my mother or to kill an unborn child instead of giving it a life to live? Answer me! What's worse?

SENECA

There is nothing worse than disrespecting your parents.

MELODY

Who are you to make such a judgment? Do you think you're God?

SENECA

Blasphemy! Blasphemy! I'll hear none of it from my own daughter.

MELODY

If you were to go to the library and read, I mean read profusely, these circumstances would have a whole different meaning to you.

SENECA

Nothing can shake my faith or my beliefs. They are written in stone and called the Ten Commandments, the direct word of the Lord.

MELODY

Then why does it say in those commandments, "Thou Shalt Not Kill?" Why does it say that?

SENECA

You are heading into a life of damnation!

MELODY

I JUST WANT TO HAVE MY BABY!

SENECA

It isn't your baby. It's God's child. He let it pass through your body to begin life. And, when its life is over, it will go back into God's presence and wear a white robe and sing with the angels.

MELODY

You're sick. You really are sick!

(Seneca is beginning to "lose it".)

SENECA

The clouds in the sky will become highways . . . highways to travel in and out of the most beautiful place that could ever be imagined . . . to fly through the sky with no more effort than a thought of where you want to travel to. Just a thought is all that is needed . . . no cars . . . no planes . . . not even a horse and buggy . . . or a surrey with a fringe on top.

MELODY

Have you been listening to musicals again, Mother?

SENECA

Musicals are pure stories that come from the goodness of the soul, not like that horrible Elvis Presley music they call rock and roll.

MELODY

What if someone wrote a musical about Jesus Christ? What if they called it, "Jesus Christ, Super Star?"

SENECA

Now I know what's wrong. You found the medicine bottle, didn't you?

MELODY

The medicine bottle is for you and daddy and Aunt Penelope.

SENECA

I forbid you to ever drink from the medicine bottle again. It is evil for you.

MELODY

But, it is just for you.

SENECA

Enough! Enough of this. We're going to see Doctor Gavorkian.

MELODY

No! No! Not the angel of death. I won't see the angel of death.

SENECA

You'll do what I tell you to do.

MELODY

Please. Please don't take me there. Ohhh no . . .

(Seneca grabs Melody by the arm and drags her out of the room as Melody screams "bloody murder.")

Brother John comes into the room.)

BROTHER JOHN

Why, God? Why does this happen to me and my family?

(John kneels in prayer.)

BROTHER JOHN

Have I not been a faithful servant to thee? Have I not been good to my family and to the members of the church?

(Pause)

Maybe I have been too harsh with my children. Maybe I should change my ways.

(Pause)

If I changed my ways would you make all things right and not make me suffer any more?

(There is an O.S. muffled sound.)

BROTHER JOHN

Is that you, God? Is that a yes?

(Pause)

I thank you so much, dear Lord.

(Pause)

I will take care of my family as I take care of my bees. Yes, I will.

(John gathers his bee equipment together. Dawn enters while John is talking to God. John doesn't see her.)

BROTHER JOHN

I will look down on my family with great care and compassion. I will be the Patriarch that I am supposed to be just as I am with my bees and their colony.

(Pause)

But just one thing, God. Please make it easier for me to keep our church building as it is and not to let the unfaithful turn it into a house of the devil. Please do that for your faithful servant. Please.

(Dawn applauds John.)

DAWN

Nice prayer, Brother John. Are you going to include that in next Sunday's service?

BROTHER JOHN

What are you doing here?

DAWN

I came over to see how Melody is doing.

BROTHER JOHN

She and Seneca left the house.

DAWN

Where did they go?

BROTHER JOHN

That's none of your business.

DAWN
(Seductively)

Now that's no way to talk to your neighbor.

(Pause)

I really do like your sermons. I've heard a lot of them and they're beautiful.

BROTHER JOHN

Where did you hear them. If you stepped inside a church, God would send down a huge bolt of lightning to cleanse the evil from inside his palace.

(Dawn approaches John and runs her fingers through his hair.)

DAWN

You're so uptight, John.

(Pause)

I can hear you practicing your sermons because you leave your window open. Ohh, your hair feels so smooth.

(Pause)

When are Melody and Seneca coming back?

BROHER JOHN

It will be awhile. They went to the Doctor's office.

(John begins to succumb to Dawn's seduction.)

DAWN

Then we have plenty of time.

