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Why Katahdin Runs: A play in three acts

Jaisey Bates

Loyola Marymount University

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WHY KATAHDIN RUNS

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY JAISEY BATES

PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH,

CREATIVE WRITING EMPHASIS

MAY 2008

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SYNOPSIS

Sometimes being Mixed Blood leaves you mixed up!

For KATAHDIN, a Mixed Blood young woman who grew up in non Native group foster homes, running is her safest means of escaping her anger and her lack of family, roots, and memory.

This is the story of how Katahdin's ancestors help her find a home within, roots, and joy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the many kind readers and guides who have shared their time and feedback with WKR. Special thanks to Mr. K. Francis, Tribal Historian of the Penobscot Nation, Indian Island, Maine, to the Native Voices at the Autry actors whose talents inspired many of these characters, to Dr. Chuck Rosenthal and his Loyola Marymount University Spring 2008 Master's Creative Thesis Workshop, to Dr. Linda Bannister, and to Professor Michael Datcher. Thank you also to Aldred W. Montoya, San Carlos Apache, who gave BAH-ISCH-KINN and BEH-NEICH-HAH their names. As 5-year-old MESATAWE MORNING STAR would say:

Thank You / Wlioni / Merci / Bird Words!

DISCLAIMER

All WKR characters are fictional.

All errors are mine.

WHY KATAHDIN RUNS

CHARACTERS

KATAHDIN Great Mountain

MESATAWE Morning Star

EARTHSONG:

KASKALJASIS Song Sparrow

NANATASIS Hummingbird

AZABAN Raccoon

AWASOS Bear

MEGESO Eagle

MKAZAS Crow

MUSICIANS / DANCERS

TIME and SETTING

Past and present intersect in place and time shifts framed
by early 1700s rural Québec and Los Angeles today.

WHY KATAHDIN RUNS

CHARACTERS

KATAHDIN

Great Mountain.

A green-eyed Mixed Blood young woman of Abenaki, Penobscot, and French Canadian heritage.

Katahdin is the direct descendant of Little Pale Wolf and Winner Boy.

MESATAWE

Morning Star.

Katahdin's mother as a young child and as a young woman.

She is a Spirit trying to communicate with her daughter.

EARTHSONG

Ensemble Actors (2 women + 4 men).

Collectively, Ensemble Actors are EARTH SONG, an organic Chorus.

Individually, each is a Spirit linked to Katahdin.

Each Spirit also transforms into other characters in Katahdin's blood stories.

KASKALJASIS

Song Sparrow.

Katahdin's unborn younger sister and Katahdin's great grandmothers Little Pale Wolf and Linto She Sings, as young girls and as young women.

NANATASIS

Hummingbird.

Katahdin's grandmother Anaïs as a young woman.

AZABAN

Raccoon.

Katahdin's father Scott as a young boy and as a young man.

AWASOS

Bear.

Katahdin's grandfather Joe as a young man.

MEGESO

Eagle.

Katahdin's great grandfathers Winner Boy and Atian, as young boys and as young men.

MKAZAS

Crow.

Katahdin's mother's imaginary childhood bird friend.

KATAHDIN'S MATRILINEAL BLOODLINE

Early 1700s Québec

Little Pale Wolf / Winner Boy

Late 1800s Maine and Pennsylvania

Linto She Sings / Atian

Late 1960s Maine

Anaïs / Joe

1970s to early 1990s Maine

Mesatawe / Scott

Late 1980s to Present

Katahdin and her unborn younger sister.

NOTES

CASTING:

At least 4 men and 4 women, all adults, for the speaking roles. Specific physical characteristics are not required. It is greatly preferred that the entire cast is of Native American heritage.

MUSICIANS / DANCERS / SPIRITS:

KATAHDIN cannot see the Spirits unless they assume characters in her stories, or unless she is dreaming. However, the Spirits, Musicians, and Dancers can see and interact with everyone, including the audience.

Specific individual Musician, Dancer, and Spirit traits are to be developed during the rehearsal process. Those characters with animal names hopefully will integrate something of their Abenaki namesake animal into their Spirit's voice, movement and music.

For example, in Abenaki stories, AZABAN Raccoon is the Trickster, and AWASOS Bear is the wise Elder.

Spirits fluidly shift into specific characters, and the Ensemble will together decide the easiest ways to distinguish assumed from essential characters - perhaps with mask work, "Bear" / "Eagle" / etc. signs (perhaps with the Abenaki words on the reverse side) hung about their necks, or perhaps a shared simple costume item, like a red bandana, that they remove when 'crossing over' to portray a blood story character. Costume changes are very minimal and noted in the text.

When EARTH SONG Spirit characters are speaking as themselves, perhaps they sing their lines in order to further distinguish their primary Spirit character from the characters they assume.

Blood story characters have a Fourth Wall, but Spirits / Musicians / Dancers are not spatially restrained and have no Fourth Wall. They can hang out on the stage or walk through the scenes upstage of actors as they observe the action. They can interact with audience members within the audience during the shifting of scenes, or grab an empty seat to watch with the audience a bit. If stage directions note that a specific character exits stage, Spirit-as-character exits stage as directed, but can immediately return as Spirit.

Musicians are encouraged to range into the back of the audience and improvise in a manner that suits the stage action as they watch the stage with the audience.

All music during the play is to be developed as the Musicians and Ensemble wish. My script notes in this draft are suggestions for a traditional underpinning of any modern riffs, with drums serving as the blood pulse throughout.

STAGING:

Bare stage with a small raised triangle platform upstage left. If possible, a scrim upstage is used for stills and film clips. Regardless, a Spirit will narrate scrim information for audience. The past is very alive in every moment of the present, so all flashbacks are present moment.

ACT ONE

AT RISE:

BLACK. POWERFUL DRUM PUSH /
SINGING / CRESCENDO.

EARTH SONG is distributed
throughout audience and offstage.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run

Chantez / CHANTEZ / Chantez
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

SING -

SPOTLIGHT STAGE RIGHT on KATAHDIN
in the driver's seat of two
parallel chairs as her car,
gripping the seat and rocking,
upset, as a cacophony of loud
recorded voices ricochet overhead.

RECORDED VOICES

(different voices indicated by slash)

You're some bastard breed who don't talk. Some stupid dumb
injun and you're only a girl - some stupid dumb squaw girl
... / you never can tell with you injuns - even half-breeds
like you ... / why dontcha find your way over to that motel
with the busted T-E-L in the sign an I'll be up after I fix
your car...

Katahdin takes out a rolled cloth,
unrolls it, and considers the
knife and her scarred wrist. She
is resisting what she is doing -
setting up to cut herself.

She is barely restrained kinetic
motion as she listens to RECORDED
KATAHDIN thoughts play over
volume-dampened RECORDED VOICES,
and as EARTH SONG commences their

song sotto voce from their
positions throughout the theater.

KATAHDIN RECORDING

My scars are stories on my skin. I try to read them, I try to understand. My scars are my blood memories. I cut when I can't run, so I can breathe. I run when I'm jumping out, my blood full screaming, caged. I run when something inside rips, makes my skin itch. When my blood runs, cries, when I don't understand, when I can't remember. I run when I can't feel and when I feel too much. I run when I'm ready to fight, to claw, to cut myself so I can breathe. I run everyday.

RECORDED VOICES

Stupid, that's no injun brave that's a squaw injun, lookit it's hair! / No, you cannot run with us. This running is for us men only. This is very important work so we will be warriors. But you are different blood. White blood. And you are a girl. So you can never be warriors like us, and so you can never run with - / Bet you don't even talk Injun! / Boy, dontcha know only the Devil speaks Injun! / I bet I talk Injun good's you! Listen: HOW! / HOW! / HOW!

With gaining strength the following dialogue is shared among the EARTH SONG, parceled out, overlapping, looped, sung, instrumentally rendered in English or French - a soul song elemental riff, building to crescendo.

EARTH SONG

Sing, sing, SING / Blood.
Chantez / CHANTEZ / Chantez

Sing Earth in Blood / Chantez la terre -
Sing Blood on Fire / Chantez en feu -
Sing Blood through Sky / Chantez le ciel -
Sing Wind in Blood / Chantez le vent-

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Chantez / CHANTEZ / Chantez

Where do you stand / If you have no ground?
Where are your roots / If you have no soil?
Where is your present / If you have no past?

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Chantez / CHANTEZ / Chantez

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Chantez / CHANTEZ / Chantez

Katahdin starts to cut, as AZABAN
Raccoon / KATAHDIN's FATHER, as a
young man in anguish, speaks in
spite of himself across time:

FATHER

RUN KATAHDIN RUN!

Katahdin puts down the knife,
rises, and runs in place, sobbing
with shame, as EARTH SONG
continues their song and move
onstage as lights transition to
full stage. MESATAWE Morning Star
/ KATAHDIN's MOTHER AS A YOUNG
WOMAN is revealed on her corner
platform. Katahdin cannot see or
hear Earth Song or her Mother.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run.

Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.

Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Are you running / Away.
Run / Home

Are you flying / Away.
Fly / Home -

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run -

- HOME!

Earth Song continues to sotto voce
loop refrain *Sing Blood / Sing*
BLOOD / Sing Blood.

MOTHER

Katahdin!

Katahdin cannot hear her.

MOTHER

(to audience)

Katahdin is my daughter and she is lost. I was taken from her when she was very young and where she did her growing, in all those non Native group foster homes, no one could teach her the ground of our stories.

We are her blood and we speak to her in the English and French words she would understand but she cannot hear us, she has not learned how to hear us. We are her blood and we are her stories and we are here. *Katahdin* -

MOTHER and EARTH SONG

(to Katahdin)

We are here.

MOTHER

(to audience)

My daughter needs to learn her past, our past, so she will remember her roots and so her feet will know her ground. We need Katahdin to remember, find her ground, find joy. She is the last of our blood on your side.

Earth Song resolves into its
individual spirits.

MOTHER

We are Katahdin's blood memories, past and future. We are her mother, her father, her sister, her ancestors. We are

others too, because blood echoes across time when it is strong. Our blood is strong. On this side, we choose our names. We have many names in many languages, but our first shared tongue was Abenaki so our first names are Abenaki. Katahdin does not remember us yet. We are:

(introducing herself)

MESATAWE / Morning Star. I am Katahdin's mother and I've chosen to keep my name from when I was on your side.

(introducing each in turn - if actors are wearing necklace signs, perhaps they flip them between Abenaki + English)

KASKALJASIS Song Sparrow, Katahdin's unborn younger sister and two of her great grandmothers. / NANATASIS Hummingbird, Katahdin's grandmother. / AWASOS Bear, Katahdin's grandfather. / MEGESO Eagle, two of Katahdin's great grandfathers. / MKAZAS Crow, my imaginary childhood bird friend. / AZABAN Raccoon ...

Azaban is engaged in some kind of mischief that is making him belly laugh so hard he is sputtering in silence, wholly oblivious to Mother.

MOTHER

(gently)

AZABAN Raccoon is Katahdin's father, but he doesn't choose to remember yet. On this side, we choose our memories. We choose the stories we can bear to carry.

(looking around her lawn chair)

This place is where Katahdin was born, where I was born. This place is in rural Maine. Katahdin's birth cord is buried here. My ashes and Katahdin's unborn sister's ashes are buried here too. This is where her father forgot himself. So this is Katahdin's memory home and I need to stay here for her until she remembers. If she would hear me just once she would know wherever she is, I am there too. But aieeee, this Maine summer day is hot!

SCRIM: A film clip of an explosion of sunset behind Katahdin, focusing in on Katahdin's green eyes as she runs on an ocean channel path.

- AND/OR -

MEGESO Eagle:

KATAHDIN runs hard on an ocean
channel path, surrounded by the
smog-crazed fire of a Southern
California sunset.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run!

Where do you stand / If you have no ground?
Where are your roots / If you have no soil?
Where is your present / If you have no past?

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

KATAHDIN

(to an audience member, as she walks it off)

Last night I dreamt of you, Maman. I can't really remember
you, but I dreamt you. In my dream you said my green eyes
sing transition and power and are a gift from my past like
how fast I can run. You said long, long ago is today and
also tomorrow.

MOTHER

Katahdin, your green eyes let you see all your ancestors,
Native, French Canadian, Mixed. Ecoutes-moi, m'petite.

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member, as her mother)

In my dream you said my mixed blood makes me stronger and
you told me the story of my name mountain.

MOTHER

Katahdin, your name mountain is the tallest in Maine, home
to the Four Wind Brothers and their mixed winds. Comprends-
tu? You are strong and mixed like your mountain brothers,
and you run like the wind..

KATAHDIN

Ouais, Maman, I am the mountain that runs. I am the
mountain.

Katahdin starts to run.
KASKALJASIS Song Sparrow
approaches Mother.

SONG SPARROW

Maman, I want to run with Katahdin, maybe she will remember me.

MOTHER

Maybe she will, m'petite. As her sister?

SONG SPARROW

Peut-être if we bring her to the beginning, when I was the White French Canadian girl they named LITTLE PALE WOLF.

MOTHER

Ouais, c'est vraiment une bonne idée, Grandmaman.

SCRIM: Film clip focuses extreme close-up on Katahdin's eye until the green blurs to a rush of intensely-hued fern and foliage, as stage to black.

DRUM PUSH gains intensity. Earth Song / Spirits join.

SCRIM: Film clip subtitled "WOODS NEAR THE SAINT-FRANÇOIS RIVER, QUÉBEC - 1705" - a YOUNG GIRL'S P.O.V. as she runs swiftly through woods. Several beats as we journey with the character as she runs. Freeze frame.

- AND/OR -

NANATASIS Hummingbird:
We look into one of Katahdin's green eyes and see a mountain blur to a rush of green. We are running through the woods near the Saint-François River in Québec. It is 1705 and we are running with a French Canadian girl, about 7 years old, with long fair hair and green eyes. She is very fast and

very frightened.

FINAL DRUM BEAT / CRESCENDO,
powerfully resonating in the
sudden silence.

Stage lights to full, revealing
KASKALJASIS Song Sparrow has
transformed into LITTLE PALE WOLF.
She is running in place in tandem
with Katahdin.

DRUM PUSH starts.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(choking sobs, French accented, very young)
Maaamaaa! Fire - where ...? Blood and fire everywhere and
you say *Show how fast...* So I run fast for you, Mama, see
how I - ? But where are you, Mama?

DRUM PUSH ends, final note
resounding. Katahdin senses
LITTLE PALE WOLF.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

MAMA!

Katahdin hears Little Pale Wolf,
but she can't see her. Katahdin
walks it off.

KATAHIN

(to an audience member, as her mother)
Voices, again. Maybe I cut too deep this time.

(to another audience member)
Little girl, why are you running - what are you running
from? Are you me?

(tracing her scarred and bloody wrist)
This is me.

MKAZAS Crow transforms into SANJAY
and strides forward brandishing an
empty dish detergent bottle,
sputtering with fury.
Katahdin rushes to cover her

wrist.

SANJAY

(pronounced East Indian accent)

KAY-TAY-DIN!

Katahdin turns and runs in place. Sanjay tries to run in tandem with her, but he is unaccustomed to running and falls behind. Katahdin notices and slows her pace so he can run with her. It is a great physical effort for Sanjay, and no effort at all for Katahdin.

SANJAY

(short of breath, pronounced East Indian accent)

KA-TAY-HE-DUN! You must listen to me, I am speaking to you. Very important -

Katahdin doesn't respond, but marginally increases her pace. Sanjay is barely able to keep up.

SANJAY

KAY-TA-HAY-DIN! I a MAN am speaking to you!

Katahdin regains her stride and leaves Sanjay sputtering in her wake, brandishing the empty dish detergent bottle as he leans over, gasping.

SANJAY

YOU AMERICAN WOMAN! I cannot know you American woman. You are always wasting! This bottle is not for throwing away - there is some ... left ...!

Katahdin runs in place.

SANJAY

(throws bottle down)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Sanjay continues his histrionics, picking up and brushing off the empty detergent bottle and storming off as Katahdin turns to watch him, walking it off as:

KATAHDIN

(after Sanjay, once he cannot hear)
I can't marry you, Sanjay. I'm sorry you don't have a Green Card. Maybe that's why you chose me for the room? I didn't know.

Katahdin goes to her car and sits, restrained kinetic energy, as a worried Sanjay paces, nearsightedly examining a yellow legal pad.

KATAHDIN

I thought living under a roof and having an office job might help, but I can't breathe and time is mixing up.

Katahdin unwraps her wrist and traces her scars as Sanjay steps downstage.

SANJAY

(speaking on cell phone)
Yes please I may speak to BOOB-ee. About the room for rent? BOB-ee. Bob-ee. Yes, so sorry. Please I may enquire if this is a woman ... a American woman?

KATAHDIN

(resisting looking at the knife)
All I share with cockroaches and kings is this will to survive, so I cut and I run.

SANJAY

(to cell phone)
No? BOOB-ee is a man's name? BOB-ee. So sorry ... hello?

Sanjay peers nearsightedly at his legal pad, sighing dramatically as he uses a felt red pen to scratch another name off his list. He studies the list, as Katahdin takes up her knife. There is only

one more name on Sanjay's list and he silently begs the universe for success. He dials.

Katahdin's cell phone rings and she answers. As she speaks, she resists the power of her knife.

SANJAY

(to cell phone)
Yes, please I may speak to Kahhhhhh... t-t-t-t... so sorry...?
About the room for rent?

KATAHDIN

(to cell phone)
My name is Katahdin, like the mountain.

SANJAY

Yes? Please I may enquire if this is a woman ... a real American woman?

KATAHDIN

Real...? I'm part Native American, so I guess that's about as real as you can get.

SANJAY

(downcast)
Part American ... You are meaning that you are not a real American woman, no?

KATAHDIN

Yes, I mean, I'm American and I'm part Native American, First American...

SANJAY

First American ... you are meaning you are still a real American woman, no?

KATAHDIN

Yes, I'm still a woman and still American.

SANJAY

(puzzled)
Still a woman ...

