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SF PERUSALS

Late,
A Cowboy Song

Sarah Ruhl

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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LATE, A COWBOY SONG was written with the support of the Ucross Foundation in Wyoming.

LATE, A COWBOY SONG was first produced by the Clubbed Thumb, at the Ohio Theater in New York City on April 21, 2003. The production was directed by Debbie Saivetz. The set design was by Andromache Chalfant, the lighting design was by Steve O'Shea, the costume design was by Eric Hall, the sound design was by Bray Poor, and the original music was composed by Michael Escamilla. The Production Stage Manager was Erin Cameron. The cast was as follows:

MARY . . . . . Carla Harting
RED . . . . . Addie Johnson
CRICK . . . . . Mather Zickel

LATE, A COWBOY SONG was subsequently produced by the Piven Theater Workshop in Evanston, Illinois on July 26, 2010. The production was directed by Jessica Thebus. The set design was by John Dalton, the lighting design was by JR Lederle, the costume design was by Janice Pytel, and the sound design was by Andre Pluess and Amy Warren. The Production Stage Manager was John Kearns. The cast was as follows:

MARY . . . . . Polly Noonan
RED . . . . . Kelli Simpkins
CRICK . . . . . Lawrence Grimm

CHARACTERS

CRICK: Charming, fragile, and child-like.

MARY: Keeps her journal locked.

RED: She's no cowgirl, she's a cowboy.

Crick, Mary and Red need not be any particular race or ethnicity.

NOTES

Blue, the horse, and the painting exist as suggested, abstracted objects.

Transitions should be fluid, without black-outs.

PLACE

A version of Pittsburgh.

A silhouette of a messy kitchen.

An image of the Marlboro Man hovers in the distance against blue light.

MUSIC

It would be nice if the actress playing Red could play the guitar. At the very least, she should be able to sing, accompanied by a live guitar. When Red sings, she ought to have a real cowboy outfit. Don't forget the chaps. The lyrics of the songs are mine. The music is up to you. (Or the music from earlier productions can be obtained.) Think simple iconic melodies. Yodling optional. Some melodies feel like honky-tok. Others – more like prayer under the night sky.

To all the lady cowboys of heart and mind who ride outside the city limits of convention, with special thanks to Paula Vogel and Anne Fausto-Sterling

PART ONE

1. You're late

A man – Crick – sits among dirty dishes.

A woman – Mary – steps in the door.

CRICK. You're late.

MARY. I know, I'm sorry.

CRICK. Where were you?

MARY. I ran into an old friend on the street.

CRICK. There's some food on the stove.

MARY. You cooked! Thanks.

CRICK. I love you, sugarplum.

They kiss.

MARY. I love you too. Smells good. What is it?

CRICK. Beef. Who'd you run into?

MARY. That girl we went to school with who always wore a money clip instead of carrying a purse.

CRICK. Oh, her. What's her name?

MARY. I haven't seen her in years.

CRICK. I didn't know you and her were friends.

MARY. Red. Red is her name.

CRICK. That's right. Red.

MARY. What's wrong with Red? I like her.

CRICK. She used to make jokes all the time that weren't funny.

MARY. I think she's funny.

CRICK. Maybe I have a better sense of humor than you do. Just kidding.

What did you do with – "Red"?

MARY. Had some coffee.

CRICK. Where?

MARY. What does it matter?

CRICK. I want to be able to imagine your day – every moment – like a beautiful detailed painting – the sort a Russian might paint on a hollow egg.

MARY. I don't think any Russians are interested in painting my life.

CRICK. Where'd you get coffee?

MARY. Green Shutters.

CRICK. You took her *there?*

A pause.

MARY. What's wrong with Green Shutters?

CRICK. You got coffee at a Chinese restaurant?

MARY. There are no other restaurants on that block.

CRICK. That's where *we* go.

MARY. I told you – there are no other restaurants –

CRICK. You were supposed to be home for dinner.

MARY. I know. I'm sorry. I should have called. Thanks for cooking.

She eats her food.

CRICK. I have a headache.

