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SF PERUSALS

Children's Letters to God

A New Musical

Book by	Music by	Lyrics by
Stuart Hample	**David Evans**	**Douglas J. Cohen**

Based on the international best-selling book
by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
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HAMPLE	EVANS	J. COHEN

Based on the book by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall (50%)

Originally Produced by Carolyn Rossi Copeland Productions, Inc. and The Lamb's Theatre Co., Ltd. (25%)

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LAMB'S THEATRE

CAROLYN ROSSI COPELAND

and

MARIE B. CORPORATION
BROADWAY OVERSEAS MANAGEMENT

present

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD

Book by
STUART HAMPLE

Music by
DAVID EVANS

Lyrics by
DOUGLAS J. COHEN

based on the book by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall

Starring

GERARD CANONICO JIMMY DIEFFENBACH LIBBIE JACOBSON
SARA KAPNER ANDREW ZUTTY

Set Design
ANNA LOUIZOS

Lighting Design
KIRK BOOKMAN

Sound Design
PETER HYLENSKI

Costume Design
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Musical Staging
PATRICIA WILCOX

Direction by
STAFFORD ARIMA

In Association with The Lamb's Theatre Company, Ltd.

THE CHARACTERS

JOANNA, 13 — Bright, responsible, and romantic, she is often forced to take care of her intrusive little brother, Kicker, who at times drives everyone crazy. She's in the same class as Brett, on whom she has her heart set.

KICKER, 9 — Joanna's brother; imaginative; questions everything; often feels powerless because he's the youngest and the smallest in the group.

BRETT, 13 — A doubter, sometimes a tad cocky to cover his insecurity, parents divorced. His prized possession is a baseball cap covered with a variety of pins from special places which he wears at all times.

IRIS, 11 — Passionately in love with her pet turtle, Arnold. Tends to over dramatize herself and has a secret crush on Brett.

THEO, 11 — About to celebrate his 12th birthday. Totally inept physically but is happy that he is not as physically inept as Kicker. Would fervently like to be an athlete/hero. Wears glasses.

[The parts will be played by a multicultural cast of age-appropriate children; for example, in our New York production, Iris happened to be Asian, so we changed her last name to Chang. You should feel free to make similar substitutions. The ages may range from 7 to 15, according to the actual ages of the actors.]

FURTHER CASTING OPTIONS

While CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD was originally written to be performed by five kids ages 7-15, it is possible to expand the cast with more performers: these additional cast members should only be assigned letters and solo lyrics that are not character specific.

In the following numbers, where the entire cast sings (as indicated by the word ALL), feel free to add the additional voices:

"QUESTIONS/QUESTIONS"
"LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE"
"QUESTIONS FOR THE RAIN"
"A SIMPLE HOLIDAY SONG"
"WHEN I AM IN CHARGE"
"DAYDREAMS"
"HOW COME?"
"I KNOW"

The show can also be performed by a cast of young adults if age-appropriate children are not available.

In addition, it is possible to enlist a local church, synagogue, school or community group to participate in the show by joining in the singing of the final song, "I KNOW."

A NOTE ABOUT "TITLES"

We have suggested projecting "titles" throughout the show to preserve the sense of chapter headings that appear in the book, CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD. In the Lamb's Theatre production off-Broadway, we were unable to do this due to a thrust stage. But in a proscenium house, titles could be used successfully.

Titles are optional and do not have to be "projected" by light onto a screen: they can also be creatively revealed on parts of the set, for example. We encourage productions to be imaginative.

THE PHYSICAL PRODUCTION

CHILDREN'S LETTERS TO GOD can be done with minimal props and scene changes and a set that allows the action to be fluid. The various locations (school, Kicker's bedroom, party, etc...) can be indicated minimally or more extensively, according to the director's vision.

SONGS

ACT I

(In the dark, we hear children's voices:)

BRETT. Dear God, If you're so famous, how come you're never on T.V.?

KICKER. Dear God, Please send Dennis Clark to a different camp this year.

IRIS. Dear God, How did you know you were God?

JOANNA. Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

THEO. Dear God, How come you did all those miracles in the old days and don't do any now?

(Pin-spot on JOANNA, who sings:)

Song: *"PROLOGUE"*

JOANNA.
IN THE BEGINNING...
GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS
AND THE EARTH.
HE SET THE WORLD SPINNING
SO WE CAN CONCLUDE —

KICKER. Dear God, Please make my sister prettier so she can get married.

