

START *(Lights up on Sue and Gary. Sue is Gary's wife. Farmer woman, salt of the earth. She has a very strong upper Midwest accent — think Fargo. Gary is a Midwestern hippie in his mid-forties. He is an organic farmer. He was clearly in his element in the late sixties and early seventies. He is generally good-natured and quite smart.)*

GARY. Gary Gauger. This is my wife, Sue. *(Beat; Sue waves.)* So my case — the day before, I had gone to work here, you see our workshop is a little building right over there. And it is about ninety-two percent recycled.

SUE. Even the shingles and the foundation are recycled.

GARY. So anyway, I start my plants out there, and then in mid-March we move 'em out front to the hotbeds. So I would come over here in the morning and work all day, and I'd go back for supper at night.

So anyways, that day, I went to work, my folks weren't around —

SUE. But they had been planning a trip to Sugar Grove —

GARY. I just thought, "No big deal, they go away sometimes." By night, they didn't get home, I was worried about 'em. I said, "Jeez, they must've gotten in a car accident." But what do you do, call hospitals?

SUE. Oh, ya can't. Ya can't. Not between here and Sugar Grove.

GARY. And the police, I knew, wouldn't investigate until they'd been missing for twenty-four hours. So I just basically stayed by the phone till midnight, went to bed.

Next morning, I got up to call the police, and a customer came walkin' up the driveway, looking for motorcycle parts, and in the back room where we thought the part might be is where we found my father's body.

Now, it looked to me like he'd suffered a stroke, because he was face down in a pool of blood. And he obviously ... was dead. I felt his pulse.

So, all of a sudden, here's my father's body, my mom's been missing. So I called the paramedics, who called the police, who told me they suspect foul play.

About an hour and a half later, they find my mother's body in a trailer out in front of the house. She had been killed and covered with rugs and pillows. *(Pause.)* They had been hidden, and their throats were slashed.

Two and a half hours after I found my parents, they had me arrested. *(Lights down on Gary and Sue, up on Delbert.)*

END

DELBERT.

It is not easy:

you stand waiting for a train
or a bus that may never come
no friend drives by to catch a ride
cold, tired:

call yourself a poet

but work all day mopping floors and looking out for thieves ...

(Lights down on Delbert, up on Robert and his wife Georgia. Robert is a black man in his mid-thirties, hardened but not lacking a sense of humor, with a deep rural Mississippi accent. Georgia is also Southern; opinionated, earthy, contentious and extremely warm. Loves to speak her mind. The two of them overlap, finish each other's sentences, and otherwise play off each other whenever they appear together.)

ROBERT. Robert Earl Hayes. This here's my wife —

GEORGIA. Georgia Hayes.

ROBERT. *(Sotto voce.)* Baby, they know your last name —

GEORGIA. I know, I just wanted to introduce myself. Go ahead.

ROBERT. Now, at the time that all this happened I was working around the racetrack, takin' care of the horses you know. And at that racetrack, this white girl, she gets raped and killed. And you know, she be dating the black guys —

GEORGIA. Mm-hmm.

ROBERT. — and when she got killed, they ask me have I ever had sex with the girl. I told them yeah, they said —

WHITE COP 1. Well, were you having sex with her that night?

ROBERT. I said no. Then they said —

WHITE COP 1. Well, why does she like hanging out on the black side of the track?

ROBERT. So I said, "I don't know why she like hanging out back there, I guess we more fun."

But this girl, she got killed. And the cop came to my job the next morning, they said —

WHITE COP 1. We gotta talk to you.

ROBERT. I said okay, I went to the police station. And they kept saying —

WHITE COP 2. We know what happened —

WHITE COP 1. We know you asked her for a date, and she hit you —

WHITE COP 2. — and you hit her back —