

Academy  
by John Mercurio  
Conceived and Developed by Andrew Kato

(Suggested by Faust by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Academy  
A musical

|              |                  |                 |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <u>Cast:</u> | <u>Seniors</u>   | <u>Freshmen</u> |
|              | Michael Fletcher | Benji DuPres    |
|              | Amory DuPres     | Pete Neville    |
|              | Regan O'Reilly   | Theodore Gert   |
|              | Conrad Lansky    |                 |

The action takes place on the campus of St. Edward's Preparatory Academy. The boys remain on stage on risers on the sides of the stage for the duration of the play. When they are in a scene, they step forward and take part; otherwise, they remain on the risers. The set is comprised of whatever desk or chair or bench is necessary to suggest the location.

Song List:

1. *Goodbye, Hello*
2. *There is a Spirit*
3. *Without You*
4. *The Good Life*
5. *Wouldn't Believe It*
6. *Finale: Wouldn't Believe It*
7. *A Little Company*
8. *It Starts*
9. *My Father*
10. *Bells*
11. *Walpurgis Night*
12. *Perfect Day*
13. *"All Right..." Recitative*
14. *I Want to Be a Poet*
15. *Higher*
16. *Fearless*
17. *Finale*

Academy

(Scene One: Benji at home packing; Amory in front of his home waiting for his driver; Michael on a train on his way to school. A small spotlight appears downstage center. Benji steps into it. He holds a suitcase. Music begins.)

BENJI

(Calling to his mother offstage and "upstairs")

Mom! We gotta go! Just think in -

(checking his watch)

- twenty-eight and a half minutes, I'll be on the train to St. Edward's whisked miles away from my boyhood home. From my - *boyhood*. From the sweet way you fold my socks to your buttermilk pancakes all rolled up in a little ball. The socks, not the pancakes.

IT'S TIME

TO START

THIS BRAND NEW CHAPTER ON MY OWN

MY DAYS ARE MINE ALONE NOW

OH GOD

GO BACK

THEY'LL TAKE YOU BACK, IT'S ONLY FAIR

'CAUSE AFTER ALL, IT'S THEIR FAULT

WHO FIXED MY TEETH AND CUT MY HAIR

AND BOUGHT ME FOOD, THESE CLOTHES TO WEAR

JUST TO ONE DAY FORSAKE ME

WHY'D YOU EVEN MAKE ME?

PLEASE WON'T YOU TAKE ME BACK, RELAX

STAY CALM

STAY COOL

I KNOW THERE'LL BE MORE BOYS LIKE ME

WHO'VE NEVER GONE AWAY TO SCHOOL AND THOUGH THERE'S

STUFF I LEAVE BEHIND

THERE'S SO MUCH STUFF I'VE YET TO FIND

IT'S TIME TO TRY, IT'S TIME TO FLY

SO FAR,

SO GOOD,

GOODBYE

AND HELLO, HELLO

MY BRIGHT TOMORROW

WITH YOUR MILLION STARS TO REACH

I NEED YOU NOW

TO SHOW ME HOW SO

GO AHEAD AND TEACH ME

HOW TO BE THE MAN I DREAM TO BE

(Lights down on Benji, up on Amory DuPres. He too has a suitcase, but clearly a more expensive one than Benji's. He stabs out a cigarette.)

AMORY

Hey, Charles, I got a brilliant idea: how about *I* drive to St. Edwards and you can sit in the back? And if you're worried about me handling the Rolls, we can take the junker. We'll take the Bentley.

(To himself)

Just one more year, just one more year.

JUST ONE MORE YEAR,  
JUST ONE MORE YEAR.  
ONE MORE YEAR  
AND THEN ANOTHER FOUR  
THEN THAT'S IT,  
I'LL REAP THE BENEFIT  
AND AT LAST CASH IN ON THE CACHET  
THAT GOES ALONG WITH THE FAM'LY NAME DUPRES  
'CAUSE I KNOW EACH CLASS I SKIP  
EARNS ME JUNIOR PARTNERSHIP  
JUST NEED TO BARELY PASS  
AND WHEN I LEAVE,  
I'LL GO FIRST CLASS  
AU REVOIR AND KISS MY -

(Saying "ass", but drowned out by the sound of a car horn.)

AMORY

AND HELLO, HELLO  
MY BRIGHT TOMORROW

AMORY AND BENJI

WITH YOUR MILLION STARS TO REACH  
I NEED YOU NOW  
TO SHOW ME HOW SO  
GO AHEAD AND TEACH ME

AMORY

HOW TO BE THE MAN THEY SAY TO BE

(Lights out on Amory and Benji, up on Michael. He has a small duffel bag and is riding on the train.)

MICHAEL

(On his cell phone)

Yes, Dad, I'm on the train. What? Hang on.

(Pulling out a pad and writing this down)

"...four hours at a velocity of 150 kilometers per hour; how far is it to the station at St. Edward's?" Got it.

(Makes the sound of interference into the phone)

Dad? Dad, oh shoot, you're breaking up. I'll email you my answer.  
What? Yes, dad, I'll remember to show my work.

(He slams the phone shut.)

THEY KILL ME WITH ATTENTION EVERY DAY  
EVEN WHEN I'M -

(Doing a quick calculation)

345.937 kilometers-

AWAY.

SO IT'S GOODBYE TO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD  
WHOSE SIDEWALKS I HAVE MEMORIZED  
TO MOM AND DAD I LONG AGO OUTGREW  
TO EVER DULLER SKIES THAT HOVER OVERHEAD  
A GIANT IMAX FUTURE LIES IN STORE FOR ME INSTEAD  
TIME TO FLY, TIME I SAID  
GOODBYE.

BENJI

STAY CALM  
STAY COOL  
I KNOW THERE'LL BE  
MORE BOYS LIKE ME  
WHO'VE NEVER GONE  
AWAY TO SCHOOL  
AND THOUGH THERE'S  
STUFF I LEAVE BEHIND  
THERE'S SO MUCH  
I'VE YET TO FIND  
IT'S TIME TO TRY

TIME TO FLY

SO FAR, SO GOOD.  
GOODBYE.

AMORY

I KNOW EACH  
CLASS I SKIP  
EARNS ME  
JUNIOR PARTNERSHIP  
JUST NEED TO BARELY  
PASS AND WHEN  
I LEAVE,  
I'LL GO FIRST CLASS  
  
IT'S TIME TO FLY

GOODBYE.

MICHAEL

GOODBYE TO THE NEIGH-  
BORHOOD WHOSE SIDEWALKS  
I HAVE MEMORIZED  
TO MOM AND DAD I  
LONG AGO OUTGREW  
TO EVER DULLER  
SKIES THAT HOVER  
OVERHEAD  
A GIANT IMAX  
FUTURE LIES IN  
STORE INSTEAD  
TIME TO FLY,  
TIME I SAID

GOODBYE.

(The rest of the boys enter, each with a suitcase or duffel bag.)

(Each boy individually to someone offstage)

REGAN

GOODBYE  
GOODBYE

PETE

GOODBYE

CONRAD

GERT

|              |                |         |         |                    |
|--------------|----------------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE |         |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| <br>         |                |         |         |                    |
| <u>BENJI</u> |                |         |         |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| <br>         |                |         |         |                    |
|              | <u>Michael</u> |         |         |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE |         |                    |
|              | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| <br>         |                |         |         |                    |
| <u>REGAN</u> |                |         |         |                    |
| GOODBYE      | <u>PETE</u>    | GOODBYE | GOODBYE |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        |         | GOODBYE |                    |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE | <u>BENJI/AMORY</u> |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE | GOODBYE            |
| GOODBYE      | GOODBYE        | GOODBYE | GOODBYE | GOODBYE            |

(The boys arrive at the campus of St. Edward's Academy.)

ALL

HELLO, MY BRIGHT TOMORROW  
 WITH YOUR MILLION STARS TO REACH  
 I NEED YOU NOW  
 TO SHOW ME HOW SO  
 GO AHEAD AND TEACH ME

MICHAEL

HOW TO BE THE MAN...  
 I NEED TO BE

AMORY

HOW TO BE THE MAN  
 THEY SAY TO BE

BENJI

HOW TO BE THE MAN

ALL

I DREAM TO BE

(Chapel bells ring. Two terrified freshmen, Pete and Gert stand awkwardly.)

PETE

What's up with the bells?

GERT

Chapel.

PETE

Chapel?

GERT

Every morning.

PETE

Rabbi Goldstein's gonna be thrilled about this.

(Hand outstretched)

I'm Pete.

GERT

Theodore Gert.

(Eyeing Pete's outstretched hand)

Oh, I'd like to shake your hand, really I would, but since I don't know if you'll end up being a social asset or liability, I can only offer you a casual wave, but please know, in spirit, I'm giving you a nice firm hand shake.

PETE

Okay...

(Benji, eager to make friends, rushes over to them.)

BENJI

Hey, guys. I'm new. You new?

PETE

Yup. I'm Pete.

(They shake)

BENJI

Benji.

GERT

I'm Gert.

BENJI

(Sticking his hand out to Gert)

Nice to -

PETE

(Pulling Benji's hand back)

Don't -

(Senior boys - Regan and Conrad enter. Regan has his football, which he is never seen without.)

CONRAD

Seriously? It's a total civil liberty's violation. Dude, the CIA has installed a laser-telescope to scan the brain activity of the citizens of Cleveland.

REGAN

Impossible.

CONRAD

Why's it impossible?

REGAN

If I was going to go to the trouble of scanning a guy's brain, I wouldn't choose someone from Cleveland.

(Michael and Amory enter.)

BENJI

Amory!

AMORY

(Ducking behind Michael to avoid Benji)  
Oh shit...

BENJI

He must not see me.

BENJI

Hi Amory!

AMORY

I swear I don't know that guy.

MICHAEL

He seems to know you.

BENJI

(A little louder and more frantic with the arm waving)  
Amory, it's me!

CONRAD

Hey, hey, you're gonna wet yourself, little guy. Take it easy.

PETE

(To Gert but the others overhear)  
He didn't take it easy on your mom last night.

(Benji, Pete and Gert crack up, high-five. Conrad starts toward them menacingly, Regan close behind.)

CONRAD

Who said that?

(Regan slams his fist into his football. Gert slinks away.)

I'm not going to say it again, who said that?

BENJI

That doesn't make any sense.

CONRAD

What?

BENJI

You said, "I'm not going to say it again" and then went ahead and duplicated your words verbatim.

REGAN

He's got a point.

(Bells ring indicating the start of chapel.)

CONRAD

Shut up, we're gonna be late.

(Regan, Michael, Amory and Conrad exit.)

BENJI

(Once they're gone: To Conrad in his most menacing voice)  
That's right, homey, keep walking.

(To Pete, while wiping his mouth with the back of his hand)  
Oh my gosh, a glob of spit just flew out when I said that. Okay, no biggie! Sometimes that happens. I think we're gonna be best friends.

(He offers Pete the same hand he wiped his mouth with. Thinking better of it, Pete offers his fist for an Obama bump. Benji bumps back.)

PETE

Thanks for having my back.

BENJI

No parents to look out for us, I guess we look out for each other. Man, I wish my dad could have seen this place. I used the past conditional tense because he died a few months ago. It's been tough; mom hasn't gone back to work yet, barely gets off the couch. Just can't muster the will. Too much too soon?

PETE

Maybe a little. But I hear you. My dad's gone too. He and mom split last year.

BENJI

That's awesome.

PETE

*What?*

BENJI

I mean that we have this thing in common. Look at us! Already bonding and shit.

(He takes out his phone and after putting his arm around Pete, snaps a picture of the two of them.)

Well, I think it's going well, don't you? The ancient ritual of sizing up the new guy.

(Bells ring. Pete runs off for chapel. Benji continues talking to Pete, unaware he's long gone.)

The marking of the territory, the sniffing of crotches. Not that I want to sniff your crotch or anything. Pete? Guys?

(Bells ring. Benji, realizing he is late for chapel, runs off to join the others. Segue Scene Three)

(Scene Three: The boys take their place in the chapel. As the boys stand in the pews with hymnal in hand, the hymn "There is a Spirit" begins. Half-way through the hymn, Benji, arriving late, bounds into the scene, and tries to unobtrusively scooch his way down the pew to a vacant seat.)