BROTHER JOHN

For what?

DAWN

For us.

(Dawn caresses the back of John's neck.)

BROTHER JOHN

Ohh, that feels soooo good.

(Dawn plants a kiss on John's lips.)

DAWN

How did that feel?

It felt good too.

BROTHER JOHN

(Dawn runs her hand inside John's shirt.)

And this?

DAWN

We better not do this. Seneca will be home soon.

BROTHER JOHN

I could tell Apollo to leave my house for awhile.

DAWN

He musn't know . . . ever . . . not ever.

BROTHER JOHN

(Dawn takes John by the hand and leads him O.S.)

Of course not . . . not ever, ever, ever.

DAWN

(Dawn pulls John O.S.)

Oh my God, that feels good.

BROTHER JOHN (O.S.)

Mmmm huh.

DAWN (O.S.)

(The stage lights fade to black.)

The lights come up on a desk with two chairs facing the desk. Seneca and Melody are seated in the two chairs. Doctor Gavorkian is seated behind the desk. He is dressed in his white coat. He is a very sinister appearing man with emotionless eyes that look like they should belong to a snake.

Melody cries uncontrollably.)

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

Everything will be all right, child.

MELODY

I'm not a child. I'm a grown woman.

SENECA

Who is in trouble.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

I'll fix the trouble for you.

MELODY

I don't want it fixed!

(The Doctor takes out a syringe and tests it.)

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

You won't feel a thing.

MELODY

Mother, how can you let this happen? Don't you have any feelings for the child?

SENECA

It's what's best for you.....only the best.

(She motions to the Doctor to approach Melody and he does, syringe in hand.)

MELODY

No, mother. Please.

(The Doctor plunges the needle into Melody's arm as the lights fade to black.)

SCENE II

(Dawn and John enter. John's hair and clothing are a mess. Dawn straightens her blouse and hikes up her mini-skirt to its appropriate place.)

DAWN

There, that's about right.

(Pause)

You ought to clean up yourself. You look a mess.

BROTHER JOHN

I don't know what I'm going to tell Seneca.

DAWN

You tell her what you want to.

(John begins to cry. The next speech is close to what the TV evangelist, Jimmy Swaggert said on national TV after he had slept with a hooker.)

BROTHER JOHN

Don't you see? I have sinned. I will never be forgiven for I have sinned.

DAWN

Hogwash. You had a good tumble in bed. That's all.

BROTHER JOHN

But it was with another woman, not my wife. Ohhh God. I have sinned. Please forgive me.

DAWN

Oh stop it. You had a good time and you know it.

BROTHER JOHN

No, no. I can't even think about that. I can't.

DAWN

Don't tell me you never got laid before you got married.

BROTHER JOHN

Just once . . . but she plied me with alcohol.

DAWN

Out of the medicine bottle?

BROTHER JOHN

How did you know about that?

DAWN

Apollo and I had a medicine party one night over at my place.

BROTHER JOHN

No wonder it was half empty the other night.

DAWN

Maybe I should have poured some down you before we started.

BROTHER JOHN

Oh, no. Seneca and Penelope and I swore that no one would ever know about the medicine bottle but us. How did Apollo find it?

DAWN

A curious child could have found it.

BROTHER JOHN

Did you and Apollo have sex after you drank from the medicine bottle?

DAWN

What do you think we did?

BROTHER JOHN

Oh, no. I contributed to the demise of my only son. God, forgive me.

DAWN

You helped him get laid. That's all you did. Period.

BROTHER JOHN

Let's never do this again, OK?

DAWN

It depends on how I feel . . . and how many other guys I've had that week.

BROTHER JOHN

Have you no shame?

DAWN

Yes, it's a shame there aren't more men who want to go for a tumble with me . . . a sorry shame. That's all they're good for anyway.

BROTHER JOHN

Oh, God. Forgive her even more than you forgive me.

(O.S. NOISES ARE HEARD as Seneca and Melody arrive.)

BROTHER JOHN

Quick, out of the house before they see you.

DAWN

Are you out of your mind? I'll leave when I'm damn well ready.

(Melody and Seneca enter. Melody looks terrible and is very distraught.)

What are you doing here?
SENECA

I was just leaving.
DAWN

(Dawn exits.)

Me too.
BROTHER JOHN

(John quickly grabs his bee clothing and exits at the other side of the stage.)