(understands, he thinks, laughing uncomfortably)
Very funny! First American, so there is a Second American?

KATAHDIN

First Americans were the first Americans, the first inhabitants of this North American continent - Native American, Aboriginal, Indigenous, American Indian ...

SANJAY

(a eureka moment)

Oh! You are a *American* Indian! I am a Indian too, a 100% First Indian!

(he finds himself vastly amusing and laughs until he gasps for air)

Oh...oh...oh. I am very funny too, no? You are a very nice real American woman, but -

(suddenly intently serious)

I need somebody for the room with no ... second person ... no man ...

KATAHDIN

My whole life I've slept with strangers, so I'm thinking it's time I try sleeping alone.

SANJAY

(very taken aback)

You are sleeping ...?

(doesn't understand)

Ha ha ha! You want to see the room?

Katahdin puts the knife down with relief.

KATAHDIN

Sure, I'm kinda over sleeping in my car so I thought I'd check a few places out.

SANJAY

(puzzled)

Sleeping in ...

(doesn't understand)

Funny! Here is the address...

Sanjay continues M.O.S. on phone, using grandiose hand gestures to

pantomime the journey,
supplementing his extraordinarily
and ridiculously detailed
directions, as Katahdin 'listens'
on her cell phone.

KATAHDIN

(pressing buttons on cell phone)
Mute. Speaker.

(setting the cell phone down)
I can speak to you when I know you can't hear me. I know
the address, it's by the ocean canal path where I run. I
only have the courage to look at one place. A step. Truth
be told, I don't know if I want to rent a room. It's not
you.

('listening' to Sanjay's directions and glancing
across time to watch his antics)
I think. I just don't know if I can stay still without
forgetting how to breathe. I've been living on the road so
long, I don't remember how to stay in one place, I'm scared
to stay in one place.

MOTHER

I'm here, Katahdin. I'm here with you. We're all here with
you, always. Hear us.

Katahdin almost hears.

KATAHDIN

(to an audience member)
Maman? I miss you. I don't really remember you but I miss
you. Can you miss someone you never really knew? I don't
remember much from when I was a child. There was a beat-up
Airstream on a grassy high ground with woods and that was
home and you had brown eyes, beautiful brown eyes, and I
remember how bad I wanted my green eyes brown too so I'd
know I was yours, so everyone'd know I was yours.

MOTHER

Katahdin, I'm here, we're here.

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member)
Maman?

LITTLE PALE WOLF

Maaamaaa! I run fast for you, Mama, see how I - ? But where are you, Mama? MAMA!

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member)

Little girl? Where are you? Let me help you.

Katahdin exits her car.

MOTHER

AWASOS Bear, please, help her remember. NANATASIS Hummingbird, please, help her. AZABAN Raccoon, please.

Little Pale Wolf and Sanjay transform back into Song Sparrow and Crow as NANATASIS Hummingbird transforms into a chain-smoking, Dallas-watching, PART-TIME ASSISTANT GROUP HOME MATRON, AZABAN Raccoon transforms into a LITTLE BOY, and AWASOS Bear walks with dignity and sits with his back to ASSISTANT MATRON, hugging his knees and facing audience (Awasos Bear will portray the TV).

SCRIM: Photograph of a run-down house. Subtitle: "THE PORTLAND SUNRISE GROUP HOME, MAINE - 1991."

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member)

Little girl - am I remembering you, dreaming you?

(looking around)

Time is mixing up again. This is that first group home, from when I was 4. I didn't talk here, and there was this boy -

AWASOS

(to audience)

We are in a foster group home in Portland, Maine. It is 1991 and this is the first of many group homes for my very young granddaughter, Katahdin. I, Awasos Bear, need Katahdin to remember us, and I will try to help.

Awason Bear intones the *Dallas* theme. Azaban Raccoon as Little Boy ambushes Katahdin. Katahdin is mute at this time of her life.

LITTLE BOY

HOW! Pow pow pow!

ASSISTANT MATRON

House Rules! Mayhem in commercial time ONLY.

LITTLE BOY

Yes, m'am.

ASSISTANT MATRON

And what're we telling the Head Matron when she gets back?

LITTLE BOY

(by rout, seeking approval)

We played wholesome and enriching educational games and you read good books to us and we did not watch TV at all so we will grow up to be good Americans and have jobs and not do drugs or -

Theme music over, the show is about to start.

ASSISTANT MATRON

(interrupting)

SILENCE!

Little Boy is hurt but patiently waits until a commercial break, while Katahdin thoughtfully considers him.

AWASOS (as TV)

I love you. I hate you. I love you.

(interjects as himself)

We are oil rich Anglo folks living on a cattle ranch on land sacred to indigenous peoples for thousands of years, but you won't see a Native American on this show because though we live and love and die on this land today we are still the invisible Americans, and our children like Katahdin watch this show and learn we are nowhere and they learn how to disappear.

(to Katahin)
Katahdin -

MATRON

Huh?

AWASOS (as TV)

(to Assistant Matron)
I love you. I hate you. I love you.

(turning downstage again)
And now a word from our sponsors: Don't you want to be the envy of all your friends? Only you will have a toilet that shines pure white. The secret is Bright White, a pioneering new product that removes everything from surfaces except pure shining white.

Awason continues the commercial sotto voce under following.
Little Boy pounces.

LITTLE BOY

HOW! Pow pow pow! Yer one dead injun squaw! YEEE HAAW!

MATRON

Katie isn't all Indian. She's part White too, she's a bastard breed and you're no cowboy neither, you son of a dead crackhead whore, so cut it out already.

AWASOS (as TV)

Bright White, for pure shining white! And now we return to our program: I love you. I hate you. I love you.

Awason repeats these three sentences under rest of scene. Little Boy is livid and fighting tears as he turns to Katahdin, bellowing:

LITTLE BOY

HOW!

MATRON

RULES!

Little Boy is crying, furious at his tears, and turns downstage, crouching. Katahdin gently puts her hand on his shoulder.

LITTLE BOY

(whipping around to Katahdin)

You're some bastard breed who don't talk. Some stupid dumb injun and you're only a girl - some stupid dumb squaw girl - and I DON'T WANNA PLAY WITH YOU no more!

Little Boy storms off and he and the Assistant Matron transform back into Raccoon and Hummingbird. Song Sparrow and Crow help Awasos Bear to his feet.

KATAHDIN

(after Little Boy can't hear her)

It's not you. I can't speak, I've forgotten how.

(hearing her voice - to an audience member)

Where did you go, little boy? I can talk now, I'll talk with you...

(looking around)

I didn't talk for three years. The doctor said I was traumatized because I saw my mother die. The grown ups in those group homes called me 'Katie' and I almost forgot my name until I dreamt of my mountain and my mother ... those same dreams from last night.

The scrim photograph fades.

MOTHER

M'petite, those're your memories, but I can only remind you in your dreams until you remember for yourself.

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member)

Maman? What is happening, I don't understand ...

Mother stands and puts her palms flat before her, reaching for Katahdin, but restrained by an invisible barrier, as Katahdin moves downstage center, upset and

lost, rocking as she crouches and traces her scars.

Song Sparrow softly sings as she crosses to Mother's corner, standing behind Mother's ratty lawn chair and continuing her song as she gently guides Mother to sit again and rests her hands on Mother's shoulders. Katahdin hears the song and relaxes.

KATAHDIN

(to an audience member)

Is that you singing, little girl? Who are you ... where are you ... where am I?

SCRIM: Film clip of a bus depot station. Subtitle: "NEW ENGLAND BUS COMPANY DEPOT, PORTLAND, MAINE - 2005"

Earth Song spirits move among audience as bus depot travelers and their families, sotto voce dialogue under following.

From here on, each time Katahdin speaks she addresses a different audience member as the Other.

KATAHDIN

(looking around)

Are you here, little girl? I remember this place! When I turned 18 end of December 2005 the foster system aged me out and I came here to this bus depot because I thought there'd be maps, some kinda sign which way to go. What did I expect - a big neon red arrow? But I looked at all the destinations and none of them spoke to me, so I watched the people come and go -

(studies the audience as bus depot travelers)

- all these people with places to go. You're not here, are you, little girl? You can't hear me, no one here can hear me and I have no where to go. Where's your family - are you alone, too? When you've got no family, you've got to make one for yourself, even if it's just in your imagination.

Hummingbird is a young mother with a baby in her arms, carrying a little American flag.

KATAHDIN

(notices Hummingbird)

See, little girl, do you see that young mother with the sleeping baby? She's waiting for someone. I think it's her boyfriend, the baby's father. Let's make her our Grandmother. So that little sleeping baby would be our mother. So you would be my little sister. Yes.

Awasos Bear, in camouflage, enters the depot from behind the audience as a young soldier on furlong from Iraq. He and his girlfriend have an emotional reunion, and he meets his daughter for the first time.¹

Katahdin weeps as she watches.

KATAHDIN

Little Sister, these people are strangers to us, but I have named them our family and it hurts they can't see me, they won't see me.

The young family prepares to exit.

KATAHDIN

(to young family)

Don't go. Please, don't go.

The young family exits.

KATAHDIN

(to young family)

Why did you go? I didn't get to say goodbye.

(to audience member)

Little Sister, sometimes having a family hurts, even if it's just made up.

¹ A happy variation on 1970, when Joe - Awasos Bear - died in Vietnam and never had the chance to see his girlfriend Anaïs again or to meet his newborn daughter, Mesatawe Morning Star.

MOTHER

(taking Song Sparrow's hand)

Katahdin, I am here and so is your Little Sister. We are all here with you and you never need to say goodbye because you carry our love with you.

Song Sparrow starts to sing, and Katahdin hears.

KATAHDIN

Is that you singing, Little Sister? I want to tell you about our real mother. Our mother had beautiful brown eyes and she named me for a mountain and she loved us very much. She died when I was real little. All I remember of our father is two moments, him laughing and holding me up in the air so I could fly and him crying in the corner, angry words, glass everywhere. He disappeared after Maman died. He's dead too, I think, like all those strangers said, otherwise why hasn't he come looking for me all these years, why wouldn't he remember his blood?

MOTHER

Katahdin, your father is lost. Your father lost his way that day you remember, that day your unborn sister and I died, but you carry him too, you carry all his love. All that was beautiful in him survives in you, and when you remember, he will find his way.

Mother acknowledges Azaban as she speaks. Azaban is unaware.

KATAHDIN

Maman? What's happening to me, why am I here again, raw and hungry and wanting. Why won't they see me? I am invisible to all these people. I feel like I'm falling. I'm a ghost. I can't breathe. Gotta get outta here before I disappear -

Katahdin rises as Ensemble Actors transform back to their Spirit characters.

KATAHDIN

Where's my car, I need my knife.

Scrim film clip fades and Earth Song sings as Katahdin starts to run, her panic gradually replaced by calm.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run.

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Are you running / Away.
Run / Home.

Are you flying / Away.
Fly / Home -

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run.

KATAHDIN

So I got outta there, Little Sister, I got on a bus and worked apple and strawberry picking and got my beautiful little rusted up runt of a tin can on wheels - 199,999 miles when I bought it. Of course, I didn't know the odometer must've been broken for years.

Crow transforms back to Sanjay as Katahdin approaches her car.

SANJAY

(nervously practicing as he paces, peering at his legal pad)
KAY TAY...He Done... Dun ...

KATAHDIN

(walking it off by her car)
I worked for food, car repairs. A lot of car repairs. But you learn fast what is bad but you can patch it and what is really bad and then you're just looking around at wherever you are, hoping someone'll stop soon before it gets dark or before there's weather and you're hoping whoever stops will be a family or a woman and you know the

first thing is to find work and a mechanic:

Katahdin prepares to enter her car as Azaban Raccoon rapidly transforms into a lewd chaw chewing and spitting rural ALABAMA MECHANIC, interrupting Katahdin from entering her car - and saving her from her knife for a bit.

ALABAMA MECHANIC

(thick Alabama accent)

Well now if you're asking me this vehicle need's a lot of fixing before it'll be fit to drive to the junk heap, and since you don't look like you've got the pretty penny it'll cost and since I'm just heading over to the cockfight myself, why dontcha find your way over to that motel over yonder, the one with the busted T-E-L in the sign - they give me a fair rate - and wait for me to come on by -

KATAHDIN

- or -

Azaban Raccoon pivots around and has transformed into a leering BROOKLYN MECHANIC, again interrupting Katahdin from entering her car.

BROOKLYN MECHANIC

(thick Brooklyn accent)

Mother of Grace will you lookit this mess? We're talking serious finances here, Lady, if you aren't gonna dump this mess and don't take it wrong or nothing but you don't look all that rolling in dough - so lemme contemplate the situation here on my way to the boxing match and there's a cot under the oil cloths over there and how about you rest up a bit before I get back to fix you up?

Mechanic transforms back into Azaban Raccoon, who laughs uncomfortably, skipping away as:

KATAHDIN

I never knew how many 'languages' there were in America, Little Sister, or how the mechanics all seemed to speak the same one.

Katahdin turns back to enter her car as Sanjay interrupts her with excitement.

SANJAY

Hello Kay Tay Done He... Tay!

Katahdin turns to him, confused at how time is coming undone, again.

SANJAY

You want to see the room? Very nice room...

KATAHDIN

Sanjay?

SANJAY

Yes, this is my name. I am the apartment room for rent - I mean, I am the man with the apartment room for rent.

KATAHDIN

(figuring out where she is in time)

OK.

Sanjay leads Katahdin away from her car and to the apartment and M.O.S., using grandiose hand gestures, he shows Katahdin every last detail of the extremely small apartment room.

Katahdin watches Sanjay's antics as she speaks to her Little Sister. Sanjay is unaware.

KATAHDIN

Little Sister, I think this room is really a big closet - guess that clothing rod across the length of the room is a pretty big clue - but I just need room for my bedroll and I can stand up straight in here, and there's a bathroom in the apartment, and I really only want a place to crash at night. I think I might be able to breathe here, Little Sister.

Sanjay completes his apartment tour and turns to Katahdin.

SANJAY

Very nice room, no? You are wanting to rent this room, part-First-not-Second-American-Indian lady? It is only one month notice if you want to move out and I will make the rent very cheap since we are both being Indians, no?

KATAHDIN

(to Sanjay)
Sure, I'll try it out.

Sanjay breaks into a beaming smile and does a very awkward happy dance.

KATAHDIN

(to "Little Sister")
It's been different, but OK. I only crash here at night because the rest of the time I've been working or running. But about a week ago Sanjay started acting a little weird.

(watching Sanjay attempt to moon walk)
Well. Weirder than usual.

Sanjay abruptly shifts from dancing to pacing and trying to get his courage up to ask Katahdin something very important to him, as Katahdin checks her wrist wrapping and prepares to exit her room. Sanjay approaches her as she exits.

SANJAY

(hopeful)
Kay - tay - eee- dun. Rent is due in 3 days but I am having a very good idea. My Work Visa will be ending soon but if you, a real American woman, marry me, I will get my Green Card and I will pay your rent here for 2 years and then you will be no more married with me. See, this is a very good idea, no?

KATAHDIN

No, no, no.

(bends down, frantically untying sneaker and thrusting a small wad of bills toward him)
This is everything I've got now and I'll give you the rest tomorrow and it will be my one month notice like you said.

SANJAY

(forlornly looking at money then back at her)
But *No* is meaning *Maybe*, no? I read this in a American magazine. If a American woman says *No* many times, it means *Maybe*, no?

KATAHDIN

No! I mean, yes, it means no. I mean, I'll get you the rest of the money tomorrow and by the end of next month I'll move out.

SANJAY

(Bollywood telenovella histrionics)
But you are not understanding of me! If you do not marry me then I will not be having a Green Card and then it will not be possible for me to stay here and learn how to be a good American man like Clint Eastwood! If you do not marry me then I must be going home to India, where there is no Clint Eastwood except on the videos! But maybe *No* is now and *Yes* or *Maybe* is tomorrow, no?

Sanjay clings to his hope as he sadly crosses offstage, and as Katahdin exits the apartment and starts to run in place.

Raccoon trips Sanjay and Sanjay stumbles, recovers, and pivots, immediately storming forth, trying to catch up with Katahdin as she runs, brandishing the empty detergent bottle. Sanjay leans over, gasping:

SANJAY

YOU AMERICAN WOMAN! I cannot know you American woman. You are always wasting! This bottle is not for throwing away - there is some ... left ...!

Katahdin runs in place.

SANJAY

(throws the bottle down)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Sanjay continues his histrionics, picking up and brushing off the empty detergent bottle and storming off to transform back to Crow as Katahdin walks it off.

KATAHDIN

Sanjay should've flat out asked me when I applied, Little Sister, and saved us both the drama. I run alone.

Katahdin winds down, catching her breath, as Song Sparrow transforms into Little Pale Wolf, running.

MOTHER

Katahdin, écoutes-moi, m'petite.

Katahdin almost hears.

KATAHDIN

Maman?

LITTLE PALE WOLF

MAMA!

Simultaneous:

LITTLE PALE WOLF

Maman, je cours ... voyez-vous? Où-êtes vous, Maman? Mama!

KATAHDIN

Even when I'm still, I can hear the wind in my blood, running.

KATAHDIN

What's happening? I need -

Katahdin runs. Little Pale Wolf transforms back to Song Sparrow, and moves to Mother.

SONG SPARROW

(to Mother, sad that Katahdin doesn't hear them)
Maman.

MOTHER

(comforting Song Sparrow)

She does not hear us yet, m'petite.

SONG SPARROW

But she must hear us, so she will survive, so we all will survive.

Song Sparrow goes to run with Katahdin.

MOTHER

I died too young to be this tired. Aieeeee, this heat, the weight of this air. Why does this heat never end?

Mother pulls at her blouse and uses her hand to catch her beautiful long hair in a ponytail off her neck, as Raccoon makes a great show of shaking a can of Coors Light in front of the audience, but where Mother cannot see him.²

RACCOON

Because you did not choose the day of your death, Mesatawe Morning Star -

MOTHER

Ouais, je sais que c'est ça mais it's just so hot today.