ALL

THERE IS BUT ONE GOD  
LIFT UP YOUR VOICES  
FATHER TO ALL OF US  
EACH HEART REJOICES

AND THERE IS A SPIRIT  
WHICH RENDERS US WHOLE  
IT'S NOT DENIED ANYONE  
IT LINKS US UP  
SOUL TO SOUL  
SPIRIT TO SPIRIT  
BODY TO BODY AND  
HEART TO HEART  
HAND TO HAND TO HAND TO HAND TO HAND TO HAND

(During the following, we intercut between the hymn and the boys' inner thoughts.)

BENJI

PLEASE MOMMY TAKE ME HOME  
SINCE I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE PAGE.  
JUST SMILE AND MOVE YOUR MOUTH AND MAYBE THEY WON'T NOTICE

OTHERS

THERE IS A SPIRIT AND YOU'RE ALWAYS NEAR IT  
IT'S HONORED IN ALL OF US  
LISTEN, YOU'LL HEAR IT

PETE

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE

GERT

THIS UNIFORM'S TOO SMALL

PETE

I CAN'T BELIEVE I MADE IT IN

GERT

IT CLEARLY DOESN'T FIT ME

PETE

I REALLY GOTTA PEE

GERT  
JUST GRIN AND SUCK IT IN

PETE  
THIS HYMN HAS SEVEN VERSES!

GERT  
I SHOULD HAVE NEVER HAD ALL THAT CHEESE

PETE  
AT LEAST I'M NOT BALDING -

GERT  
OH SHIT, NOW A BUTTON JUST POPPED.

BENJI  
(Through feigned smile)  
MY JAW IS ACHING

PETE  
MY LEG KEEPS SHAKING

REGAN  
LOOKING AROUND AT THIS  
OCEAN OF FACES

PETE AND MICHAEL  
WE'RE ALL DRESSED THE SAME  
AND WE'RE HIDING ALL-

CONRAD  
TRACES OF WHAT MAKES US DIFF'RENT

FRESHMEN  
MUSN'T RISK BEING DIFFREN'T  
OR THEY'LL THINK YOU'RE  
WEAK EVEN WORSE, THINK YOU'RE  
STRANGE  
THEY THINK I'M WAY TOO-

PETE  
LOUD

GERT  
FAT

MICHAEL  
SMART

THE OTHERS  
SPIRIT IS CUT  
FROM AN

INFINITE WHOLE

IT'S NOT DENIED

ANYONE-IT

LINKS US UP

SOUL TO

SOUL  
SPIRIT TO SPIRIT

THE OTHERS  
BODY TO BODY  
AND HEART TO HEART

HAND TO HAND TO

HAND TO HAND TO  
HAND TO HAND

THERE IS A SPIRIT...

BURNS LIKE AN

THE OTHERS  
EMBER, etc.

DUMB REGAN

THEY KNOW THAT I CAN'T SEE CONRAD

SWIM, BENJI

DANCE PETE

FIGHT GERT

EVEN GET TO FIRST BASE SENIORS

HOLD MY LIQUOR AMORY

SLEEP WITHOUT MY NINJA TURTLE NIGHT LIGHT GERT

UPPERCLASSMEN (MICHAEL, CONRAD, AMORY, REGAN)  
IT'S THE SAME EV'RY YEAR  
WHEN NEW FACES APPEAR  
AND BEGIN ANALYZING YOU  
SIZING YOU UP

WHO'S THE BOY TO DESTROY? REGAN

WHO'S THE ONE TO BEFRIEND? MICHAEL

WHO'S THE GUY TO IGNORE OR ADMIRE FROM A FAR? CONRAD

AND WE'RE CLUELESS OURSELVES WHO WE ARE. AMORY

|                                        |                         |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| BENJI                                  | OTHERS                  |
| PLEASE GOD DON'T LET THEM FIND OUT     | Mm, mm, mm. Mm, mm, mm. |
| THAT NICKNAME THEY CALLED ME BACK HOME | Mm, mm, mm. Mm, mm, mm. |

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| PETE               | OTHERS      |
| MY HICCUPS STARTED | Mm, mm, mm. |

GERT  
I THINK I FARTED

OTHERS  
Mm, mm, mm.

REGAN  
THEY'VE FIGURED OUT THAT I'M —  
ON RITALIN

CHORUS  
(Mm...)

CONRAD  
I WAS BORN WITHOUT EYEBROWS

OTHERS  
Mm, mm, mm.

GERT  
MOM'S DATING A WAITRESS

OTHERS  
Ah, ah, ah. Ah, ah, ah.

PETE  
I'M OCD

OTHERS  
Ah, ah, ah. Ah, ah, ah.

BENJI  
I'M HOT FOR DORIS DAY.

OTHERS

Ah.

MICHAEL

I SECRETLY CROCHET

REGAN

I LIKE TO DANCE BALLET

CONRAD

DAD WEARS A NEGLIGEE

CHORUS

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M --

GERT  
- FAT

OTHERS  
THERE

PETE  
THE TEACHER'S PET

IS A

CONRAD  
BLIND AS A BAT

SPIRIT

AMORY  
I NEED A CIGARETTE

BURNS LIKE AN EMBER

REGAN  
THEY THINK I'M SLOW

THERE

BENJI  
A PILE OF NERVES

IS A SPIRIT

MICHAEL  
MY EARS HANG LOW

ALWAYS

GERT  
MY PENIS CURVES.

OTHERS  
REMEMBER

BENJI  
I'M SURE BY NOW THEY KNOW MY NICKNAME  
WHAT THEY USED TO CALL ME.  
NO — HOW COULD THEY EVER KNOW?  
SO PUT IT OUT OF MIND —  
YOUR SECRETS SAFE, FREE FROM THE PAST  
A FRESH NEW START —  
AT LAST, AT LAST —

AH

AH

AH

AH

(Suddenly leaping to his feet.)

Okay! All right go ahead and say it,  
"Benji Buhjina!  
Benji Buhjina!"  
Ha! Ha! Feel better now?

(They all turn and look at him and turn back.)

OH GOD, COME TAKE ME NOW

ALL OTHERS

THANK GOD I'M NOT THAT GUY  
IN FACT I'M FEELING BETTER NOW  
'CAUSE ONCE YOU REALIZE THAT  
EVERYBODY TRIES TO  
DESP'RATELY DISGUISE  
SOME THING THEY DON'T WANT KNOWN  
YOU DON'T FEEL SO ALONE  
IN FACT I'M FEELING FINE

ALL

THERE IS A SPIRIT  
IT BURNS LIKE AN EMBER  
IT'S HONORED IN ALL OF US  
ALWAYS REMEMBER

THERE IS A SPIRIT  
A SOFT INCANDESCENCE  
IT'S HONORED IN ALL OF US  
PART OF OUR ESSENCE

AMORY

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE

REGAN AND CONRAD

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE

GERT AND BENJI

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE.

MICHAEL AND PETE

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE

GERT AND BENJI

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE, I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE,  
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE, I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE.

AMORY

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE, I CAN'T BELIEVE.  
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE.

REGAN AND CONRAD

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT, HERE WE GO AGAIN.

MICHAEL AND PETE

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.  
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HERE.

(On the button, the boys close their hymnals. On the exit music, they  
file out in neat rows. Segue Scene Four)

(Scene Four: Student Book store. Several tables on which piles of book are arranged. There are signs on the tables indicating which classes/sections: "American History 112" "French 201", etc. The boys refer to a class schedule as they navigate the piles of text books and pick the right ones. Only Michael and Amory are smart enough to have enlisted a freshman -Gert- to do their heavy lifting for them. During the following, Michael simply picks up the book and places it on top of the already substantial pile of books Gert carries. Benji rushes in after everyone else.)

MICHAEL

(Reading off the title)  
Integrative Calculus.

AMORY

Nah.

MICHAEL

American History.

AMORY

Didn't I take that already?

MICHAEL

Mhm. Twice.

(Amory takes the book from Michael and hands it to Gert, who is beginning to tremble under the weight.)

BENJI

(Waving vigorously at him)  
Hey, Amory! 'Sup?

AMORY

(Stopping Benji's manic arm-waving; looking around to see who's watching)  
Dude, every guy here is dying to be the one who comes up with your new nickname and you're giving them so much material to work with.

BENJI

Thanks.

AMORY

So how'd you do it?

BENJI

Do what?

AMORY

Get my dad to rescue you from that depressing middle school in New Paltz - (Montessori Middle School in New Paltz)

BENJI

I didn't. It was his idea.

AMORY

What?

BENJI

There's no way in hell my mom could swing the tuition here.

AMORY

My dad's footing the bill?

BENJI

Real class act. He arranged everything. Listen, I better go pop the other half of my pink pill.

(Benji turns away from Amory. Amory rejoins Michael)

AMORY

(To Michael)

That kid is so far out of his league.

MICHAEL

(Picking up another book and handing it to Amory.)

*Faust.*

AMORY

(Taking the book)

He shouldn't be here.

MICHAEL

Oh, wait that's for Drama Club.

AMORY

Hang on a second.

(Stopping him from taking the book back. Getting an idea as he flips through the book)

"Even a good man as he gropes for light, invariably strays from his true course."

MICHAEL

You can memorize that but nothing about the Monroe Doctrine.

AMORY

You know, in *Faust*, the devil believes man is inherently corruptible. Essentially, a dude would whack another dude to ace Trig.

MICHAEL

Exploring the classics with Amory DuPres.

AMORY

Look around: Any guy here would do anything to survive St. Edward's.  
Especially a freshman.

GERT

(His face appearing from behind the books)  
Freshman? Why, why especially a freshman?

MICHAEL

The Curse.

GERT

(From behind the pile of books)  
The Curse? That can't be good.

MICHAEL

Every year three freshmen with the lowest GPA are dismissed from St.  
Edward's.

AMORY

Back to New Paltz middle school.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well, we managed to survive without breaking a bunch of rules.

(Michael points Gert toward the cash register off stage. Gert exits  
with his armful of books.)

AMORY

(Referring to the Faust book)  
Maybe we should have. It paid off for Faust.

MICHAEL

Dude lost his soul.

AMORY

And got everything his heart desired.

MICHAEL

No success is worth that.

AMORY

You sure about that?

MICHAEL

Whatever. There's no way to settle this.

AMORY

Maybe there is.

(Considering Benji who is in the shadows behind them choosing his books.)

The same way God and the Devil did with Faust. With a wager -

MICHAEL

(Taking just the calculus book with him and turning to go.)

This has been a lot of fun, but I gotta get a jump on my Calculus. Somewhere there's a rubber ball bouncing in an elevator that needs its velocity calculated.

AMORY

Relax, you have like a three-five average.

MICHAEL

Not good enough for Stanford.

AMORY

Your dad still on your case about that?

MICHAEL

He says throughout history, all the really significant minds have gone to Stanford; apparently Jesus Christ majored in carpentry there.

AMORY

Then that's what you'll get if you win.

MICHAEL

What?

AMORY

Take my bet and if you win, I guarantee you Stanford next year.

MICHAEL

No way you can do that.

AMORY

Unless my father was recently appointed to the Stanford Admission Committee.

MICHAEL

So say more about this wager.

AMORY

If I walk up to any freshman here and guarantee he won't end up in the bottom three, I bet he'll do whatever I say.

MICHAEL

*Whatever you say? Even lie, cheat and steal.*

AMORY

The three basic food groups.

MICHAEL

No. He'll do the right thing, even if he ends up failing.

AMORY

So you act all God-like and mentor him and I'll, you know, corrupt him.

MICHAEL

How do you plan on doing that?

AMORY

Make his situation so desperate, he'll grab whatever rope he's thrown.

(He offers his hand for Michael to shake. Michael is about to accept, then withdraws his hand.)

Come on, it's our senior year. We're young, we're smart, I'm attractive. Let's enjoy the ride.

(Without giving himself time to change his mind, Michael grabs Amory's hand and they shake on it.)

MICHAEL

So who's our subject?

(Benji rushes in frantically batting at his backpack.)

BENJI

Help! A ladybug flew into my backpack! Get it out! Get it out!

(Amory gives a little laugh, pats Michael on the back and exits. Regan who has been at one of the tables of books conferring with Conrad comes over to Benji. He has an envelope in his hand.)

REGAN

Hey, Benji. The guys got together and discussed it and, well, we want you to have this.

(He hands him an envelope)

Welcome to St. Edward's, buddy.

BENJI

Wow, I'm touched. Thanks, O'Reilly!

(They all exit. Michael hangs back.)

MICHAEL

I wouldn't thank him if I were you. It's called the Greyhound gift. Every year they give it to the new kid who's gonna need it the most.

BENJI

And they thought of me.