JOANNA.
(A bit annoyed)
THAT HE CREATED BROTHERS

WHO SOMETIMES INTRUDE!

KICKER. Sorrrr-ry.

JOANNA.
BUT FIRST HE ADDED FLOWERS
AND FISHES IN THE SEA...
AND BIRDS AND ANIMALS
IN ALL THEIR GLORY —

IRIS. Dear God, Is Pastor Bowen*a friend of yours or do you just know him through business?

JOANNA.
WOULD YOU RATHER TELL THIS STORY?

IRIS. Okay!
THEN HE MADE MAN AND WOMAN
WHO BROUGHT FORTH CHILDREN —

THEO. Dear God ...What does begat mean? Nobody will tell me.
BRETT. *(Whispering to THEO.)* Two people making babies.
THEO. Ewwww! That's gross!

JOANNA.
AND THEIR CHILDREN
HAD CHILDREN

IRIS. Dear God, I bet you can't name the capitals of every state. I can!
BRETT. Hey God, A lot of people say bad things with your name in it, but I never do.
KICKER. Dear God, Did you have as much trouble learning Hebrew as I am?

ALL.
AND THESE CHILDREN
HAVE LOTS OF QUESTIONS!

*Can be replaced by the name of a local clergy person.

Song: *"QUESTIONS/QUESTIONS"*

(Upbeat music sounds)
QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS
THINGS WE GOTTA KNOW —
EVERYTHING FROM

BRETT.
ARE YOU REAL?

IRIS.
TO HOW YOU MAKE IT SNOW...

ALL.
ANSWERS, ANSWERS
NEVER SEEM TO COME!

JOANNA.
WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE?

THEO.
AND WHO INVENTED GUM?

IRIS/JOANNA.
MAYBE YOU ARE HARD OF HEARING

KICKER/THEO.
MAYBE YOU DON'T REALLY CARE

JOANNA.
MAYBE YOU ARE ON VACATION

BRETT.
MAYBE YOU'RE NOT REALLY THERE

ALL.
MAYBE WE'RE TALKING TO THE AIR!

LETTERS, LETTERS —

MAYBE IF WE WRITE,
THEN WE'LL GET AN ANSWER
IF YOUR SCHEDULE'S NOT TOO TIGHT.

LOTS OF LETTERS,
THAT'S A WAY TO START.
LETTERS FROM WHAT'S ON OUR MIND
AND LETTERS FROM THE HEART...

BRETT.
THINGS WE'D NEVER ASK OUR PARENTS —

KICKER.
LIKE WHAT ABOUT THE BIRDS AND BEES?

THEO.
AND WHY IS SUNDAY SCHOOL ON SUNDAY?

ALL.
SO, GOD,
HOW ABOUT IT?
TELL US, PLEASE...

IRIS/JOANNA/KICKER.
HOW DO YOU MAKE THE WATER FREEZE?

THEO/BRETT.
WHY DO THE SWISS MAKE BETTER CHEESE?

ALL.
WHO SAYS "GOD BLESS YOU" WHEN YOU SNEEZE?

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS
RUNNING THROUGH MY BRAIN

KICKER/IRIS.
DO YOU LOOK LIKE HERCULES...?

JOANNA/THEO/BRETT.
OR MORE LIKE CELLOPHANE?

ALL.
AND AFTER YOU ANSWER THESE
WE'RE NOT THROUGH —
GOD, YOU HAVE A LOT OF EXPLAINING
TO DO!

(Transition of lights and music. A title appears:)

[Complaints & Doubts]

(The stage lights pick out KICKER in his "room". It's a mess – a heap of his clothing and toys.)

JOANNA. KICKER BROWN! Your room is a mess!

KICKER. Dear God, My sister Joanna thinks she's God. Boy, is she wrong!

JOANNA. You better clean it up fast, or mom says you can't go to Theo's birthday party.

KICKER. Dear God... I will clean up my room if you will send me a pony. Is it a deal? Your friend, Kicker.

JOANNA. Start picking up, Kicker!

KICKER. You're not the boss of me!

JOANNA. No, but I'm bigger than you.

KICKER. It's too hard to do it alone. *(Pleading)* You have to help me.

