The Drought
The set consists of a kitchenette: a small table that folds out from the wall, two mismatched chairs, the wallpaper is an intentional yellow with pink rosettes sprawling in an intentional manner. There is a TV on a small table. There is a lot of sunlight in this kitchen, pouring in from a window over the sink, and the metaphorical windows across from it, bright sunlight, a weightless sunlight. There is bed room: a full-sized bed, a vanity, matching dresser. It is clear that this was furniture that formally decorated a grownup’s room, but now belonged to a young girl.

In front of the rooms there is a sidewalk, creating a half-circle across the stage. There should be a separation between these two spaces, a see-through fabric, a sliding door, a drastic light change, something. The light is always too hot on the sidewalk, glaring up and out.

These are young adults playing children. These are children who can’t wait to be adults. There should be a gesture towards the place where these two facts meet.

This is a memory, told from ELENORE’s adult point-of-view.

The three parts of this play take place in Inman, South Carolina.
PART I

Enter ELENORE, balancing on the edge of the sidewalk. She is a young woman, just entering adulthood.

She wears a nightgown.

ELENORE
If I were a bird
I’d float along, fly about, flit around
and smack
my head against windows all day long.
If I were a pillow
I’d find the fragile field of warmth and comfort
inbetween a person’s nose and mouth.
If I were a mayor,
I’d give freedom, and finance, and futures,
to the dolls
in my daughter’s bedroom.
If I were a cigarette,
I would never have to move again.

ELENORE pulls back the separation between sidewalk and home. MOTHER is on the linoleum floor.
When I was eight, her father died. I saw her in the kitchen, kicking her feet. I thought she was angry. But her heart was broken.

She didn’t have a lot to say, that month of February. I was going to turn nine that year, and she didn’t have very much to say about anything.

It didn’t rain for three months. From February to the end of April, there were no spring showers. Summer came in like a weight, pushing in on our home, lifting all moisture up and out of the earth.
ELENORE leaves the separation open as she pulls off her nightgown. Skirt. Tshirt. Picks up a pink backpack. Pink lunchbox. She is nine.

She sits on the curb. It is August, and it is hot.

JANE and EDGAR sit down next to her. JANE and EDGAR speak as if they are constantly finishing each other’s sentences. They are twins.

**Scene One**

JANE
Welcome to the afterschool club.

ELENORE
The what? I wasn’t aware-

JANE
It’s the unofficial school club. You don’t get to sign up for it.

ELENORE
Who else is in it?

JANE
Edgar and me. Sometimes Jimmy Petroli. His mom works the night shift and sometimes falls asleep before school gets out. Jenny Lane, her father can’t afford day care- so she walks home. But she hangs out before she leaves sometimes.

(pause)
Our parents are just forgetful.

EDGAR
Why are you apart of the club?

ELENORE
I didn’t know I was. How do I become part of the club?

EDGAR and JANE look at each other.

JANE
This is your third day out on the curb past 2:45.

ELENORE
Oh.

EDGAR
It’s okay. That’s why we made a group.
JANE  Where's your mom? Working? Cleaning? Worse?

ELENORE  She's in school.

EDGAR  An academic.

ELENORE  A what?

JANE  Nothing, he's just jealous. Our parents own a gas station.

ELENORE  I don't-

JANE  It's okay, you don't have to be embarrassed. I'm not jealous. We know who we are. At least I do.

ELENORE  My dad is supposed to pick me up.

EDGAR  Where is he?

ELENORE  I don't know.

JANE  Welcome to the afterschool club.

ELENORE  Isn't there an afterschool club already?

EDGAR  Yeah, but you have to pay for it.

JANE  We're free.

EDGAR  Sometimes Jimmy brings snacks.

ELENORE  Where is he?

EDGAR  His mom must have been awake today.
JANE
You’re in our class.

ELENORE
I think so.

JANE
I’m Jane.

EDGAR
I’m Edgar.

ELENORE
Elenore.