MICHAEL

You dumb ass, it means they think you'll end up with the Curse. One of the bottom three. It's a bus ticket home.

(Michael leaves, Amory following him. Benji slowly opens the envelope. Indeed, it is a bus ticket. He bravely stuffs the ticket back in the envelope and shoves it in his back pocket.)

BENJI

(Trying to be brave)

Okay, thanks. I like your tie. Follow me on...

(Turning front; with diminishing enthusiasm:)  
twitter...

(As Benji walks, the scene transitions. Scene Five: The Quad.)

BENJI

GREAT, THEY THINK I'M A FREAK  
NOW THAT MUCH SEEMS CLEAR  
THEY FOUND THEIR FIRST GEEK  
TO BEAT UP THIS YEAR.  
HELLO, HELLO, MY BRIGHT TOMORROW -

I PACKED MY CLOTHES  
GOT ON THE TRAIN  
I KNEW WHICH STOP WAS MINE  
WITHOUT YOU

I FOUND MY DORM  
I TIED THIS TIE  
YOU SEE I'M DOING FINE  
WITHOUT YOU,  
WITHOUT YOU, DAD

MY LIFE IS A BIG SUCCESS  
EVEN WITHOUT YOU  
HELL, EVERYTHING IS A MESS  
I'M LOST WITHOUT YOU

SO I PACKED THE WRONG CLOTHES  
AND I TOOK THE WRONG TRAIN  
OKAY, I MISSED MY STOP  
WITHOUT YOU

CAN'T FIND MY DORM  
LOOK AT THIS TIE  
AND NO ONE SEEMS TO CARE  
NOT SURE THAT I DO  
WITHOUT YOU

AND WHATEVER I DO FROM NOW ON,  
I DO WITHOUT YOU  
HAVE TO FACE FACTS, YOU'RE GONE  
I COULD SCREAM, NOBODY'S HEARING  
NOBODY'S STEERING  
AM I DISAPPEARING?

I'LL FIND MY DORM  
I WILL GO UNPACK  
TRY TO ENJOY THE RIDE  
TAKE TIME TO FIND MY STRIDE  
THOUGH I'M DYING INSIDE  
WITHOUT YOU.

(Benji, determined to find his dorm, starts off of right, then  
changes his mind and turns and walks off right as the lights fade.)

(Scene Six: Fingal's Cave, the basement of the boys' dorm. This is their private sanctuary that the administration may know about but allows them to have as their secret place to blow off steam. Signals given across stage from one stakeout point to another. Flashlights switch on and off. The boys are seated around a card table playing blackjack; a few beer bottles are on the table. Amory is dealing.)

AMORY

Ante up.

REGAN

(Anteing up)

Two.

CONRAD

(Anteing up)

Three.

CONRAD

I'm just saying the administration seems hell-bent we take either Mandarin or Arabic. It's like, could they be any more obvious?

(At best, he gets two blank looks from his friends.)

Turning us into their private multilingual army programmed to attain global capitalism. Somebody needs to speak up. Let them know exploiting us for their own geo-political ambitions is so not cool.

REGAN

(playful snark)

Now I remember what I forgot to do today.

CONRAD

What?

REGAN

I forgot to tell the administration to stop exploiting me for their geo-political ambitions.

CONRAD

Dude that attitude is part of the problem.

REGAN

I swear to God, Conrad, I'm just trying to win one hand. Now, do you have any eights?

AMORY

You do know we're playing blackjack.

CONRAD

There's a fight going on, Regan, and most people don't show up for it.

REGAN

I can't get involved. Too risky for my foot.

CONRAD

Your foot?

REGAN

Coach made me field goal kicker. What if I show up at some march or protest and some moron trips me? Bam! There goes my scholarship.

CONRAD

Doers and watchers, Regan. Doers and watchers.

Amory clears the cards.)

AMORY

Ante up.

REGAN

Three.

CONRAD

Two.

AMORY

Hang on. Let's make it interesting. What if the winnings for this next bet wasn't cash, but instead you win your heart's desire?

CONRAD

Yeah, right.

REGAN

Go fish.

AMORY

Theoretically, if I could offer you -  
(To Regan)

A contract with the Broncos. And you -  
(To Conrad)

I don't know - corporate America pledging to deploy green technology to reach net-zero carbon emission.

CONRAD

(Gasping)

Don't even joke.

REGAN

What's the ante?

AMORY

Your soul.

(They snicker)

Humor me.

CONRAD

Seriously? My soul? The core of my humanity? No way I could live myself. The self-loathing, the shame of it all.

REGAN

(beat)

You said the Broncos, right?

(There is a knock on the door. The boys rush around to hide cigarettes, glasses, magazines. Amory opens the door; it's Benji.)

AMORY

Benji, welcome to "Fingal's Cave." Guys, this is Benji DuPres.

(Noticing the confused expressions.)

He's my cousin.

REGAN

Hah! I knew it! I immediately noticed your similar cheek bones and the taper of your hips.

AMORY

Benji's father and my father are brothers.

BENJI

Were brothers. God, I miss him. Don't you miss him?

AMORY

Sure I do. But you have to figure out how to get through this without him. Make him proud.

BENJI

That's the plan.

AMORY

Honor his memory.

BENJI

You said it.

AMORY

His legacy.

BENJI

(Beat)

Amory, I'm freaking out. I don't know what hell I'm doing here. I haven't eaten all day.

AMORY

Relax, it's just nerves.

BENJI

No, I can't find the cafeteria.

AMORY

(Handing him a sheet of paper)  
Here.

BENJI

What's this?

AMORY

This place is a war zone, Benji. And this - is your battle plan.

BENJI

(Reading)  
Trig with Professor Grey. American History with Hobart.

AMORY

And you see I've signed you up for sports and extra-curricular -

BENJI

Extra? I'm just hoping to deal with the regular amount of curricular.

AMORY

Football. And Drama club's doing Faust this semester. Having the lead will look great on your transcript.

REGAN

(Pulling Amory aside)  
Hobart, seriously? You know what a hard-nosed SOB he is.

CONRAD

And Drama club, and football? You got a death wish for the little guy?

AMORY

(Pushing them aside, back to Benji)  
Benji, listen up: It's vital that you, in particular, succeed here.

BENJI

What? Why?

AMORY

Because you feel bad your father never got to see you shine. That he died before you ever amounted to anything.

BENJI

Dad said he'd love me no matter what I accomplished.

AMORY

Yeah, all dad's say that, but it isn't true. It's every son's duty to climb higher, shine brighter than his father. We owe them that much, don't you think?

BENJI

I guess...

AMORY

I can guarantee you the kind of success your dad always dreamed for you. But you have to do exactly as I say.

(Music begins)

BENJI

If I do, you promise I won't end up one of the bottom three freshmen who goes home?

AMORY

Oh, Benji. That and so much more. I can get you closer to the Holy Grail every guy here dreams of:

(With quiet awe)

Your first-choice college. Harvard.

CONRAD

(On his knees praying)

Please oh, please Princeton.

REGAN

Parson's School of Fashion Design.

(They all look at Benji. Finally he has the courage to answer.)

BENJI

Dartmouth.

AMORY

THE GOOD LIFE  
WITH GOOD MEN AROUND YOU  
(YOU'RE WELL-RESPECTED)

WHERE MOGULS AND MAGNATES SURROUND YOU  
(YOU'RE WELL-CONNECTED)

THE VIEW FROM UP HERE WILL ASTOUND YOU  
TO START WITH  
THERE'S DARTMOUTH  
IN THE GOOD LIFE

CONRAD AND REGAN

GOOD LIFE  
GOOD LIFE

AMORY AND REGAN

THE GOOD LIFE  
YOU'RE FEARLESS AND THRIVING

CONRAD

(YOUR REPUTATION SPREADS)

AMORY AND REGAN

WHOA! STEP BACK,  
YOUR LIMO'S ARRIVING

CONRAD

(AND YOU'RE OFF YOUR MEDS)

AMORY

(Referring to Conrad)  
AND HE'S THERE TO DO ALL THE DRIVING  
BE THE LOAFER  
WITH A CHAUFFER  
IN THE GOOD LIFE

ALL (except BENJI)

STICK TO THE PLAN  
MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO  
AND OPPORTUNITY WILL KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR  
BUT IF YOU SHOULD FAIL,  
THE ONLY YALE YOU'LL KNOW'LL  
WILL BE A SHINY DEADBOLT LOCK ON YOUR DOOR

AMORY

EVERMORE  
EVERMORE  
(Taking Benji downstage, very chummy)

REGAN AND CONRAD

DON'T WANDER FAR OFF THE TRACK  
YOU MAY NOT EVER COME BACK  
DON'T DEVIATE FROM THE PLAN

AMORY

It sure would break his heart  
if you ended up on the bottom  
of the pile.  
Or God forbid, worse.

REGAN AND CONRAD

THEY'LL SEE YOU  
IT'S BEST TO HIDE WHAT  
OR ELSE SOMEBODY MIGHT HEAR  
STICK TO THE CODE  
EV'RY TIME  
THEY'RE WATCHING

Worse?

BENJI

End up like Thomas Campion.

AMORY

Who's that?

BENJI

Fifty years ago, Thomas went off his nut and jumped from Lattimore.

AMORY

The library?

BENJI

The bell tower on top of the library.

AMORY

Did he have a lot of overdue fines?

BENJI

The curse, Benji. Tommy found out he was one of the bottom three. So if you feel yourself slipping, you start creeping close to the edge, you come see me.

AMORY

THE GOOD LIFE  
THE COMFORT AND EASE THERE

IT'S ALL CEOS  
VIPS THERE

REGAN AND CONRAD

DON'T WANDER FAR  
OFF THE TRACK, YOU  
MAY NOT EVER COME BACK  
DON'T DEVIATE FROM THE PLAN  
THEY'LL SEE YOU.  
IT'S BEST TO HIDE WHAT  
YOU FEAR. OR ELSE SOME-  
BODY MIGHT HERE. STICK TO THE  
CODE EV'RY TIME. THEY'RE WATCHING.

ALL BOYS (except Benji)

SO TAKE STOCK -  
TO MAKE STOCK—THAT SOARS SKY HIGH

ALL

JUST DO LIKE—

AMORY

WE'VE TOLD YOU

ALL

AND WE—

WILL MOLD YOU AMORY

THEN WE'LL- ALL

EMBOLD YOU AMORY

NOW WE HAVE SOLD YOU ON THE GOOD LIFE! ALL

(Blackout)

(Scene Seven: Various locations at St. Edward's Academy. Bells ring. Music starts. Pete and Benji with bookbags and clutching class schedules. During the following montage, we see Benji struggling with classes and extra-curricular.)

PETE

Let's go, DuPres. We can't be late our first day. We got five minutes to get to Claremont Auditorium.

BENJI

We got five minutes to find Claremont Auditorium.

PETE

Then Chem, PE; two o'clock, Drama club auditions-

BENJI

I'm trying out for Faust. Amory says having the lead will look good on my transcript.

PETE

Plus football? And Hobart for American History? Pretty ambitious.

BENJI

Yeah, well Amory says...

PETE

Amory says, Amory says.

(Bells ring)

BENJI

Come on, we're gonna be late.

(During the following, they search for the right classroom.)

BENJI

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT  
YOU COULDN'T CONCEIVE IT

PETE

EVERY SIGHT AND SOUND AROUND HERE  
EVERYTHING IS LEATHER-BOUND HERE

BENJI

JUST WALKING TO CLASS NOW

PETE

THREE RENOIRS I PASS NOW

BOTH  
STAIRS OF OAK AND CHAIRS OF SATIN  
BOYS WHO ONLY SWEAR IN LATIN

(Regan and Conrad cross and bump into each other.)

CONRAD  
Caesari futatrix!

REGAN  
Cum Cunno et verpus.

PETE  
AUTHORS WITH NAMES LIKE  
DUMAS FILS AND PERE

BENJI  
SAPPHO, AND SAKI AND CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

PETE  
THIS ONE GUY NAMED BALZAC  
No, seriously, Ballsack!

BENJI AND PETE  
THERE'S FRENCH CLASS AND FOOTBALL EACH DAY

PETE  
MAYBE FAUST IN THE DRAMA CLUB PLAY

BOTH  
CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

(During this montage, we see Benji overwhelmed by his studies and how Amory keeps pushing him too hard. Bells ring. The boys take their place for French class. Almost like soldiers they go from one class to another, very regimented always moving in straight lines, cutting sharp angles. We see Amory with his arm around Benji, leading him from class to class, influencing his daily "progress".)