Maybe you should go upstairs and rest.
SENECA

I don't want to rest.
MELODY

I hate you!
(Pause)

I did this for you.
SENECA

For me?
MELODY

Yes, for you. It was the best thing to do for you.
SENECA

Did you stop to think how I would feel? Did you?
MELODY

Just because times are changing around us doesn't mean that we should change our family values.
SENECA

You didn't even hear what I just said.
MELODY

The good book says that you should honor and obey your parents.
SENECA

MELODY

Honor? Honor? You want me to honor someone who takes me to go under the the knife of that low life scum of a Doctor? You're crazy.

(Seneca begins to drift into her fantasy world once again.)

SENECA

If the times had not changed then all would have been perfect by now. We would have no need for Doctors like Doctor Gavorkian.

MELODY

You can't dictate the progression of life.

SENECA

Flowers would bloom and the trees would always be green, even in Antarctica.

MELODY

There are no trees in Antarctica.

SENECA

Then plant some.

(Pause)

We could drift through the air from place to place and never even need a car or an airplane.

MELODY

La la la. You're off into the twilight zone.

SENECA

And we wouldn't need to have ABORTIONS. All would be perfect.

MELODY

WHAT ABOUT ME?

(John enters. He has his bee equipment in hand.)

SENECA

I thought you were out working in your world of bees.

BROTHER JOHN

I know. I know.

SENECA

You know what?

BROTHER JOHN

I heard. I stood over there and heard.

SENECA

You heard nothing.

BROTHER JOHN

I heard everything . . . everything.

SENECA

If you were there I would have seen you. You know it's against our religion to lie.

BROTHER JOHN

I'm not lying. I heard. I heard everything.

MELODY

Then you know about the problem I had?

BROTHER JOHN

You had?

MELODY

Mother took me to see Doctor Gavorkian. Poof! The problem went away. Then I have no secrets. I have only shame.

(Melody begins to cry again.)

MELODY

This world is not worth living in. It has turned into a bog . . . into . . .

SENECA

Sin.

MELODY

Sin? Thou shalt not kill! That's in your book of rules.

BROTHER JOHN

Now wait a minute. A fetus is not a human being until it's born.

MELODY

. . . even though a woman can feel it turning around and kicking in her body.

SENECA

It wasn't old enough to kick.

MELODY

No! You had it killed.

BROTHER JOHN

Think of what it would have meant to the good church people if they saw you walking around with a huge bulge in your body.

MELODY

I could have gone away to have and raise the child.

SENECA

It wasn't a living child.

MELODY

Something was alive in my body.

BROTHER JOHN

That's enough. We shall never talk about this incident again in this house. Never!

MELODY

Before you ban this from conversation in this house, maybe I ought to tell you who put it in my body in the first place.

BROTHER JOHN

A very good idea. Then I will put a shotgun to his head and make him pay for this terrible deed that has put a plague on our house.

SENECA

Who was the snake?

MELODY

Maybe you should take a swallow out of the medicine bottle before you hear this. That's what I was enticed to do.

BROTHER JOHN

I don't know what you're talking about.

(Melody gets the bottle from its hiding place and shows it to everybody.)

MELODY

This bottle of white lightning gin that's marked, "medicine"

SENECA

Who made you drink out of that bottle?

MELODY

Nobody made me. I was seduced.

SENECA

Who did it? Who?

MELODY

One night Apollo wanted to teach me how good it felt to be drunk. Well, he taught me all right. He certainly taught me. And that wasn't all he taught me. Then you wonder why I hate my brother.

BROTHER JOHN

This isn't true. Our son would never do such a thing.

MELODY

Well, he did.

(Pause)

You don't believe me do you? Do you think I would lie about something as terrible as this?

SENECA

Liar! Liar! Get out of here. Don't you ever say this again or God will strike you dead in your tracks.

BROTHER JOHN

And you will never be allowed in heaven when you die. He will banish you forever.

(Melody begins to sob again. She searches through some furniture and comes up with a pistol.)

MELODY

Never, huh. We'll see about never.

SENECA

What are you doing. Put down that gun.

(Melody turns with her back to the audience and fires the gun She slumps to the floor.

She has a last gasp before she dies.)

MELODY

I'll see you in heaven or I'll see you in hell.

(Melody dies.)