EDGAR
You’re new.

JANE
Where do you live?

ELENORE
Applegate.

EDGAR
Next to the orchard?

ELENORE
Yeah.

JANE
Cool. We have a cool game to show you-

EDGAR
But not now-

JANE
Yeah, the apples are nasty/ this time of year

EDGAR
And it’s only fun if you get to eat the apples/ in the end.

JANE
Especially if you get caught-

EDGAR
Yeah, at least you get a prize-

JANE
Where’d you come from?
ELENORE
Greenville.

EDGAR
Where's that?

JANE
It's close.

EDGAR
Why'd you move?

ELENORE
My mom said she wanted a new place of scenery.

JANE
Oh.

EDGAR
Oh.

ELENORE
What?

JANE
Nothing.

EDGAR
Do you like it here?

ELENORE
It's pretty. We didn't have a creek in my last home.

EDGAR
You have a creek?

ELENORE
Right behind my house. You don't?

EDGAR
No.

JANE
Does your dad like the change of scenery.

ELENORE
My dad lives in Greenville.

EDGAR
Why?

JANE
Edgar./
ELENORE
  His job./
JANE
  That's/ nice.
EDGAR
  But you said Greenville's/ close.
ELENORE
  It is. I like/ living with my mom.
JANE
  Edgar, jesus.
EDGAR
  What?
JANE
  Do you have siblings?
ELENORE
  No
JANE
  Oh.
ELENORE
  Why are you two in the same grade?
EDGAR
  We're twins.      JANE
                       Twins.
ELENORE
  That's so cool.
JANE
  It's whatever.-
EDGAR
  We get that a lot.-
JANE
  It's just who we are. It's not that cool to us.
EDGAR
  It is sometimes.
JANE
  Sometimes.
EDGAR
  So, where’s your dad?

ELENORE
  He probably just forgot how long it takes to get here from the old house.

JANE
  Yeah, I’m sure.

ELENORE
  And yesterday, his car broke down.

EDGAR
  The day before?

ELENORE
  My mom got caught up.

JANE
  Sounds familiar.

ELENORE
  Your dad’s car breaks down a lot?

  JANE and EDGAR share another look.

JANE
  Yeah.

EDGAR
  Sure.

EDGAR
  So you want to be apart of the club?

JANE
  Stupid, no one wants to be apart of the club.

EDGAR
  It’s not so bad.

ELENORE
  I’ll join.

JANE
  Well, we hope you won’t be in it for long.

EDGAR
  Who ever leaves?

JANE
  Lisa’s mom got remarried, and have we seen her since?
EDGAR
   Just as long as you don’t join the official afterschool club.

ELENORE
   My mom’s talked about it.

JANE
   Well, all you do is play dodgeball there, anyway, and eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. They mix the peanut butter and the jelly together first.

EDGAR
   Gross.

ELENORE
   That’s the worst.

JANE
   There’s a car.

EDGAR
   That your dad?

ELENORE
   No. My mom.

EDGAR
   Your dad probably got lost.

JANE
   Definitely. Greenville’s not that close.

ELENORE
   Right.

JANE
   See you in class.

EDGAR
   And maybe here for the club meeting.

ELENORE
   What will you guys do?

JANE
   Madlibs.

ELENORE
   Have fun.

   ELENORE goes to meet her mom. EDGAR and JANE stare at each other.
Scene Two

ELENORE is on the curb again. She’s reading a letter. She is dressed like a little girl.

JANE enters with EDGAR. They sit next to ELENORE.

JANE
What do you want to do today?

ELENORE
Hold on. I’m busy.

EDGAR
Who’s the letter from?

JANE
Edgar, she’s busy.

EDGAR
I read and talk all of the time.

JANE
(to ELENORE)
He’s failing.

ELENORE
School?

JANE
English.

EDGAR
Math, too.

ELENORE
But you’re so smart.

EDGAR
I don’t like school.

JANE
Do you?