CONRAD (as Student teacher)  
"LE VOYAGE" DE CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

BENJI AND PETE AND GERT  
LE VOYAGE

CONRAD AND ALL  
POUR L'ENFANT AMOUREUX DE CARTES ET D'ESTAMPES

ALL  
L'UNIVERS EST EGAL A SON VASTE APPETIT!

AH! QUE LE MONDE EST GRAND A LA CARTE DES LAMPES!  
AUX YEUX DU SOUVENIR QUE LE MONDE EST PETIT.

(Bells ring. The boys pack up and leave the classroom and gather for football practice. Benji rushes to join them. Regan acts as student coach, while the other boys listen attentively. All along, Benji tries to take notes in his planner.)

REGAN

HUDDLE UP, LISTEN UP

NEW PLAY

Z-TWENTY.

Q.B. SENDS OPEN ENDS

DOWN AND OUT FOR

DEFENSE RUSHES

GUARD CRUSHES

TIGHT END RETREAT

Q.B. STEPS BACK FOR THE PASS

GUARDS FAN OUT TO PROTECT

ALL (minus Benji)

HUDDLE UP

READY

FOR A SWEEP

GUARDS FAN OUT TO PROTECT

(Amory appears and whispers to Regan to throw the ball to Benji. Regan does; Benji catches it.)

REGAN

Get him!

(The boys charge at Benji and topple him.)

BENJI

Augh!

(Bells ring. As the boys pack up and leave the classroom and gather for *Faust* auditions, Benji, utterly winded, limps to auditions. Pete and Gert are already there holding scripts.)

PETE

Finally!

(Hands him a script)

Here. Read Faust. I'm the devil.

GERT

And naturally, I'm God.

PETE

Geez, what happened to you?

BENJI

I think I cracked by tibia.

GERT

Oh my god, is that blood?

BENJI

Maybe a little. Go ahead with the -

GERT

(Reading as God)

No matter what dark path you drag him down, I wager a good man like Faust will stay true to his course.

PETE (Devil)

That is a wager you will soon lose.

(to Benji as Faust)

YOU MUST LEARN TO PROFIT FROM YOUR OPPORTUNITIES.

BENJI (Faust)

(Reading from the script)

I NEVER COULD ADAPT TO PEOPLE.

PETE (Devil)

I CAN HELP

GERT (Lord)

YOU'LL SEE, HE'LL KEEP HIS FAITH WITH ME.

BENJI (Faust)

I CANNOT GO ON AS I'VE BEEN

PETE (Devil)

SIGN

GERT (Lord)

HE'LL KEEP HIS FAITH

PETE (Devil)

SIGN!

(Benji pretends to sign the contract)

AH! TO FORTUNES SWEET!

(Bells ring. From either side of the stage, Amory keeps close tabs on Benji's progress. During the following, boys continue cross from different directions and weave through each other, always engrossed in their book in hand - cramming, pushing themselves.)

BENJI

WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE PRESSURE  
EVEN SEARCHING THE STACKS HERE TAKES SKILL  
THOUGH IT'S PAINFULLY CLEAR,

I DON'T FIT IN HERE

I SWEAR I CAN DO THIS  
THOUGH I SURE DON'T DESERVE IT  
I VOW I'LL GET THROUGH THIS  
IF THE TEST'S ON A CURVE I CAN PASS THIS CLASS STILL.  
DAD BELIEVED I COULD DO THIS  
SO I WILL.  
BELIEVE IT.

PETE

How was class with Hobart?

BENJI

I think I had one good moment. He asked me where the Declaration of Independence was signed. I said at the bottom.

PETE

We gotta hurry. That bell means first quarter exams are about to start!

GERT

Sounds just like the "You're-gonna-die-bitter-and-alone" bell.

BENJI, PETE AND GERT

(Cramming as they rush to class)

CERVANTES, DANTE, BRONTE AND KANT  
JOHN LOCKE, ERNST BLOCH, BARTOK, AND BACH.

PETE and GERT

MURIEL SPARKS, ANTI-QUARKS  
KARL MARX  
FANTASIESTUCKE,  
KABUKI, GLUCK

BENJI

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT

(Now they stand in a line behind Benji who stands in front of them. The three recitations combine in a rhythmic counterpoint with Benji singing on top of it.)

| <u>BENJI, PETE, GERT</u> | <u>FRENCH (CONRAD)</u> | <u>FOOTBALL (REGAN)</u> | <u>FAUST</u>        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| YOU WOULDN'T             | POUR L'ENFANT          | HUDDLE UP, HUDDLE UP,   | YOU MUST LEARN TO   |
| BELIEVE IT               | AMOUREUX               | NEW PLAY                | PROFIT FROM YOUR    |
| YOU COULDN'T             | L'UNIVERS              | READY?                  | OPPORTUNITIES.      |
| CONCEIVE IT              | EST EGAL A SON VASTE   | DEFENSE RUSHES,         | I NEVER COULD ADAPT |
| ONLY ONE WAY TO          | APPETIT                | TIGHT END RETREAT       | TO PEOPLE. I CAN    |
| ACHIEVE.                 | AH! QUE LE MONDE EST   | QB STEPS BACK           | HELP. ONLY SIGN.    |
| NEVER LET UP NO          | GRAND A LA CARTE       | POW!                    | HE'LL KEEP HIS      |
| REPRIEVE                 | DES LAMPES!            | THE PASS IS             | FAITH WITH ME.      |
| BETTER BELIEVE IT!       | AUX YEUX DU            | COMPLETE!               | SIGN!               |
| THOUGH YOU'RE            | SOUVNIR QUE            | PASS COMPLETE!          | HE'LL KEEP          |
| FREAKED AND              | LE MONDE EST PETIT     |                         | HIS FAITH.          |
| TERRIFIED                |                        |                         | SIGN!               |

ALL

FAKE IT, KEEP THAT SHIT INSIDE  
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!

(During the last measures of the song, the boys one by one, receive their quarterly reports. Pete, Gert and Benji line up and hold their reports to their chests, hopeful. Button. Immediately after applause, they open their reports to learn their fate.)

PETE

Three six. Yes!

GERT

Three seven five!

GERT

What about you?

PETE

Benji?

BENJI

(Lying)  
...Three eight.

PETE

Whoa!

(Gert bows to him in an exaggerated display of respect. Bit about being ready to commit and finally shake Benji's hand.)

GERT

I knew it! I told you he was just pretending to be dangerously stupid.

BENJI

Hey, I'll catch you guys later. I gotta find someone.

(Michael, who has been watching this scene unfold, follows Benji, who is clearly looking for a particular building. Segue Scene Eight.)

(Scene Eight: Outside in the Quad.)

MICHAEL

Hey, you're going the wrong way. Freshman Seminar is in the main building just past the gym.

BENJI

Fingal's Cave. It's the basement of one of the senior dorms, right?

MICHAEL

You're going to see Amory.

BENJI

I know it's through the quad, but then is it left or right?

MICHAEL

(Desperately trying to stop him)

Don't do it.

BENJI

I'm going to ask my cousin for a little advice, is that a crime?

MICHAEL

With Amory, it usually leads to one.

BENJI

Look at me. I'm literally trailing blood. Clearly I need help. Excuse me.

MICHAEL

(Trying to stop him from leaving)

Hey—! Did I ever tell you what happened to me freshman year?

BENJI

This is only the second time we've spoken so, not surprisingly, no.

MICHAEL

(Hesitant at first)

The Greyhound Gift? My freshman year, guess who the lucky recipient was?

BENJI

No way.

(Amazed)

Wow, what a total loser.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I was a complete freak just like you. So I get it.

BENJI

You know, when I was a kid, my dad started me collecting precious stones: you know, amethyst, jade, topaz, that sort of thing. Every year for my birthday, he gives me a new one. Well, next month's my birthday; and it hit me today that now that dad's gone, my collection won't ever get any bigger than it is right now. Look, I know I'm nothing special. I'm not cool. Not charismatic. I'm not Amory. But dad thought I was this amazing kid. And now that he's gone, I don't know what to think.

MICHAEL

You're unbelievable...

BENJI

Now what'd I do?

MICHAEL

Nothing, it's just most guys don't admit that sort of stuff out loud.

(referring to Benji's tie)

Gimme that thing.

(Benji hands him his tie. During the following, Michael puts the tie on and ties it properly. Hesitant to reveal this at first:)

For my tenth birthday, my dad gave me his old Stanford sweatshirt. He's been waiting my whole life for me to grow into it.

BENJI

Dad and me, we were a team. Any decision I had to make, every tough call, he was my go-to guy, you know? I just - I can't. I don't know how to do this alone.

MICHAEL

(Trying to stem Benji's voluble flow of emotion)

Okay, okay, Benji, first of all, it's only been a month. Give yourself a little time to find your way.

BENJI

What's the second of all?

MICHAEL

What?

BENJI

You said "first of all" that implies a "second of all"?

MICHAEL

I got your back.

BENJI

What?

MICHAEL

I'll meet with you before class, I'll stay late at the library. I can get you through this - without resorting to Amory's more extreme alternatives.

BENJI

So tell me, do you know where they signed the Declaration of Independence?

MICHAEL

At the Second Continental Congress, Independence Hall. (OR: Oh! You heard about that? Apparently, some loser freshman answered "at the bottom!" What a tool!)

BENJI

I don't get it; a guy like you, a senior - why help me?

MICHAEL

This bank manager guy can't sleep. Keeps having these dreams. So he goes to a shrink. "Doc," he tells him, "I'm so swamped with work at the bank, I've started dreaming I'm one of the deals I'm putting together. I dream I'm a mortgage, the next night, I dream I'm an IRA. Mortgage, IRA, back and forth. Am I going crazy?" "Relax," the doctor says, "I promise, you're not a loan." Get it? A loan?

BENJI

(Beat)

Technically, an IRA isn't a loan -

MICHAEL

(Overlapping)

Yeah, I know but that's not the point -

- it's more of a -

Okay, but I'm trying to tell you -

Maybe a T-note or promissory note would have been better.

MICHAEL

(Cutting him off)

Amory's at Fingal's right now. Through the quad, second building on your left. Me, I'll be on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the stacks. Your call.

(Michael starts to leave)

BENJI

Seriously, Michael - why are you helping me?

MICHAEL

Like the shrink said. I promise, you're not alone.

(Michael exits. Benji starts off toward Fingal's; then stops himself and considers it.)

BENJI

IT'S A QUIET ROAD  
THAT I WALK EACH DAY  
NOT MUCH CONVERSATION  
DON'T HAVE MUCH TO SAY  
IT'S THE ONLY ROAD  
THAT I'VE EVER KNOWN  
AND FOR ALL THESE YEARS  
I HAVE ALWAYS WALKED  
DOWN THIS ROAD ALONE  
ALL ALONE

IT'S A LONELY ROAD  
BUT I'LL NOT COMPLAIN  
I HAVE SEEN THE SUNSET  
I HAVE SMELLED THE RAIN  
SUCH A LOVELY ROAD  
BUT IT'S ALSO TRUE  
THAT I FIND MYSELF EVERY NOW AND THEN  
SOMEONE ELSE FELT THE WORD/SAW  
THE WAY I DO

IS THAT SOMEONE YOU?  
HAS MY WISH BEEN HEARD?  
WERE YOU LISTENING?  
WITHOUT JUDGING EV'RY WORD

TELL ME, COULD IT BE?  
THAT YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME  
HOPING TO FIND A LITTLE COMPANY

(Michael is revealed in a separate space apart from Benji. He pulls his Stanford sweatshirt out of his bookbag.)

MICHAEL

I HAVE MOTHER'S EYES  
I HAVE FATHER'S NAME  
I'VE A FAMILY PHOTO  
IN A GUILDED FRAME

WOMEN ALL IN WHITE  
MEN IN BLACK AND GREY  
THOUGH I SEE MYSELF  
STANDING NEXT TO DAD  
I FEEL MILES AWAY  
MILES AWAY

MICHAEL

I HAVE LOTS OF FRIENDS  
AND WE'RE CLOSE, I GUESS  
BUT EACH DAY IT SEEMS THEY  
KNOW ME LESS AND LESS

BUT THAT ALL JUST CHANGED  
WHEN YOU LET ME KNOW  
THAT YOU'RE TERRIFIED  
AND A MESS INSIDE  
HOW I FEEL ALL THE TIME  
BUT NEVER SHOW

BOTH

NOW I'M TEN FEET TALL  
HIGH ABOVE THE CROWD  
WHERE IT FEELS OKAY  
JUST TO SAY WHAT'S NOT ALLOWED  
AND FOR ONCE TO TELL  
THAT I'M SCARED AS HELL  
A STRANGE PEACE OF MIND  
'CAUSE FIN'LLY I FIND  
I'M TWO OF A KIND -

(By this point, Benji has made a decision between going to see Amory or Michael and ends up in the stacks where Michael studies.)