Mother watches her story in the distance as she fans the back of her neck, while Raccoon laughs, shaking the can even harder, then holding it to his ear.

RACCOON

- and because you choose to stay and watch this Katahdin and try to talk to her from that ground where you died, instead of coming with us wherever you want.

²Actually a can that has been emptied of beer and refilled with water.

MOTHER

But you know I need to stay here until she hears me, Azaban Raccoon. You understand why Katahdin needs to remember, don't you?

Azaban Raccoon stops shaking the beer can and is extremely excited - he knows this answer! He starts to say but then stops, confused. He shakes his head. His eyes gleam as he thinks of the right answer but then he abruptly stops, confused again. He sheepishly turns toward Mother.

MOTHER

(gently)

We are her blood but she cannot see us, we are her stories but she doesn't know us, we are her ground but she doesn't feel us, how we with all our love hold her up. Our daughter needs to learn her past, our past, so she will remember her roots and so her feet will know her ground. If she would hear me she would know wherever she is, I am there too, we are all there too. But aieeee, this heat!

Mother watches Katahdin run as she fans the back of her neck. Raccoon skips over to Mother and hands her the shaken can of beer, laughing.

AZABAN

Take this, Mesatawe Morning Star, it is cool and will take away your day's heat and remind you of when you were breathing.

MOTHER

(reaching for can, laughing with surprise)

Merci, Azaban Raccoon, for not always being the mischievous trickster of your namesake.

(quietly to herself)

And I hope someday you also will allow yourself to remember.

Azaban laughs as he skips away. Mother holds the can to the side of her neck. Katahdin senses Song Sparrow but cannot see her, and

both walk it off, in place.

KATAHDIN

Little Sister, some voice inside keeps insisting there's something more than this - all of this - something beyond, a reaching promise, a swelling wanting within that sometimes chokes because though the voice inside cries for something more, it never says exactly what that something more *is*.

As Katahdin speaks, Awasos Bear brings a chair and a multi-line office phone forward. Song Sparrow and Crow help Awasos Bear sit in front of the chair, holding the phone.

KATAHDIN

(realization)

What time is it? I don't want to be late for work.

Katahdin crosses to the chair, accepts the phone from Awasos Bear, and sits in the chair. Katahdin is not aware of Awasos Bear.

SCRIM: Film clip of a frenetically busy photocopy machine sales office, phones ringing incessantly, sales agents pacing as they push product over the phone, as they brag sales statistics to each other, as they react to the office president recalibrating the sales standings on the prominent whiteboard. Harsh neon tube lighting - one tube shimmers pinkish, about to burn out. Freeze frame, muted office sounds continue,

- AND/OR -

MEGESO Eagle:

Katahdin arrives at work, a noisy and busy photocopy machine sales

office in Los Angeles.

Awasos Bear slowly leans over, putting his head in his hands and softly singing his variation on the Earth Song. Katahdin gently puts the phone on Bear's back as desk while Mother considers the beer can.

MOTHER

(to beer can)

I know you - I remember you and all your brothers.

Azaban laughs. Mother starts to open can as Song Sparrow softly sings her variation of the Earth Song as she walks toward Mother. Mother halts as she hears Song Sparrow's song and watches her approach.

MOTHER

(to Song Sparrow)

I know you - I remember you and your songs, Kaskaljasis Song Sparrow, my daughter and my grandmothers.

Song Sparrow continues singing as she reaches out her hand for the beer can. Mother considers, then hands over the beer can, and joins in singing the Earth Song for a phrase as Song Sparrow walks away.

Raccoon tries to sneak away but as he turns, Song Sparrow is there. Raccoon hangs his head and laughs sheepishly as Song Sparrow gives him the can, shaking her head, and transforms into Little Pale Wolf, running.

RACCOON

(regaining his glee as he skips away)

Mesatawe Morning Star wouldn't have opened it anyway, Song Sparrow -

(as he does a French Canadian clog jig)
Allons-y! She remembers too much and I am happy to remember nothing. Et puis comme ça!

Katahdin sits at her desk
answering multiple flashing lines,
as Earth Song Spirits transform
into office workers, salespeople,
etc., mingling in the audience.

KATAHDIN

(answering call)
Good Morning, thank you for calling Copiers-R-Us, #1
photocopy seller in Southern California, how may I direct
your call?

(listens)
No, I don't know why he didn't bring you more Krispy Kremes
today, please hold for transfer.

(answering another call)
Good Morning, thank you for calling Copiers-R-Us, #1 seller
in Southern California, how may I - ?

(listens)
I'm sorry, we don't actually copy documents. We just sell
the machines. Have you tried - ?

(listens)
Yes, I do see how our company name might be misleading -

Office sounds and light fades, as
a DRUM PUSH representing the
pursuit of Little Pale Wolf
through the woods develops in
intensity until dominant.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(frightened, looking behind her)
Maman, les étrangers me suivent et je suis trop fatiguée.
I hear them, closer, but I am so tired, Maman.

Stage to black.

SCRIM: Film clip of a young girl's P.O.V. running swiftly through woods, foliage. Several beats.

- AND/OR -

MEGESO Eagle:

As Katahdin works in the office we look into her green eyes and see a mountain blur to a rush of green. We are running through the woods near the Saint-François River in Québec in 1705 with a very young girl with green eyes. Her dress is torn to rags, her face is smudged with soot and dirt, and her long fair hair is briered with leaves and twigs.

DRUM PUSH crescendos, representing the proximity of Little Pale Wolf's pursuers.

SCRIM: The young girl's P.O.V. emerges from the foliage and is faced by an extremely steep green mountain cliff. Freeze frame.

FINAL DRUM BEATS. Lights immediately up reveal Little Pale Wolf, running, exhausted.

MEGESO Eagle:

She runs out from the trees and finds herself in front of a steep mountain cliff.

With FINAL DRUM BEAT, she whips around downstage to audience and freezes, the FINAL DRUM BEAT resounding. She is holding a stone back, prepared to hurl it at the audience / her pursuers. She is the picture of defiance, without fear.

Katahdin and Little Pale Wolf see each other across time.

SCRIM: Still photo of green mountain cliff replaced by film clip of the frenetically busy photocopy machine sales office as before but M.O.S., with the dream's deep echo of the final DRUM BEAT, resounding.

Katahdin sits at her desk, islanded in the sudden absolute silence, listening to her dream's echoes and watching Little Pale Wolf. Katahdin rises from her desk, holding the phone. Katahdin does not notice when a Spirit character takes the phone. Katahdin moves toward Little Pale Wolf.

SCRIM: The office scene freezes and fades, replaced by a still photo of a green mountain, as:

KATAHDIN

(to Little Pale Wolf)

Little Sister? Who are you running from? Tell me, let me help you.

Little Pale Wolf breaks from her story to approach Katahdin.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

You hear me!

(realizing with joy)

Your eyes are green like mine! I am your first grandmother.

Little Pale Wolf gives Katahdin her stone.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

Sometimes they are not enemies.

KATAHDIN

I don't understand.

Awasos Bear has transformed into an ABENAKI ELDER. Mkazas Crow enters as ABENAKI WARRIOR, bringing a blanket for his Elder, they sit, watching the audience as dancers.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(taking Katahdin's hand and turning her gently toward Awasos Bear / Abenaki Elder and Mkazas Crow / Abenaki Warrior)

Look.

Light focuses on Elder and Warrior. Earth Song drums.

ELDER

The White girlchild must be returned to her people.

WARRIOR

Grandfather, her people are gone, her village is burnt, we saw the ruins. We found her in the woods. She runs as a young wolf. Grandfather, we have prayed to the Creator, but Red Feather yet has no child. We ask to care for this White girlchild as our own.

The men are wordless for a long beat as they watch the dancers and listen to the drums. Stage lights fade up, as Little Pale Wolf smiles to Katahdin.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(to Katahdin)

Voyez-vous? Sometimes they are not enemies.

Little Pale Wolf smiles at Katahdin and moves upstage and arcs around, transformed back into Song Sparrow. Song Sparrow sings as she goes to Awasos Bear.

SONG SPARROW

(To Awasos Bear, gently putting her hand on his back)
Awasos Bear, Grandfather, it is time to rise.

Song Sparrow and Crow gently assist him to rise to his feet with dignity. They exit, as:

SCRIM: The still photo of a green mountain fades, replaced by the previous office scene, as:

Hummingbird has transformed into OFFICE MANAGER, the mother of the company president, and is lecturing Katahdin M.O.S., but Katahdin is not listening. The Office Manager's dialogue becomes full-voiced:

OFFICE MANAGER

- and so we're gonna hafta get a time stamp machine because I know you lie about your hours and I can't be here watching after you ever moment of ever day. And my son the president of this #1 Copiers-R-Us company agrees with me that we need to get one of those wall video cameras too in order to make sure you don't mess with the time stamp machine because you never can tell with you injuns - even half-breeds like you - what's gonna end up missing from the office or if you're gonna come in drunk as a skunk or -

As the Office Manager speaks, Katahdin considers the stone in her hand, as Spirits remove the chair. Katahdin holds the stone back, prepared to hurl it at the Office Manager. The Office Manager is unaware, but shifts to speaking her thoughts.

OFFICE MANAGER

(not aware she is now speaking her inner thoughts)
- and my Momma was part Cherokee because her people were slaves to Cherokee folks back in the 1800s and my Momma's people became Cherokee and married Cherokee folks and I never knew nothing about it until right before Momma died she showed me some papers and said the Cherokee Nation had

decided we weren't part Cherokee anymore because our people had been African slaves -

KATAHDIN

I love you. I hate you. I love you.

Katahdin considers and studies the stone, troubled. The Office Manager continues ad lib M.O.S. speaking as if Katahdin were still seated and was paying close attention as she exits, returning transformed back into Hummingbird. Katahdin moves downstage and starts to run in place.

KATAHDIN

Well, this has been a day, Little Sister. I'm glad I met you but I don't understand why time is so mixed up. How can you be my first grandmother, you look like you're only seven? Why didn't you let me say goodbye?

(walks a bit as she gets her bearings - yawns)
Sorry. I think I need to crash.

She watches Crow instantly transformed to Sanjay jump out with the empty detergent bottle, gesticulating wildly, berating her M.O.S. and beating his chest with the empty bottle. She watches him for several beats. He is not stopping.

KATAHDIN

In my car. I think I need to crash in my car.

Katahdin looks around, trying to figure out which way to go, as Raccoon trips Sanjay, who stumbles, looks around wildly, threatening the unseen tormentor with the empty detergent bottle, but seeing no one sputters silently in rage as he transforms back to Crow.

Meanwhile, the Spirits start creating their Earth Song, and will continue for the duration of the Act.

KATAHDIN

(realizes with wonder)
I haven't cut since this morning.

Katahdin smiles and starts to run, as Hummingbird flies to Katahdin and gently introduces herself.

NANATASIS

Katahdin, I am Nanatasis, "Hummingbird."

Crow flies to Katahdin to introduce himself.

CROW

Katahdin, I am Mkazas, "Crow."

MEGESO Eagle flies parallel to Katahdin and slow motion runs in exact tandem with Katahdin, with great joy.

MEGESO

Katahdin, I am Megeso, "Eagle."

Crow watches Katahdin as they run in tandem, as Awasos Bear catches Azaban Raccoon as he is casually attempting to exit, and brings him to Katahdin.

AWASOS

Katahdin, I am Awasos, "Bear", and this is Azaban -

AZABAN

RACCOON!

Raccoon breaks free, does a gleeful Québécois jig while intoning his own accompaniment, and scampers off, as Awasos Bear sighs.

Final Drum Push / Earth Song
Crescendo starts, as all Spirits
move to join Mother in her corner.

At Final Drum Beat, all Spirits
and Mother turn to face Katahdin,
who is still running.

MOTHER

(to Katahdin)

It is time to sleep, m'petite. We are all here now for
you, for your dreams. We are all here now to remind you of
your memories.

Katahdin winds down her running,
catching her breath as she
approaches her car.

KATAHDIN

Maman? Even when I'm still, my blood is running. I can
hear the wind in my blood, running.

Katahdin moves into her car, which
now has 3 chairs for a backseat.
She considers the stone before she
puts it next to her knife. She is
very sleepy and curls on the
backseat and closes her eyes.

Mother has a thought and takes the
green fancydance fringe shawl from
the back of her lawn chair and
gives it to Song Sparrow, and Song
Sparrow sings as she moves to
Katahdin and gently unfolds the
shawl over her as she sleeps,
continuing to sing as she rejoins
Mother and the Spirits.

Powerful Drum Push / Crescendo as
Mother and all Spirits, even
Raccoon, one by one join Song
Sparrow in her song with joy.

EARTH SONG

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.
Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Lights are fading, replaced by a
warm and bright blue diffuse dream
light. Final Drum Beat / Earth
Song note, resounding.

MOTHER

(to Katahdin)

It is time to sleep, m'petite. Oligawi, olegwasi, et bonne
rêves. Sleep well. Dream well.

EARTH SONG

Sing, sing, SING! / Blood.

[If there will be an intermission,
fade to black.]

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

IF INTERMISSION: BLACK. POWERFUL DRUM PUSH /
SINGING / CRESCENDO.

NO INTERMISSION: Lights up, a warm and bright blue
diffuse dream light, on EARTH
SONG. Katahdin is sleeping.

Spirits move amongst the audience
as they sing their Earth Song,
mixing French and English, singing
to the audience, watching the
audience watch Katahdin sleep,
trying to see her through their
eyes. Audience engagement is
encouraged if possible - clapping,
stomping, singing, etc.

EARTH SONG

Sing, sing, SING / Blood.

*Sing Earth in Blood -
Sing Blood on Fire -
Sing Blood through Sky -
Sing Wind in Blood -*

*Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.*

Where do you stand / If you have no ground?
Where are your roots / If you have no soil?
Where is your present / If you have no past?

*Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood*

*Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.*

She's a mountain.
She's a woman.
She's a bird.

She's a mountain.
She's a woman.
She's a bird.

Mountain, Woman, Bird -
Sing, sing, SING / Blood.

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run.

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.
Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.
Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

She's running / Away.
She's running / Home.

She's flying / Away.
She's flying / Home.

Are you running / Away.
Run / Home.

Are you flying / Away.
Fly / Home -

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run.

Sing, sing, SING / Blood.

- Home!

Final drum push. Lights to full
as Katahdin opens her eyes,
reacting with wonder to the shawl.

Katahdin sits up on center chair
and wraps the shawl around her,
facing audience. She is dreaming.

KATAHDIN

Voices again. Am I dreaming, where am I?

Panicked, Katahdin goes to the
front seat and finds her stone and
knife where she left them. She
traces the scars on her wrist.

KATAHDIN

My scars are my stories, my knife helps me understand.

Katahdin picks up her knife and
considers it as Song Sparrow sings
as she crosses to Katahdin.
Katahdin hears and turns and looks
to Song Sparrow with wonder, she
is remembering as she dreams.
Song Sparrow gently takes the
knife and sets it down, and gives
Katahdin the stone.

SONG SPARROW

(to Katahdin)

You don't need to cut to hear your blood's stories. We are
your blood stories.

KATAHDIN

(to Song Sparrow)

Little Sister?

Song Sparrow smiles with joy at
the recognition.

SONG SPARROW

Come dream with us, Elder Sister. Come remember our
stories with us.

Song Sparrow leads Katahdin from
her car toward Megeso Eagle.
Katahdin is able to see and hear
all the Spirits now, and the scrim
film clips and photos, and she
approaches Megeso Eagle.

KATAHDIN

(shyly)
I remember you, I think. You are Megeso Eagle?

MEGESO

(happy she recognizes him)
Yes.

Song Sparrow moves downstage center and sings as she transforms into LINTO She Sings, facing audience, running and singing with great joy, as:

SCRIM: Film clip subtitled "MOUNT KATAHDIN, MAINE 1895" - starts with a view of the mountain then blurs to a YOUNG GIRL'S P.O.V. running swiftly through woods as she sings. Several beats as we journey with the character as she runs. Freeze frame.

MEGESO EAGLE

(to audience / other Spirits / Katahdin)
We are seeing my eagle view of MOUNT KATAHDIN, your name mountain, then a rush of green because we are running through thick woods. It is 1895 and we are running with a young girl. She is about 8 years old and has long black hair and green eyes.

(to Katahdin)
You have her green eyes, Katahdin, and her gift of running very fast.

Katahdin smiles and moves to join Linto She Sings, running in tandem, as Awasos Bear enters as GRANDFATHER, smoking his pipe, deep in thought. Once in a while he shudders as he coughs, a deep rasping cough that wearies him.

Katahdin notices Grandfather and approaches him shyly.

KATAHDIN

I think I remember you, but I'm sorry I don't remember your name?

AWASOS BEAR

(breaking from Grandfather role to answer Katahdin)
My name is Awasos Bear, Katahdin. I am one of your great grandfathers, and I am Linto She Sing's grandfather too.

KATAHDIN

Grandfather?

AWASOS BEAR

Yes.

Katahdin returns to run with Linto, who speaks to Katahdin.

LINTO

My name is LINTO and it means "She Sings" and that is a good name for me my Grandfather says because I am happy when I sing! I am happy when I run too. My grandfather calls me Green Eyes because my eyes are green like my grandmother from long ago, like your eyes! I speak Abenaki and this is what I am speaking now.

KATAHDIN

(to Linto)
You run when you're happy?

LINTO

(answering)
Yes, don't you?

Katahdin is silent.

GRANDFATHER

(to audience as Linto She Sings and Katahdin, sharing a child's oft-repeated bedtime story)
Long ago a White girl child with green eyes came to our ancestors in Québec. She ran very fast and they gave her the name Little Pale Wolf.