BROTHER JOHN

Oh no. Not my little girl, not my sweet little girl. Ohhh, the foul brood has invaded our house, our home.

SENECA

(screaming)

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT! ALL YOUR FAULT. AHHH!

BROTHER JOHN

My fault?

SENECA

YES! YOUR FAULT!

BROTHER JOHN

Don't you take credit for at least half of the fault? She is one half your child . . . or was.

SENECA

Now she's my dead half.

BROTHER JOHN

We've got to keep this quiet. If the Church members find out that she killed herself . . . well, there goes my job.

SENECA

You stand here over the dead body of your daughter and worry about your job?

BROTHER JOHN

We still have to eat . . . and pay the mortgage.

(Seneca picks up the gun from Melody's dead hand.)

SENECA

Maybe I'll shoot you and collect widow's benefits.

BROTHER JOHN

Now, don't do anything rash. Haste makes waste, you know.

SENECA

I'll waste you.

(Seneca fires a couple of rounds at John but they miss him.)

BROTHER JOHN

Woman, you've lost your mind.

SENECA

And you're going to have a hole in yours.

(Seneca fires another round but misses again.)

BROTHER JOHN

I'll tell you what I'll do.

SENECA

You better talk fast.

BROTHER JOHN

I'll go to the coroner. He's a faithful member of the congregation. He'll bury the body and we'll tell everybody that Melody left town and is staying with her uncle in Uruguay.

SENECA

She doesn't have an uncle in Uruguay.

BROTHER JOHN

Nobody knows that but us.

SENECA

This better work.

(She lowers the gun.)

BROTHER JOHN

It will. Trust me, it will.

(John hurriedly exits.

Seneca just stares at the dead body on the floor.)

SENECA

Ohhh, Melody. If it wasn't for Elvis Presley and all those rock and roll musicians, this never would have happened. The world would have stayed the same.

(Melody's body rises and stands. A key light makes her appear ghost-like.

This is what Seneca is seeing in her imagination.)

MELODY

Look, Mother, it's true. There's beauty all around me....all over the universe.

SENECA

I told you. Where is your white Robe?

MELODY

It's being fitted for me. After all, I'm going to wear it for eternity. I wouldn't want to wear a robe for that long that didn't fit me well.

SENECA

Of course not.

(Pause)

Are all the trees green, even in Anarctica?

MELODY

Yes, Mother . . . and the flowers are always in bloom.

SENECA

And you go from one place to another without a car or a plane or anything but your will to get someplace.

MELODY

That's right. I met Saint Peter at the Pearly gate and he sent me back here to tell you this. I got here in an instant.

(Aunt Penelope enters but is not yet seen by Seneca.)

SENECA

Then you have gone to the right place. And, you'll be there for time and eternity.

MELODY

For time and eternity.

(Seneca sees Penelope and lets out a SHRIEK.

The lights go quickly to black and then come up very slowly. Melody's dead body lies on the floor once again.)

PENELOPE

I think you should come with me, Seneca. C'mon . . . come with me.

SENECA

NO! I'm staying here with Melody. I'm staying in this beautiful place where she now lives.

PENELOPE

John told me what happened. You don't want to be here when the Coroner arrives, now do you?

(Pause)

We'll find a nice place for you . . . a nice place where you can rest.

(Pause)

Doctor Gavorkian will be there to take care of you.

SENECA

Doctor Gavorkian will be there?

PENELOPE

Yes, yes he will. C'mon now.

(Penelope takes Seneca by the hand and leads her out of the room.)

SENECA

You're sure the Doctor will be there?

PENELOPE

Yes, I'm sure.

(The lights fade to black.)

END ACT II

ACT THREE

Scene I

(There is a hospital bed at stage left. Seneca is in the bed. Doctor Gavorkian is at the bed side. He is checking Seneca's vital signs. Seneca wears a white robe.

Penelope is seated on the other side of the bed.

This area of the stage is sealed off by some hospital partitions.)

SENECA

Am I dead? Am I in heaven? I'm wearing a white robe.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

You're going to be just fine, my child.

PENELOPE

I don't think so.

SENECA

I don't remember seeing Saint Peter. Have I been through the pearly gates?

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

Not yet. There, you're very healthy, Seneca. Why I believe we can maybe Send you home in a day or so.

PENELOPE

I don't think so.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

You're not helping any.

PENELOPE

I'm telling it like I see it . . . like it is.