MARY. Oh – you do? I'm sorry. The one you get right there?

CRICK. Yes.

MARY. Do you want me to rub your head?

CRICK. Sure. Thanks.

She starts rubbing his head.

CRICK. Do you have any money?

MARY. Why?

CRICK. Can't you just answer the question – simply and elegantly – yes or no – in the same manner in which it was asked?

MARY. I have a little money.

CRICK. Can I have some?

MARY. What for?

CRICK. I just need it. Do you not trust me?

MARY. Of course I trust you.

She stops rubbing his head.

CRICK. Aw – why'd you stop?

MARY. Sorry.

CRICK. So you'll give me the money.

MARY. I just want to know what it's for.

CRICK. It's a surprise.

MARY. How much?

CRICK. Five hundred dollars.

MARY. Jesus.

CRICK. You don't have five hundred dollars? I thought you were an heiress.

MARY. I'm not an heiress.

CRICK. You're more of an heiress than me.

MARY. That's true. Most people are more of an heiress than you. They – like – inherit money from their jobs. Like a paycheck.

CRICK. Look – fuck you.

MARY. I don't like your language.

CRICK. In a just society people with more money give money to people with less money. I know you agree with that.

MARY. Yes – I do.

CRICK. If I had more money than you I'd give my money to you.

MARY. But you never do have more money than me.

CRICK. But I could.

MARY. Yes. You could. But you don't.

CRICK. You want to tally it up? See who's spent more on who? In the mind of God, who do you think has spent more money on who? Me or you?

MARY. Me.

CRICK. You think God cares? It's just money. It's not your soul. Money is meant to be spent.

MARY. Right.

CRICK. And I know you have five hundred dollars. Just sitting there. Doing nothing. Your soul should just sit there. Doing nothing. Not your money.

MARY. I'll write you a check.

CRICK. Thanks.

MARY. It's my whole savings.

CRICK. Don't worry, honey. I'll give it back to you. I'm just going borrow it.

How is whatserface, anyway?

MARY. Red?

CRICK. Yeah, Red. What kind of name is Red, anyway. Who does she think she is, the Marlboro Man?

MARY. She is, kind of. Red's a cowboy.

CRICK. Oh, yeah right – a cowboy in Pittsburgh.

MARY. She is – she wears a cowboy hat. She wore a big hat into the Green Shutters. It was kind of funny. People looked at her and she just tipped her hat. She does things to saddles and harnesses. She rides things. She can make a horse fall asleep – she sings horse lullabies for a job. She gets paid for it. She says it's beautiful, when a horse falls asleep. She says it's like if God fell asleep. Because God would sleep standing up – just in case he had to wake up – to take care of anything.

CRICK. It's cows that fall asleep standing up. Not horses.

MARY. Oh – I thought she said horses.

CRICK. Cows. Horses only fall asleep if they have to – if they're put in stalls. They should roam free. Don't you think.

MARY. It's nicer to think of horses falling asleep. I don't like to think of a cow falling asleep. It's not as pretty. Why is a cow not as pretty as a horse.

CRICK. People in India think cows are beautiful. They put cows in their art.

MARY. I don't know about that.

CRICK. What'd you talk about – you and *Red*?

MARY. I told you – horses falling asleep.

CRICK. Did she make a pass at you?

MARY. Yeah – I fucked her.

No, she didn't make a pass at me.

Jesus.

CRICK. What's wrong with you? Using language like that?

MARY. I'm going to my mother's house.

CRICK. You haven't eaten your dinner.

MARY. I'm not hungry.

CRICK. Why not? Hey – did you eat *dinner* with her at the Green Shutters?

MARY. No.

CRICK. The coffee – filled you up – all by itself?

MARY. Yes.

CRICK. Never known you to be satisfied by cream and sugar.

MARY. I didn't have cream or sugar in my coffee.

CRICK. Oh, you took it cowboy style. That's your new way, huh, tough girl?

MARY. Yeah. That's right. I don't like your tone of voice. I'm going to see my mother.