LINTO

(to Katahdin)
Not long ago we lived in Canada and my mother and my father got real sick and Grandfather and I got sick too and

Grandfather and I got better but my mother and my father live in the ground now and Grandfather says they are happy when I run and sing. Grandfather and I have walked south to Mount Katahdin in this state they call Maine - we have come to honor the Four Wind Brothers on Mount Katahdin! But I am worried that Grandfather is not well.

Linto smiles and starts to sing again. Katahdin is concerned and leaves Linto to approach and watch Grandfather, who is asking guidance of the audience-as-Creator.

GRANDFATHER

Creator, I am asking for guidance. My love for my daughter's child is asking for guidance.

(deep rasping cough)

I am no longer young and I want Linto to be well and to live to be happy as a strong Abenaki woman.

Unbeknownst to Grandfather and Katahdin, Azaban Raccoon as WOULD BE WHITE MAN enters with Mkazas Crow in a black cassock cape as a JESUIT.

GRANDFATHER

(looking around with wonder, to Katahdin)

This is where we lived in Canada in the 1870s when my daughter was a young girl of Linto's years. This is where we lived, far from the city.

As Grandfather speaks and Katahdin sits next to him, WBWM is hopping around with excitement, pointing to Grandfather, pantomiming with exaggeration about Linto's mother as a young girl as he M.O.S describes her to JESUIT.

JESUIT nods and turns upstage, as WBWM gleefully turns toward Grandfather and starts toward him. But as he approaches Grandfather's dwelling, his glee reduces and

WBWM starts to feel nervous.

At the entryway, WBWM stops to flatten his hair with his hand and neaten his clothes. He takes a deep breath but then decides not to enter and turns to JESUIT, who glares at him pointedly, then turns back upstage.

WBWM smiles sheepishly, upset with himself. He turns to the entryway of Grandfather's dwelling.

Linto sings and runs throughout the following.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

(entering)

Grandfather, I have brought you good news!

WBWM cannot see Katahdin. Grandfather glances at WBWM, then nods slightly. He is caught up in a silent wracking cough. WBWM does not hear Grandfather speaking to Katahdin.

GRANDFATHER

(to Katahdin)

I remember this man. He is the Would Be White Man who wanted my young daughter to go to that missionary school in Québec, all those years ago, where we are now, seeking guidance from the Creator.

WBWM is impatient and glances toward JESUIT. He waits until the instant Grandfather stops coughing and returns to his pipe before speaking.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

(reciting rapidly by rout, worried he'll mess up the recitation)

Grandfather, I am here to offer the opportunity of good schooling for your daughter at the missionary school.

GRANDFATHER

I am not a grandfather yet, I am a father and my daughter has no need for this schooling. The women are teaching her all she needs to know to be a good Abenaki woman.

WBWM's glee at not mixing up his speech changes to a growing desperation.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

Grandfath... Elder Brother, here we are so far away from Québec, here the women do not know the ways of the White people, and there are more and more White people in our N'dakina, our homeland, and at the missionary school your daughter will learn the ways of the White people too.

GRANDFATHER

My daughter does not need this schooling. The women are teaching her all she needs to know.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

But your daughter would do well to learn the language of the White people, so when the White people give their white papers to you, and the White people have many white papers, your daughter will read to you what the White words say.

GRANDFATHER

My daughter does not need this schooling.

Grandfather is caught up in a wracking cough. Katahdin puts her hand on his shoulder, concerned. Grandfather pats her hand in gratitude and returns to his pipe.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

Elder Brother, you are not well. You are not well and winter is near.

Grandfather glances toward WBWM sharply, returns to his pipe. WBWM is greatly encouraged.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

Elder Brother, if your daughter will go to this missionary school, she will be warm and eat all the food she wants as she learns the ways and words of the White people. She

will learn good things. But if your daughter stays with you here she will stay hungry and when winter comes, she may be ill again. She may be very ill again like her mother who did not see the past Spring. She may be ill as you are now.

Grandfather is caught up in a silent wracking cough. Katahdin brings him a cup of water and he drinks and returns to his pipe and smokes for many long moments in silence. WBWM is in great suspense for Grandfather's decision.

GRANDFATHER

(with great sadness)

The White people at this school, are they good people?

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

(restraining his happiness with the greatest effort)

These White people are good people, and they will teach your daughter good things.

GRANDFATHER

(with great sadness)

These White people will give my daughter good food?

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

Your daughter will eat all the food she wants, good food.

Grandfather is caught up in a wracking cough.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

Yes, Elder Brother.

Grandfather smokes. WBWM is in great suspense, but restrains himself from speaking further. Grandfather removes his pipe and studies it.

GRANDFATHER

(his heart is breaking)

Then my daughter will go to this school.

WOULD BE WHITE MAN

(jumping up and turning to leave)

This is a good decision, Elder Brother. You will see.

WBWM dances up to JESUIT. JESUIT looks to him as he pantomimes the discussion. Grandfather is seized with a silent violent coughing fit. JESUIT reaches under his black cloak and brings out a money pouch. He gives WBWM three silver coins and exits. WBWM does a gleeful dance as Grandfather catches his breath and nods as he slowly rises with Katahdin's assistance.

GRANDFATHER

(to Katahdin)

My daughter never spoke of her time at that school, but she came back to us and then in time Green Eyes came to us.

(looking around)

We are back from long ago. We are back by Mount Katahdin.

(studying Katahdin, realization)

Daughter, are you telling me our Green Eyes needs to go to such a school? Daughter, I am asking you this, for how I may best care for your beautiful child now that you are on the other side.

Katahdin is stunned.

KATAHDIN

(as Linto's mother and Grandfather's daughter)

Father?

(the word means much to Katahdin, and she is momentarily overcome)

Father, I trust your heart's decision. I will go with her.

Katahdin assists Grandfather in his slow exit as Linto stops singing and running, her smile fading as she looks around in confusion.

Hummingbird brings a chair center stage and a beautiful blanket, and Linto, terrified, sits facing audience, wrapping herself in her blanket. Katahdin returns and watches Linto.

KATAHDIN

My daughter.

Hummingbird reenters with another chair and puts it a little upstage left to Linto, and approaches Katahdin.

KATAHDIN

(to Hummingbird)

I remember you, I think. You are Nanatasis, "Hummingbird"?

HUMMINGBIRD

(happy to be recognized)

Yes, Katahdin. Come, you can go with your daughter, though she will not be able to see you.

Hummingbird leads Katahdin to the seat by Linto, as Megeso Eagle as ATIAN brings a chair and blanket and sits parallel to Linto - so Katahdin is in the middle, but a little upstage. Linto and Atian cannot see Katahdin.

KATAHDIN

(to Linto)

Daughter.

LINTO

(confused, cannot see Katahdin now)

Mama?

LOCOMOTIVE sounds, steam, whistle. Linto is terrified, and Katahdin learns she has no voice to comfort Linto.

LINTO

Grandfather! GRANDFATHER!!

ATIAN

You speak Abenaki? I can speak Abenaki too. This is a 'train'. Do you not know of trains? How old are you - I am 10.

LINTO

I speak Abenaki. I am 8.

The whistle sounds again.

LINTO

(sobbing quietly)
Grandfather...

ATIAN

This is my first time in a train, but I have seen them many times before, moving over the land very quickly and breathing black smoke to the sky. Look out the window, see how fast we fly?

Linto is still crying, but she is listening to Atian speak. Atian stands up in the train, holds his arms out like he is flying.

ATIAN

I am an eagle, flying!

He is flying as the train lurches and he falls to the floor, laughing. Linto shyly smiles at him as he gets back on his feet. Atian glances at her and notices her eyes.

ATIAN

My little sister looks like you but her eyes are brown and your eyes are green.

LINTO

My grandfather calls me Green Eyes sometimes. He says my first grandmother gave me her eyes as a gift. Is your sister here too?

ATIAN

My sister was sick and left us not long ago, but she would like this train, I think, because this train moves very fast and she ran very fast and she was happy when she ran.

LINTO

I can run very fast too, I like to run very fast too. My mother and my father were sick and left us not long ago, but my grandfather says they are happy when I run and when I sing. Grandfather says I need to go to this school far away, are you going to this school far away?

ATIAN

Yes, we are going to the Carlisle Indian School, in the state called Pennsylvania.

LINTO

(studying the passing landscape with worry)
My grandfather tells me I when my mother was young like me and they lived far away from the cities in Québec, my mother went to one of these schools. I want to stay with my grandfather but he says I need to go to this school.

ATIAN

(trying to distract Linto - and himself - and make her laugh by clowning as he speaks)
I think the Carlisle School will be a good place. Where I live on Indian Island on the Penobscot River, there are many Jesuit White men on our reservation and they teach us their language and their God and have since before my grandfather's time. My grandfather fought in the American Civil War and my father is a river driver. My father wants me to see the world beyond Indian Island and to learn to read and write English. The Jesuits are building a school on Indian Island, and my father says if I study hard at the Carlisle School then I can be a teacher at that Indian Island School when it is built and I am a man.

LINTO

You are from Indian Island? I have heard of your island. We have come this season to live near Mount Katahdin. I understand most of your words, but they sound different.

ATIAN

We both speak the same language but you speak an Abenaki dialect, and maybe our Penobscot dialect is different.

LINTO

Do you speak English?

ATIAN

I learned some English from those Jesuit. Like 'train' is an English word.

LINTO

"Train."

Linto smiles but then the whistle blows and there is the sound of much steam and she shudders.

LINTO

(whispers)
"Train."

ATIAN

We are stopping for more people, I think.

Linto, Katahdin, and Atian rise and step downstage. The rest of the Spirits rapidly gather, preferably before the stage if the stage is raised, and start milling about as train depot folks with their backs to the audience.

HUMMINGBIRD (as BESSIE/WHITE GIRL)

Look at those injuns, Mama!

CROW (as WHITE MAN)

Why are those gypsy river rats on our train?

BESSIE/WHITE GIRL

MAMA, that injun brave's gonna scalp me!

RACCOON (as ELDON/WHITE BOY)

Stupid, that's no injun brave that's a squaw injun, lookit it's hair!

BESSIE/WHITE GIRL

MAMA, Eldon called me stupid!

WHITE MAN

That lil squaw gal's a half-breed - lookit her eyes.

ELDON/WHITE BOY
You ARE stupid, Bessie! Bet you don't even talk Injun.

BESSIE/WHITE GIRL
MAMA, Eldon called me stupid AGAIN!!

WHITE MAN
Boy, dontcha know only the Devil speaks Injun?

ELDON/WHITE BOY
Bet you can't talk Injun, Bessie!

BESSIE/WHITE GIRL
I talk Injun good's you! Listen: HOW!

ELDON/WHITE BOY
HOW!

WHITE MAN
HOW!

ALL
HOW!!

Spirits exit. ATIAN looks ill and he is breathing hard.

LINTO
Is that English?

ATIAN
Yes.

LINTO
What did they say?

Atian is silent.

LINTO
Do you know those English words - do you understand?

ATIAN
I know those English words. I do not understand.

The train whistle blows and the lights dim.

SCRIM: Black and white photograph
of Carlisle Boarding School,
subtitled "CARLISLE INDIAN
INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL - 1895."

Hummingbird and Crow take the
blankets from Atian and Linto and
return transformed as NIZHONI and
CHASKE. Lights up. Chaske is
keeping watch as Nizhoni
approaches Linto and Atian.

NIZHONI

(big smile, in English and rapidly, glancing around
nervously to see if any of the teachers can hear)
Please, here at the Carlisle Indian School you must be
careful not to speak your language when the teachers can
hear because you will get a bad beating. I am NIZHONI which
means "Beautiful" and I am Navajo, but my white name is
Mary Louise. You will have a white name too. Do not speak
your language where you can be heard and do not try to run
away and do not cry too loud or you will be punished.

(to Linto)
Do you speak any English?

Linto looks to Atian in confusion.

ATIAN

(answering Nizhoni in English)
She only knows 'train' but I will translate for her.

Still keeping an eye out, Chaske
approaches Atian and Linto.

CHASKE

(in English, rapidly, keeping watch for teachers)
I am CHASKE which means "First Born Son" and I am Sicangu
Lakota, but my white name is Christian. They will give you
a white name too, you will point to a name on the board and
they will write it on white tape and they will sew it to
your back so everyone knows what to call you. They will be
coming soon to cut your hair. They do not value our ways.
They do not care that in some of our nations we only cut
our hair when we mourn. Do not speak your language where
you can be heard and do not try to run away.

ATIAN looks ill and he is
breathing hard.

LINTO

(to Atian)
Is that English?

ATIAN

Yes.

LINTO

What did they say?

Atian is silent.

LINTO

Do you know those English words - do you understand?

ATIAN

I know those English words. I do not understand.

SCRIM: Black and white photograph
slide show from Carlisle Boarding
School.

Nizhoni, Chaske, Linto, Atian, and
Katahdin turn upstage and watch
the slideshow for a few beats.

Lights center stage. Atian,
Linto, Chaske and Nizhoni start
marching, they march in unison a
few beats, then they turn
downstage with their first line.
Katahdin watches, trying to
understand.

CHASKE

"Kill the Indian and Save the Man"

ATIAN

- Richard Henry Pratt,

NIZHONI

founder of the Carlisle Indian School

(1879).
LINTO
CHASKE
"We were told never to talk Indian"
NIZHONI
- Lone Wolf,
ATIAN
a Carlisle Indian School student
LINTO
(Blackfoot).
CHASKE and ATIAN
"Only one boy
NIZHONI and LINTO
and five girls
ALL
spoke Indian last week"
ATIAN
- *Indian Helper*,
NIZHONI
Carlisle Indian School Newspaper
CHASKE
(Feb. 10, 1893)
ALL
"Only the Devil Speaks Indian,"
ATIAN
you
CHASKE
with the black robed ghosts
NIZHONI
command
LINTO
as if we can comprehend as

ATIAN
at this white man's moment

ALL
we

LINTO
children

NIZHONI
wrapped in our grandmothers' blankets crawl

LINTO
into the cold black belly

ATIAN
of this night

LINTO
from the cold black belly

CHASKE
of the iron beast that coal steamed carried us

NIZHONI
from our mothers

ATIAN
our fathers

CHASKE
our people

LINTO
our memories

ALL
our home.

ALL
"Only the Devil Speaks Indian" -

NIZHONI
you ghost people chant

as our medicine pouches	LINTO
our buckskin	CHASKE
our moccasins	ATIAN
burn.	ALL
We are:	ALL
Navajo -	NIZHONI
Sincangu Lakota -	CHASKE
Penobscot -	ATIAN
Abenaki - ...	LINTO
You shear	ALL
our hair	NIZHONI
as we weep	LINTO
for only in deep mourning do we cut our hair.	CHASKE
We own	ALL
birth names	ATIAN

spirit names that are not spoken	NIZHONI
while	LINTO
You sew	ALL
white names	CHASKE
to our backs	ATIAN
and speak them often.	NIZHONI
We learn	ALL
how to forget	LINTO
our ceremonies	ATIAN
our dances	CHASKE
our stories	NIZHONI
our Elders as	ATIAN
you teach	ALL
how to march	NIZHONI
round you	CHASKE
the all-seeing Man-on-the-Bandstand,	NIZHONI

our School Father.	ATIAN
We speak	ALL
in song	LINTO
within	CHASKE
to our Creator as	NIZHONI
you	ALL
line us up	NIZHONI
against the wall	CHASKE
to assign our new Gods:	ATIAN
Baptist -	NIZHONI
Presbyterian -	LINTO
CHASKE	
Protestant -	
We try	ALL
to escape:	CHASKE
Zitkala Sâ hides from the matrons under a bed.	NIZHONI

LINTO

You find her.

ATIAN

That boy speaks of birds in his tongue.

CHASKE

You fling him against the wall and break his collarbone.

NIZHONI

That girl cannot not cry for home.

LINTO

You make her eat lye.

CHASKE

I run to woods and snow and seek guidance from the stars.

ATIAN

You recapture me and imprison me in the guardhouse cell.

NIZHONI

Lucy Pretty Eagle trances on a vision quest

LINTO

seeking answers from the spirits.

CHASKE

You bury her alive

ATIAN

believing she is dead and if

ALL

we do survive

LINTO

your boarding school -

ATIAN

your education -

NIZHONI

assimilation -

CHASKE

alienation -

amnesia,	ATIAN
you will	ALL
'Outing Contract' us	CHASKE
to white families	NIZHONI
as cheap labor or	CHASKE
you will	ALL
use us	LINTO
as cannon fodder	ATIAN
in your wars	CHASKE
but only after you	ALL
bury my braid	CHASKE
bury my name	NIZHONI
bury my past	ATIAN
bury my future.	LINTO
"Only the Devil Speaks Indian" -	ALL

you say
CHASKE

and so
LINTO

I implore of you,
NIZHONI

my School Father,
CHASKE

in your own language:
ATIAN

Please!
ALL

All stop marching.

ALL
*Lead me now to this your
Devil, for this devil is my
Mother, and her tongue is my
Home.*

Nizoni and Chaske march in opposite directions and turn upstage while Atian and Linto step downstage and sit in chairs that Spirits provide. Linto is watching the audience. Atian is watching Linto, he has a letter open in his hand. Lights up to full.

NIZONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(recognizing Katahdin)
Katahdin!

Chaske/Crow signs "Hello" as well. Katahdin is confused that they can see her, and they move together.

KATAHDIN
You can see me?

NIZONI/HUMMINGBIRD

We are on the other side now, too. Chaske is new here and did not have the chance like me to learn the language of the other side before crossing over, so he cannot speak yet, unless it is in his stories.

Chaske/Crow signs "it is good you are here, your daughter needs you."

NIZONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(to Chaske/Crow)

Yes.

(translating for Katahdin)

He says it is good you are here and your daughter needs you.

KATAHDIN

What happened, how long has it been now?

NIZONI/HUMMINGBIRD

Your daughter is 12 now and she reads and writes English well. Atian and your daughter are the only Abenaki speakers in the school and they speak it together when they can because they do not want to forget their language and they do not want to forget their home. Our friend and Elder Brother Chaske was Outing Contracted to a farmer in eastern Pennsylvania. He wrote a letter to Atian. Chaske, can you share your letter?