JOANNA. Okay, munchkin, we'll do it together. *(She notices her binoculars.)* Hey, what are you doing with my binoculars? Were you spying on me and Brett?!

KICKER. No.

JOANNA. *(She shoots him an accusatory glance.)* Kiiiiiiick-er? You were, weren't you!

KICKER. Um...I forget...

(Cornered, he runs to the wings.)
MOM!! JOANNA MESSED UP MY ROOM!

(He exits fast!)

JOANNA. Dear God, It must be hard for you to love everybody in the world. I only have one brother and I can't do it.

(The lights change to a scene outside. BRETT appears, carrying a gift. He wears his baseball cap with buttons and badges on it.)

Song: *"THIRTEEN"*

BRETT.
CAKE AND ICE CREAM AND PARTY FAVORS.
PLAYING GAMES WITH FRIENDS – BIG WOW.
WHY IS IT THINGS I LOVED LAST YEAR
SEEM SO STUPID NOW?

DAD MOVED OUT ON NOVEMBER SEVENTH;
I GREW AN INCH-AND-A-HALF LAST SPRING.
SO MANY CHANGES IN ONE YEAR...
WONDER WHAT NEXT YEAR WILL BRING?

TURN THIRTEEN
AND THINGS GO CRAZY –
FEELING LIKE A TOTAL FREAK!
VOICE IS GETTING LOWER,
SCHOOL YEAR'S GETTING SLOWER.
AND I'M SHAVING EVERY OTHER WEEK!

DAD MOVED OUT ON NOVEMBER SEVENTH;
MOM THREW OUT HER WEDDING RING.
SO MANY CHANGES IN ONE YEAR...
WONDER WHAT NEXT YEAR WILL BRING?

(JOANNA enters carrying a gift. She runs to catch up with him.)

JOANNA. Brett!
BRETT. Hey! Joanna.
JOANNA. Wait for me.
BRETT. Alright, if you're nice, I'll let you walk me to Theo's birthday party.

JOANNA. At last my life is complete!

BRETT. Don't mention it.

JOANNA. If I know you, you're giving Theo something real, like, strange, right? Lemme see...

(She tries to grab his gift but BRETT pulls away.)

BRETT. It's top secret.

JOANNA. Now — what would somebody with your twisted brain — covered in that weird hat — give another person for a birthday gift?

BRETT. Forget it. You'll never guess.

JOANNA. If you want to know the actual truth, I...don't...care!

(He grabs her present and runs off. She chases him, yelling.)

JOANNA. Brett Williams! Gimme that!

(BRETT runs to the party followed closely by JOANNA; THEO and KICKER are already there.)

BRETT. *(Handing the two gifts to THEO.)* Theo, you're such a great guy, I brought you two presents!

JOANNA. *(Grabbing her gift and offering it.)* One's from me!

BRETT. Open mine first!

THEO. *(THEO stands stunned having been forced into a private feud; he decides to grab BRETT'S present. JOANNA sits with her brother.)* A baseball mitt? Thanks, but I stink at baseball!

BRETT. You have to work at it, Dude. You'll get better.

THEO. How can I do that? I need a coach to teach me.

BRETT. Hard to find.

THEO. How about you?

BRETT. Maybe as a special birthday bonus.

THEO. Really?

BRETT. No promises.

THEO. Hey, cool, dude!

(THEO raises his hand to high-five BRETT, but he misses when BRETT turns and walks towards the birthday cake. IRIS enters furious, clutching her Birthday invitation and carrying her turtle, ARNOLD.)

IRIS. Theo, I just came to tell you that I am not coming to your party!

THEO. But, you're already here!

IRIS. *(Pulls out invitation.)* I'm leaving because your dumb invitation says "No Turtles Allowed."

THEO. You're allowed. But not your dumb turtle.

IRIS. Too bad. Because if Arnold is not allowed, then I am leaving.

THEO. Birthdays are for people, not pets.

IRIS. Which shows how little you know, since it is a fact of nature that Arnold is more than just a pet!

Song: *"ARNOLD"*

IT'S NOT LIKE HE CAN FETCH A STICK
OR HOP OR PURR
OR EVEN LICK.
BUT GOD HAD BETTER THINGS IN MIND, YOU SEE,
THE DAY THAT HE BROUGHT ARNOLD TO ME...

(IRIS holds up the turtle.)

THEO. I said no turtles!