SENECA

Do I have a house in heaven?

PENELOPE

You'll have a room but it won't be heavenly . . . not even close.

SENECA

Why not? I already have my white robe. See!

(Seneca gets out of the bed and shows off her white robe.)

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

I think it would be better if you stayed in bed. I've ordered some pills that will help you sleep.

SENECA

I don't want to sleep. I want to look out the window. I didn't know they had windows in heaven.

(Seneca goes to the edge of the stage and stares

out her make believe window.

The Doctor goes around the bed and talks in
whispers to Penelope.)

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

They'll give her shock treatments at the institution. That should snap her out of
this fantasy world.

(Pause)

When can you take her there?

PENELOPE

I'll take her home first. Then Brother John and I can drive her to the institution. It
might take both of us to keep her calm in case she suddenly gets violent.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

That should be all right. I'll give you a bottle of tranquilizers to take with you.
Don't give her more than two at a time as an overdose might kill her.

PENELOPE

It would? How many would kill her?

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

In her condition, may be five or six.

PENELOPE

I'll remember that.

SENECA

Oh look. The flowers are blooming. They're gorgeous, just like I knew they would
be.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN

I'm going to go and get the prescription. I'll be back in a little while. Then, you can
take her home.

(Doctor exits.)

SENECA

But I am home. I have my white robe and all the flowers are blooming.

PENELOPE

You're crazy. But then you always were a little touched.

SENECA

Touched by the hand of the Lord.

PENELOPE
Not exactly.

SENECA
By the hand of Jesus?

PENELOPE
No, not him either.

SENECA
Then by whom? Whose hand am I touched by?

PENELOPE
I don't know but it wasn't God.

SENECA
Do you think they might have a medicine bottle in here? I really could use a swallow or two of medicine.

PENELOPE
I don't think so . . . at least not the kind you're craving.

SENECA
What a shame. Saint Peter said I could have all the medicine I wanted.....maybe they're just re-stocking the bottles.

PENELOPE
Yes, that's it. They're re-stocking.

(Doctor Gavorkian enters the room. He has a prescription bottle in hand.)

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN
Here you are, thirty tablets total. Now, be careful.
(Pause)

Did Saint Peter tell you, you could say goodbye to Brother John while you were here visiting, Seneca?

SENECA
Yes, yes. As a matter of fact, he insisted that I do just that.

DOCTOR GAVORKIAN
Good. Then, Penelope will take you to see him for a little while. Penelope, she is discharged. I'll fill out the paperwork.

SENECA

Oh, how thrilling. I'll see John and say goodbye to him. Of course, he'll be joining me soon. He's not young anymore.

PENELOPE

He's OK.

(The Doctor exits.)

SENECA

I meant he'll get lonely without me until he can join me. Would you take care of him until he can come up my way?

PENELOPE

Sure I will. Then it will be just like it was when we were kids.

SENECA

When you were kids?

PENELOPE

Before you came along.

SENECA

Before I came along.

PENELOPE

We used to go fishing and swimming together . . . down at the pond. Nobody knew we were there, not even our parents. We'd even go skinny dipping together sometimes. That was so much fun. Those were good times.

SENECA

Did you go in the water first, so he couldn't see you all naked and such?

PENELOPE

Hell no! We both tore off our clothes, jumped into the water and started kissing each other.

SENECA

You didn't.

PENELOPE

Didn't what?

SENECA

You know . . . didn't . . . you know there's no kissing allowed here in heaven.

PENELOPE

What a shame. Well, get your shoes, we're leaving.

SENECA

We're going to see John.

PENELOPE

Yes . . . oh here, take a couple of these pills. You'll feel good.

SENECA

OK.

(Seneca takes the pills as the lights fade to black.)

End Scene 1 I

Scene II

(The lights come up slowly. The hospital bed and chairs are gone.)

Brother John is alone in the room. He talks to God.)

BROTHER JOHN

I am so grateful, God. You have made me into a new man. I feel joy in my life. My world was becoming a terrible place in which to live. But, you showed me the light.

(Pause)

The men who burned down the church in the middle of the night did it for You. Now there will be no den of iniquity in a house that was once a place of worship. I thank you, Lord.

(Pause)

It's like the bees when they swarm to start a new life in another place with a new born queen. They fill themselves with honey and go on their journey.