CRICK. You didn't finish your dinner.

MARY. I'll eat it later. I want to see my mother.

CRICK. Tell her I say hello.

MARY. I will.

Mary turns to go.

CRICK. Bye.

Crick looks pained.

Mary turns back.

MARY. I'm sorry.

CRICK. What for?

MARY. For being late.

CRICK. Don't go to your mother's. Stay here with me. We'll make up.

MARY. What do you mean: we'll make up?

CRICK. You know what I mean. We'll make up. Come here.

Crick pulls Mary to him.

They kiss.

2. Red

A woman – Red – in a cowboy hat –

leans against a tree and strums a cowboy tune on her guitar.

Stars and moon overhead.

She sings.

RED.

OH, AS THE SUN SETS
THE HORSES DO SLEEP
THE FIELDS THEY ARE LONG
AND THE CRICK IT IS DEEP…

OH, FIND ME A CHILD
WHO GROWS INTO A MAN
WHO CRIES LIKE A BIRD
AND FLIES LIKE A – CRAYON…

3. Summer

CRICK. You're late?

MARY. Yes.

CRICK. How late?

MARY. I think – I don't know – I wasn't keeping records…

CRICK. Don't you just know these things?

MARY. You're supposed to keep records. I used to keep records in my diary – I put a red mark – but I forgot.

CRICK. Mary.

MARY. Once when I was little –

CRICK. Should we take a test?

MARY. I don't want to. I'm scared of those tests.

CRICK. So we'll just wait and see.

MARY. I guess.

CRICK. What about when you were little?

MARY. I forget.

CRICK.

Well, you know how I feel about it.

MARY.

Oh, I remember. When I was little I put a red mark in my diary to keep track and someone saw my diary and asked what's that red mark for and I had to say that's when I have my period. And they passed my diary around the cafeteria.

CRICK. Oh, honey. That's horrible.

He kisses her on her forehead.

CRICK. No wonder you don't want to keep track.

MARY. I'm glad I'm grown up now.

She thinks about being grown up and starts crying.

CRICK. Aw honey, aw honey, aw honey, don't cry. It'll work out. We'll get married.

MARY. Oh, Crick.

CRICK. What kind of wedding do you want to have?

MARY. I don't know.

CRICK. Would you have bridesmaids?

MARY. Oh – I don't know –

CRICK. I think we shouldn't have bridesmaids. Those matching dresses – it's weird. Like seven nurses in lilac preparing to take you to your death-bed. I don't want to have a big party. Something small. Because it's between us, right?

MARY. Yes.

CRICK. It's about our love. I don't want people getting drunk and falling all over a dance floor. That's no way to celebrate our love.

MARY. You're right. I never thought of that.

CRICK. A lot of poetry and music and flowers. Love isn't pretty like that. They try to make it pretty. Like a funeral. Cover up what's really going on. With people in uniforms running around arranging things. And meat cooked all wrong. Love is between two people. It's not about acquaintances throwing up in the bathroom. I hate that.

MARY. I want *some* flowers at the wedding.

CRICK. You do? Aw, honey. What kind of flowers do you want?

MARY. Those little blue ones, like you find in a field.

CRICK. We'll have lots of those flowers, lots and lots and lots.

MARY. I think they're called forget-me-nots.

CRICK. I love it when you know stuff about plants.

We'll have forget-me-nots. A whole bundle. You'll carry some, I'll carry some. No music, okay? But we'll have a whole room of those little blue flowers. And some really good meat, cooked over a grill. We should get married soon.

MARY. Aw, Crick.

CRICK. Before you start to – show.

MARY. Oh –

CRICK. What do you want to name our kid?

MARY. I was thinking Jack?

CRICK. I never liked the name Jack.

Pause.

Mary looks pained.

CRICK. What's wrong?

MARY. I love the name Jack.

All my dead relations are named Jack.

CRICK. Oh, that's right. I'm sorry, honey.

Jack, it is. What do I care about a name! We're gonna have a baby!

Crick whirls Mary around the room.

CRICK. But it has to have my last name, okay?