MICHAEL

So what do we start with? Trig or French?

BOTH

AND I'VE GOT COMPANY.

(Blackout)

(Scene Nine: Various locations at St. Edward's Academy. During the following song, there is a passage of time from fall to winter. Colors change and leaves begin to fall. During the following montage, we see Michael coaching Benji through French, football and Faust rehearsals.)

MICHAEL

7:15 we meet at the dining hall. Review your Trig over bacon and eggs.

BENJI

I'm pescatarian.

MICHAEL

Lunch we teach you to throw a football without resembling my great Aunt Francis who's been dead for two years. Did you memorize your scene for rehearsal?

BENJI

When you say memorize-

MICHAEL

Gimme your arm.

(As Gert crosses, he watches one leaf fall.)

GERT

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE LEAF  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE LEAVES WHEN PUT TOGETHER  
MAKE AN AUBURN SORT OF RAINBOW  
AND IT'S ALL FROM THE FALL OF ONE LEAF

(Gert rushes to join Pete at a Faust rehearsal. Now there are a few physical elements incorporated into their scene work: simple props and costume pieces.)

PETE (Devil)

Poor Faust, he looks in the wrong places.

GERT (Lord)

It is not where he looks, but how.

(Clearly Benji is late for his entrance. Repeating Benji's cue)  
But *how!*

BENJI (Faust)

(Leaping onto the scene. Michael watches his progress from afar)

It is difficult to believe in anything when all around, nothing -  
(hesitating to remember his lines. Michael gestures grandly with his right arm.)  
- nothing..

(Michael gestures again. Finally, Benji gets it and lifts his arm up like it's a by-product of his emoting, but there on his arm are the lines Michael wrote on his arm earlier.)

BENJI

- believes in me!

(Rehearsal ends. Gert and Pete lead Benji downstage and sing to him, encouraging him)

GERT and PETE

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE WORD  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE WORDS WHEN PUT TOGETHER  
WRITE A SONNET,  
EPIC POEM  
"WAR AND PEACE" DID INCREASE WORD BY WORD

(Regan enters with Conrad. They and the other guys huddle up.)

REGAN

No, Benji! Q-42!

BENJI

(Trying to recall what play that is)  
Q-42, Q-42...

MICHAEL

(whispered to Benji)  
Go long, go long!

BENJI

What?

MICHAEL

Go long, go long.

BENJI

What?

ALL THE BOYS

Go long, go long!

(He does. Regan throws the football and much to everyone's amazement, Benji catches it. Cheers and hugs. Pete joins Benji and together they practice their French recitation to a rap beat as they cross.)

PETE and BENJI

"Pour l'enfant amoureux  
De cartes et d'estampes  
L'univers est egal a son vaste appetit!"

GERT (Lord)

(script in hand; testing himself on his lines)  
The heart of God, the heart of every man. Heart to heart to heart.  
They're all the same.

(During the following, Michael and Benji sit together and study.  
Michael has French flashcards with which he quizzes Benji.)

GERT AND PETE and REGAN

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE DAY  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE DAYS WHEN PUT TOGETHER  
MAKE A JOURNEY  
BUILD A MEMORY,

GERT AND PETE and REGAN and CONRAD

WHAT YOU SEE IN A LEAF  
WHAT YOU SAY IN A WORD

GERT, PETE, REGAN, CONRAD, MICHAEL AND BENJI

WHERE YOU GO WITH A STEP  
WHAT YOU MAKE OF A DAY  
WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR HEART

BENJI AND REGAN

YOUR HEART,

GERT, PETE AND CONRAD

YOUR HEART,

AMORY AND MICHAEL

YOUR HEART,

ALL

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE HEART  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE HEARTS WHEN PUT TOGETHER

SOME

FORM A CHORUS,  
MAKE A FAMILY,  
PACK A BACKYARD,  
FILL AN ORCHARD,  
BUILD A VILLAGE,  
LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

THE REST

FORM A CHORUS,  
MAKE A FAMILY,  
PACK A BACKYARD,  
FILL AN ORCHARD,  
PACK A BACKYARD, FILL AN ORCHARD,  
BUILD A VILLAGE, LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

ALL

IT CAN START HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART

(Christmas tree lights are illuminated and the boys, arranged as carolers, sing the final verse while snow begins to fall.)

ALL

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE HEART  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE HEARTS WHEN PUT TOGETHER

SOME

FORM A CHORUS,  
MAKE A FAMILY,  
PACK A BACKYARD,  
FILL AN ORCHARD,  
BUILD A VILLAGE,  
LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

THE REST

FORM A CHORUS,  
MAKE A FAMILY,  
PACK A BACKYARD,  
FILL AN ORCHARD,  
PACK A BACKYARD, FILL AN ORCHARD,  
BUILD A VILLAGE, LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

ALL

IT CAN START HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART

(Benji ends the song with a report card in his hand which he clutches to himself, full of hope. Immediately after applause, Michael rushes up to him, expectantly. Benji opens the report card. Amory watches their exchange from afar.)

BENJI

C plus!

MICHAEL

Congratulations, man! Oh, that reminds me.

(Removing a colorful stone from his pocket and handing it to him)

Here. Lapis Lazuli.

BENJI

(Correcting his pronunciation, holding it up to the light)  
Lazuli.

MICHAEL

Happy birthday. Your collection lives on to expand after all.

BENJI

Thanks.

MICHAEL

(Spotting Amory studying them)

I'll catch you later.

(Benji exits. This exchange starts playful up to a point.)

AMORY

You guys seem pretty chummy.

MICHAEL

I grew up an only child. I know the feeling.

AMORY

The big brother he never had.

MICHAEL

It's not working, by the way.

AMORY

I'm sorry, I don't know what you're referring to.

MICHAEL

Pushing him into killer classes, busting his chops with extra-curricular. It's not working. He hasn't once asked for your help. I've gotten him through the first two months without breaking a single rule.

AMORY

Yeah, I'm proud of you. The way you're chumming up to the little guy to win this bet.

MICHAEL

Hang on, that's not why I'm doing this.

(Amory stares at him)

Not the only reason. Jesus, I'm not feeling good about that. He's a nice kid.

AMORY

I'm not the one trying to claw my way into Stanford. You want to break your old man's heart?

MICHAEL

Your father, my father. I'm beginning to think this bet has more to do with two old guys a hundred miles away.

AMORY

It always has to do with some old guys a hundred miles away. I see now if I expect to win this bet, I'm gonna have to put a little effort into it.

MICHAEL

After all these years, this is what you decide to put effort into?

AMORY

In a way you're proving my point. You want Stanford, and you'll do whatever it takes to get it.

MICHAEL

Hey, I just don't want to see him fall on his face.

(Amory's cell phone rings. He checks the caller ID)

AMORY

Keep telling yourself that.

MICHAEL

What does that mean?

AMORY

You and me, Michael, we're more alike than you care to admit.

(moving away from Michael)

Gotta take this.

MICHAEL

Hang on a second. Amory, we're not done here!

AMORY

(On the phone: He sounds like an excited little kid)

Hey dad! I was gonna call you. Mort Scully asked me to spend Christmas with his folks at Lake George...

(Listening)

What? Benji? Oh, he's good, he's good. Of course if you want me home for Christmas, I could -

(Listening. Underscore begins)

Yeah, you're right: the fishing at Lake George is amazing this time of year.

(He hangs up the phone)

Lake George it is.

s

YOU NEVER CRITICIZE

YOU NEVER STOOP TO MORALIZE

YOU NEVER SPEAK IN ABSOLUTES

NOT YOU, NEVER YOU

YOU NEVER RAISE YOUR VOICE

YOU NEVER SAY I HAVE NO CHOICE

YOU DON'T DISSUADE MY OWN PURSUITS

NOT YOU, NEVER YOU

OF ALL THE WAYS THERE ARE TO RAISE A KID

WHAT MADE YOU CHOOSE THE WAY YOU DID?

MY FATHER, MY FATHER

MY FATHER, OH MY FATHER

YOU DON'T STAY UP AND WAIT

TO YELL AT ME FOR BEING LATE

YOU NEVER SAY I MUST OR SHOULD

THESE ARE THE THINGS YOU NEVER DO

BUT I WISH YOU WOULD

GOD, I WISH YOU WOULD

TAKE INTEREST IN THINGS I PURSUE

AND FAKE IT IF YOU HAVE TO

ENGAGE MY ADOLESCENT WARS  
BE GLAD I'M YOURS  
MY FATHER, ARE YOU AWARE I'M EVEN THERE?

PLEASE GOD, DON'T LET ME SOME DAY  
END UP BEING JUST LIKE - MY FATHER.

(Blackout. Segue Scene Ten)

(Scene Ten: Inside the library. The senior boys are studying intensely at different carrels. The internal thoughts should follow one another seamlessly, as if one uninterrupted thought.)

REGAN

"The bisector of the vertex angle bisects the base."

CONRAD

"Maxwell's equations predicted the existence of electromagnetic radiation."

MICHAEL

"The Ottoman Empire stretched from the Black Sea in the East to Algiers in the West."

REGAN

(Suddenly revealing what he's really thinking about)  
If by some miracle, I get NHS President that could sweeten my extra-curricular enough -

CONRAD

Lower than a B plus in Chem, I'll lose U. Penn and Berkeley -

MICHAEL

Three generations of Stanford men. And I will be the fourth. I will be the fourth. I will be -

REGAN

Stay on point. Focus. Bisector is perpendicular.

CONRAD

Stay present. Push through. Electromagnetic radiation.

MICHAEL

In the zone. From Budapest to Algiers.

REGAN

Focus.

CONRAD

Present.

MICHAEL

Zone.

REGAN

Focus.

CONRAD

Present.

MICHAEL

Zone.

(Bells ring. Automatically, the boys stop their reading and begin packing up their bags. During the following, we see Benji pull out an envelope and read its contents.)

CONRAD

BELLS RING  
CONSTANTLY

MICHAEL

CUING YOUR CLASS OR YOUR MEAL OR WHEN TO SLEEP  
CHIMING THE ANCIENT TRADITION THAT THEY KEEP

REGAN

WISDOM OF THE AGES  
SILVER-HEADED SAGES

(Benji, spotting Michael at another carrel, goes to him.)

BENJI

Look.

(He hands him the letter. As Michael reads it.)

I knew I sucked at French but no worse than the rest of the guys.

MICHAEL

(Reading from the letter)

"Mr. DuPres, you must show significant improvement on Monday's exam, or you will find yourself forced to leave St. Edward's altogether."

CONRAD

BELLS BRAG  
ENDLESSLY

CONRAD and REGAN

EACH TOLL TELLS THE TALE OF THE COUNTLESS CLEVER WHIPS  
WHO FOR YEARS HAVE PREVAILED HERE WITHOUT ANY SLIPS  
HUNDREDS OF SUCCESSES  
BELLS DON'T TELL THE MESSES

BENJI

I can hear them all at home right now. "Poor Benji, it's a good thing his old man can't see what a total screw-up he is."

MICHAEL

So quit play practice and we can squeeze in a few more hours -

BENJI

Is that all you got for me, Michael? Study harder? You don't understand the pressure of being a DuPres.

MICHAEL

You sound an awful lot like Amory.

BENJI

Well, maybe he's the one I should listen to!

(He starts to go.)

MICHAEL

Hey, Benji! Wait!

(He starts after him, then stops himself)

CONRAD and REGAN

LIKE A PARENT SWELLS WITH PRIDE  
THAT THEY CANNOT KEEP INSIDE  
SO THEY—

CONRAD, REGAN and MICHAEL

SING OUT SEVEN TIMES A DAY,  
"LOOK AT MY BOY!  
YES, THAT'S MY SON.  
YES, HE'S THE ONE  
MY PRIDE AND JOY."

BELLS DON'T UNDERSTAND  
THE TOLL THAT THEY TAKE  
THOUGH A WORD IS NEVER SAID  
EVEN WHEN THEY ARE STILL,  
I STILL HEAR THEM IN MY HEAD  
NO TIME TO BE AFRAID, KID  
YOU'VE GOT TO MAKE THE GRADE, KID  
OR YOU'LL FIND THAT YOU'VE DROWNED  
IN THE SOUND OF THOSE BEAUTIFUL—

(During the above, Benji has found Amory.)