(Pause)

They are in flight beneath the spring sunshine.

(Apollo and Dawn enter.)

BROTHER JOHN

That's what I will do with my family. I will take flight under the spring sun and start a new life in a new place with a new church and no more foul brood anywhere.

DAWN

Run away when the going gets tough.

BROTHER JOHN

What are you two doing here?

APOLLO

I used to live here.

BROTHER JOHN

What do you mean you used to live here?

DAWN

He's moving in with me.

APOLLO

I'm running away from home.

BROTHER JOHN

You can't move in with that Jezebel. I forbid it.

APOLLO

I'm a big boy now.

DAWN

I need a permanent lover.

BROTHER JOHN

A permanent lover. Did he tell you what he did to his sister? He made her kill herself.

APOLLO

What did she say I did?

BROTHER JOHN

You got her drunk and then got her pregnant.

(John lunges toward Apollo. He grabs him by the throat.

Dawn tries to stop the fight.

BROTHER JOHN

You're no son of mine. You're no damn good.

(The two men fall to the floor.)

DAWN

He wasn't the one who did it.

BROTHER JOHN

She said he was.

DAWN

It was Reverend Grant. He got her drunk and made her pregnant.

BROTHER JOHN

Is this the truth? You better not lie to me.

APOLLO

I swear it was him. I would never rape my own sister.

DAWN

Believe him. He told me the same thing two months ago. Please believe him.

(John hesitates for a moment. Then he lets go of Apollo's throat and gets up off of him.)

BROTHER JOHN

I'm sorry, son. I believed her but I know that Reverend Grant was run out of town for doing that to other girls . . . I believe you.

APOLLO

You could at least wish us well. That would make you the follower of the teachings that you preach.

BROTHER JOHN

All right. I wish you well and I give you my blessing. Go ahead, my son. Fly from the nest.

DAWN

He's mine now. All mine.

(Apollo and Dawn exit.)

BROTHER JOHN

Tell me that I did the right thing, Lord. Give me a sign that I am right. Do it at thy will.

(O.S. noises are heard as Seneca and Penelope arrive.)

BROTHER JOHN

Is this my sign, Lord, is it?

(Seneca and Penelope enter. Seneca is really "out of it." She still wears her white hospital robe.)

SENECA

Twas the night before Christmas.

PENELOPE

Shhhh. You're home now, Seneca.

SENECA
(Singing)

Home, home on the range.

BROTHER JOHN

What's the matter with her?

PENELOPE

Where the dear and the Buffalo roam.

PENELOPE

She took some pills the Doctor gave her.

SENECA

I took four, just like the Doctor told me to take.

PENELOPE

He didn't tell her to take four.

SENECA

Yes he did. I ask him if he is still my doctor. He said for ever. So, I took four.

BROTHER JOHN

What do you mean for ever.

SENECA

Look, I'm wearing my white robe . . . and all the flowers are blooming . . . and the trees are green in Antarctica.

BROTHER JOHN

What's she talking about?

PENELOPE

She thinks she's not on earth any more.

BROTHER JOHN

What?

PENELOPE

The shock of Melody dying put her off into an imaginary world.

SENECA

I've seen Melody. She's here too.

PENELOPE

Yes, Seneca. We know.

SENECA

She's off getting a fitting for her robe. She doesn't want to wear it forever if it doesn't fit well.

BROTHER JOHN

What kind of pills did he give her?

PENELOPE

Tranquilizers . . . but they just make her hyper-active. They don't calm her down at all.

BROTHER JOHN

Well, give her some more. We don't want members of the church to come over and see her like this.

PENELOPE

Sure.

SENECA

Where's Apollo? He's not here.

BROTHER JOHN

Uhhh . . . sit down, Seneca. I have to tell you something.

SENECA

Can't you tell me standing up?

BROTHER JOHN

Yes, yes I guess so.

SENECA

You guess so. Don't you know?

BROTHER JOHN

Yes, I know. Listen, Seneca, Apollo and that tramp, Dawn, were here a little while before you got here.

SENECA

Ohhh, how is Apollo? I never get to see him anymore.

BROTHER JOHN

He's OK but he gave me some bad news today.

SENECA

He's such a bad boy and he loves to give bad news. Melody said that she is looking forward to seeing him again. She said that they could go out and look at the beautiful flowers all day long if they wanted to.