MARY. Why?

CRICK. There're only three Thorndiggers left in the United States. Plenty of Smiths, no offense honey.

MARY. Maybe Smith could be the middle name.

A long pause.

MARY. Crick? Maybe Smith be the middle name.

CRICK. Hold on. I'm thinking. Jack Smith Thorndigger.

MARY. Jack Smith Thorndigger.

CRICK. Sounds like we're trying to belong to a country club, having a last name for a middle name. But if it's what you want – okay – I like it. I like it.

MARY. What'd you do with that five hundred dollars?

CRICK. It's a surprise.

I'm so happy. Are you happy?

MARY. Yes.

CRICK. You've made me the happiest man in the world, Mrs. Thorndigger. I hope we have a boy, don't you? If

we have a girl and she wears those lavender mini-skirts and the boys chase her around I wouldn't be able to stand it. I'd have to follow her all around, to school and to parties, just to make sure boys weren't looking at her funny.

MARY. Hey –

CRICK. What?

MARY. You never asked me to marry you.

CRICK. Aw, honey.

MARY. I want you to ask.

He gets down on his knees.

CRICK. With eyes the size of tulips, and the most perfect nose in Pennsylvania, Mary Smith: we have loved each other since we were eight years old. Will you marry me?

MARY. Yes, I'll marry you – my dearest love.

CRICK. My beautiful Mary Thorndigger. I love you.

MARY. I love you too.

They kiss.

Crick buries his head in Mary's lap.

MARY. Honey – there's one thing.

CRICK. What is it darling?

MARY. If we have a baby, you gotta get a job.

CRICK. No problem. I'll get a job.

4. Crick gets a job

At the museum. A job interview.

CRICK. Because I've always wanted to be a museum guard.

Because I've always loved paintings.

Because I've always thought that paintings should be in a person's house and not in a museum.

Don't get me wrong. I *do* want paintings to be in a museum.

And I swear to protect them. I would never remove one. Or touch one.

I promise to guard them and uphold all the regulations.

I've always wanted to be a museum guard. My whole life long.

Because how could you really look at a painting and love it and understand it if you see it for five minutes – you've got to look at it the whole day long. Maybe for your whole life long.

I'll be the best museum guard you've ever seen. I will.

I'm going to have a baby. I'm going to be the best father and the best museum guard you ever seen.

A pause while the museum interviewer asks: why's your name Crick?

Oh, yeah, people are always asking me that.

My father named me after the creek I was conceived near. Sort of a funny name, I know.

I always wished I were named John or Mark or something like that.

My wife and I won't make the same mistake with our baby.

We're naming it Jill, if it's a girl.

My wife – she wanted to name it Blue – but I said no, honey – the kids at school will make fun of it. Our child should have a nice old-fashioned name out of the Bible like Jill.

A pause while the imaginary museum interviewer speaks.

Oh? Really? Maybe it's the translation I read.

A pause while the imaginary museum interviewer speaks.

Really? I do. Well, that's wonderful. Thank you. I can't wait to start.

5. At the Green Shutters

Red wears a cowboy hat. Mary looks pregnant.

Mary and Red, finishing a large bowl of soup for two people.

Two fortune cookies on the table.

MARY. I love this soup. I'm going to learn to make it at home. The clear soup – with vegetables – all bright and clear and separate in the broth. You know how in Cambpell's soup the vegetables get all mushed together?

RED. Yeah.

MARY. I like it when the vegetables are separate. So a carrot really looks like a carrot. I wonder how they do that. I'm going to learn to make it at home.

RED. You know – I hear there's even better Chinese food outside of Pittsburgh.

MARY. Where?

RED. Places like New York. San Francisco.

MARY. Oh! Have you been there?

RED. Nope. You know me – can't bring a horse into the city.

MARY. No.

RED. But I hear they have the best Chinese food there. And not just Chinese food. But Asian food more generally.

MARY. What do you mean?

RED. The cuisine of other countries in Asia. Not just China.

MARY. Oh!