ELENORE
Like school? Yeah.

JANE
That’s weird.

ELENORE
No, it’s not
JANE
Sorry.

EDGAR
Who's the letter from?

ELENORE
My friend Haleigh. She lives back in Greenville.

JANE
Is she your best friend?

ELENORE
Yes. She is. I miss her a lot.

JANE
What does the letter say?

ELENORE
She just started school. She doesn't like her teacher because she gets her in trouble a lot.

JANE
Edgar got in trouble.

ELENORE
Did you get a yellow card?

JANE
Red.

EDGAR
Jane.

ELENORE
What are you going to do?

EDGAR
Nothing.

JANE
Our parents don't care.

ELENORE
They don't?

JANE
Nope. I got a red card once. If I didn't need her signature, I wouldn't have told her. I know the way around that, now. My mom put me in the corner for two hours, but I made a bracelet. See?

JANE shows ELENORE the bracelet.
ELENORE
   My mom would kill me.

EDGAR
   Really?

ELENORE
   No. Not really.

EDGAR
   Oh. I thought-

JANE
   Edgar. Shush.

ELENORE
   Can I finish my letter please?

   JANE and EDGAR get up. EDGAR gives JANE a piece of paper. JANE forges a signature on the bottom of the pages. EDGAR looks a little guilty. JANE moves immediately onto something else.

   ELENORE sighs when she finishes the letter. She folds it up carefully and puts it neatly into her backpack.
   All done.

JANE
   What do you want to do?

EDGAR
   Let's play a game!

JANE
   Okay. What kind of game?
   Silence.

ELENORE
   Back home, my best friend and I would play princesses and dragons.

EDGAR
   Who is the fire-breathing dragon?

JANE
   I don't know.

EDGAR
   Who are you?
JANE
I'll be the magical witch who casts a spell on the dragon.

ELENORE
Don't you want to be a princess with me?

JANE
I'll be the witch.
I like making up spells.

EDGAR
I'm going to go get a stick.

ELENORE
Why do you need a stick?

EDGAR
I'll be the prince. Who rescues the princess from the dragon. And I need a sword.

EDGAR leaves to retrieve his sword.

JANE
Edgar told me last night that he wants to kiss you.

ELENORE
He did not.

JANE
He made me pinky promise.

ELENORE
You're lying.

JANE
I'm not, I promise.

ELENORE
I don't believe you.

JANE
Fine, then.

ELENORE
Do you pinky promise me that you're not lying?

JANE
Yeah.

They pinky promise.
ELENORE
   Why does he want to kiss me?

JANE
   He thinks you’re pretty.

ELENORE
   He does?

JANE
   Yep.

ELENORE
   That’s strange.

JANE
   Edgar is strange.

ELENORE
   He really thinks I’m pretty?

JANE
   That’s what he said. He could be lying.

ELENORE
   Do you think I’m pretty?

JANE
   Sometimes.

ELENORE
   Sometimes is good.

JANE
   Yeah, only princesses can be pretty all of the time.

ELENORE
   I want to be pretty all of the time.

JANE
   Me too.

ELENORE
   But you are pretty all of the time.

JANE
   Only when I’m sleeping. When I’m awake, my face is weird.

ELENORE
   You’re pretty now.

   EDGAR comes back with a stick.
EDGAR
Is this a good one?

JANE
Yes. It's scary.

ELENORE
You aren't actually going to hit us?

EDGAR
We're just playing pretend, right?

JANE
Right.

ELENORE
But you're a witch.

JANE
I think I'm a...sorceress.

ELENORE
Are they better than witches?

EDGAR
Of course they are. They're old queens that turned evil.

JANE
You're walking in the forest. When we run into each other.

EDGAR
What am I going to do?

JANE
You're looking for the evil sorceress that cast a spell on your dog.

EDGAR
What did you do to my dog!

JANE
He's a rabbit now!

EDGAR
Not a rabbit!

           JANE picks up a small twig. She swishes it.