Chaske/Crow nods and signs "Yes", stepping downstage toward Atian. Atian turns to read the letter.

CHASKE/CROW

(gently, to Atian)

My friend, I am working from before sunrise until late at night every day. I sleep in the barn with the livestock. I am beaten often and I am only allowed to eat the leftovers the farmer does not think are good enough for the pigs. My friend, I am so tired and all I want is to go home to my reservation. I want to go home.

ATIAN

(as he carefully folds the letter, and to an audience member-as-Chaske)

Elder Brother, yesterday my last two letters to you, written weeks ago, came back to me, stamped "DECEASED." I do not know how to say goodbye.

CHASKE/CROW

(speaking and signing)

We do not need to say goodbye, my friend.

Atian puts the letter away and turns to watch Linto as Grandfather enters slowly and Nizhoni/Hummingbird, Chaske/Crow, and Katahdin go to assist him.

GRANDFATHER

(to Nizhoni/Hummingbird)

Nizhoni, like you I have the opportunity to learn the language of the other side before crossing over. You have been such a good Elder Sister to our Linto. I will be joining you, soon, but we need to help Linto before I cross over. Nizhoni, can you tell your story, so my daughter, Linto's mother, can understand?

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

I will try, Grandfather. Maybe if we go back to last winter, when I first got sick.

Lights to dream blue as Nizhoni/Hummingbird joins Atian and a smiling Linto downstage. Nizhoni/Hummingbird and Linto are teasing Atian by whispering in each others' ears.

ATIAN

(pacing, trying not to show he cares that he is left out and also keeping an eye out for teachers)
So what are you two whispering about - Girl Talk?

LINTO

(giggling)
No, Woman Talk!

NIZHONI

(giggling and struggling against coughing)
No, Indian People Talk!

Nizhoni and Linto dissolve into
laughter, and Linto pats Nizhoni's
back as Nizhoni coughs.

LINTO

(taking pity on the forlorn Atian)
Atian, we are talking about our dreams, about what we are
going to do when we are grown and go home.

ATIAN

(relief)
So what are your dreams, Linto?

LINTO

First, I want to go home to my grandfather, and help him.
I read and write English well now -

ATIAN

Yes you do, better than me, even -

LINTO

Thank you, Atian, and you are right.

She and Nizhoni dissolve in
giggles again, while Atian
blushes.

LINTO

(gently, not teasing anymore)
Since I know English I hope I can help my grandfather learn
how to understand English too. But Nizhoni is 14 years old
like you and she has thought for a long time about what she
wants to do. Can you tell him, Nizhoni?

NIZHONI

(eyes shining)
My dream is to learn as much as I can and return to my
people and teach the children English and the White
peoples' ways so the children will survive in this new
world. My dream is to teach the children these things and
teach the children our own heritage and language too. Our
school motto here is "Kill the Indian and Save the Man,"
but this is not my motto. My motto is "Save the Children

and Save the Indian."

Nizhoni laughs as she coughs. As lights change from the dream blue, Nizhoni rejoins Grandfather, Chaske/Crow, and Katahdin, as Linto and Atian return to their first positions, Linto silently watching the audience and Atian watching Linto. Atian is worried and doesn't know what to do. He speaks to an audience member-as-Chaske.

ATIAN

Elder Brother, I do not know how to help Green Eyes. Last winter, Nizhoni caught consumption, like many other students here. We work too hard and eat too little, I think. Many of the sick students have been sent home to die. Some die here and we bury them here at the school. Some of the students have survived, but they are very weak. Nizhoni was sick for a very long time, but she was always smiling and joking and laughing and everyone thought she would get well.

(to another audience member-as-Chaske)

Green Eyes was holding Nizhoni's hand last month when Nizhoni passed. Green Eyes has not spoken since then, English or Abenaki. She will not speak - even to me - and I do not know what to do, but I think I understand.

Nizhoni/Hummingbird, Chaske/Crow and Katahdin assist Grandfather to sit in a chair they place upstage right to Linto and Atian. Grandfather suffers from wracking silent coughs and often cannot smoke his pipe so he just holds it and studies it as he thinks. Grandfather is dying. Linto is unaware, lost inside her silence.

ATIAN

(to Linto)

Green Eyes, you must eat or you will be sick and we both know one who would not want you to become ill. We both know one who would want you to be happy and well.

NIZHONI

(to Linto, from the 'other side')

My friend, please eat. Please be happy and well. Please.

ATIAN

I also do not want you to be sick, Green Eyes. Here, I hid some food from the table for you.

Atian unwraps a piece of bread and holds it out for Linto. Linto does not respond.

ATIAN

Please eat. You must eat.

Linto does not respond.

ATIAN

I ask of you in our language: please come back from where you are. I will hold your grief for you so you can speak. Please come back.

Linto rises and moves upstage, parallel to Grandfather. Nizhoni/Hummingbird draws Katahdin aside to speak to her apart from Grandfather. Atian will address a different audience member-as-Chaske each time he speaks.

ATIAN

Elder Brother, Green Eyes will not speak and the teachers do not understand. They have tried to make her speak English. Others have told me they have struck at her with their hands, with their fists, with their belts, and it makes my blood burn and I cannot breathe with the fire running like wind in my blood but I do not know what to do.

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(explaining to Katahdin)

They have put Green Eyes in a prison room. They shout:

SPIRITS

You will not come out until you speak English!

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

They tell her -

SPIRITS

This is for your own good.

ATIAN

They will not let me see Green Eyes in her prison. They tell me -

SPIRITS

This is for Laura's own good.

ATIAN

They tell me -

SPIRITS

Laura must learn to obey.

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(explaining to Katahdin)

Laura is your daughter's White name.

As Nizhoni/Hummingbird explains the following, Atian moves parallel to Grandfather and Linto, but upstage, and faces audience.

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(to Katahdin)

Atian has found where your daughter is imprisoned. She is in the guardhouse, in a room with no windows and with a locked door. He hides and watches a teacher come and go with a tray of food.

Nizhoni/Hummingbird and Katahdin rejoin Chaske/Crow and Grandfather, as Atian moves parallel to Linto and Grandfather and sits.

ATIAN

Elder Brother, I finished my lessons and my chores as fast and as well as I could so I will not be missed. I have come to sit outside her prison door. There is a small crack under the door. I put my hand on the wood of the door and I talk to Green Eyes in our language. I sing to

her in our language.

Atian's palm is pressed to the audience-as-door. Atian speaks and sings to Linto softly. He can speak of everything from their first meeting on the train. He can tell her for the first time what the White people at the train station were saying, what Nizhoni and Chaske said that first day at Carlisle. He can tell Linto all the things he probably would not be able to say to her directly. He can repeat his pleas for Green Eyes to eat and to speak and to come back. Atian will speak and sing softly underneath the following scene with Grandfather and Linto. He will not hear what they say to each other, for they are speaking in dreams.

Nizhoni/Hummingbird gently places her hand on Grandfather's shoulder.

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(to Grandfather, gently)
Grandfather, it is time.

Nizhoni/Hummingbird, Chaske/Crow, and Katahdin assist Grandfather to rise. Grandfather sees Linto for the first time since she left for Carlisle. Grandfather, Linto, and Atian are seeing each other in the audience.

GRANDFATHER

(struggling to breathe, looking up to audience-as-Linto with a beautiful smile)
Green Eyes? Is that you, Green Eyes?

Linto's eyes clear a little, a spark of life and hope. She licks her lips and tries to swallow.

LINTO

(a hoarse, dry whisper)
Grandfather?

GRANDFATHER

(smiles but has to wait for a silent coughing spasm to pass, then to catch his breath)
I remember you still as a child - but so much time and how you have grown.

(he is quiet with a joyful memory)
You look like your mother, my daughter, when she was a young woman of your age.

Katahdin puts her hand on his shoulder, struggling with tears.

GRANDFATHER

(confused, he notices Linto's short hair)
But your hair is cut - why is your hair cut?

LINTO

(it is very hard for her to speak, her voice is rusty)
It is their way here, Grandfather.

Grandfather nods, sadly, and is silent with his thoughts a moment.

LINTO

Grandfather? May I stay with you now, I want to go home to you, Grandfather.

Grandfather struggles to breathe, smiling.

GRANDFATHER

(gently)
I will always be with you, Green Eyes. You will carry me with you. Wherever you are, I will be there with you, always.

LINTO

(realizing with horror what he is telling her)
Grandfather, I will go with you, I want to go with you. Please. Let me stay with you, where you are. Please don't send me away from you again, don't go without me!

GRANDFATHER

Where I am now, and where I am going - it is not your time for this place. You need to survive and be strong. You are the last of our line. Remember who you are.

LINTO

(she can hardly speak through her grief)
Grandfather -

GRANDFATHER

Yes.

Both Linto and Grandfather cannot speak for a moment, gazing at the audience-as-Other. Grandfather hears Atian.

GRANDFATHER

Who is the one singing for you, my granddaughter?

LINTO

(still unable to hear anything outside her dream)
No one is singing for me, Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER

I hear a boy. Listen, Green Eyes. Do you hear him?

Grandfather is gently leading Linto back to her present world with his words.

LINTO

(hears Atian for the first time)
Yes.

Linto listens to Atian, slowly remembering him.

GRANDFATHER

Who is this boy, Green Eyes?

LINTO

He is my friend.

Linto gasps with pain as she slowly comes back to her present

world - it hurts to be alive,
aware of her surroundings, instead
of cocooned in her grief, numb and
adrift. Grandfather is patient.

GRANDFATHER

Tell me of your friend.

LINTO

(fighting tears)
His name is Atian. He is Penobscot and his people live on
Indian Island. I met him on the train, when I left you to
come to this school.

Linto silently sobs, unable to
continue.

GRANDFATHER

(gently)
Tell me.

LINTO

(she fights her tears to tell him, knowing she is
saying goodbye)
I was frightened and I was missing you and I wanted to go
home to you and Atian said:

ATIAN

This is a 'train'. Do you not know of trains?

LINTO

There was a loud whistle and much noise and I was so
frightened and I called out your name and Atian said:

ATIAN

This is my first time in a train, but I have seen them many
times before, moving over the land very quickly and
breathing black smoke to the sky. Look out the window, see
how fast we fly?

Atian returns to his song.

LINTO

Atian told me of his sister who looks like me but she has
brown eyes and he taught me my first English word - 'train.'

Linto is silent as she remembers,
as she struggles with awakening.
Grandfather listens to her
silence.

LINTO

It is their way, Grandfather, to only speak English at this
school. Atian spoke some English and he would translate
for me when he could. That first day at this school, we
met two elder students. We all became friends.

(struggling with her emotions)

One was as a sister to me.

Linto is silent as she remembers
her grief.

GRANDFATHER

(gently)

Then the one who was as a sister to you is with you always,
Green Eyes. Wherever you are, she is there with you. You
carry her with you. Do you understand?

NIZHONI

I am always with you, my friend. My sister.

Linto nods.

GRANDFATHER

Where are you now, Green Eyes?

Linto looks around for the first
time at the room.

LINTO

I do not know this place, Grandfather.

She is frightened.

GRANDFATHER

Tell me of this place where you are.

Linto uses her hands to explore
the dark closet-sized room.

LINTO

It is a small room. It is dark. The walls are cold.

Linto notices the pale light of the crack under the door. She slowly kneels, hearing Atian, listening to him as she presses her palm to the audience-as-door, as Atian is doing the same, on 'the other side' of the door.

Grandfather watches, patient.

GRANDFATHER

(gently leading Linto to hear and understand what Atian is saying)

What is your friend saying, Green Eyes?

Linto cannot speak through her silent tears. She understands.

GRANDFATHER

(with love)

Tell me.

LINTO

He is saying:

LINTO and ATIAN

Come back from where you are.

Linto releases her palm from the door and searches for her grandfather with sudden panic.

LINTO

Grandfather.

GRANDFATHER

Yes.

Linto takes a shaky breath as Grandfather nods, encouraging her. Linto presses her palm to the door again.

LINTO

He is saying:

ATIAN

I will hold your grief for you so you can speak.

LINTO

He is saying:

ATIAN / CHASKE (signing) / NIZHONI
/ KATAHDIN

Please.

GRANDFATHER

Yes.

Grandfather is dying. It is hard
for such a strong soul to release
this life. Linto's heart is
breaking as she rises to her feet.

LINTO

Grandfather ...

GRANDFATHER

I will always be with you. Your mother, your father, the
one who was as your sister. We are with you. You carry
us. Wherever you are, we will be there with you.

CHASKE (signing)/ NIZHONI /
GRANDFATHER / KATAHDIN

Always.

LINTO

Grandfather -

GRANDFATHER

You need to survive and be strong. You are the last of our
line. Remember who you are. You are Linto, She Who Sings.
You sing as a song sparrow sings. This is your gift to
give. A song sparrow has much beauty to sing to this
world. This world needs such beauty. This world needs
your songs.

Linto is struggling through her
pain to be strong for her
grandfather. Grandfather is
standing. He is waiting, troubled
and in extraordinary pain. He is

using all his strength to stay
with Linto until she understands.

LINTO

I have learned some Navajo words from the one who was as my
sister. I will translate them for you, Grandfather:

LINTO and NIZHONI

*Beauty is before me
Beauty is behind me,
Above me and below me
Beauty lives.*

*In my youth
I am aware of beauty,
In old age
I shall walk in beauty.*

LINTO

(singing in a pure and beautiful voice)

*In beauty, it begins.
In beauty, it ends.*

As Linto is speaking and singing
the poem, Grandfather is standing
straighter and breathing easier,
his pain and his life are fading
to a faint memory as he listens.
He is ready for his journey, and
Chaske/Crow and Nizhoni/
Hummingbird will walk with him.

LINTO

Walk in Beauty, Grandfather.

Linto and Grandfather smile at the
audience-as-Other.

NIZHONI/HUMMINGBIRD

(to Katahdin)

Do you remember, now, how you return to your daughter?

Katahdin looks toward Linto, and
has a dawning understanding.

KATAHDIN

(struggling with joyful tears, answering
Nizhoni/Hummingbird but gazing at her daughter)

Yes.

Nizhoni/Hummingbird smiles as she
gives Katahdin an apple and as
she, Grandfather, and Chaske/Crow
prepare to exit. Linto's smile
fades and Linto sinks to her
knees, sobbing.

LINTO

Grandfather!

ATIAN

(hearing Linto's voice for the first time in months)
Green Eyes?

Linto hears him and it is a sudden
shock. She slowly presses her
palm to the audience-as-door, as
Atian is doing.

LINTO

Atian, Grandfather wants me to come back to this world. He
tells me I need to survive and be strong and remember who I
am. Grandfather says I have songs to sing to this world.
Grandfather says this world needs my songs.

Atian is crying silently with
relief.

ATIAN

Yes.

Drum push starts. Linto rises to
her feet and starts to sing. She
sings with growing joy.

Grandfather slowly walks with
strength and wonder at the beauty
surrounding him as he exits.

Drum push ends. Linto smiles
through her tears as Atian rises
to his feet and moves upstage of

Katahdin, now NEW TEACHER, who is standing where Grandfather stood, facing the audience.

ATIAN

I hide when I hear someone coming, Elder Brother. It is a new White teacher. This woman has long gold hair like the Spring sun on Penobscot River waters. This New Teacher is not like the others, she looks sad and she is very young. I don't know why she is here, that other teacher brought the food tray an hour ago.

New Teacher glances around to make sure no one is watching. She pulls the red apple from her pocket and rubs it with her skirt to make it shine. She enters the guardhouse hall and stops outside Linto's cell door, listening.

LINTO

(singing)

In beauty, it begins.

In beauty, it ends.

Linto continues to sing variations of these phrases. Atian is worried and creeps closer. New Teacher joins Linto's song as she unlocks the cell door.

LINTO and TEACHER

(singing)

In beauty, it begins. / La beauté ça commence.

In beauty, it ends. / La beauté ça fini.

Linto and Teacher sing. Linto sings in English and Navajo and Abenaki. Teacher sings in English and Frech. They sing together for several beats.

TEACHER

Open the door, Linto She Sings.

Linto slowly pushes the door and it opens. She smiles.

Teacher offers Linto the apple.
Linto accepts the apple.

LINTO
(to Teacher, in 'English')
Thank you.

Linto tentatively takes a bite
from the apple, chews and
swallows. She carefully considers
the Teacher a moment.

LINTO
(to Teacher)
Wlioni. This is how we Abenaki say "thank you."

TEACHER
(carefully repeating)
Wlioni.

LINTO
(smiling)
Yes.

Atian slowly turns to exit stage
right. Linto becomes thoughtful.
She turns to audience-as-open-
door.

LINTO
(tentatively)
Atian?

Atian halts, his back to Linto.

ATIAN
(struggling with his emotions)
Yes.

Atian and Linto slowly turn toward
each other. They are seeing each
other with new eyes.

ATIAN
(to Linto, struggling with his emotions)
You came back.

LINTO

(to Atian, studying his eyes)
You called me back.

Atian cannot speak. He nods.

LINTO

(to Atian, with deep gratitude)
Wlioni, my friend.

Atian cannot speak. Linto turns to audience and smiles. The joy and beauty of the world is in her smile.

NEW TEACHER

(gently, to Linto)
Let us leave this place. Come with me.

(gently, to Atian)
She will be safe with me. She will be well soon.

Atian nods his understanding, while with great compassion New Teacher helps Linto walk out of the guardhouse. New Teacher and Linto exit.

Loud sounds of steam and a train whistle. Atian looks around. He smiles. He is in a train, heading back to Indian Island.

Atian walks downstage center. Loud sounds of steam and a train whistle. Atian turns to audience and sees Chaske in a different audience member with each paragraph.

ATIAN

Elder Brother, I am home on Indian Island and I am 21 and I have been teaching English at the new school here for almost 3 years now. There is much poverty and many challenges, but I encourage the children in their English and Abenaki-Penobscot studies.