RED. Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean…

MARY. What's the food from Vietnam like?

RED. Never had it.

MARY. Me neither. I bet there's a cook-book. Or show on T.V.

RED. They have everything on T.V.

MARY. Yeah.

I wonder if they feel bad, making food for us in America.

RED. Who?

MARY. The Vietnamese and the Koreans. After those wars. Why would they want to cook food for us, d'you think?

RED. Maybe they don't want to. Maybe it's for the money.

MARY. What exactly happened in those wars anyway? Who was fighting who?

RED. The north, the south. It's always the north and the south.

MARY. Maybe if people appreciated – *really* appreciated – the cuisines of other nations – they would say to themselves – my body has been nourished by this other country. I will be good to its citizens.

RED. Could be.

MARY. Well, I just don't know.

RED. About wars? How they begin and how they end?

MARY. Yeah.

RED. Me neither.

MARY. I wish I knew.

RED. Me too.

All I know is what a cowboy needs. Simple food. No fancy spices.

MARY. Sounds nice.

RED. See – I don't cook for other people. I cook for me. One soul, eating under the night sky.

MARY. Can a soul eat?

RED. I reckon so.

MARY. Me too.

A pause.

MARY. Well. We'd better have our fortune cookies. What time is it?

RED. I have no idea.

Mary looks at a clock.

MARY. I'm late.

That's all right.

You can't rush a fortune cookie.

It's – a ritual.

She opens her fortune cookie. She reads it. She is troubled.

MARY. Huh.

RED. What's wrong?

MARY. I keep getting the same fortune.

RED. What's that?

MARY. It says: your onion is someone else's water lily.

RED. What does that mean?

MARY. I don't know.

RED. You eat lots of onions?

MARY. Not many.

RED. Huh.

I hear sometimes pregnant ladies get a taste for onions.

MARY. No, not me. I don't know. Onions make you cry, I guess. Maybe Crick is my onion. And he'd be someone else's water lily.

RED. He ever hit you?

MARY. My husband?

RED. Yeah.

MARY. No.

Of course not.

He's so gentle, he wouldn't hurt a fly. Why do you ask?

RED. Because sometimes you talk about him – like you're afraid of him.

MARY. Afraid of Crick? Nah. That's silly.

RED. What's he make you cry about?

MARY. Oh, I don't know. Stuff. What's your fortune?

RED. Your smile is so lovely it makes everyone realize that the world is a beautiful place.

MARY. It's true.

RED. Aw.

(A pause. They look at each other.)

RED. So you got a name for the baby yet?

MARY. I want to name her – Blue – if it's a girl. I feel like it's a girl.

RED. That's a pretty name. Blue.

MARY. It's kind of after you.

RED. Really?

MARY. Yeah – after I ran into you – I thought about your name. I thought, I want this baby to be a real individual-type-person. Like Red is. So I thought I'd call her Blue.

RED. I'm flattered.

MARY. I hope you don't think that's weird. I mean, I know we don't know each other very well and all.

RED. No – no – I'm flattered. Maybe I'll baby-sit for her – it – the baby – sometimes. When it gets born.

MARY. Maybe. I don't know. Crick says he wants it to be just me, him, and the baby. He likes the family intimacy feeling. With the lamps all aglow. Like Swedish paintings, he says.

RED. I never seen a Swedish painting.

MARY. Me neither. Crick goes to museums.

RED. Maybe we'll take it for walks.

MARY. What?

RED. The baby.

MARY. Oh – yes. The baby!

RED. I could show it the stables, outside the city limits.

MARY. Oh! That sounds like heaven.

6. Red Sings a Song

RED.

EATIN' SOUP UNDER THE PITTSBURGH SKY
EATIN' SOUP LOOKING IN HER EYES
WHO AM I TO DESCRIBE SUCH FRAGILE* DELIGHTS
I'M A COWBOY FROM PENNSYLVANIA

SHARIN' OUR FORTUNES AND SHARIN' RICE
SHARIN' ONE TABLE AND SHARIN' ONE NIGHT
WHO AM I TO DESCRIBE SUCH FRAGILE* DELIGHTS
I'M A COWBOY FROM PENNSYLVANIA

**Fragile (pronounced with a long "i")*

7. Christmas Morning

Christmas music.