IRIS.
ARNOLD KNOWS
IT'S OKAY TO TAKE TIME,
IT'S OKAY TO STUDY A BLADE OF GRASS.
ARNOLD KNOWS
WHEN I'VE GOT SHOW 'N TELL
I CAN ALWAYS TAKE HIM TO CLASS.

ARNOLD KNOWS
HOW TO LISTEN REAL HARD —
IF I SHARE A SECRET, HE'LL NEVER TALK.
AND ARNOLD KNOWS
TO RETREAT IN HIS SHELL
AND DO HIS COOL IMPRESSION OF A ROCK.

THEO. Hey! Is this my birthday or what?

IRIS.
(KICKER, BRETT & JOANNA ECHO)
HE'S SLOW
SO I KNOW JUST WHERE TO FIND HIM.
AND HE MOVES LIKE PEOPLE DO
WHEN THEY GET OLD.
SO WHO CARES IF HE'S NOT SPEEDY AS A ROCKET?
HOW MANY PETS CAN FIT INSIDE YOUR POCKET?

ALL.
(Except THEO)
ARNOLD KNOWS

IRIS.
WHEN I DON'T WEAR A SMILE

JOANNA.
IT'S BECAUSE A SMILE DOESN'T FIT YOUR MOOD.

KICKER /BRETT/ JOANNA.
ARNOLD KNOWS

IRIS.
THAT I LIKE WHAT HE LIKES

KICKER.
BUT YOU'LL NEVER LIKE TURTLE FOOD.

IRIS.
AND ARNOLD KNOWS
HOW TO BLEND RIGHT IN.
HE WON'T SCREAM FOR ATTENTION
TO PROVE HE'S SMART...
AND IF HE MOVES AT A SLOWER PACE,
ARNOLD KNOWS

ALL.
(Except THEO)

ARNOLD KNOWS

IRIS.
MY ARNOLD KNOWS
HOW TO FIND A PLACE
IN MY HEART.

THEO. Okay. Your slimy turtle can stay.

KICKER. Great. *(Cookie Monster voice.)* Chocolate cake! Me love it!

IRIS. *(Holds ARNOLD, her turtle, near the cake.)* Cut a piece for Arnold.

THEO. Turtles don't eat cake.

IRIS. Arnold hasn't been himself lately. He needs a treat.

THEO. I just got a treat! Brett's gonna be my baseball coach! Thanks, Dude!

(He raises his hand for BRETT to high-five, and misses.)

KICKER. He can't even do a high-five. What a geek.

JOANNA. Kicker, that's mean.

KICKER. So? Everybody says he's a geek.

JOANNA. You apologize.

KICKER. I'm sorry you're a geek.

JOANNA. Kicker!

KICKER. I'm sorry.

THEO. It's okay. I am a geek.

JOANNA. Theo, you are not a geek just because you can't do a high-five. Now stop sulking and make your wish.

THEO. *(From the heart.)* I wish…I didn't drop a fly ball every single time…and go on my rollerblades without falling over…and not have this stupid baby face so I look about five years old…I wish I could be like everybody else.

(He starts to blow out the candle.)

JOANNA. Theo! Why would you want to waste a perfectly good wish on that?

Song: *"LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE"*

JOANNA.
IF EVERYONE YOU KNEW
WAS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE...

KICKER.
THEY PROBABLY WOULD NEVER HAVE OLYMPICS
(They all look at him a tad confused.)
'CAUSE IF A HUNDRED PEOPLE RAN
THE HUNDRED METER RACE,
WE'D NEED A HUNDRED MEDALS
FOR THEY'D ALL COME IN FIRST PLACE!

JOANNA.
IF EVERYONE YOU KNEW
WAS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE,
YOU COULDN'T TELL MY BROTHER
FROM A TURTLE.

IRIS.
EXCEPT ONE LIKES THE WATER

JOANNA.
AND THE OTHER HATES A BATH.

BRETT.
ONE GIVES OFF A FUNNY SMELL,

JOANNA.
THE OTHER STINKS AT MATH.

KICKER. Hey!

JOANNA.
BOTH COULD USE A HARDER SHELL

IRIS.
TIME WILL TELL,
IT'S JUST AS WELL

ALL.
(Except THEO)
THAT EVERYONE YOU KNOW
IS NOT LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE.

IF EVERYONE YOU KNEW
WAS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE...