BROTHER JOHN

He doesn't live in that place, Seneca. Besides, our beautiful daughter, Melody, has passed on to a better place.

SENECA

There isn't any better place than where I am. Don't you remember saying that? I remember Reverend Grant saying exactly the same thing.

BROTHER JOHN

What do you remember about Reverend Grant? What exactly do you remember?

SENECA

I remember him taking me for long walks out into the woods. He would do that when you were out of town on church business.

BROTHER JOHN

Ohh, no.

SENECA

Ohh, yes. And, they were beautiful walks . . . sometimes the moon would shine down on us and it would be so romantic.

BROTHER JOHN

And then . . . then what would happen.

SENECA

He taught me what love would be like in the movies.

BROTHER JOHN

What would he teach you? WHAT!

SENECA

You don't have to shout at me. Even though I'm in a better place now, there is nothing wrong with my hearing . . . nothing at all.

BROTHER JOHN

OK, OK, but just tell me.

PENELOPE

She's not going to tell you anything.

SENECA

Yes I am. I am going to tell him . . . everything.

PENELOPE

There are some things best left untold. This is one of them.

SENECA

Penelope, you keep out of this.

BROTHER JOHN

Go ahead, Seneca. Tell me everything about the nights in the woods under the bright moonlight.

SENECA

Well, first the Reverend would tell me to look up into the sky and stare at the moon.

(Pause)

Then he would caress the back of my hair. It felt so good.

(John is starting to unknowingly "get off" on this sex story.)

BROTHER JOHN

Yes, yes . . . go on.

PENELOPE

This is kind of interesting. I heard about the Reverend. I heard lots of things about him.

BROTHER JOHN

So what happened next?

SENECA

Well, he began to massage my shoulders. It really relaxed me.

PENELOPE

I love a good shoulder rub.

SENECA

Then he moved from there to my back. My back was very tense by this time.

BROTHER JOHN

Backs get like that.

PENELOPE

Especially mine.

SENECA

Then he kissed me . . . right there . . . under the stars and the bright moonlight. Ohhh, it was such a good kiss.

PENELOPE

Did it last a long time?

SENECA

It felt like it was at least an hour . . . maybe even longer.

BROTHER JOHN

Like the kisses we give each other when we go to bed.

PENELOPE

Like the kind I fantasize about.

SENECA

Yes, like the stories you've told me . . . time and time again.

BROTHER JOHN

I never knew I could enjoy a story like this one.

PENELOPE

Me either.

SENECA

You two are perverts. None of this ever even happened. This has been a story that was told to me by Marge Callister. She said it happened to her.

BROTHER JOHN

I knew it. I knew all along that you were just making up the whole thing.

PENELOPE

So did I.

SENECA

You knew nothing . . . nothing at all. You listened like a couple of awe-struck kids.

BROTHER JOHN

Well, it was a good story.

SENECA

Sure. Well, I'm going upstairs and go to bed. Give me that bottle of pills, Penelope.

PENELOPE

OK, but don't take too many. The Doctor said they could be fatal.

SENECA

You can't die when you're already in heaven. Some people are really dumb.

(Penelope gives Seneca the bottle of pills.
Seneca exits.)

BROTHER JOHN

I didn't know she could make up stories like that.

PENELOPE

It kind of reminds me of our days down at the swimming pond. Those were good days. I really miss those days.

BROTHER JOHN

Those were days of freedom.

PENELOPE

Yes, freedom to explore the world.

BROTHER JOHN

The world of nature.

PENELOPE

Sometimes you caught fish in the pond.

BROTHER JOHN

And sometimes we weren't even afraid to go skinny dipping.

PENELOPE

We were just being kids.

BROTHER JOHN

We didn't know any better.

PENELOPE

But we learned fast.

BROTHER JOHN

Yes, we did.

PENELOPE

I remember when you gave me, your sister, a kiss. That was a really good day.

BROTHER JOHN

Nothing was meant by it. We were just being kids.

PENELOPE

Kids playing house.

BROTHER JOHN

Just kids playing house.

PENELOPE

Would you take me back to that time?

BROTHER JOHN

What do you mean?

PENELOPE

Would you give me a kiss like the one you gave me at the pond?

BROTHER JOHN

We're not kids any more. It wouldn't be right to do that now.

PENELOPE

It wouldn't hurt anything.