Crick rips open brown wrapping paper on a painting.

Crick and Mary see an abstract expressionist painting;

we see only a frame.

He leans it against the wall, reverent.

Crick and Mary look at the painting.

MARY. It's nice.

CRICK. Is that all?

MARY. How much was it?

CRICK. Never mind about that. Do you like it?

MARY. What do I do with it?

CRICK. What do you mean: what do I do with it?

MARY. I'm not used to presents like this.

CRICK. So?

MARY. What do I do with it?

CRICK. Look at it.

She looks at it.

MARY. Again and again?

CRICK. It's not like: again and again.

Crick puts a chair in front of the painting. Mary sits and looks at it.

MARY. I know, but –

CRICK. It's good practice to just *look* at something. If Eve had just looked at that apple instead of eaten it, we'd all be better off. If all the bad things of the world were paintings, and we just looked at 'em, we'd be better off. It clears your head, just to look at something. Don't you think?

MARY. But how many times, I wonder?

CRICK. What?

MARY. I mean, if you own your own painting, how many times a day should you look at it?

CRICK. As many times as you want.

They look at the painting.

CRICK. Doesn't it clear your head?

MARY. Yeah.

Mary stands in front of the painting, posing.

MARY. How long do you think you could just look at me, without kissing me?

CRICK. Not too long.

MARY. Try.

He looks at her for a while.

He kisses her.

CRICK. Merry Christmas, Mary.

MARY. Merry Christmas. I love the painting. I really do.

8. Crick looks at his Painting

Crick puts the painting on the wall.

He looks at it.

He puts it on a different wall.

He looks at it.

He puts it on the floor.

He looks at it.

He does a push-up over it and looks at it.

He rolls over on his back.

He holds the painting above him.

He looks at it.

He puts it on the ground beside him.

He curls up next to it.

He looks at it.

9. Mary Makes Soup

Mary's kitchen.

She thumbs through the Joy of Cooking.

Her excitement mounts as the process becomes more and more violent.

MARY. "Consommé: a clear soup."

There it is!

"A clear soup is supposed to be as bracing as a clear conscience."

How about that. I've thought the very same thing. I wonder who wrote this cook-book.

(She looks to see who wrote the cook-book.)

Never heard of her.

"About Clear Soups:

"Because so much valuable material and expert time goes into the making of clear soups and because they taste so delicious, most of us assume that they have high nutritional value."

Yes, I do.

"It disappoints us to have to tell you that, while they are unsurpassed as appetite stimulators, the experts give them an indifferent rating as food."

That can't be right.

"Instead of calling for things young and tender, remember that meat from aged animals and mature vegetables will be most flavorsome. *Bones are disjointed and crushed*; meat is trimmed of fat and cut up. Bones, especially marrow bones with *gelatinous extractives*, play an important role in stock.

"As the stock heats, quite a heavy scum rises to the surface. If a clear soup is wanted, push the scummy

abluvinious crust to one side. Continue simmering. Again, push the scummy foam to one side.

Add lean ground beef, one egg white and crumpled shell, and *several uncooked fowl carcasses.* Beat these additions into the stock."

My God.

It's violent, isn't it?

Mary fills a pot with water and puts it on the stove.

10. Mary and Red, Outside the City Limits

Red eats soup out of a thermos.

RED. I think you've done it, Mary. Just like in the restaurant.

MARY. Really?

RED. Yep. Dee-licious. How'd you do it?

MARY. You don't want to know.

RED. Why?

MARY. It was ugly.

RED. Guess things have to get ugly before they get nice.

MARY. Yeah. Red. You're not afraid of what anyone thinks of you, are you?

RED. Nope. Not really.

MARY. How'd you get like that?

RED. I dunno.

MARY. Is it because your name is Red? I remember, in high school, you always wore these red velour pants. They were the ugliest things I'd ever seen.