JANE
Oh, a rabbit. A fearsome, red-eyed, ugly little rabbit.
EDGAR defends himself with his stick. ELENORE stands on the edge, watching.

EDGAR
You better turn him back right now.

JANE
Not a chance. You'll have to live with the shame of owning a rabbit for all eternity.

EDGAR
But my poor, brave wolf.

JANE
Oh, don't be silly it was a dog.

EDGAR
You change him back, or I'm gonna, I'm gonna-

JANE
Gonna what?

EDGAR
Cut all of your hair off.

JANE
I'd like to see you try.

EDGAR tries with his make-shift sword. ELENORE doesn't know how to participate in the game.

EDGAR
Do not fear, princess. I will save you from this evil sorceress.

ELENORE
But what about your dog?

EDGAR
He is unimportant!

ELENORE
How chivalrous!

EDGAR
I am! And I will save you.

JANE and EDGAR duel.

They break character.

They resume dueling.
ELENORE doesn't know how to fit in to the story. She stands, falters, makes a decision.

ELENORE gets in the way. JANE does something fancy with her hands, it is clear she has cast a spell. ELENORE gracefully, beautifully collapses to the ground. Ballet-like.

EDGAR
Beautiful princess!

JANE
How will you save her now, if she is now eternally asleep?
She'll never be yours now.

EDGAR places his make-shift sword beside ELENORE. You can never save her.
She is dead. Forever.
The princess will never wake up, all because she saved you. What a terrible way to die. At least she'll be beautiful forever.

EDGAR
She saved me!

JANE
Means nothing when she's dead.

EDGAR
I'll make her a saint when I return to the kingdom.

JANE
Only the king can do that, measly prince.

EDGAR
How can I save her? I must save her!

JANE
True love's kiss, of course. Don't you watch movies?

EDGAR
I've got to kiss her?

JANE
Yes.

ELENORE
JANE!
JANE  
What? It always happens this way.

ELENORE  
Can't we think of something else?

JANE  
Like what?

ELENORE  
I don't know.

JANE  
Then you kiss.

EDGAR  
We kiss?

JANE  
Kiss.

ELENORE goes back to sleep.

The lights fade as EDGAR leans in to kiss her.

Scene Three

Lights up. The curb again. The sky is gray. It feels like it is going to rain, but it will not. ELENORE and JANE sit.

ELENORE  
Where's Edgar?

JANE  
He's sick.

ELENORE  
Is he okay?

JANE  
It's just a cold.

ELENORE  
I hope he gets better.

JANE  
He's fine.

ELENORE  
My mom never lets me stay home for a cold.
JANE
Why not?

ELENORE
She doesn't like to take off of work.

JANE
Ours just lets us sleep.

ELENORE
Alone?

JANE
Yeah, sure. They leave us alone all of the time.

ELENORE
I wish my mom would. She always gets a babysitter.

JANE
What if you're really sick?

ELENORE
I had the stomach flu, and she stayed home then. But
she usually just gives me some cold medicine and tells
me that I'll be okay.

JANE
JANE prickles, she is sensitive, and the mood
shifts.

JANE
Can I see your essay? The one you read in class today?

ELENORE
Why?

JANE
I just want to read it again.

ELENORE
But you heard it in class.

JANE
I wasn't listening very well.

ELENORE
I guess.

ELENORE pulls out the essay.

JANE
Mrs. Lark liked it a lot.
ELENORE
I think she's nice.

JANE
You like her because she likes you.

ELENORE
Why do you think she cried when I read it?

JANE
Because it was good. For a nine-year-old.

ELENORE
I just said what I wanted.

JANE
(reading from the essay)
"When I grow up, I'm going to be a teacher. I want to teach math to the fourth grade, because it's my favorite grade. I like numbers because there is always a right answer. I don't like English, because there is always a different way to say something else."

That's insightful. For a fourth grader.

ELENORE
Thanks.