I have found it is easier for the children to learn if I tell them their lessons in stories. I am surprised to discover this is my gift. I recreate this new White century into words and a world the children can understand.

I tell them we are all mixed in heritage and there is good to be found in all peoples, regardless of skin color or language. I tell them there is good to be found and cherished in ourselves. And when they ask, and they ask often, I tell them stories of the Carlisle Indian School, of Nizhoni and you and New Teacher and Green Eyes.

Atian removes Linto's letter from the envelope and rereads as he speaks.

Green Eyes has been teaching singing classes with New Teacher at Carlisle for almost 2 years now. I read parts of her letters to my students, like how she writes to me that there are many young students who go to the gate to meet the new students as they arrive, as Green Eyes and I continued to do in your and Nizhoni's honor.

I do not share all that Green Eyes writes with my students. In her letter from last month that arrived today, Green Eyes says she has an answer for my question.

Atian stops speaking as he struggles with sudden emotions.

ATIAN

(simply, with endless joy)

She says her answer is:

ATIAN and OFFSTAGE LINTO

Yes.

Loud sounds of steam and a train whistle. Green Eyes enters from behind the audience and walks through the audience to join Atian on stage.

Drum push starts as Musicians and Dancers sing and dance in joyous

celebration of Atian and Linto's marriage.

One by one, Nizhoni/Hummingbird, Chaske/Crow, Grandfather, and Katahdin/New Teacher join the celebration circle, accepted and welcomed with much love.

Azaban Raccoon / Would Be White Man comes to the edge of the circle and looks longingly at the joyous characters. Grandfather holds out his hand to WBWM, who joins the circle.

All shed their assumed characters and all but Katahdin sing Earth Song.

Drum push ends and all on stage turn to Mother in her corner, Katahdin follows their gaze, confused.

Hummingbird sings as she walks to Mother and helps her down from her corner, and leads Mother to Katahdin, while all on stage form a semicircle around Katahdin. Hummingbird stops singing, as Mother takes Katahdin's hand.

KATAHDIN

Maman?

MOTHER

Ouais, Katahdin.

KATAHDIN

MAMAN!

They embrace, Katahdin crying and Mother gently rocking her, as:

MOTHER

We are with you, Katahdin, and not only in your dreams. We are always with you. You carry us with you. Wherever you are, we are there with you.

Mother gently takes Katahdin's hand and removes the wrapping as Katahdin flinches with shame and tries to remove her hand.

KATAHDIN

These scars are my stories, Maman. I need them to remember who I am.

MOTHER

Non, m'petite. We are your stories, we are your blood, and you do not need to cut to find us.

KATAHDIN

No, no, I need my scars, they're all I have - NO!

Katahdin breaks away and starts to run. Song parrow moves toward Katahdin, but Mother stays her:

MOTHER

Let her run in her dreams - this is how she's survived - and here she cannot cut herself.

SCRIM: A film clip of an explosion of sunset behind Katahdin, focusing in on Katahdin's green eyes as she runs on an ocean channel path.

- AND/OR -

MEGESO Eagle:

KATAHDIN runs hard on an ocean channel path, surrounded by the smog-crazed fire of a Southern California sunset.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run!

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

Earth Song starts sotto voce and loops phrases, gaining in power, and drum push starts.

KATAHDIN

(to an audience member as "Little Sister")
Little Sister, I think a part of being mixed blood is that you have mixed dreams, strong dreams with strong voices, because your blood runs in different worlds and times, translates each experience through different lives, languages.

KATAHDIN

(to another audience member)
So sometimes you have to run as fast as you can, just to keep the different dreams from pulling you apart.

Katahdin continues to run.

EARTH SONG

Are you running / Away?
Run / Home!

Are you flying / Away?
Fly / Home -

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run!

Sing Blood / Sing BLOOD / Sing Blood.

- HOME!

Final drum beat.

If possible, Katahdin runs up a path thru the center of the audience and exits behind the audience.

Fade to black.

END ACT TWO.

[INTERMISSION]

ACT THREE

AT RISE:

BLACK. POWERFUL DRUM PUSH /
EARTH SONG.

Lights up, a warm and bright blue
diffuse dream light, on EARTH
SONG.

SCRIM: A film clip of an explosion
of sunset behind Katahdin,
focusing in on Katahdin's green
eyes as she runs on an ocean
channel path.

Spirits move amongst the audience
as they sing their Earth Song,
mixing French and English, singing
to the audience and to the
offstage Katahdin.

EARTH SONG

Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin,
Run, Katahdin, run!

Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.
Your blood is singing to you.
We are singing to you.

Are you running / Away?
Run / Home!

Are you flying / Away?
Fly / Home -

If possible, Katahdin enters from
behind audience, and runs to
Mother.

KATAHDIN

(to Mother)

I couldn't find my car. I want my knife, need my knife.
Then I was scared I couldn't find you. But you're here.

MOTHER

We're always with you, Katahdin, all you need to do is listen. You need to survive and be strong. We need you to survive and find joy. You are the last of our line.

Remember who you are, Katahdin. You are strong and mixed like your mountain spirit brothers, you run like the wind, and your green eyes let you see what is good and beautiful inside others, that good and beautiful that lives in the blood under the skin, whatever color the skin, whatever language the tongue.

You need to remember the joy and the beauty that you carry in your blood, and learn how to share the beauty of your gifts with the world. This world needs the beauty of your gifts, Katahdin. This world needs you. Remember us, Katahdin. It is time for you to remember.

Katahdin and Mother study each other with new eyes. Mother is seeing Katahdin as a young woman. Katahdin is seeing her Mother as a young woman.

MOTHER

Come with me, m'petite. Come dream with us, remember us.

Katahdin takes her Mother's hand with a child's trust and wonder, as Mother leads Katahdin to her corner, where Hummingbird has transformed into Anaïs, Mesatawe Morning Star's 18-year old mother. She is sitting on Mother's lawn chair and singing a popular song from the 1960s to her baby.

KATAHDIN

(glancing around with astonished recognition)
Maman, this is our home!

MOTHER

(smiling)
Yes, Katahdin, this is our home, and this woman is Anaïs,

my mother and your grandmother. This was her home too, and where she was born.

KATAHDIN

But, she's so young ...

MOTHER

The baby she is rocking is me, m'petite.

Mother leads Katahdin to sit with her at Anaïs' feet as:

SCRIM: A still photo subtitled "OUTSIDE OQUOSSOC, MAINE - 1971" - A rundown Airstream trailer set in a scraggly-grassed clearing fringed by woods and mountains. The trailer is plastered with colorful bumper stickers like *This Pony Powered by Frybread!*

- AND/OR -

AWASOS:

Anaïs sits in a lawnchair in front of a run-down Airstream trailer plastered with colorful bumper stickers like that one, that says *This Pony Powered by Frybread!* The Airstream is set in a scraggly-grassed clearing fringed by woods and mountains, outside Oquossoc, Maine. It is 1971 and Anaïs is 18 and rocking her baby.

MOTHER

Maman?

Anaïs pauses in her singing and smiles at Mother across time.

ANAÏS

Daughter, it is good to see you.

MOTHER

Maman, I'd like for you to meet your granddaughter. I named her Katahdin, Maman, after the mountain.

With Mother's introduction, Anaïs sees Katahdin.

ANAÏS

(to Katahdin)

My granddaughter, I am sad I did not meet you on your side
- I crossed over the year before you were born.

(looking closer)

Katahdin, you have our first grandmother's green eyes.

MOTHER

(to Anaïs)

Ouais, Maman, and she runs as fast as the wind, but, Maman, Katahdin does not run with joy yet, she runs to escape. She runs not to hurt herself, Maman. I remember when I was a child you told me you used to run from anger. S'il vous plaît, Maman, racontez-nous ces histoires. I think it may help Katahdin learn she is not alone in how she feels.

ANAÏS

(to Mother, stroking her face)

See how with our love we reach across the stars. Je t'aime à jamais, m'petite.

MOTHER

(eyes shining)

Moi aussi, chère Maman.

ANAÏS

(handing the 'baby' to Katahdin)

Granddaughter, will you hold your mother for me?

Katahdin accepts the baby with wonder.

ANAÏS

(to Katahdin, smiling)

We carry each other, Katahdin.

(rising from her chair, to Mother)

Daughter, may your grandmother, my mother, join us, from when I was a very young girl?

MOTHER

(to Anaïs)

Ouais, Maman, she can be through me. Merci, Maman!

Mother sits in the lawn chair, as ANAÏS' MOTHER. Anaïs is young and upset, barely restrained kinetic energy, in front of Mother.

ANAÏS

C'est pas juste, Maman! They yell an run to Teacher sayin I'm on a warpath an gonna scalp them or somethin.

ANAÏS' MOTHER

Anaïs, Daughter, those girls don't understand because no one's told them in a way they'd understand.

ANAÏS

I hate bein Indian! I hate my hair, my skin, my eyes! I'm ugly ugly ugly! Why couldn't I be born White? I wish I'd never been born! I hate I hate I - !

Anaïs, crying, starts to run hard.

ANAÏS' MOTHER

(to Katahdin)

Great Granddaughter, I will share Anaïs' thoughts with you while she runs.

(as Anaïs' thoughts)

I hate myself for cryin like some baby an for hurtin you an I can't look at you so I run away an I will run and run and run until everythin doesn't look blood red anymore, until it hurts more to breathe than it does to cry, until my blood stops burnin an cryin an it's my lungs that're burnin an then I'll run some more. I'll run forever into this night, until I jump up into all these stars like your story with the young warriors and those caribou.

ANAÏS' MOTHER

(to Katahdin)

Great Granddaughter, do you know this story?

KATAHDIN

(rocking baby)

No.

ANAÏS' MOTHER

(to Katahdin, smiling)

Great Grandaughter, I will tell you this story when you have your first child, your daughter.

Anaïs is downstage opposite
Katahdin and Mother.

ANAÏS

(speaking her thoughts aloud for Katahdin's sake)

It's black night. When I come into the clearin the lights're on in the trailer windows, an the little Christmas lights along the roof that're up all year but never turned on except for holidays and birthdays, they're on too. The lights look so warm against the black an you're sittin in your chair.

Anaïs approaches Mother and stands before her, but she can't look at her mother and she starts to cry and looks up to the night sky.

ANAÏS

(speaking her thoughts aloud for Katahdin's sake,
looking up at the night sky)

As soon's I stop runnin my blood starts cryin again an I can't look at you yet, Maman, so I look up at all those stars blurrin bright ribbons through my blood tears. An even now I can hear the wind in my blood, runnin. An a million years pass up there in all those stars an stars're bein born an stars're dyin an those stars're all so quiet, so far away.

(to her mother, but still looking at sky)

There's a million years between us, Maman, an no way to reach across.

Mother stands and puts her hand on Anaïs' cheek. Anaïs crys harder and accepts Mother's embrace, putting her head on her mother's shoulder.

ANAÏS

(to her mother)

I just want them to see me for who I am an like me for who I am.

ANAÏS' MOTHER

(to Anaïs)

Je vraiment te comprend, m'petite. For some, il doit plusiers de temps to learn that under our skin, we're all the same.

(rocking Anaïs while speaking to Katahdin)

Great Granddaughter, give my daughter her baby.

Katahdin kisses the baby and gives the baby to Anaïs. Mother returns to herself and to her place, as Anaïs sits in the chair, again the 18-year-old mother, singing to her baby.

MOTHER

Merci, Maman.

ANAÏS

(to Mother)

Il n'y pas de quoi, m'petite.

(to Katahdin)

When the girls laughed at me an made fun of me the world'd go red an my blood would burn an I would knew I needed to run hard an long an forever until I ran past my shadow an I ran past my hate an I ran past the person they said I was and put a million years between us and jumped to the stars.

(to her baby)

You are my way to reach across, m'petite. Comprends-tu? Because of you, I understand. Because of you, your grandmaman can reach across a million stars and talk to me in my thoughts and dreams, an I can hear her. She is with me all the time now, an that's because of you. You see, m'petite, I have done somethin wonderful in my life, somethin beautiful, an that somethin is you. You're the beautiful gift I'm givin this world an you are gonna grow up proud of your beautiful brown eyes an skin an hair. You're gonna understand how beautiful you are, inside an out, an your beauty's gonna shine like one of those brightest stars, like that Morning Star.

She is thoughtful a minute,
rocking the baby.

That'd be a good name for you, m'petite - Morning Star. Your grandmaman taught me the Abenaki word for Morning Star, 'Mesatawe.' You're gonna shine, Mesatawe. You're the beautiful gift I'm givin this world an I am gonna tell you all the stories I can from your grandmaman. I'm gonna tell you all the stories I can from your Papa too, an I'm gonna start now before it'll be too hard for you to hear me, before a million years gets between us. I'm gonna love you so much. I'm gonna love you for me an your Papa and your grandmaman too. I love you so much, m'petite. I love you all the stars in the sky.

She hums a bit as she thinks and rocks the baby.

MOTHER

(to Anaïs)

Je t'aime beaucoup, Maman.

Anaïs smiles at Mother across time.

MOTHER

(to Anaïs)

Maman, I was taken from Katahdin when she was very young, and where she did her growing, there was no one to tell her of us. We are helping Katahdin remember our stories, so she will know who she is. Voulez-vous nous raconter d'autre histoire?

ANAÏS

(to Mother and Katahdin)

Ouais, m'petites. I want to tell you about your Papa's story ... your grandpapa's story.

Awasos Bear enters as JOE, laughing and joking with Megeso Eagle as JOE'S WHITE FRIEND.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, looking at Joe)

Your Papa came to work at the paper mill. I saw him at shift change one night an I just stopped where I was an stared. He was Native an the only other Native at the mill an he had brown skin an black eyes an shiny black hair down his back an he was laughin from his belly with his White friend.

Joe notices Anaïs and they smile at each other across time. Anaïs melts.

ANAÏS

(to her baby)

I ran for must've been a million years that night.

Joe and his friend bring a worktable with a box on top downstage and his friend leaves Joe to work with the contents of the box. Joe glances at Anaïs, but she will not meet his gaze.

ANAÏS

(to her baby)

Coupla nights later your Papa got transferred to my section an worked by me. I didn't look at him at all an watched my hands workin an I made a lot of stupid mistakes which made me mad. I found out he'd asked for that transfer.

Shift whistle sounds. Joe exits.

ANAÏS

(to her baby)

I ran every night for hours. Just cause I'm part Native too, what? He thinks we oughta be friends or lovers or what? *No way in a million years* I'd say when I was runnin. *No way.*

Joe enters, laughing and joking with his friend. Joe goes to his workbench while his friend exits.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, looking at Joe)

But he didn't talk to me - he just came into the mill before shift with his White friend, laughin, an he'd come take his station across from me an I knew if I happened to look up at the beginnin of shift, he'd be smilin at me, but he didn't talk to me.

Joe smiles at Anaïs. The shift whistle sounds. Joe focuses on his work.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, looking at Joe)
Shift'd start an he'd focus on work an wouldn't quit till
the whistle blew.

Shift whistle sounds. Joe exits.

ANAÏS

(to her baby)
*Good. I don't care an I don't wanna talk to him anyway,
I'd say to myself when I'd run after shift. He's got all
his friends, all his White friends. I'd run for hours.*

*Came a night before shift I washed my hair an untangled it
an combed it out. I washed my shirt an jeans an even
ironed them. I thought about it, then I ironed my hair too
so it was long an it went down my back. Try not to talk to
me now, I was laughin to myself as I was headin into shift.
Just you try.*

Joe enters, laughing, with his
friend.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, deliberately not looking at Joe)
I heard him come in with his White friend, laughin like
always.

(smiling, listening to Joe laughing)
Your Papa had this warm laugh that came from deep inside.
Your Papa's laugh was beautiful.

Joe goes to his workbench while
his friend exits.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, deliberately not looking at Joe)
I felt him get to his station an I was waiting for shift to
start an I wasn't gonna look at him. I didn't look at him.
My ironed hair kinda hung down like a curtain in front of
my face an I was glad cause it was too hard not to smile,
but I was lookin at my brown hands an my hair was hangin
down so he couldn't see me smilin. He didn't say anythin.

Shift whistle sounds.

Shift started an we worked. I didn't look at him at all an watched my hands workin an I made a lot of stupid mistakes which made me mad. We worked until the whistle blew.

Shift whistle sounds.

He didn't say anythin. I was watchin my hands an my hands were just sittin there quiet an my starched clothes itched somethin awful an I wouldn't look up, I couldn't look up, an my brown hands started blurrin an my blood was cryin an I started to run.

Joe and his friend remove the workbench. Joe moves downstage and starts to run, joyous.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, deliberately not looking at Joe)
I ran outta the mill. I ran through the shift comin in. I ran an I ran an then I ran more. I ran so fast it was like I could fly.

(to her baby, slowly looking up and seeing Joe)
An then, sometime a million years later, I realized he was runnin beside me. Your Papa was runnin beside me, his hair flyin behind him like some beautiful mane an this smile on his face like all the joy in the world.

Joe starts to sing "Age of Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In" as he runs.

ANAÏS

(to her baby, watching Joe with shining eyes)
We were runnin together an he started to sing. He sang about stars an peace an love an open hearts and everythin dawnin, everythin shinin new.

(to baby, sudden realization)
He was singing about you! Mesatawe, the Morning Star!

Joe stops running, and smiles as he sings to Anaïs and his baby with love. Anaïs watches Joe exit.

ANAÏS

(to her baby)

Your Papa was gonna go to college when he got back from Vietnam, he was that smart. But your Papa was special, m'petite, his heart was wide open an the sky was callin him an so your Papa is a star up there in the sky now. Your Papa is always watchin out for you, shinin on you, always lovin you.

MOTHER

Do you see Katahdin, how one can run from love? What story from your past do you want to see most?

Anaïs sings Joe's song to her baby as she rises and exits.

KATAHDIN

But I run because I have to run, I don't know any other way. Maman, can you tell me the story of when you and Papa were little? I don't remember him at all.