BRETT.
WE PROBABLY WOULD NEVER GO TO MOVIES —
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO SPEND YOUR MONEY
JUST TO SIT AND SEE

ALL.
(Except THEO)
PEOPLE WHO ALL LOOK AND ACT THE SAME AS
YOU AND ME!

IRIS.
LIFE WOULD BE AN AWFUL BORE —

ADD JOANNA.
WHAT IS MORE

ADD BRETT.
BE THANKFUL YOU'RE

ALL.
(Except THEO)
THEO
AND YOU'RE SOMEONE
UNLIKE EVERYBODY ELSE!

THEO.
BUT IF I ONLY HAD A BODY
THAT NOBODY WOULD TEASE...

IRIS.
I WISH I DIDN'T HAVE BIG EARS,
BUT SO WHAT?

KICKER.
OH, GIVE ME LONGER LEGS

JOANNA.
WITHOUT KNOBBY KNEES.

BRETT.
I HAVE A GIANT BIRTHMARK RIGHT ON MY BUTT.

IRIS.
SO THEO, STOP YOUR CRYING AND TRYING
TO PLEASE...

JOANNA.
BE PLEASED WITH WHO YOU ARE —

ALL.
(Except THEO)
A ONE-OF-A-KIND STAR!

THEO.
I'M ONE-OF-A-KIND!

ALL.
OH, IF EVERYONE YOU KNEW
WAS JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE...

THEO.
I GUESS THERE'D BE A MILLION, TRILLION THEO'S.

JOANNA.
AND UNLIKE EVERY SNOWFLAKE
EVERYONE WOULD BE THE SAME,

BRETT.
AND WHEN I'D CALL, "HEY, THEO!"
THEY'D ALL ANSWER TO YOUR NAME.

IRIS.
YOU COULDN'T TELL WHO'S REAL OR FAKE,

KICKER.
I COULD TAKE YOUR PIECE OF CAKE!

ALL.
(Except THEO)
NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT,
CAN'T YOU SEE...

BRETT.
A SNAKE'S NOT MEANT TO FLY,
A BIRD'S NOT MEANT TO SWIM.

KICKER.
I'M GLAD THAT I'M NOT HER —

JOANNA.
I'M THRILLED THAT I'M NOT HIM.

IRIS.
BE HAPPY YOU ARE YOU

IRIS/ BRETT.
'CAUSE TWO OF YOU WON'T DO

ALL.
(Except THEO)
AND THAT GOES DOUBLE IF THERE WERE A FEW!
FOR IF EVERYONE YOU KNEW
WAS JUST LIKE EVERYONE YOU KNEW
THEN IT WOULD BE OUR BIRTHDAY TOO!
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US" –

THEO.
NO ...
ME!

ALL.
(Except THEO, Overlaping with THEO'S held note.)
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!!!"

(Transition of lights and music. A title appears:)

[Forces of Nature]

IRIS. Dear God, do plastic flowers make you mad? I would be if I made the real ones.

KICKER. Dear God, why do you always make the grass green And the sky blue? Are those the only colors you have?

THEO. We read that Thomas Edison invented light. But in Sunday school they said YOU did it. So I bet he stole your idea.

IRIS. *(Bends down to look at something)* Look, a spider caught a fly.

KICKER. Yecccch! I hate flies. Also spiders.

IRIS. They're God's creatures, just like we are. Just like Arnold.

KICKER. I don't care whose creatures they are! Keep 'em away from me!

BRETT. God doesn't make flies and spiders. They just are!

JOANNA. You are so clueless it's pathetic!

BRETT. He doesn't make everything!

(We hear thunder)

JOANNA. Where do you think that comes from?

(It suddenly rains. All but IRIS run for cover.)

BRETT. *(Shields his hat from the rain.)* Oh, NO!!!

IRIS. *(She looks skyward, twirls happily, arms out.)* Rain! I LOVE it!

BRETT. My hat's getting wet!

JOANNA. What is it with you and that hat?

BRETT. It's private, okay?

KICKER. Dear God ...Last week it rained so much it was almost like Noah's Ark. But I'm glad it wasn't...'cause you could only take two of things, remember? And we have three cats!

Song: *"QUESTIONS FOR THE RAIN"*

IRIS.
WHAT DID PEOPLE DO BEFORE UMBRELLAS?

THEO.
DO FISH HAVE A CLUE THAT IT'S RAINING?