BROTHER JOHN

I guess not. Brothers and sisters are much more affectionate now than they used to be. Besides, I made a promise to the Lord after Melody left us, that I would be kinder and more open to my family.

PENELOPE

Then do it.

BROTHER JOHN

Come here.

(John gives Penelope a gentle kiss. In the middle of the kiss, Penelope becomes passionate and pulls John tightly to her body.

John breaks away and stares at Penelope. He is visibly shaken by the action of Penelope.)

BROTHER JOHN

What are you doing?

PENELOPE

Ohh, John. Now that Seneca is going to be put into an institution, we can have each other to ourselves . . . just like it was at the pond.

BROTHER JOHN

We aren't kids anymore.

PENELOPE

You already said that.

BROTHER JOHN

Did Doctor Gavorkian recommend an institution for Seneca?

PENELOPE

Don't change the subject on me. This is too beautiful to let pass by.

BROTHER JOHN

(Ignoring her)

It's very important that we decide where to take her and do it now.

PENELOPE

All right. All right! I get the message.

BROTHER JOHN

To live life to its fullest is what is important now. We must adjust to the fact that Seneca will be gone for a long, long time.

PENELOPE

I know. That's what I just said.

(John is now "rehearsing" a sermon.)

BROTHER JOHN

My dear brothers and sisters. The Patron Saint of hard times has descended upon our house. Will we lie down and do nothing? No! Emphatically no!

PENELOPE

I agree . . . sort of.

BROTHER JOHN

Will we let the foul brood of life drive us into the arms of the devil? No! Absolutely not!

PENELOPE

I'm going up stairs and check on Seneca.

(Penelope exits.)

BROTHER JOHN

Will we let Elvis Presley or rock and roll music destroy us? Of course we won't. We are too strong for that my brothers and sisters . . . much too strong.

(Pause)

We can listen to the music of Brahms, or Mozart. That music will inspire and cleanse our souls.

(Pause)

We can read the scriptures from our bibles and be inspired to do the right thing at all times.

(Pause)

Oh, thank you, God for enlightening my mind. See how much better and thoughtful I am to my family? I knew it would be this way.

(Penelope rushes into the room.)

PENELOPE

Seneca isn't breathing. The bottle of pills are by her bed. There are ten of them missing. I think . . . I think she's dead.

(John simply can't handle this statement. He goes "over the edge.")

John lets out a primal scream.)

BROTHER JOHN

Ohh, no. Ahhhhh!

PENELOPE

Don't go upstairs and see her.

BROTHER JOHN

Why not? She's my wife.

PENELOPE

She's your dead wife. Remember her as she was when she was alive.

BROTHER JOHN

It doesn't matter. I have to go and see her. I have to say goodbye.

PENELOPE

OK. Maybe it's best that way. I'll go with you.

(John and Penelope exit.

Apollo and Dawn enter.)

APOLLO

. . . know that gun is here some place.

DAWN

What's the big deal?

APOLLO

It's my gun and I want it. Oh, here it is. Huh, there are some spent bullets in here.

DAWN

Maybe somebody was target practicing. Let's go home. This place suddenly gives me the creeps.

APOLLO

OK. I wonder where everybody's gone to?

DAWN

What do you care? You don't live here anymore.

APOLLO

Yeah, I guess you're right.

(Apollo and Dawn exit.)

A moment later, John enters. He is visibly shaken.
He sits in a chair and puts his head in his hands.)

BROTHER JOHN

Oh, dear God. Everything is gone now. The church is gone. My son
is gone and living with a harlet. Now, my wife is gone. Why me?

(Pause)

I have been a good servant to thee. I have followed the rules of the good book. I
have brought sinners into the flock and have heard them repent and become
good church members. Why me?

(Pause)

Why did you make the bees and their lives so simple and perfect and the lives of
people so imperfect?

(Continued)

BROTHER JOHN

Why do you make the times change and become so sinful? Why? If you could do
good for the bees, you certainly could do good for me, your faithful servant.

(John gets down on his knees. A single light
envelopes him.)

BROTHER JOHN

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

(The lights flash on and off. A loud sound of
thunder is heard.)

BROTHER JOHN

Is that you, God? Is that you talking to me? What shall I do?

(Another sound of thunder is heard.)

A VOICE

Stop buying those Elvis Presley records.

(The lights fade to black.)

THE END

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