JANE
"First, I'm going to go to Chapman High School. I would like to be a cheerleader there. Cheerleaders always get their way."

Do you really want to be a cheerleader?

ELENORE
Yeah, I think it'd be fun. I like to dance. Plus, they're always popular.

JANE
You're popular now.

ELENORE
No, I'm not. You are.

JANE
I'm apart of the unofficial afterschool club. I'm not popular.

ELENORE
I am too.
JANE
I guess being a cheerleader would be alright.
Especially since we might be old enough to drive a car.
And we wouldn’t have to wait on our parents all of the
time. We could also wear whatever we want.

ELENORE
I wanted to buy one of those stretchy shirts that
Miranda and Kelsey were wearing last week, but my mom
said I wasn’t old enough. In high school, it wouldn’t
matter. Because I’d be a cheerleader, and cheerleaders
have to look cool.

JANE
We could be co-captains together.

ELENORE
They have captains?

JANE
Yeah, my mom was a cheerleader captain. She talks about
it all of the time.

ELENORE
That’s cool.

JANE
(continues reading)
"I’d date the quarterback of the football team—"

Really?

ELENORE
What?

JANE
Edgar can’t play football.

ELENORE
So, what? I’m not dating Edgar.

JANE
But he kissed you.

ELENORE
We were playing pretend.

JANE
Still.

ELENORE
It doesn’t count.
JANE
Yes, it does.

ELENORE
I don’t care. Give me back my essay.

JANE
Not yet, I’m not done.

"He’d be super nice to me, and he’d tell me I was beautiful everyday. I want to make really good grades, so I can get into Clemson University. There, I will study teaching."

My mom says USC is better.

ELENORE
My dad likes Clemson better.

JANE
USC has a better football team.

ELENORE
That is definitely not true. Clemson won by 12 whole points last time.

JANE
For the first time in years.

ELENORE
I like orange better.

JANE
You’d look better in red.

ELENORE
But their mascot is a chicken.

JANE
A fighting rooster.

ELENORE
What does that mean?

JANE
I don’t know. That’s what my dad always says when someone makes fun of the Gamecocks.

"When I finish college, I’ll marry my high school boyfriend. We’ll move into a big yellow house back in Greenville. I like Greenville better than Spartanburg, because it’s prettier and all of my friends are there."
JANE
But I’m in Spartanburg.

ELENORE
Yeah, you could move with me.

JANE
What if I want to stay here?

ELENORE
I don’t know.

JANE
You don’t want to live where I live?

ELENORE
I don’t know. It’s just an essay.

JANE
Why don’t you like it here?

ELENORE
It’s still weird. I still don’t know anyone.

JANE
You know me and Edgar. That’s enough.

ELENORE
I guess.

JANE
Well, in my essay I said I want to live in California.
So, we won’t live together anyway.

ELENORE
California? That’s so far away.

JANE
My aunt lives there. She has an orange tree.

ELENORE
I can’t visit you in California.

JANE
I don’t think I’d be able to visit you in Greenville.

ELENORE
Fine.

JANE
Fine. Let’s see how your conclusion is.

"My husband will make a lot of money, and we’ll have
two kids and a dog. I want a boy and a girl, and the
JANE  
dog can be either a boy or a girl. We'll have great jobs, be married forever, and always love each other."

I'm guessing that's where Mrs. Lark cried.

ELENORE  
Why?

JANE  
Because your life story is just like hers.

ELENORE  
Really?

JANE  
Sure. I don't think it's a good thing. My mom says she's very bored.

ELENORE  
She seems to like her job enough.

JANE  
Maybe she fakes it.

ELENORE  
I don't think so. Maybe she just thought it was a nice essay.

JANE  
It's okay.

ELENORE  
Let's hear yours.

JANE  
No.

ELENORE  
Why not? You insisted on reading mine.

JANE  
I didn't bring it to class.

ELENORE  
Didn't you get into trouble?

JANE  
Yeah, but it doesn't matter.