BRETT.
WHY'S IT ALWAYS FALL ON
SOME IMPORTANT BASEBALL GAME?

JOANNA.
HOW COME FLOWERS GROW...

KICKER.
BUT I JUST STAY THE SAME?

THEO.
CAN'T YOU MAKE IT SO IT SKIPS THE WEEKENDS?

IRIS.
DOES RAIN MEAN THAT YOU MIGHT BE CRYING?

JOANNA.
IS IT LIKE THE SNOW:
ARE NO TWO RAINDROPS ALIKE?

THEO.
WHY DOES IT TURN GRASS GREEN?

BRETT.
BUT IT JUST RUSTS MY BIKE?

ALL.
QUESTIONS FOR THE RAIN
WHILE THUNDERCLAPS ARE RINGING

THEO.
WHY DOES DADDY CURSE IT...

JOANNA.
BUT IN MOVIES THEY START SINGING?

ALL.
WHY'S IT ALWAYS CLEAR?
IS IT TEARS DISGUISED?

KICKER.
IS IT SAFE TO DRINK?

BRETT.
SHOULD WE WAIT TILL IT'S PASTEURIZED?

ALL.
QUESTIONS FOR THE RAIN —
SOME THINGS I SOMETIMES WONDER...
WHICH IS IT MORE FOND OF:
THE LIGHTNING OR THE THUNDER?

IRIS.
DOES THE SUN GET WET
OR DOES THE RAIN PASS RIGHT THROUGH IT?

THEO.
WHEN YOU MAKE IT RAIN
HOW DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG TO DO IT?

ALL.
QUESTIONS FOR THE —

IRIS.
(SCREAMS)

JOANNA. *(Rushes to her.)* What's the matter?
IRIS. Arnold's not moving! I think he's...dead!
KICKER. Really? Dead? Wow! How can you tell?
BRETT. Turtles look dead even when they're alive!
JOANNA. Oh, Brett!
BRETT. *(Leans down over ARNOLD.)* Let me take his pulse.

KICKER. I never saw anything dead before — except an ant.

BRETT. *(Looks at ARNOLD.)* Yep. He's dead all right.

JOANNA. Some people think we live after we die.

BRETT. Forget it.

IRIS. *(Places ARNOLD on the ground.)* If we live after we die, why do we have to die then?

JOANNA. Maybe it was his time.

IRIS. It's not fair! If I was God I would let everybody's turtle live forever!

BRETT. Nobody lives forever.

KICKER. Dear God, what is it like when you die? I just want to know, I don't want to do it.

JOANNA. It's sad, but you were lucky you had such a great turtle.

IRIS. Dear God...Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't you just keep the ones you got now?

ALL.
(Except IRIS)
GOD, WE GIVE YOU THANKS
JUST LIKE ON THANKSGIVING...

IRIS.
BUT I'D BE MORE THANKFUL
IF MY FRIEND WAS LIVING.

THEO.
WAS HE IN MUCH PAIN?
HE LOOKS AWFUL GREEN.

BRETT.
ARNOLD WAS A TURTLE —
THEY ARE ALWAYS GREEN!

IRIS.
OH, WHY DID YOU TAKE HIM IN HIS PRIME?!

THEO.
WAS HE REALLY THAT YOUNG?

IRIS.
I'D SAY HE WAS MAYBE THREE OR SO —
WITH TURTLES IT'S KIND OF HARD TO KNOW.

JOANNA. And so we lay to rest Iris Burns' beloved turtle *(Beat)* Arnold Burns.

KICKER.
IS THERE SUCH A THING AS TURTLE HEAVEN?

THEO.
WILL ARNOLD COME BACK AS A RABBIT?

IRIS.
WILL I EVER SEE MY LITTLE FRIEND AGAIN?
P.S. THERE'S NO RUSH — *(Alternate lyric if IRIS is older:)*
REMEMBER I'M JUST TEN. I'M ONLY TWELVE, AMEN.

KICKER.
IF HE'S WET, WILL HE GET
PNEUMONIA?

THEO.
WHY AM I HUNGRY FOR FRENCH FRIES?

JOANNA.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S GONE,
IS IT STILL HELPFUL TO PRAY?

BRETT.
IF THE RAIN WON'T STOP —
WILL ARNOLD FLOAT AWAY...?

(JOANNA shoots him a disapproving glance.)