RED. I loved those pants.

I wore 'em every day. I wore 'em until I wore the crotch clear out. And then I bought another pair.

Red laughs.

Mary laughs.

They laugh about nothing in particular.

Then they stop.

MARY. Lately – I can't decide simple things, like should I eat this potato chip or should I take a walk. So I ask myself questions in my head. I close my eyes and ask: should I take a walk? And the voice answers: Yes or No, and I think it's my own voice, but I'm not sure. Sometimes I think it's God's voice. But I've never been sure about God. So it must be my voice. Do you ever do that?

RED. Nope.

MARY. If you want to eat something, you eat it.

RED. I reckon so.

MARY. And if you want to take a walk, you take a walk.

RED. I do.

MARY. You don't think about it beforehand.

RED. Nope.

MARY. That's nice.

RED. I think about some things beforehand.

MARY. Like what?

RED. Never mind. Maybe you think about things too much, Mary. You should learn to ride a horse. When you're riding a horse, there's no time to think, should I jump over this fence or shouldn't I. All of a sudden you're just jumping over a fence. You know?

MARY. But life isn't like that. Life is –

RED. What?

MARY. I don't know. I'm afraid of horses.

11. New Year's Eve

Crick watches It's a Wonderful Life.

Mary enters.

FROM THE TELEVISION:

– A toast…to my big brother, George. the richest man in town!

The crowd breaks into cheering. People sing "Auld Lang Syne"

MARY. This is on again? This was just on.

CRICK. Shhh…I love this movie.

MARY. Don't you want to go to my mother's house? She's all alone.

CRICK. In a little bit. It's about to end.

Mary picks up the phone. She dials a number.

Crick turns up the volume.

MARY. Happy New Year! How's your leg? We're just watching a movie. No – we didn't feel like going out. Crick? You want to talk?

CRICK. Just a second! It's my favorite part.

MARY. He says Happy New Year. Okay, Mom, I love you too. Bye.

She dials another number.

MARY. Hello? Hi. Happy New Year! *(Pause.)*

With the horses?

CRICK. Who's that?

MARY. It's Red. Want to wish her a happy New Year?

CRICK. No.

MARY. Okay, you too, bye.

FROM THE TELEVISION:

– Look daddy. Teacher says, every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings.

– That's right, that's right.

They watch the movie. Crick is moved.

MARY. You crying Crick?

CRICK. A little bit.

12. A Journal Entry

Morning light.

Mary takes her journal out from under the couch.

She unlocks her journal.

MARY. *(to the audience)* January 1. New Year's Resolutions: One: Write in Journal Every Day. Two: Read books about how to be a good mother and how to improve your sex life. Three: Learn to ride a horse.

Thoughts for the day: Bad things could happen. Your heart could stop ticking inside your body. Your husband could drop dead and you could find him laying there, his face blue. A window could fall on you. Some people have defective hearts that just stop ticking. There's nothing you can do. I might have one of those hearts. I might drop dead at any moment. Some people spontaneously burst into flames. No warning. It's true. I saw it on television.

My life is not so bad. I read somewhere in a book: you have a right to be happy. Or was it: you have the right to pursue happiness. That's right. You have the right to chase happiness.

13. Red: A Song

RED.

OH, THE SKY DOESN'T WORRY ME AT NIGHT
OH, THE FLY DOESN'T WORRY ME IN FLIGHT
MY HEAD DOESN'T WORRY ME
MY HEART DOESN'T WORRY ME
MY FOREHEAD HAS NO WORRY LINES AT ALL…

14. Crick and Mary go to the Museum

CRICK. We'll start at the beginning. With the Middle Ages.

MARY. I thought we were starting at the beginning.

CRICK. It's the beginning of Western art.

MARY. I was just kidding – get it?

CRICK. That's pretty good!

MARY. Thanks.

CRICK. Used to be they painted people flat.

Like this.

Do you like it?

MARY. Everyone looks so – sad –

with blood coming out everywhere.

And flat.