Silence.
Do people make fun of you, Ellie?
ELENORE
Sometimes. They make fun of my teeth.

JANE
I heard Lenny call you names earlier. Did you cry?

ELENORE
In the bathroom.

JANE
I’m sorry.

ELENORE
Thanks.

JANE
You want my bracelet?

ELENORE
You want to give it to me?

JANE
Yeah. I made it when I was sad, so maybe when your feelings are hurt, you can look at it, and it’ll make you feel better?

ELENORE
Like a dream catcher?

JANE
A sadness catcher?

ELENORE
Can you make another for yourself?

JANE
Yeah, I’ll show you. But hold on to mine for now.

JANE gives ELENORE her bracelet.

ELENORE
Do you want to come over to my house?

JANE
My mom will be here soon.

ELENORE
Tomorrow?

JANE
That would be fun.
ELENORE
I'll call you tonight.

JANE
Your mom is here.

ELENORE
See you tomorrow.

ELENORE exits. JANE sits, pulls out her string and starts to make a new bracelet.

Lights.

Scene Four

ELENORE sits at the kitchen table. Her mother sits across from her. They eat bread and butter and a "Just Add Milk!" dish. Grocery brand.

MOTHER
I'm sorry your dad couldn't make it.

ELENORE
Where is he?

MOTHER
In Greenville. You know that.

ELENORE
I know. Why doesn't he live with us?

MOTHER
We need some time apart.

ELENORE
Why?

MOTHER
Sometimes grownups don't get along. We've had this conversation before, Elenore.

ELENORE
It's just.

MOTHER
What?

ELENORE
Nothing.
MOTHER
   Talk to me, Ellie.

ELENORE
   I just wonder about it. When Jane or Edgar ask about it, I don’t usually know what to say.

MOTHER
   Parents have arguments all of the time, Ellie.

ELENORE
   Not for this long.

MOTHER
   You don’t know that.

ELENORE
   None of my friends have parents that don’t live together.

MOTHER
   That’s not true. You know Haleigh’s parents don’t live together.

ELENORE
   But they’re getting divorced.

MOTHER
   So?

ELENORE
   It’s different.

MOTHER
   It might not be.

ELENORE
   Are you and dad getting divorced?

MOTHER
   I don’t know, Elenore.

ELENORE
   Why not?

MOTHER
   Because your dad and I haven’t figured that out, yet.

ELENORE
   But you might be thinking about it?
MOTHER
Ellie, I'm sorry. But it's none of your business, right now. Your dad and I will figure it out on our own.

ELENORE
It is my business.

MOTHER
It's not.

ELENORE
But he's my dad. And you're my mom. It's my business.

MOTHER
And he's my husband. And this doesn't involve you right now.

ELENORE
But I should know if you're getting divorced.

MOTHER
And I'll tell you if we do.

ELENORE
I want to know now.

MOTHER
I don't have an answer for you.

ELENORE
I'm going to bed.

MOTHER
Not until you finish dinner.

ELENORE
I'm not hungry.

ELENORE gets up.

MOTHER
Sit down.

ELENORE
No.

MOTHER
You need to finish your dinner.

ELENORE
I don't want to.
MOTHER
  I don’t care.

    ELENORE sits back down.

ELENORE
  I don’t want to tell my friends that my parents are getting divorced.

MOTHER
  It’s none of your friends business either.

ELENORE
  Fine.

MOTHER
  Eat.

    ELENORE and MOTHER sit in silence. Neither eat.

Scene Five

JANE and EDGAR at the front of the school.

EDGAR
  Where’s Elenore?

JANE
  Her mom picked her up on time.

EDGAR
  Lost another one.

JANE
  I think her dad is supposed to pick her up tomorrow.

EDGAR
  So she’ll be here?

JANE
  Probably.

EDGAR
  Have you met him?

JANE
  No.

EDGAR
  Me either.
JANE
Why would we?

EDGAR
I don’t know. We’ve met her mom lots of times.