ALL.
QUESTIONS FOR THE RAIN
I'M HAPPY TO HAVE KNOWN HIM

IRIS.
DON'T MEAN TO COMPLAIN BUT

IS IT TOO LATE TO CLONE HIM?

ALL.
(Except IRIS)
HE WILL ALWAYS BE TURTLE NUMBER ONE,
THE VERY BEST OF FRIENDS —
WE SURE HAD LOTS OF FUN.

IRIS.
THANK YOU FOR MY ARNOLD...

(The sky clears and sunlight breaks through.)

ALL.
AND THANK YOU FOR THE SUN.

(We hear sounds of car horns.)

JOANNA. C'mon Kicker, mom and dad are here. Bye, Brett.
THEO. See ya!
BRETT. *(To JOANNA)* Later.
KICKER. *(Runs toward "car")* Hey, Mom – I saw a real live dead turtle!

(Exits with JOANNA.)

IRIS. Brett? D'you need a ride?
BRETT. No thanks. My mom's coming. I think.
IRIS. Aren't you sure?
BRETT. Not really, 'cause ever since they got divorced and my dad moved out, she's been kind of losing it.
IRIS. *(Not wanting him to be disappointed.)* Sure you don't wanna come with us?
BRETT. Nah...I'm cool. *(IRIS starts to leave.)* Hey, Iris — you okay about Arnold?
IRIS. Yeah...thanks for asking...that's really sweet...well, bye, Brett. *(She runs to the "car", suddenly losing it.)* Mommy...! Arnold ...diiiiiiiiiiiiiiiied!!!!!
BRETT. Dear God, how do you feel about people who don't believe in you? *(A beat)* Somebody else wants to know.

(Transition of lights and music. A pin-spot picks out each KID as he/she speaks a letter.)

JOANNA. Dear God, do animals believe in you or is there somebody else for them?

IRIS. Did you mean for giraffes to look so funny or was that a mistake?

THEO. I hope ants aren't special because we squish them all the time.

Song: *"ANTS"*

KICKER.
HOW I LOVE TO SQUISH ANTS!
HOW I LOVE TO STOMP ANTS!
WHO GAVE 'EM PERMISSION TO CRAWL UP MY PANTS?!

HOW I LOVE TO SMASH ANTS!
HOW I LOVE TO MASH ANTS!
THAT IS WHY I GOTTA DO MY SQUISHY ANTS' DANCE!

HOW I HATE ANY BUG,
EVERY SPIDER AND SLUG.
EVERY TIME I SEE ONE, I WANNA YELL "UGH!"
IT'S ALWAYS KIND OF MESSY WHEN YOU SQUISH 'EM
ON A RUG —
BUT I LOVE TO SQUISH ANTS!

(He does a little ant-squishing dance. BRETT and JOANNA enter with a large rubber ball.)

JOANNA. Hey, Munchkin.

KICKER. Where are you guys going?

BRETT. To check out the new roller coaster.

KICKER. Can I go?

JOANNA. You're too little.

BRETT. And too shrimpy. Hey, Kicker, you're good at kicking people. Let's see if you can catch.

(Tosses the ball to JOANNA over KICKER'S head.)

JOANNA. Yeah, Kicker, catch!

(Tosses the ball back over KICKER. BRETT bounces the ball off of KICKER'S back.)

KICKER. Ow!
BRETT. Wow! What a great backboard!
JOANNA. Hey! Be nice to my little brother!
KICKER. Yeah, Dorkhead!
JOANNA. *I'm* the only one who's allowed to torture him!

(She shoves KICKER towards BRETT. He puts kicker into a head lock and gives him a "noogie")

BRETT. Say Mercy. Say it!
KICKER. Mercy!
BRETT. Thank you!

(BRETT and JOANNA exit laughing.)

KICKER.
I WILL NEVER SQUISH ANTS —
I WILL ONLY HELP ANTS.
JUST LIKE LITTLE PEOPLE, ANTS DESERVE A CHANCE!

REMEMBER, EV'RY BUG
DEEP DOWN JUST WANTS A HUG.

NO ONE LIKES BEING CREPT ON,
BUT IT'S WORSE GETTING STEPPED ON.
I WILL NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, EVER SQUISH ANTS!

(Transition of lights and music. THEO and JOANNA enter.)

THEO. C'mon, Iris, we're going to the zoo.

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