AMORY

Benji, my boy, what can I do for you?

(Benji hands Amory the letter. Amory holds it out and begins reading it.)

CONRAD, REGAN and MICHAEL

BELLS.

BENJI

The curse. It's happening to me. Michael says I just need to study harder.

AMORY

I think the 21 century requires a more high-tech response, don't you?

(Benji stares blankly at Amory)

VIRGIL 247.

BENJI

What's that?

AMORY

Professor LeRoux's computer password. He's used the same exams for first year French since the Prussian War. Print yourself out a little preview and your problems are solved.

BENJI

What?

AMORY

Get into his office and onto his computer, print out the test-

BENJI

Wow. You're talking at least three major violations.

AMORY

LeRoux leaves his office door unlocked.

BENJI

Great. Two major violations.

AMORY

Okay, if Thomas Campion had come to me for advice, I bet you he wouldn't have ended up taking a nose dive off the top of Lattimore bell tower.

BENJI

All right, all right.

AMORY

Good. But you better hurry.

BENJI

You mean - now?

AMORY

The test is Monday. It's five o'clock Friday. Your very small window of opportunity is about to shut.

BENJI

But what if Professor comes back while I'm -?

AMORY

Go!

(Benji runs out. Michael runs in.)

MICHAEL

Benji! There you are! Wait!

(To Amory)

Where's he going?

AMORY

I told you I was going to put a little effort into this.

MICHAEL

(Holding Amory back as he starts to go)

What did you tell him to do?

AMORY

Get your hands off me.

MICHAEL

Shit. Professor LeRoux didn't write that note. You did.

(Michael runs off as "Walpurgis Night" music begins. Segue to Scene Eleven.)

(Scene Eleven: Play practice: The Walpurgis Night scene from Faust. The boys rehearse the number with gnarled tree branches and illuminated torches. This rehearsal and Benj's trip to LeRoux's office intersect, the two worlds converging.)

GERT (as God)

The moon is wise to go into hiding: it is a night when the air, is afoul, when the vilest of spirits convene, and all hell breaks loose.

THE BOYS VOICES OF SPIRITS (REGAN, CONRAD, GERT)  
DO YOU HEAR, AROUND US, VOICES  
IN THE DISTANCE, COMING NEARER?  
DOWN THE MOUNTAIN THEY COME SPILLING LOUDER, CLEARER!

(During the above, we see Benji seeking out Pete.)

BENJI

Pete, come on. I need your help.

PETE

I'm on my way to play practice. Hey, you should be too.

BENJI

I don't have time to explain, just come with me.

PETE

But they're blocking the Walpurgis Night section. It's my big scene when I escort Faust on this freaky trip he has to take: "crisis of conscience," "dark night of the soul" stuff.

BENJI

Pete. I'm begging you.

(After a beat, Pete nods and they start toward Professor's office, which means criss-crossing through the tree branches from the Faust rehearsal.)

GERT, REGAN AND CONRAD

IT WOULD SEEM WE'VE BEEN ADMITTED  
TO A SPHERE OF DARKENED SPACES  
CLUTCHING FRANTICALLY ABOUT US TWISTED FACES!

ALL BUT BENJI AND PETE

THE PATH IS STEEP THE PATH IS LONG  
BUT WE PRESS ON OUR FRANTIC THROG

THE PITCHFORK PRICKS, THE BROOMSTICK POKES,  
THE MOTHER BURSTS, THE INFANT CHOKES

(In another area, Amory enters, Michael close behind.)

MICHAEL

Okay Amory, I get it: You're pissed off your dad gave more  
attention to his nephew than to his own son.

AMORY

My Dad has nothing to do with this.

(He starts off.)

MICHAEL

Where the hell are you going?

AMORY

To watch, of course.

MICHAEL

Watch what?

AMORY

(Looking at his watch)

Right about now, Professor LeRoux should be on his way to close up  
his office for the weekend.

MICHAEL

Oh shit.

(Amory runs off. Michael runs after him.)

VOICES OF SPIRITS (GERT, CONRAD AND REGAN)

(Start of 2 part round)

DO YOU HEAR, AROUND US, VOICES  
IN THE DISTANCE, COMING NEARER?

(A door appears. Benji and Pete stand outside it. Inside, we see  
the Professor's office: a computer screen and printer, writing  
utensils, etc.)

BENJI

Stay here.

PETE

Hey! This is Prof. LeRoux's office. We can't go in here.

BENJI

Watch the door.

(He goes inside the office, leaving Pete outside as look-out.)

PETE

Benji, don't!

BOYS AS SPIRITS

DOWN THE MOUNTAIN THEY COME SPILLING  
EVER LOUDER, EVER CLEARER!

(During the above, Benji approaches the desk and begins typing into the computer keyboard.)

BENJI

VIRGIL 247.

BOYS AS SPIRITS

(Whispered)

DO YOU HEAR, AROUND US, VOICES  
IN THE DISTANCE, COMING NEARER?

PETE

Benji! He's coming down the hall. We gotta get out of here.

(In the office, Benji anxiously waits as the printer spits out a copy of the exam.)

BENJI

I'm coming!

(Benji folds the exam and puts it in his pocket. He rushes out of the office.)

PETE

It's too late. He's seen us.

ALL BUT PETE AND BENJI

NOW HIGH UPON A SLENDER WIRE  
THE FATED WINDS BEGIN TO HISS  
AND DOWN BELOW A WALL OF FIRE  
SO HOW'D WE'D EVER COME-

(Michael and Amory rush on and hang back to watch. Slyly, Benji

stuffs the exam in Pete's pocket.)

BENJI

Professor LeRoux.

BOYS AS SPIRITS

TO -

PETE

No sir, we're not lost.

BOYS AS SPIRITS

THIS?

(The Walpurgis Night spirits disperse in different directions.)

BENJI

I was - you see, I was trying to talk Pete out of it, sir.

PETE

What are you talking about?

BENJI

I can't take the fall for you.

PETE

I'm the one who was trying to stop you.

BENJI

Just show him. In your pocket.

(Slowly in disbelief, Pete pulls the crumpled page from his pocket.)

PETE

(To the Professor)

But sir, I didn't -

(Listening to the Professor)

Yes, sir.

BENJI

Yes, sir.

PETE

Benji, please. You heard what he said: he's giving us till tomorrow morning to go to President Dougherty with the truth. You gotta tell him this was all your idea.

BENJI

Yeah.

(Pete starts to go)

No.

PETE

What?

BENJI

I can't.

PETE

Yes you can. And you're gonna.

BENJI

I'm fighting for my life here. I can't lose this -

PETE

You think I can? Fine. I'll tell him myself.

BENJI

It won't do any good.

PETE

Oh yeah, why not?

BENJI

Because outside the entrance of the theatre where we rehearse there's a little plaque. You ever notice it? It says "The DuPres Arts Center." That's me, Pete. That's my family. So go tell Dougherty anything you want. But you better be able to offer him something. A new dorm. A computer lab. Can you do that, Pete?

PETE

(Quoting one of his devil lines)

"Things take a diff'rent shape, I see  
The devil's in the house and can't break free."

(He exits. Michael and Amory rush in.)

BENJI

(To himself as he starts off)

What the hell am I doing?/have I done?

AMORY

(Rushing to Benji)  
Hey, hey, where you going?

BENJI

I can't let Pete take the fall for this.

AMORY

Hang on a sec.  
(Holding Benji back)  
Would you stop? What do you have to gain telling Dougherty the truth?

MICHAEL

Gain? Are you serious? How about what he'll lose?

AMORY

Like what?

MICHAEL

Like his self-respect. Like the ability to look himself in the mirror again.

AMORY

Sure. Back home. Because that's where he'll be if he talks to Dougherty.

(Benji suddenly pulls out his cell phone and dials)

AMORY

What are you doing?

BENJI

Your father'll know what I should do.

AMORY

(Pulling the phone away from him)  
Stop trying to suck up to my father all the time.

BENJI

He's the one who's always calling me.

AMORY

Back off. He's already got a son.

BENJI

Yeah, well he seems to prefer me.

AMORY

Benji, think of what this'll do to your mom. She'll sink even lower. And think of your dad. His memory.

BENJI

But Pete has nothing to do with any of that. This is on me. Right, Michael?

(Nothing from Michael)

Michael?

MICHAEL

Amory's right.

BENJI

He is?

MICHAEL

An expulsion on your record? You're toxic. You're done.

AMORY

(hand on Michael's shoulder)

This is the right choice.

MICHAEL

(Shrugging off Amory's hand)

No, it's not. But it's the only choice.

BENJI

If you say so.

(Benji slowly exits.)

MICHAEL

It's getting out of hand. I concede, okay? You win. Just, let's call this thing off before it's too late.

AMORY

Sure, if that's what you want. But I'm pretty sure Dad's calling the Stanford admissions committee tomorrow.

MICHAEL

Wait, what? What's he going to tell them?

AMORY

Trust me. He knows all the right words to use. Gentleman, scholar. A real man of integrity. Or if you're having second thoughts, I'll tell my father to forget about calling the committee.

(He starts dialing. After a moment, Michael reaches out, takes Amory's phone and clicks it off. Segue to scene Twelve.)

Scene Twelve: Pete's room: A bed and a dresser with a framed picture of his father on it. He is alone; the envelope he has just collected from the Professor in his hand. He eyes it nervously, but doesn't open it. Trying to gather his courage, he opens his battered leather French book. As he recites the poem, he doesn't need to refer to the book often. During the course of the song, he tries to find the courage to open the envelope. During this song, he remains hopeful, always optimistic there's a chance he won't be expelled.)

PETE

EARLY MORNING  
WE WOULD START OUT  
CLIMB ABOARD, LET LOOSE THE ROPE  
LADEN DOWN WITH HOOK AND HOPE.  
HARDLY EVER CAUGHT A ONE  
BUT STILL YOU'D ALWAYS SAY,  
"WHAT A PERFECT DAY, PERFECT DAY."

LAZY SUNDAY,  
WE WOULD START OUT  
MITT AND CAP ONE SIZE TOO SMALL  
ONE EYE ALWAYS ON THE BALL  
HARDLY EVER CAUGHT A ONE  
BUT STILL YOU'D ALWAYS SAY,  
"SUCH A PERFECT DAY, PERFECT DAY."

YOU'D SAY, "IT'S THE RHYTHM OF THE WAVES,  
THE SWINGING OF THE BAT,  
THE JOURNEY NOT THE END, THAT MATTERS MOST.  
AND SO WHAT IF WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE,  
THE BIG ONE GOT AWAY.  
I WAS WITH MY SON ALL DAY."  
YOU'D SAY, "I WAS WITH MY SON  
SON, LET'S HEAD HOME."

(He tries again to find the courage to open the envelope.)

LAST SEPTEMBER, WHEN THE WIND CHANGED  
HOW IT SEEMED TO URGE YOU ON  
'CAUSE ONE SUNDAY, YOU WERE GONE  
JUST A NOTE BESIDE MY BED  
WITH THOSE WORDS YOU ALWAYS SAID  
YOU SAID IT'S THE RHYTHM OF THE WAVES,  
THE SWINGING OF THE BAT,  
THE JOURNEY NOT THE END, THAT MATTERS MOST.

AND YOU'D SAY IT'S THE SWING OF THE BAT  
AND THE STING OF THE BALL  
AND THE JOURNEY NOT THE END THAT MATTERS MOST.  
IT'S THE TURN OF THE KEY AT THE START  
AND THE BURNING OF HOPE IN YOUR HEART  
AND THE JOURNEY ITSELF  
AND THE LIVES THAT YOU TOUCH ON YOUR WAY  
IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT  
AND NOW MY JOURNEY MAY BE THROUGH  
THERE'S NO MORE I CAN DO.  
I MISS THOSE PERFECT DAYS WITH YOU  
OH, WHAT A TIME I'VE HAD  
NOW CAN YOU HEAR ME, DAD?  
                  (Pete opens the envelope and reads the letter.)  
I'M HEADING HOME.

(Bravely, he puts the Baudelaire book and the envelope down on the dresser and picks up the picture of his father.)

(Standing with his suitcase and picture in hand, he looks around the campus for the last time. Gert outside his room to see him off. Pete recites the poem with the conviction of a general marching his army into battle.)

Pour l'enfant amoureux de cartes et d'estampes  
L'univers est egal a son vaste appetit!  
Ah! que le monde est grand a la clarte des lampes!  
Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit!