MAMAN

Ouais, m'petite. We met here, when I was five and your Papa was six, it was 1975. When I am in the story, I won't see you, but you can see me, d'accord?

Katahdin nods and Mother-as-Mesatawe goes over and sits in the lawn chair. She sits as a very young child. She bops around in the chair, play pretending. She is radiant with energy and happiness.

MESATAWE

(as she playacts, singing)

I am Mesatawe, I am the Morning Star.

Hummingbird enters and approaches Mkazas Crow.

HUMMINGBIRD

Mkazas Crow, I think it might be time for you to earn your name.

Mkazas Crow is confused and flies to Hummingbird. Hummingbird thanks him, laughing, but directs him to Mesatawe.

MESATAWE

(to the chair, petting the arm-as-wing)
You are a very nice bird and I would like to fly on your back to my Papa Star, please.

The chair is silent and Mesatawe grows thoughtful. She pets the chair arm as Crow, unseen, flies to the chair and tries to figure out what to do.

MESATAWE

You are a very nice bird and I am Mesatawe Morning Star and I am 5 years old and I want to fly very fast on your back so will you please fly me very fast on your wings because I'm make believing the night is almost over so I need to fly across the sky to see my Papa because my Papa is laughing and waiting for me in the sky! My Papa is a star and we will fly and Maman will smile at us and we will be happy stars laughing in the sky!

Crow has contorted himself to be one with the chair, so Mesatawe is petting his head and it tickles and makes Crow giggle and shift his wings.

MESATAWE

(smiles hugely)
Wlioni! This is how we Abenaki say "thank you", Maman says. Maman says my French Canadian ancestors say "Merci."

(she thinks seriously a second)
But how do you say "thank you" in Bird Language?

Her petting his head tickles again and Crow can't refrain from giggling and sneezing. He rises and takes Mesatawe's hand and helps her stand on the chair and they fly.

MESATAWE

OH Thank You / Wlioni / Merci / Bird Words! I can ride on your wings - I can fly! WHOOOO-ooooo! Lookit me flying! I am flying so fast! Lookit all those little trees and those little houses down there! Lookit all those little people down there - little people so little they look like dots - brown dots, black dots, white dots! Purple dots! Blue dots! Up here all the little people dots look the same and I am flying so fast they can't see me!

(calling down to audience-as-all-the-little-people-down-below)

Mesatawe Morning Star is flying so fast you can't see me all the way down there!

(calling at the very top of her lungs to the audience-as-all-the-little-people-down-below)

I'm flying across the sky and you can't see me - you can't see me!

SCOTT

I can see you just fine.

As Mesatawe is flying with joy, Azaban as SCOTT has entered and stood watching her. Scott is a 6-year-old Penobscot boy from Indian Island who was adopted out to a white couple in rural Maine when he was 3 years old. Scott's adoptive father, Joe's best friend from the paper mill, is a troubled Vietnam vet and their home is not a happy one.

Mesatawe's eyes glow with joy at the unexpected company. She is still flying.

MESATAWE

(looking down at Scott)

I see a little person all the way down there!

SCOTT

I'm not little!

MESATAWE

I see one of those little people dots all the way down there!

SCOTT

I'm not little - I'm SIX years old!

MESATAWE

That little people dot is GREEN!

SCOTT

I AM NOT GREEN!

MESATAWE

That little people dot is BLUE!

SCOTT

I AM NOT BLUE!

MESATAWE

That little people dot is WHITE!

Scott is silent.

MESATAWE

That little people dot is WHITE!

SCOTT

(sadly)

I am not white.

Mesatawe is curious and she stops flying and speaks to Crow / the chair.

MESATAWE

I want to say thank you to you for letting me ride on your back. You are a very nice bird. Thank You / Wlioni / Merci / Bird Words! I will fly to my Papa on my own now.

Mesatawe hops down to sit on the chair, leaning forward and kicking her legs. Crow is unseen and curiously watches the children.

MESATAWE

What color is your dot? My color is purple.

SCOTT

Your color isn't purple.

MESATAWE

It isn't? Oh. Then what color am I?

SCOTT

Your color is brown like me. Maybe other people say your color is red like me. Like that Indian crayon in the crayon box.

MESATAWE

(laughing and kicking her legs)

Oh! No, my color is purple today, like the sky a long time past *Time to go to bed Mesatawe Morning Star oligawi olegwasi sleep well dream well m'petite* time when I am supposed to be sleeping but I am watching the stars in the sky to see my Papa.

SCOTT

You can't pick your color! You are what you are!

MESATAWE

Oh. But you *can* pick your color because my Maman says so. You can pick any color you want. That's your inside color. Your real color. What's your inside color?

SCOTT

All that matters is your outside color and you are brown like me or red like me.

MESATAWE

No, today my color is purple. What is your color?

SCOTT

I'm not playing your stupid game.

MESATAWE

Is your color ... orange?

SCOTT

I'm not playing.

MESATAWE

Is your color ... pink?

SCOTT

I'M NOT PINK THAT'S A GIRL COLOR!!

MESATAWE

Is your color ... yellow?

Scott is outraged beyond speech for a moment. Mesatawe thinks she finally has the answer, and she jumps to her feet with joy.

MESATAWE

Yellow! Your color is yellow like sun like stars like my Papa Star laughing in the sky!

SCOTT

I'M NOT YELLOW!! I'M NOT ONE OF THEM GOOKS! I'm not one of them slant-eye bastard Gooks cut their throat and make them die and kill them all dead dead DEAD!

Mesatawe is stunned to a sudden silence. She gazes at Scott with wonder.

MESATAWE

I don't understand.

SCOTT

I'm not yellow.

MESATAWE

My yellow is happy. My yellow is stars laughing, sun.

SCOTT

That's not yellow. If your color is yellow, if your skin is yellow, you're one of them Gooks in Vietnam my Daddy fought. If your color is yellow you have slanty eyes and you want to kill my Daddy and my Daddy has to kill you first. If your color is yellow you are bad and you need to be dead.

Mesatawe tries to understand.

MESATAWE

But these yellow people, don't they have mothers and fathers who love them very much?

SCOTT

I don't think so. No.

MESATAWE

These yellow people, don't they have boys and girls like us and love them very much?

SCOTT

I don't think so. No, they are not like us at all at all at ALL! They are YELLOW!

MESATAWE

Why do these yellow people want to kill your Daddy?

SCOTT

THEY WANNA KILL MY DADDY! I don't know why BUT THEY DO and my Daddy killed a lot of them and he was a good soldier and that means he hadta kill lots of them yellow Gooks.

MESATAWE

Do you know yellow people?

SCOTT

No! My Daddy kilt them in Vietnam.

MESATAWE

Tell me about yellow people.

SCOTT

I TOLE YOU AREADY! If your color is yellow you have slanty eyes and you want to kill my Daddy and my Daddy has to kill you dead first.

MESATAWE

If your color is yellow ...

SCOTT

If your color is yellow you have slanty eyes and you want to kill my Daddy and my Daddy has to kill you dead first!

MESATAWE

What color is your eyes if you're yellow?

SCOTT

Yellow eye're slanty and black black black.

MESATAWE

Black like your eyes?

SCOTT

NO!

MESATAWE

What color are your Daddy's eyes?

SCOTT

My Daddy's eyes're BLUE!

MESATAWE

Your Daddy has blue eyes?

Scott is silent.

MESATAWE

What color are your Mother's eyes?

SCOTT

My Mama's eyes are blue.

MESATAWE

Your Mama has blue eyes?

Scott is silent.

MESATAWE

Where'd you find your black eyes, if your Daddy and Mama's eyes are blue?

SCOTT

My Daddy and my Mama adopted me after my Daddy got back from Vietnam. I was born on Indian Island. My mother was sick and died after I was born.

MESATAWE

My Grandmaman grew up on Indian Island too but they moved out here and my Maman was born here!

SCOTT

So I got my black eyes from Indian Island.

MESATAWE

My name is Mesatawe Morning Star and I got my name from a song my Papa used to sing. Where'd you get your name?

SCOTT

Mama tole me when they adopted me she wanted to name me Phoenix because my all family'd died but I'd be strong an fly from ashes to sky but Daddy said No. So Mama said *Let's name him Bird then*, but Daddy said *No*, an Mama said *How about Joe?* but she saw how sad my Daddy got an so she said *What name will you give him?* an Daddy said *He's Penobscot like Joe so how about Scott?* an Mama said *That's a good name* an that's how I got my name an I don't want my eyes black I want my eyes blue.

MESATAWE

But your black eyes are black like a crow's eyes, like a crow's shiny feathers and don't you want to fly?

SCOTT

I'm not a crow and I can't fly and you don't understand.

MESATAWE

(gently)

But you *can* fly. My Maman says we all of us can fly.

SCOTT

You don't understand. You can't understand when you have black eyes and you're Indian and your Daddy and your Mama are White and have blue eyes. You can't understand.

MESATAWE

Then tell me.

SCOTT

No.

MESATAWE

Then I will tell myself.

Mesatawe stands on her feet on the chair and raises her arms to fly.

MESATAWE

(crow call)

I am a crow and my eyes are black and my feathers are shiny black and my wings are strong and I'm gonna fly!

Crow is startled and tries to figure out what to do.

SCOTT
You're not a crow! You can't fly!

Crow takes Mesatawe's hand and they fly.

CROW and MESATAWE

(crow call)
I am a crow -

CROW as MESATAWE
- and my eyes are black and my feathers are shiny black and my wings are strong!

SCOTT
You can't fly!

Mesatawe doesn't hear him. She is flying, with great joy. Crow gently directs their flight.

Scott looks around himself and looks at her. He sees she is not seeing what he sees. He starts to watch her, wondering what she sees. He hears Crow as Mesatawe.

CROW as MESATAWE
(crow call)
I am flying high up in the sky. I am flying very fast and the wind is singing.

SCOTT
You can't fly.

CROW as MESATAWE
(crow call)
I am flying lower to see where the little boy lives with his black eyes like my black eyes, like my shiny black feathers.

SCOTT
(uncertain, watching her)
I'm not little, I'm six...

Mesatawe is flying, but her smile fades and she is thoughtful. She will see through Crow's eyes now, and Scott will watch her as she sees so many things she does not understand.

Scott is watching her and is growing more uncertain, shaking his head and scoffing his shoe in the dirt, but still watching her closely.

SCOTT

(trying but not quite succeeding in laughing with disdain)

So what d'ya see if you're a crow an you're flyin?

Mesatawe is silent, circling around, concerned. She doesn't understand what she sees.

SCOTT

What do you see?

CROW as MESATAWE

(a crow call, quiet and sad)

I am flying where the little boy lives with his black eyes like my black eyes, like my shiny black feathers.

SCOTT

But what do you see?

Mesatawe is silent as she looks.

SCOTT

Tell me.

Megeso Eagle and Hummingbird will portray Scott's adoptive White parents.

CROW as MESATAWE

(a crow call, quiet and sad)

I see the boy's Mama with her blue eyes. I see the boy's Daddy with his blue eyes. But his eyes aren't blue now. His eyes are red and he is yelling and he has a yellow

bottle in his hand and it is glass and her eyes aren't blue now, her eyes are red and she is crying and she is trying to talk to him and there are yellow bottles everywhere and they shine in the sun.

SCOTT

What's he saying?

CROW as MESATAWE

(a crow call, quiet and sad)

He is drinking from the yellow bottle now. He is drinking it as fast as he can. Now he is yelling at her. He is saying -

FATHER

You stupid bitch you can't understand you weren't there!

CROW as MESATAWE

He is saying -

FATHER

Adopting that Injun boy don't make it right it'll never be right it won't bring Joe back he's dead dead dead!

CROW as MESATAWE

He is saying -

FATHER

Every time I look at that bastard Injun kid I see Joe I see him smilin at me an he's dyin in front of me cause he saw that Gook sniper in the jungle before I did an he jumped in front of me to save me an it shoulda been me!

SCOTT

SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP I HATE YOU I - !

Scott is crying.

SCOTT

What's she saying? Tell me!

CROW as MESATAWE

(a crow call, quiet and sad)

She is trying to take the yellow bottle away now. She is crying now. She is saying -

HUMMINGBIRD as MOTHER

Please!

CROW as MESATAWE

She is saying -

HUMMINGBIRD as MOTHER

Please let me in.

CROW as MESATAWE

She is saying -

HUMMINGBIRD as MOTHER

Please -

CROW as MESATAWE

Now he is hitting her. Now her eyes are turning black. Now she is still trying to take the yellow bottle away, now she is still saying -

HUMMINGBIRD as MOTHER

Please -

Scott is crying, he can't speak.
Mesatawe is flying closer.

CROW as MESATAWE

(soft crow call)

I do not understand. I do not understand so I will fly closer. I am flying closer and closer. Her eyes are black now and his eyes are blue and red and I am flying into his blue and red eyes and I am flying in a green jungle now and I do not know this place. I am flying in a green jungle and I am looking for black eyes like my black eyes like my shiny black feathers. I am flying and I am looking and I see black eyes shining in the jungle green and I fly into those black eyes and I am a boy now and I am 12 years old and my home is Vietnam.

Crow transforms into a terrified VIETNAMESE BOY, running hard in place. Awasos Bear will be JOE and Megeso Eagle will be FATHER again and Song Sparrow and Hummingbird will be MOTHER / SISTER.

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

My home is Vietnam and I am scared so scared I cannot breathe - *They killed my father they raped my mother and my sister!* My mother and my sister were running and their skin was on fire and they were screaming -

MOTHER / SISTER

Run! Run!

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

- and they were screaming this to me and I did and I found this rifle and I am running in the jungle through the green and I am running so fast I fly but I hear something and I stop.

Crow as Vietnamese Boy stops in terror.

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

One of Them is coming. I see him coming and I see he is not one of the ones who killed my family and I see he is White like They were White and I am not thinking but my arm is raising up like it is not my arm and it is bringing the rifle up like the rifle is alive and I am looking through the rifle at this man and my arm is not my arm my hand is not my hand and I hear the burning ghosts of my mother and my sister screaming to me -

MOTHER / SISTER

NO!

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

- through the green but my finger is not my finger and it presses on the trigger and I see a man brown like me jump in front of my rifle he is so fast it is like he is flying then he is flying then he is standing then he is going to the ground slow to the ground and the back of his jacket is red through his black hair and he has long black hair like my mother like my sister shiny black hair and my mother and my sister are crying -

MOTHER / SISTER

NO!

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

- through the green but it is done and I am crying and the one who is White looks up from the one on the ground who is

brown and red the one who is White sees me he is coming to me and my mother and my sister are screaming -

MOTHER / SISTER

Run!

CROW as VIETNAMESE BOY

- through the green but I cannot move I can only cry and he is coming to me I can see his eyes his eyes are blue and red his eyes are crying like my eyes are crying then all the world is red then all the world is black.

Crow as Boy falls to the ground and dies and the ghosts of his mother and sister come to him and gently help him to his feet to exit.

Mesatawe throws her head back and lets out a cry that starts like a crow call but becomes all the sorrow of the earth. Scott is still crying but he is scared. He is scared for Mesatawe.

SCOTT

Come back. Please come back.

Mesatawe is crying and lost.

SCOTT

Come back, Morning Star. Come back, Mesatawe. Come back from where you are.

Mesatawe slowly comes back to herself. She is shaken.

SCOTT

(relieved)
You came back.

MESATAWE

You called me back.

Scott remembers everything Mesatawe said as Crow. He cannot speak. He nods.

MESATAWE

You called me back and I followed your voice back here.
Thank You / Wlioni / Merci / Crow Words, my friend.

Scott starts to cry and he turns
away from Mesatawe and toward the
audience. Mesatawe gently puts
her hand on his shoulder.

MESATAWE

I think the yellow people are hurting.

Scott is silent.

MESATAWE

I think the blue people are hurting. I think your Mama and
your Daddy are hurting.

Scott is silent.

MESATAWE

I think I am yellow and blue today. I am hurting today.

SCOTT

How did you see all that?

MESATAWE

Crow saw. Crow let me see.

SCOTT

Who told you all that?

MESATAWE

Crow did. Crow told me. But I don't understand.

SCOTT

Your mother hasn't told you?

MESATAWE

Told me what?

SCOTT

Your father and my Daddy were friends. Best friends. They
worked together in the mill. They were gonna go to college
together when they got back from Vietnam and then they were
gonna make a furniture fixing store together cause they

both were good carpenters. They went to Vietnam together and your father died to save my Daddy.

Mesatawe is quiet as she thinks.

MESATAWE

Maman always tells me my Papa was special and his heart was wide open and the sky was calling him and so my Papa is a star up in the sky and he is always watching out for me and shining on me and loving me.

Scott is quiet as he thinks.

SCOTT

(turning to Mesatawe)

Mesatawe, can I fly too?

MESATAWE

Yes, you can fly. Maman says we all of us can fly. Maman says all we need is love and to open our hearts to see the real colors, the inside colors.

SCOTT

Mesatawe, can you teach me how to fly?

MESATAWE

(big smile)

Yes.

Mesatawe steps back and holds out her hand. Scott turns to her, hesitates, then slowly gives her his hand.

They turn downstage to audience and step forward. Mesatawe becomes herself as a young woman, at the age at which she died. She keeps hold of Scott's hand and turns to him. Scott is still six years old. Mesatawe speaks gently to the child who will grow to be her husband and Katahdin's father.

MESATAWE

Scott, you are still a child but I am speaking to you now from when I was grown. We were children and I did not

understand what it was like for you. I could not understand why you would get so angry so quickly and why you would fight.

Scott tries to get away but Mesatawe is stronger and gently restrains him with her love. Scott cannot look at her.

MESATAWE

All I saw was how big your heart was, all I knew was how much you loved me, from when we were little. What I never understood was how much it scared you to love me.

Scott cannot get away and he trembles with fury and rage and grief. He is fighting himself.

MESATAWE

I didn't understand your grief and rage, and your alcoholism. We couldn't find a way to reach across those million stars. We were so young and we didn't know we weren't alone.