Like someone ran over the Virgin Mary with the great big machine they use to clean ice at a skating rink.

CRICK. Let's go to the next room. You'll like that better.

Modern art.

They look at a new set of paintings.

CRICK. Which one's your favorite?

MARY. I don't know yet.

CRICK. Well, pick your favorite inside your head and then I'll guess it.

MARY. That's a good game. Okay.

CRICK. You picked?

MARY. Yes.

CRICK. Is it that one?

MARY. No.

CRICK. That one?

MARY. No.

CRICK. That one was my favorite.

MARY. Why didn't you guess it first? You didn't think we'd have the same favorite?

CRICK. Aw, Mary. How about that one?

MARY. Nope.

CRICK. I'm stumped.

MARY. It's that one. The one of flowers.

CRICK. Really?

MARY. Yeah.

CRICK. That's not even a famous one.

MARY. It must be kind of famous. It got picked for a museum.

CRICK. I've never heard of the painter.

MARY. Do you like it?

CRICK. Your one?

MARY. Yeah. Do you think it's pretty?

(He pauses to look at it.)

CRICK. I don't like paintings of flowers. Usually. But I like this one. Yes. I definitely do.

It reminds me of you.

MARY. So your favorite is that one.

CRICK. Yes.

MARY. Huh.

CRICK. What – you don't like it?

MARY. No – it's just that…if I were painting that woman, I would make her arms longer. Her arms look – funny.

CRICK. Honey, it's on purpose. It's modern art. Things don't look the way they really look in life.

MARY. Oh.

CRICK. Now do you like it?

MARY. Is it supposed to be pretty? To make a woman look deformed like that?

CRICK. It's – making a statement.

MARY. My stomach hurts.

CRICK. Do you want me to rub it?

MARY. Not in the museum. People would stare.

CRICK. Do you want to see the Greek art? You might like that better. The women's arms will be the right size.

MARY. That might make me feel better.

CRICK. Or we could head over to contemporary art. You could see my favorite painting in the entire world.

MARY. What's it called?

CRICK. Untitled.

She doubles over in pain.

MARY. Oh!

CRICK. What is it?

MARY. I think I might be having the baby.

Oh!

Crick! Lay me on that bench. Oh!

CRICK. Hold it in, Mary! Hold it in! Oh, honey! Is there a doctor!

15. Mary on the phone at the hospital

MARY. Hi, Mom. It's a girl! Yeah. Just like I thought. When she came out of me Crick yelled: It's a boy! Because he saw the umbilical cord which was sort of big but then the doctor said no, that's the umbilical cord, you have yourself a girl.

So – something weird happened at the hospital. No, nothing like that. I haven't told anyone, okay? So don't act weird about it.

When I was holding the baby – a doctor came in and said to me:

There's something urgent.

We aren't sure if the baby's a boy or a girl.

Hold on. Just listen, Mom.

I said: what? How is that possible?

They said: it's sort of like a boy and a girl too.

There are some implications, they said. We're going to do a little surgery. No need to tell the baby. And then they did a little surgery. Crick got – upset. But the doctors said: everything will be fine.

So I guess it's a girl now. I don't know why they couldn't have left well enough alone.

It's beautiful, Mom. The baby.

(Pause while the mother asks a question.)

Oh, no, we don't have one yet.

I want to call her Blue.

16. A Song

Red sings a song on her guitar.

Mary cradles the baby.

RED.

WHO WILL CRADLE THE MOUSE TO SLEEP?
THE CAT WILL.
WHO WILL CRADLE THE SUN TO SLEEP?
THE MOON WILL.
WHO WILL CRADLE THE MOON TO SLEEP?
THE SKY WILL.
WHO WILL CRADLE THE SKY TO SLEEP?
THE COWBOYS WILL.
OH, WHO WILL CRADLE THE SKY TO SLEEP?
THE COWBOYS WILL.
THE COWBOYS WILL.

A horse walks across the stage.

Red gets on the horse and rides offstage.

A real horse would be nice.

An abstract approximation of the horse will do.

Intermission.

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