(Pete salutes Gert; Gert salutes back. Or payoff Gert handshake here. Then Pete walks off with his bag. Segue Scene Thirteen.)

(Scene Thirteen: Michael enters, Amory a few steps behind. Clearly they're in the middle of an argument. During this recitative, their bedroom begins to take shape behind them: two beds with a door between them, a dresser.)

AMORY

ALL RIGHT, I SET IT UP  
SO SUE ME  
YOU WANT TO WIN THIS BET, SO DO I

MICHAEL

SCREW THE BET,  
HE'S YOUR COUSIN

AMORY

You gotta admit, it was glorious to watch.  
SOCIAL DARWINISM AT ITS FINEST  
I would have pulled him out if it got ugly.

MICHAEL

IT DID GET UGLY.

AMORY

I'M JUST GETTING STARTED.

MICHAEL

THIS BET IS OUT OF CONTROL

AMORY

YOU SAYING I WIN?

MICHAEL

I'M SAYING LET'S CALL IT A DRAW.

AMORY

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

PETE WAS EXPELLED,  
HIS WHOLE FUTURE ZAPPED IN A MATTER OF MINUTES

AMORY

WELL, MAYBE I DID HIM A FAVOR.

MICHAEL

HICKSVILLE JUNIOR HIGH IS SO MUCH MORE IMPRESSIVE.

AMORY

GET OFF MY BACK

AMORY

LET'S MOVE ON WHAT'S DONE IS DONE  
THERE'S NOTHING  
MORE TO SAY

MICHAEL

WE GOTTA TALK THIS OUT  
THERE'S

(They cross into their bedroom.)

AMORY

PROB'LY NEVER EVEN ASKED HIM  
WHAT HE WANTED

MICHAEL

We're not talking about Pete anymore, are we?

AMORY

You know what the problem is? We're too old to be told what to do—

MICHAEL

— and too young to know on our own.

AMORY and MICHAEL

SOMEBODY PLANNED MY FUTURE  
WHEN I WASN'T EVEN LOOKING

(The intensity continues throughout the following.)

MICHAEL

(Closing his book)  
All right, so tell me.

AMORY

What?

MICHAEL

What do you want?

AMORY

Nobody ever asked me.

MICHAEL

Well, now somebody is.

AMORY

That's a pointless question.

MICHAEL

Or are just too scared to say it out loud?

AMORY

After college I'll work for my dad. That's an opportunity any guy would kill for.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but what do you want?

AMORY

It doesn't make a difference!

MICHAEL

Coward.

(Angrily, Michael turns away from Amory, grabs a book and opens it. After a moment, Amory finds his courage and sings softly:)

AMORY

I WANT TO BE A POET  
A GREAT ROMANTIC WRITER  
WHO'S FREE TO ROAM THE LAND WITHOUT THE BURDEN OF A NAME  
I WANT TO SING IN SPANISH  
MAYBE TRY MY HAND AT SCULPTING  
PAINT A THOUSAND TINY CANVASES THEN BUILD EACH ONE A FRAME  
AND I WANT TO SAIL ACROSS THE SEA  
WITHOUT A DESTINATION  
WHERE THE ONLY GOAL WILL BE FOR ME  
TO FEEL THE SWEET SENSATION  
OF FLOATING

MICHAEL

(Hesitant at first)

MERELY DRIFTING

AMORY

EVER ROLLING WITH THE WAVE UPON WAVE

BOTH

ALWAYS HEADING FOR A PORT OF CALL  
CALLED "NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR AT ALL"

AMORY

I WANT TO BE MORE PATIENT

MICHAEL  
I WANT TO BE LESS SELFISH

AMORY  
I WANT TO DRIVE A RACE CAR.

MICHAEL  
DRIVE A CHARIOT

BOTH  
I WANT TO PUT THE NEEDS OF ALL MY FRIENDS BEFORE MY OWN

MICHAEL  
I WANT TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

AMORY  
WANT TO BE A HERO

MICHAEL  
MAYBE HELP A TOTAL STRANGER.

AMORY  
SCORE THE WINNING POINT

MICHAEL  
HAVE GUTS

BOTH  
TO TAKE THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED  
AND THE PATH UNKNOWN  
AND YOU HEAR SO MANY PEOPLE SAY  
"IF I ONLY HAD JUST"  
I DON'T WANT MY DREAMS TO BLOW AWAY  
WITH A HANDFUL OF DUST

(The voices of the other boys are heard.)

| <u>AMORY</u> | <u>MICHAEL</u> | <u>CONRAD/REGAN</u>          | <u>GERT</u>  |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------|
|              |                | I WANT TO                    | I WANT TO    |
|              |                | CLIMB A MOUNTAIN             | FIGHT A FIRE |
| I WANT TO    | I WANT TO      | I WANT TO DIVE, I WANT TO BE | I WANT A     |
| DANCE        | BE A BOXER     | A BIKER, SHEPHERD            |              |
|              | GIRLFRIEND     |                              |              |
| I WANT TO    | I WANT TO      | ACTOR, COWBOY,               | I WANT TO BE |
| A            |                |                              |              |

BE A POET

HUNT FOR TREASURE

PRESIDENT

I WANT TO

RACE A CHARIOT

DRIVE A RACE CAR

ALL

I WANT TO FIND THE KINDNESS IN THE EYES OF EVERY MAN.

AMORY

MICHAEL

CONRAD/REGAN

GERT

BE A HERO

I WANT TO FIGHT FOR

EXPLORER, MAGICIAN, OB/GYN

MOVIE STAR

JUSTICE

PASTRY CHEF, WALTER CRONKITE

WIN THE GAME

MAYBE HELP A TOTAL

A PSYCHIC FOR DOGS

STRANGER

ALL

FIND A LOVE AND MAKE A HOME AND KEEP US SAFE AS BEST I CAN

AND YOU HEAR SO MANY PEOPLE SAY

"IF I ONLY HAD JUST"

I DON'T WANT MY DREAMS TO BLOW AWAY

WITH A HANDFUL OF DUST

AMORY

WE WON'T LET THEM

WE MUST VOW

MICHAEL

STARTING NOW

SOMEHOW WE'LL FIND A WAY TO MAKE THE DREAMS

WE DREAM TODAY COME TRUE

(They both thrust their hands out to one another, offering to seal the pact with a handshake. Amory is about to accept, then thinking better, retreats.)

AMORY

BUT ALL THE THINGS I LONG TO BE

I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO HIDE

'CAUSE THE SON OF A SON OF A SOMEBODY

KEEPS THE DREAMS LOCKED INSIDE

MICHAEL

YOU CAN WANT IT

JUST DON'T SHOW IT

AMORY

BE A WINNER, NOT A POET

BOTH

HELLO, HELLO  
MY BRIGHT TOMORROW  
WITH YOUR MILLION STARS TO REACH  
I NEED YOU NOW TO SHOW ME HOW  
SO GO AHEAD AND TEACH ME

MICHAEL

HOW TO BE THE MAN I DREAM TO BE.

AMORY

TEACH ME HOW TO BE A POET.

(Suddenly grabbing his coat and heading for the door)

Screw it.

MICHAEL

Hey, where you going?

AMORY

Pay my dad a little visit.

MICHAEL

Now?

AMORY

Yes now. It has to be now. I've wasted too much time already. The future he assumed for me - hell, that *I* assumed for me - I want no part of it. From now on, I'm my own man.

(Amory reaches for the door handle, then stops, notices his right coat sleeve.)

The tailor, when he altered this coat, he accidentally made the right sleeve a quarter inch shorter than the left. My dad, he doesn't notice when I come home for the weekend, but that right sleeve, he caught that. He says something to me every time he sees it.

(Tugging at the sleeve. He turns and rejoins Michael)  
So I never got it fixed.

MICHAEL

Remember that 64 I got on my pre-calc midterm last year? After that, my old man stopped calling me as much. Seriously, once my average dropped to a 78, I think he dropped to a C plus kind of love

for me. **And you want to know the kicker? I choked on purpose. Just to test him.**

AMORY

I got that beat. You know my father, besides being a genius at mergers and acquisitions, he's a real whiz on the tennis court.

(Benji, who during the above has been their door is about to knock on it, but stops and listens.)

Every spring he and Benji's mom, my Aunt Carol would team up for the doubles tournament at dad's club. You ever wonder why Benji and I look so much alike.

MICHAEL

You're cousins, Amory.

AMORY

I always remember them coming home with a trophy. Well, one year they had a special way to celebrate their victory.

MICHAEL

Holy shit.

AMORY

When I was seven, dad told me his little secret. "Amory," he said, "I have a fleet of jets, a flock of Bentleys but my brother, the President of the Long Island Federation of bowlers is the luckiest son of a bitch in the world." I guess he felt he screwed up with the first kid so bad, he swore to do better with his new son. For the most part, I was able to ignore Benji. But then he had to bring him here. To my world.

MICHAEL

Wow -

AMORY

Just once I want to hear him talk about me the way he talks about Benji.

MICHAEL

That's why you made this bet?

AMORY

My father doesn't get a second chance. He wants another son, he gets another me. Park Avenue Sisyphus condemned to the same story

over and over again. If I can just get dad to see what a screw up Benji is, then maybe he'd, you know, finally -

MICHAEL

But it's not Benji's fault. You can't punish him for what your dad -

AMORY

I know that! Jesus, Michael, don't you think I know that? I want to make it right.

MICHAEL

I'm glad it's over. If Benji knew I was only helping him to win. Bet. To get into Stanford. He'd flip out -

(Stunned, Benji bursts into the room, surprising Michael and Amory. After a moment, he reaches into his pocket and withdraws the lapis lazuli stone.)

BENJI

Lapis Lazuli.

(He sets it on Michael's desk and runs out.)

MICHAEL

Benji, wait!

(Underscoring begins. Michael and Amory rush off after Benji. Regan and Conrad are there.)

REGAN

Hey, is it true?

MICHAEL

Not now, Regan.

CONRAD

We heard Pete's out.

MICHAEL

Yeah, it's true. But he didn't do it. Benji threw him under the bus.

CONRAD

He's definitely a DuPres, huh, Amory?

AMORY

(Grabbing him by the collar)  
What the hell does that mean?

CONRAD

I meant it as a compliment.

MICHAEL

Come on, Amory. We gotta find him.

(Amory releases Conrad)

CONRAD

Geez, what's with him?

MICHAEL

Amory, you said you wanted to make this right.

(Michael goes. After a moment, Amory follows him.)

REGAN

Pete going down for what Benji did. It's not cool. We gotta do something.

CONRAD

Like what?

REGAN

Tell Dougherty the truth. Help out Pete.

CONRAD

It's not our business.

REGAN

Seriously? You're the one who's always saying there's a fight going on and most people don't show up for it.

CONRAD

I'm this close to merit scholar, no way in hell I can risk getting involved.

REGAN

What happened to doers and watchers, Conrad?

CONRAD

Do what you want, but...I'm out. See you around.

(He runs off.)

REGAN

Go to hell. (Seriously doubt it.)

(He runs off. Segue Scene Fourteen.)

(Scene Fourteen: The quad. Benji rushes on, he's breathless; doesn't know where to go, what to do, whom to trust.)

BENJI

WHAT HAVE I DONE?  
GOD, WHAT A MESS  
LOOK AT YOUR SON  
YOUR BIG SUCCESS

GLAD YOU'RE NOT HERE  
SO NOW YOU CAN'T SEE  
I'M NOT THE MAN YOU DREAMED I'D BE

I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH  
NOT WORTH THE FIGHT  
DAD, I SCREWED,  
I STAND ALONE  
CAN'T FIND THE LIGHT  
CAN'T FEEL THE FIRE  
CAN'T SINK ANY LOWER

(getting an idea:)

ALL RIGHT, SO I'LL GO-  
HIGHER.

(Gert rushes in wearing his God costume.)

GERT

Benji, come on, we'll be late.

BENJI

Can't.

GERT

It's because of you that Pete's gone and we have this extra rehearsal.

(Without answering, Benji keeps running off. Gert calls after him:)

Hey! We're blocking the last scene tonight. God and the devil are gonna kick each other's ass. (Spoiler alert: God kicks the devil's ass!)

BENJI

(As he runs off:)

I have to meet a friend.

GERT

What, now?

BENJI

Thomas Campion...at Lattimore.