The other spirits are gathering round. Song Sparrow leads Katahdin to join their circle, and starts the Earth Song, under the following, until all join except Scott and Katahdin, who transform as the others sing, Scott to himself as a young man, and Katahdin as herself as a very young child. Linto stops singing and joins Mesatawe as Mother in the circle. She is now Unborn Little Sister. Scott breaks from the circle as a dangerously inebriated young man and paces, furious.

AWASOS

It is 1991 and Katahdin is 4 and in her family's Airstream home with her young mother and father. Her mother has just told her father that she is pregnant. Her father is drunk and has just been laid off from his job at the mill and he has just crashed bottles against the wall in his rage, and

there are glass shards and alcohol everywhere.

SCOTT

NO I CAN'T I HATE I -!

Scott sinks to a crouch, sobbing with fury, as Katahin puts her hand gently on his shoulder.

KATAHDIN

Papa, you're bleeding.

Scott sobs harder, keening.

MESATAWE

Husband, we'll find a way. Please, come back to us.

SCOTT

I CAN'T I HATE I - !

MESATAWE

Please, come back.

Scott shakes with fury and rage and grief. He is fighting himself. He tries to light a cigarette to calm himself but he is sobbing too hard and drops the match. Scott breaks away and runs outside. Katahdin follows him, as Mesatawe feels a harsh cramp and holds her womb.

MESATAWE

No, it's too soon.

AWASOS

The cigarette Scott threw down lights the alcohol and the Airstream explodes in fire.

Scott explodes in terror, trying to get into the Airstream and save Mesatawe. He breaks the window, tries everything, as Mesatawe and Unborn Little Sister, holding hands come out of the Airstream and stand watching Scott.

Katahdin is in shock, watching.
Scott howls in agony and screams
to Katahdin:

SCOTT

RUN GET HELP RUN -!

Katahdin turns downstage in terror
and runs. The Airstream is
completely aflame and there is no
way to enter. Scott howls and
flings himself at the flames again
and again and is beaten back until
he howls and rocks in rage.

MESATAWE

Husband, hear me.

Scott is lost in rage and grief
and cannot hear.

MESATAWE

Husband, I am here. I am with you, always.

Scott almost hears. He is sobbing
and very young and lost.

SCOTT

(to Airstream)

Please come back. Please. Mesatawe Morning Star, you have
to come back, come back from where you are. Please.

MESATAWE

Husband, I am here. I am with you, always. We are with
you, always.

Spirits start to sing Earth Song
and surround and support Katahdin
as a young child and Scott with
love. Scott cannot accept what
has happened and his mind
fractures, but as he leaves his
body Earth Song restrains him with
love. He transforms into Azaban
Raccoon, only now he remembers and
though he does not join Earth
Song, he struggles through the

Earth Song labyrinth until he finds Mesatawe and he stops in shock and wonder and joy. Katahdin becomes her current age, but with all her memories.

AZABAN / SCOTT

You came back.

MESATAWE

You called me back. You came back.

AZABAN / SCOTT

You called me back.

Mesatawe turns to Katahdin and leads her to Little Sister.

MESATAWE

Katahdin, this is the love that is your Little Sister.

KATAHDIN

Little Sister. I remember you.

Katahdin and Little Sister embrace.

Mesatawe leads Azaban / Scott to Katahdin.

MESATAWE

Katahdin, this is the love that is your Papa.

KATAHDIN

Papa? PAPA!

Katahdin throws her arms around him and he slowly returns the embrace.

KATAHDIN

It's OK, Papa. I've got you.

MESATAWE

We are here, Katahdin. We are your blood. We are with you, always. You do not need to cut to find us. Remember, Katahdin. Remember. It is time to wake now. It is time

to find how to run with joy. Go to the powwow when you wake, we can all use some fun and I think you'll find someone there.

Mestatawe is looking at Megeso Eagle. He smiles and exits as all but Katahdin join Earth Song now and lead Katahdin back to her car and cover her with the shawl.

Dream lights to full stage, as Katahdin wakes and stretches as well as she can in the tiny car. She looks at the shawl with wonder, then carefully folds it and drapes it over the chair. Katahdin considers her knife.

KATAHDIN

(with wonder)

I don't need you this morning.

Katahdin carefully wraps her knife and puts it in her glove compartment. Katahdin exits her car and starts to run. The sun is breaking over the water.

KATAHDIN

(about the sunrise)

So beautiful, like the world's just being born.

The following Katahdin / Azaban Raccoon scenes and powwow scenes overlap.

As Katahdin runs, Azaban skips in and makes a big show of messing with the engine of Katahdin's car, pulling out plugs, connecting things to the wrong places, etc. Azaban has great joy in doing this because he knows he's helping Katahdin find her way to the powwow.

AZABAN

(singing)

WELL the silver thingy's now connected to the red thing,
and the ... (continues in like manner - Azaban knows nothing
about cars).

Awasos as POWWOW ANNOUNCER moves
center stage and works the actual
audience. Drum music throughout.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

Let's hear it for these young ladies, eh?

Powwow Announcer ad libs and does
not continue until the actual
audience enthusiastically
responds.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

They're really dancin their hearts out for you! Oooooo-
eaaaa! Those drums are on *fire*! What a workout for these
young ladies, fancydancin out here in this hot sun! Lookit
these dancers *fly*! If their feet move any faster, they're
gonna lift right up offa th' ground!

Katahdin winds down from her run,
and approaches her car. Invisible
to her, Azaban joyously opens the
door and jumps up and down,
silently laughing.

Katahdin starts her car without
any problems. Katahdin's car is
working fine. Azaban is
incredulous and jumps around,
exasperated, trying to figure out
how to break the car. Katahdin
pulls forward - she's getting
away!

Azaban can't figure out what to do
- great hair rending angst - so he
runs full out by the passenger
side of the car, opens the door
and leaps into the passenger seat
with great melodrama. All of this
is invisible to Katahdin.

KATAHDIN

I have no clue where I'm heading. Just feel the need for motion, see where the roads lead me. Strange, not to be running away from something for once. I wonder where this green shawl came from. It's so beautiful.

(looking at passing landscape)
Desert Highway.

(to car)
C'mon lil baby, can't break down here, OK?

(she sees a sign)
"Mandatory headlights, 24 hours." Oh, OK.

Katahdin tries to turn on her headlights, but they don't work. Azaban reacts with the greatest exasperation - *that* is all his hard work resulted in? Then the headlights turn on and Azaban shakes his head and collapses in self pity.

KATAHDIN

Dreams are strange. My dreams last night were strange. But not ... *strange*. I remember things from my dreams last night, so many things. I don't usually remember -

MOTHER

You are remembering, Katahdin. Ouais, m'petite ... remember.

KATAHDIN

(glancing around)
Ouais, m'petite ... remember. Maman?

Azaban puts his hands over his mouth and shakes his head violently. He freezes in an awkward position.

MOTHER

(overjoyed)
Katahdin? Ouais, m'petite, I am here with you, we are all here with you, and you can hear us now!

Azaban reacts with great relief
that it was Mother she heard.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

A ho! Let's give it up for these beautiful young ladies!

Powwow Announcer ad libs and does
not continue until the actual
audience enthusiastically
responds.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

Dancers, come on over here to line up so the judges can see
your numbers -

KATAHDIN

I'm hearing voices but for once I don't think I'm crazy. I
feel good, like there's a ground under my feet.

MOTHER

We are all here with you, always, with all our love -

KATAHDIN

Maybe it's echoes from those dreams last night talking.
Those're some wicked strong dreams - like I was watching
some movie all night, but that movie was somehow about me
and I ... remember now. I remember things I can't possibly
know, like my great grandmothers and my mother too when she
was young -

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

- and you can get yourself some water from our very
handsome and *very single* Water Boy.

Azaban is out of his mind with
frustration because he sees in the
audience the powwow sign that is
where Katahdin's car is supposed
to break down. Katahdin slows her
car to read the sign.

KATAHDIN

(reading audience as sign)

"Pow Wow Today - 1/2 mile - Ronnie's Famous Frybread".

Azaban takes advantage of Katahdin slowing to a crawl to jump out and puncture Katahdin's tire. In the process the car apparently runs over his foot and he jumps around in amplified silent anguish. Katahdin's car stops.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

Did I mention our Water Boy is very handsome and very *single*? There might be some snaggin goin on tonight, eh?

Katahdin exits her car and looks at the tire.

KATAHDIN

Well, I guess this is as good a sign as any. I sure could use some frybread.

She reaches for her knife, considers, puts it back and smiles as she takes the shawl and starts walking to the powwow.

POWWOW ANNOUNCER

You teen men's traditional dancers, now's the time to be makin' your way down to the arena -

Katahdin enters the powwow grounds with her shawl folded over her arm. She walks around, looking.

SCRIM: Film image of a frybread stall, with a big banner proclaiming "RONNIE'S FAMOUS FRYBREAD!"

Awasos as FRYBREAD MAN moves up stage right and turns to the audience and joyously hollers:

FRYBREAD MAN

A HO! WE GOT A TIP!

All the other Spirit Characters, wherever they are, pause and holler: *A ho!*

Katahdin smiles and crosses to join the line in front of the frybread stall, turning center stage to the audience / *Ronnie's Famous Frybread!* stall.

At a right downstage angle from Katahdin, a MIDDLE-AGED MIDWESTERN HIPPIE COUPLE - Mkazas Crow and Nanatasis Hummingbird - are also in line for frybread:

HIPPIE WOMAN

Whew this *heat!* I'm tellin you. Well I guess this is all real nice and all, but you remember that *roudez-vous* we went to a coupla years back that had all those mountain men and all those Indians? I'm tellin you, remember how that *roudez-vous* was so big the doctor hadta ride a whole day across the grounds, to deliver that baby being born on the other side?

HIPPIE MAN

Now, Martha, where'd you git tha story from? You weren't off smoking *somma* that -?

The Hippy Man is interrupted when Azaban Raccoon as a very young APACHE BOY with a stunning smile and beautiful long hair *tears* between the Hippy Man and Hippy Woman and pivots abruptly to hide behind Katahdin, stifling his giggles as he peers around her for his pursuers.

HIPPIE WOMAN

Well! Freddie! Would you look at that pretty little wild Indian girl, I can't believe her mama lets her run around in public without a top on and in all this heat. I'm telling you -

KATAHDIN

(interrupting, gently)
He's a boy.

HIPPIE WOMAN

Well! Who'd've ever thought - ?

(To Hippie Man, teasing.)

What'd you'd give, Freddie, for that beautiful head of hair, huh? Steada your wannabe sorry ponytail? Huh?

HIPPIE MAN

Now, Martha -

Hippie Couple exit stage right while speaking, as Katahdin raises her arm with her shawl, to further shield the BOY from his pursuers. The BOY smiles brilliantly at Katahdin as he catches his breath.

APACHE BOY

My name is BAH-ISCH-KINN, Little Wolf Boy. What's your name?

KATAHDIN

Katahdin. My mother named me after a mountain.

The BOY nods his head gravely as he smiles, then looks closer at Katahdin's face.

BAH-ISCH-KINN

Your eyes are *green*!

The BOY smiles widely at Katahdin. He glances beyond her shawl and squeals, sprinting away in the opposite direction, immediately transforming to TALKS-TOO-MUCH, a young Abenaki boy in 1706, who is running hard in a race with Megeso Eagle as WINNER BOY and Mkasas Crow as ABENAKI BOY. WINNER BOY is in front.

SCRIM: Frybread stall image rapidly shifts to film clip of someone running over a field

fringed by woods.

Katahdin's smile fades. Song Sparrow has transformed into Little Pale Wolf, and approaches Katahdin as Katahdin watches the race, confused.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(to Katahdin)

We are back in Québec when I was a child with the Abenaki band, in the early 1700s. I am watching the boys race and I want to run too.

If possible the Abenaki boys run to a midpoint in the audience, fighting to be the first to touch the goal, laughing.

SCRIM: Image is replaced by a brilliant blue sky.

Winner Boy wins and Talks-Too-Much is last, stutters with rage and humiliation.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

I want to run too!

Talks-Too-Much puffs out his chest and speaks breathlessly to Little Pale Wolf:

TALKS-TOO-MUCH

No, you cannot run with us, Little Pale Wolf. This running is for us men like Winner Boy only. This is very important work so we will be warriors like your Abenaki father. But you are different blood. White blood. You are not Abenaki. So you can never be Abenaki like us. And you are a girl. So you can never be a warrior like us. And so you can never run with -

WINNER BOY

(interrupting, laughing)

Talks-Too-Much, you talk too much.

(To Little Pale Wolf)

Little Pale Wolf, your mother, my father's youngest sister, Red Feather, long prayed to the Creator for a child, and then you came to us, to be her child. The warriors said you ran as a young wolf in the woods from the ruins of your village. Come, I will run with you.

DRUMS / EARTH SONG, as:

Talks-Too-Much is stunned to silence and after an incredulous beat storms offstage right in an aggrieved huff, as Winner Boy and Little Pale wolf smile at each other and turn to the audience. The children run in place. Winner Boy's grin fades to sudden seriousness as he notices Little Pale Wolf move downstage slightly. Winner Boy increases his speed to catch up and intently focuses on outrunning Little Pale Wolf, but his face registers his wonder as he is unable to pull ahead of her. Both runners smile as they run swiftly forward joyously side-by-side. The children freeze a beat, then take hands and approach Katahdin, as young adults.

EARTH SONG gains volume and will continue throughout.

LITTLE PALE WOLF

(to Katahdin)

This is Winner Boy, your first grandfather. He runs fast, but not as fast as me!

WINNER BOY

(to Katahdin)

She is speaking the truth. She tells me you have her green eyes and you run very fast.

KATAHDIN

(smiling)

Yes.

Little Pale Wolf tears off and
Winner Boy runs to catch up.

SCRIM: Film clip of someone
running over a field fringed by
woods.

WINNER BOY

(Laughing as he runs)
Little Pale Wolf! Wait for your husband!

Little Pale Wolf pulls further
ahead.

WINNER BOY

(Laughing as he stops, winded)
Yes! You are the warrior. *You are the warrior!*

Little Pale Wolf slows until
Winner Boy jogs up to her.

WINNER BOY

(Softly)
You are the warrior.

Winner Boy and Little Pale Wolf
walk to the side, holding hands.
Little Pale Wolf transforms to
Song Sparrow and Winner Boy
transforms into BEH-NEICH-HAH.
Song Sparrow helps BEH-NEICH-HAH
with his regalia, as Frybread Man
moves upstage right and turns to
meet Katahdin with a plate of
frybread, as:

SCRIM: Image replaced with image
of *Ronnie's Famous Frybread!*
stall.

KATAHDIN

(Smiling as she reaches toward the paper plate of very
yummy looking frybread)
Thank you.

Katahdin hands the Frybread Man several singles, as he smiling says, gesturing:

FRYBREAD MAN

Sugar and honey is at the end (of the counter).

As Katahdin moves to the end of the counter (downstage right to a Musician Character who hands her a jar of sugar), the Frybread Man steps center stage, turns downstage, holds up Katahdin's money and joyously hollers:

FRYBREAD MAN

A HO! WE GOT A TIP!

All the other Musician Characters, wherever they are, pause and holler: *A ho!*

The Frybread Man turns back into his Musician Character and moves away as Katahdin laughs as she sugar powders her frybread.

She is still smiling as she hands the powder sugar jar back to the Musician Character and turns to move at a cross stage angle.

Paying attention to her beautiful frybread, she almost collides with Megeso Eagle as now a very handsome BEH-NEICH-HAH in full regalia, who is being led to Katahdin by Azaban as BAH-ISCH-KINN, who has a big smile as he is pulling BEH-NEICH-HAH insistently forward by the arm.

BAH-ISCH-KINN

(To BEH-NEICH-HAH)

This is Katahdin, from a mountain.

(To Katahdin, with great pride)
This is BEH-NEICH-HAH, "He-Tries-Hard," my eldest brother.
He is the Powwow Water Boy. He has green eyes just like
you!

Katahdin and BEH-NEICH-HAH share a deep and instant sense of recognition. BAH-ISCH-KINN smiles expectantly from Katahdin to BEH-NEICH-HAH and back to Katahdin, shifting from toe to toe, quite pleased with himself. When the silence is unbroken, he sighs dramatically in frustration and rolls his eyes. At which point he notices the plate of frybread still in Katahdin's hand.

BAH-ISCH-KINN

Frybread! YUMMMMMMMM...

Katahdin looks at her plate of frybread as if she didn't realize it was there. She hands the plate to BAH-ISCH-KINN:

KATAHDIN

Take this, BAH-ISCH-KINN - you need this frybread for fuel so you can run very, very fast.

BAH-ISCH-KINN'S smile is stunning as he accepts the frybread and jogs offstage, carefully shielding the plate with his arm not to lose the powdered sugar. Katahdin smiles as she watches him go, then turns back to BEH-NEICH-HAH:

KATAHDIN

How fast can you run?

BEH-NEICH-HAH

(Smiling widely)
Very, very fast.

DRUMS / EARTH SONG, as:

SCRIM: Still image replaced by a film clip of an explosion of sunset, with birds flying, as:

Katahdin and BEH-NEICH-HAH face audience and start to run side by side with joy.

All Spirits, Musicians, and Dancers join them, and all join in creating Earth Song.

Katahdin recognizes and acknowledges everyone. She remembers her blood stories now, and has learned to run with joy.

She seeks out her mother, and brings her to the group's celebration from her corner and she and BEH-NEICH-HAH run.

KATAHDIN

Today, Maman, I run because I cannot not run. Today I run because my mixed blood is swelling and singing with joy. Because my blood is singing in different languages, new languages. Because I now understand what you always said, that this moment, today, is long, long ago, and also tomorrow. Because, Maman, at last I understand what you always believed ... that I - that all of us - can fly. A HO!

Katahdin flings her fists in a victory "V". Everyone on stage does likewise, as:

ALL OF CAST

A HO!

THE END.