JANE
That’s because Elenore lives with her.

EDGAR
Do you think Elenore would move in with her dad if they split up?

JANE
Probably. He lives in Greenville. And that’s where she wants to be.

EDGAR
I would hate that.

JANE
I’d hate her.

EDGAR
Why?

JANE
Because it would mean she didn’t love us enough to stay.

EDGAR
That’s not true. Besides, her dad doesn’t seem very nice.

JANE
I guess not. But he might just be forgetful.

EDGAR
It’s not very nice to forget.

JANE
It happens. You forget to take the trash out a lot.

EDGAR
And it makes Mom really mad.

JANE
I guess.

Do you think Elenore will write us letters if she leaves? Like she does to Haleigh?
EDGAR
   Of course she will. She would still love us.

JANE
   Even if it wasn’t enough to stay?

EDGAR
   Even then.

JANE
   Her parents probably won’t split up.

EDGAR
   You don’t think so?

JANE
   No. I don’t.

Look, it’s Mrs. Jacobs. If she sees us, Mom will get in trouble. Let’s start walking.

EDGAR and JANE get up, pick up their bags, and exit.

Scene Six

ELENORE on the floor of her living room, braiding a bracelet with an empty bowl of cereal in front of her. MOTHER is watching the news.

NEWS BROADCASTER
Lake Hartwell, very much affected by the years-long drought, has seen its lowest water levels at 640 feet, 20 feet below the full pool level. The city still implements a ban on sprinklers for the rest of the fall.

Tragedy struck the city of Inman early this morning. Around two am, a single-wide trailer caught fire, killing two and injuring two more. Elizabeth and Jack Turner are at Chapman Memorial Hospital being treated for smoke inhalation and other minor burns. Their nine-year-old twins, Edgar and Jane Turner were tragically killed in the fire. The cause of death is unknown at this time.

ELENORE and MOTHER freeze. MOTHER sits upright. The cause of the fire is undetermined. Arrangements for the Turner twins’ services have not been determined. More information will be announced once it is available.
NEWS BROADCASTER
City Hall disputes have reached a climax....

MOTHER flies to the floor to where ELENORE is sitting, and immediately wraps herself around her daughter. There is only the sound of MOTHER's weeping while the news fades away.

There is the sound of honking.

ELENORE
Mom, that's the bus.

MOTHER pulls away.

MOTHER
It's okay.

ELENORE
I should go.

MOTHER
You- Elenore.

ELENORE
What?

MOTHER
You don't have to go to school today.

Silence.

ELENORE
Did that really happen last night?

More honking.

MOTHER
Yes, it did.

ELENORE
How do you know it's true?

MOTHER
Because it's the news.

ELENORE
I should go to school.

MOTHER
You don't have to.
ELENORE
I can't miss class.

MOTHER
Okay.

_ELENORE gets up, grabs her bag, crosses to the threshold._

Elenore, I love you.

ELENORE
Love you too, Mom.

_ELENORE closes the opening of homespase to curbspace. MOTHER watches her go. Covers her mouth, looks to the TV. Cries._

_ELENORE sits on the curb._

ELENORE
If I could sit still
I would be a paper weight
And hold everything good down.

_ELENORE takes a nightgown out of her backpack. She throws it over her little girl clothes._

I felt for the first time the need to smile when I didn't have to. I felt like suddenly everything was incredibly new and unsafe, and I was going to perish incredibly quickly.

My parents did get divorced. My dad got a new girlfriend. She was pretty. My mom dated some, but really it was always going to be just us.

What felt less permanent than life?

Love.

Does this feel melodramatic?

Of course it does. Because it is. Doesn't that suck about life?

_ELENORE throws her backpack off stage. She leaves the separation of two places closed, she steps into the bedroom. Moonlight glares in on the bed, silver and ugly. HALEIGH is there. She is played by the same actress as JANE._
ELENORE stares out at the audience before putting her head down and drifting off.

End of PART I.