GOD, WHAT A RUSH!  
THRILL OF IT ALL  
CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN  
SCALING THE WALL

IF I WANT PEACE  
THE BLISS OF A DREAM,  
THEN I MUST DO SOMETHING/ MUST GO SOMEPLACE EXTREME

I'LL GO  
HIGHER

(He runs out.)

BOYS

(As they enter and during Gert's line)

AH, AH,  
AH, AH

(Simultaneously with the above, the Faust rehearsal starts taking shape, two small platforms are pushed on, on which later the God and the Devil will stand. Gert enters in his God costume. Regan as well is getting into costume as he enters, Conrad helping him.)

GERT (GOD)

(Rehearsing his lines)

Faust, you have put your faith in the wrong hands and let slip the one thing you yearned for most.

REGAN (THE DEVIL)

(Rehearsing his lines)

Every word, every deed has weight. Cursed is the man who has no one around to help him carry it.

(Benji appears, determinedly making his way toward the bell tower.)

BENJI

GOD, WHAT A HIGH

POISED AT THE EDGE  
CLOSER TO HEAVEN  
OUT ON A LEDGE

COMFORT IS THERE  
AT LAST PEACE OF MIND  
I'LL LEAVE ALL THE PAIN AND FEAR BEHIND

I'LL GO -  
HIGHER

(Michael and Amory rush into the Faust rehearsal.)

AMORY

You seen Benji?

BENJI

ATONE -

GERT

He's at Lattimore.

BENJI

ALONE -

MICHAEL

The library? This late?

BENJI

AMEND -

GERT

That's what he said. Thomas Campion at Lattimore.

BENJI

ASCEND -

AMORY

(Running off, Michael running after him)

Oh shit...

BENJI

HIGHER!

(Simultaneously God and the Devil ascend their platforms during the Faust rehearsal as Benji ascends the steps to the top of the bell tower:)

BENJI  
GOD, WHAT A VIEW!  
HERE'S WHERE MY STORY  
ENDS WITH ONE FINAL ACT OF GLORY

BOYS  
AH  
AH

FIN'LLY I'LL EARN  
RESPECT AND RENOWN  
THAT WHICH GOES UP  
COMES TUMBLING DOWN

AH  
AH

(By this point, he's at the edge. One more step and he's over it.)

THAT WHICH GOES UP  
COMES TUMBLING DOWN

HIGHER  
HIGHER

THAT WHICH GOES UP  
COMES TUMBLING DOWN

HAH HAH  
HAH HAH

THAT WHICH GOES UP  
COMES TUMBLING DOWN

HAH HAH  
HAH HAH

(as Benji is about to take the last step, Michael and Amory rush on:)

MICHAEL and AMORY

No!

(Benji stops himself.)

GERT (GOD)

Faust, you have put your need above your family and your sense of honor that goes along with that.

MICHAEL  
Step back.

AMORY  
You don't want to do this.

BENJI

These goddamn bells never stop. Like they've been tolling my funeral all along.

MICHAEL

What the hell is he talking about?

AMORY

Benji, listen carefully. I made it all up.

BENJI

What?

AMORY

Thomas Campion never jumped from this bell tower. No one did.

BENJI

But you told me -

AMORY

Campion is a Renaissance poet. I made the story up so you'd be scared. So you'd be motivated to succeed.

BENJI

But why?

GERT (GOD)

Faust, all of this could have been avoided had you kept yourself apart from the likes of him.

(From the opposite side of the stage, Regan as Mephistopheles enters in costume.)

REGAN (DEVIL)

(To God)

I only provided what he asked of me.

BENJI

What have you done to me?

GERT (GOD)

(To the devil)

What have you done to him?

AMORY

My father always gives you the best of him. I get what's left over.

BENJI

That's between you two! Leave me the hell out of it!

AMORY

I'm trying! I'm here, aren't I? We'll figure it out together, just - please - take a step back.

(He steps toward him, about to pull him back.)

MICHAEL

Guys, come on, this is nuts. We gotta go back down.

BENJI

Don't you get it! There's nothing down there for me! Everything, everyone I ever believed in is gone.

MICHAEL

I'm still here.

BENJI

You're the worst of all! You never gave a damn about me. It was about winning a bet.

MICHAEL

Yes! At first, yes!

BENJI

You knew I was freaking out! Dad gone, on my own, then you come along and tell me -

MICHAEL

I'm not your freaking dad, Benji!

BENJI

- I got your back, you said.

MICHAEL

Amory practically guaranteed me Stanford! That's epic for me. Three generations keeping me awake at night, screaming, "Don't screw this up, Michael. You can't screw this up."

BENJI

And where does that leave me? A mile up in the air because the only person I trusted lied to my face. You're a total fraud.

AMORY

You should talk! What about what you did to Pete!

BENJI

I know!

(Referring to the heights they're at)

And look where I ended up. But there's three of us standing here.

(Beat)

All our actions led us up here. And I'm not about to go down alone.

AMORY

What does that mean?

BENJI

Pete being expelled. You guys telling me to keep my mouth shut. Your bet set everything in motion. Stanford would find that story very interesting, don't you think, Michael?

MICHAEL

Benji, you can't...if Stanford finds out, I'm screwed!

BENJI

(To Michael)

You were my friend.

(To Amory)

You're my brother.

REGAN (DEVIL)

(To God)

He has no one to blame, for we are never deceived, we deceive ourselves.

BENJI

So I got another bet for you. If I were to take a step off this ledge right now, let's lay odds on which one of you would try and stop me. Amory?

AMORY

Benji, don't.

BENJI

Michael?

MICHAEL

Quit fooling around.

GERT (GOD)

The heart of God, the heart of every man. They're all the same.

(During the following, Benji moves closer and closer to the ledge)

BENJI

The winner gets redemption. His soul washed clean. So which one of you wants salvation more?

(He takes a step off the ledge. As he does, Amory and Michael rush in and pull him back. For a moment, all three of them are huddled together, clutching on to each other, panting in fear and relief. After a beat, Benji's muffled voice - his face buried in Michael's sleeve - is heard from in between them.)  
Thanks, guys.

MICHAEL

Benji's right. This is on all of us. Benji hacked into LeRoux's computer. Amory, you wrote the note. And we both told Benji to keep his mouth shut. Eight o'clock tomorrow morning. We tell Dougherty the whole story. Deal?

BENJI

Okay.

MICHAEL

Amory?

AMORY

Are you kidding? This is my chance to break free from my father. I'll be kicked out of St. Edward's, no way he'll want me for his company. Hell, I'll haul boxes at the warehouse if I have to, but I'm gonna make it happen just like we talked about. Hey, do you think they have 401ks for poets?

BENJI

Then I'll see you both in the morning.

(Benji exits. As Amory and Michael start off:)

AMORY

Oh Michael, by the way, congratulations.

MICHAEL

For what?

AMORY

It's December 18<sup>th</sup>.

MICHAEL

Yeah, so?

AMORY

Early admissions decisions go out. I heard from my dad. The Stanford committee met last week. You're in, buddy. See you tomorrow morning.

MICHAEL

What? Oh...yeah.

(They each turn and go their separate ways. Segue Scene Fifteen.)  
(Scene Fifteen: Amory and Michael in their separate spaces, standing in front of a small table on which are placed their personal effects: cuff links, a comb, their jacket. During the following verses, they make their preparations to go to Professor Dougherty's office.)

AMORY

I CAN MAKE THIS RIGHT.  
I WILL SET THIS STRAIGHT  
SHELVE THE ANGER AND THE SPITE  
BEFORE IT GETS TOO LATE.

MICHAEL

SET ASIDE THE RAGE  
KEEP YOUR HEART IN MIND  
  
EV'RY ACTION IS A PAGE  
IN THE TALE I'LL LEAVE BEHIND

BOTH

I WILL SEE THIS THING THROUGH  
THIS IS WHAT I WILL DO  
  
ONCE I LEARN TO BE FEARLESS  
ONCE I LEARN NOT TO CARE WHAT PEOPLE SAY  
ONCE I LEARN TO FIND COURAGE—  
SOMEDAY  
  
NOW I LOOK BEFORE LEAPING  
NEVER DARING TO STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD  
NEVER SAY WHAT I'M FEELING  
OUT LOUD

(Benji appears at his dressing table and prepares as well.)

BENJI

NO MORE LITTLE KID  
THERE ARE FACTS TO FACE  
I'LL OWN UP TO WHAT I DID  
WITH CONVICTION AND WITH GRACE

AMORY

ONE CHOICE FADES AWAY

MICHAEL

ANOTHER ONE APPEARS

BOTH

WILL THE CHOICE I MAKE TODAY  
REVERBERATE FOR YEARS?

AMORY, MICHAEL, and BENJI

I WILL LEAD MY OWN PACK  
I WILL FIND WHAT I LACK  
ONCE I LEARN TO BE FEARLESS  
THEN I'LL LEAP WITHOUT LOOKING  
I WON'T CARE IF THE WORLD APPROVES OR NOT  
I'LL HOLD ON TO COMPASSION  
NO MATTER WHAT

BENJI

ONCE I LEARN TO BE

MICHAEL

ONCE I LEARN TO BE

AMORY

ONCE I LEARN TO BE

AMORY  
FEARLESS

MICHAEL  
FEARLESS

BENJI  
FEARLESS

FEARLESS  
FEARLESS

DON'T CARE WHAT  
PEOPLE SAY

WATCH ME BE  
FEARLESS I CAN BE

(Dougherty's office door appears behind them.)

ALL THREE

FEARLESS  
FIND THE FAITH I LACK  
STAND OUT FROM THE PACK

(During the following, Benji and Michael decidedly move and stand in front of Dougherty's door.)

KNOW THE MAN I'LL BE  
LEAVES A LEGACY  
I WILL SEE THIS THROUGH  
THIS IS WHAT I'LL DO

(At the last possible moment, Amory, standing apart from them, them, watches them, almost envious of their courage.)

AMORY

ONCE I LEARN HOW TO -  
FEAR LESS.

(He runs off. Michael and Benji look in the direction where Amory has just run off, then face front.)

MICHAEL

He'll come around some day.

BENJI

No. He won't.

MICHAEL

For what it's worth, I really do consider you a good friend.

BENJI

I do too, Michael. We just have a lousy way of showing it.

MICHAEL

Dougherty will expel me. Or at least suspend me. Either way, nobody'll touch me now. Whatever. I don't deserve Stanford. I screwed up.

BENJI

Yeah, well maybe it doesn't have to be like that.

MICHAEL

Why?

BENJI

Michael?

MICHAEL

Yeah?

BENJI

Go.

MICHAEL

What?

BENJI

I got this.

MICHAEL

But I -

BENJI

Yeah. Know what I did? I destroyed Pete's academic record, lied to the administration, oh, and I'm pretty sure I snapped the clapper off that bell up there. I see Dougherty coming.

MICHAEL

You sure about this?

BENJI

It's now or never.

MICHAEL

Why would you do this for me?

BENJI

This guy can't sleep. Keeps having these dreams. So he goes to a shrink.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

(The rest of the boys enter one by one around Benji and sing softly throughout the following during which Benji takes a step closer to Dougherty's door and waits for the Professor to approach.)

BENJI

(Whispered)  
Go!

(Michael turns and leaves.)

CHORUS

HELLO, HELLO MY  
BRIGHT TOMORROW  
WITH YOUR MILLION  
STARS TO REACH

I NEED YOU NOW TO  
SHOW ME HOW SO

CHORUS

GO AHEAD AND TEACH ME

CHORUS

HOW TO BE THE MAN  
BE THE MAN -

BENJI

IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE VOICE  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE VOICES PUT TOGETHER.  
FORM A CHORUS, MAKE A FAMILY  
(IT STARTS WITH JUST ONE WORD  
IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE MUCH  
BUT ALL THOSE WORDS WHEN PUT TOGETHER  
LEAVE A MESSAGE, TELL A STORY/SEND A MESSAGE/WRITE YOUR STORY

SOME OF THE BOYS

PACK A BACKYARD  
FILL AN ORCHARD

SOME

BUILD A VILLAGE,  
LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

THE REST

PACK A BACKYARD,  
FILL AN ORCHARD,  
PACK A BACKYARD, FILL AN ORCHARD,  
BUILD A VILLAGE, LINK A COUNTRY,  
SPAN THE OCEAN,  
CHANGE THE WEATHER,  
MOVE A MOUNTAIN,  
FIND THE ANSWER,

ALL (BUT BENJI)

IT CAN START HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO HEART  
HEART TO -

BENJI

(To the Professor, approaching him)  
Good morning, sir.

I have something to tell you.

CHORUS

I DREAM TO BE.

The End.