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## SHE: PERFORMING BIOGRAPHY AS A DRAMATIC NARRATIVE

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*SHE: PERFORMING BIOGRAPHY AS A DRAMATIC NARRATIVE*

Partial Fulfillment Statement:

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Pedagogy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

By

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Richmond, VA  
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## Abstract

### SHE: PERFORMING BIOGRAPHY AS DRAMATIC NARRATIVE

By Ashley Love, Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

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Amid the current wave of feminism, women continue to strive for equal ground within societal constructs. Progress is being made in the workplace, the arts, and media presence, but why does it seem that women's stories of the past continue to be overlooked as if insignificant? This thesis examines these overlooked stories of the past, specifically the 1920s-2000s, through the lens of a one act play. This play focuses on one's woman's journey (my grandmother's journey) through physical, spiritual, and societal struggles of this era, which gives voice to other women who lived through similar experiences. I examine method and means to create a performance by using documents such as letters, notes, sketches, journals, and library logs. By using this documentation, audiences can understand a woman's experience with family tragedy, her liberation of place during the war, her strength dealing with a disease like poliomyelitis, and her fight for enduring hope and joy in the process of life.

## VITA

Ashley Love was born in Cadillac, MI, on September 15, 1986. She attended elementary school at a private school in Gladwin, MI, and graduated from high school at a school in Midland, MI. She went on to receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Speech Pedagogy and an M.A. in Performance Studies at Bob Jones University in Greenville, SC. For the next ten years, Ashley taught english and theatre at a high school in Myrtle Beach, SC, while developing two youth theatre programs in the Myrtle Beach community. She entered Virginia Commonwealth University in August 2020 and received a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Pedagogy in May 2022.

## Thesis Introduction

“One day my granddaughter Ashley, teacher and writer, will read this and get quite the laugh.” As I read through one of my grandmother’s journals this semester, this sentence remains engrained in my mind. Did she know something that I did not yet know all those years ago? Before she passed away six years ago, one of the last things that we did together was go through her old photos, making sure they had descriptions or dates on the back of them. I still do not know exactly why she was so insistent that I document her past, but here I am, years later, transforming her words into pictures onstage. After reflecting on the untold stories of so many women, I wrote a play about Jeanette Love’s life with the help of her journals, photo albums, library logs, and letters.

The concept of my play is centered on the box of old photos of my grandma’s life. Each scene in this play is inspired by an image from her life, and each scene has one or more characters whose names are “Jeanette.” These four characters, represent different ages of Jeanette, and they all interact revealing different facets of the protagonist. The names of the characters are: 80s/90s Jeanette, 40s/50s Jeanette, 20s/30s Jeanette, and She. The range of ages offer a diverse portrayal of the massive changes and enduring similarities that are present across ninety-three years of life. The character “She” represents Jeanette as a young girl, a teenager, and also incorporates my own voice as her granddaughter. The ambiguity of the name invites questions: When is young Jeanette speaking and when does the author speak? Are there similarities between the two?

The scenes in the play are non-chronological, brief excerpts from one moment in Jeanette’s life. These short, sporadic scenes should seem like scattered pictures on a stage, as if

the audience is looking through a box of old photos, glancing at one memory, and flipping to the next. The stage should be shaped as a box, and the setting should feature photographs of real women from my Grandmother's era scattered on the stage. These pictures will aid in the overall purpose of this project.

I wrote this play to commemorate Jeanette Love's life, to exemplify the strong women who lived during a tumultuous era in history, and to better understand the connection between the social climate and a person's experiences. My grandma was the strongest women I have known. Even now, after she is gone, I am discovering how she endured life's hardships, and yet chose to live a positive life focused on serving others. When she was dying, I remember letter after letter after letter coming in from around the United States from people whose lives she had touched, and they thanked her for all she gave to them. At the time, these letters touched me and recently, as I was reading through one of her journals, a particular excerpt struck me. Writing about her deceased mother, my grandma said, "My mama was always about love...oh that people could say that about my life." What an ironic statement, knowing that anyone who mentions "Grandma Love" says something similar: "She was about loving others and serving others."

Jeanette Love was one of many strong women born in the 1920s who lived through the Great Depression, WWII, civil rights movements, the Vietnam War, multiple pandemics, and numerous political and social uprisings. We all know at least one woman who lived through all of these life-changing events, and admire and revere those who worked to keep themselves, their families, and their county afloat. Remove these women from society, and America's backbone would be gone. As time continues, there are few women from this era still alive to relay their life



experiences, which is why this project is so important. There are stories to be told; I am telling one of them, hoping to inspire others to share their mothers' or grandmothers' stories.

This project illustrates the inevitable connection between societal waves and Jeanette's own life experiences. How many political swings and societal changes happen in one's lifetime? I have always found it fascinating how each generation changes in response to current cultural phenomena. Throughout this play cultural changes occur in the background, giving the audience insight into the era and values of that time. Through subtle allusions, this story informs and magnifies the effects of living that made the women of this era who they were and continue to be.



“I’m trying to look over 60 years and remember the good ole days.”

-Jeanette Marion Lyster Love

## Chapter 1: Artistic Aim

“I was a young, wiry girl. Happy-go-lucky with not a care in the world.” I have known this to be a description of my grandmother as far back as I can remember. It was a summer afternoon, I was around seven years old, and I was sitting in the middle of my grandparents’ apartment listening to my grandma tell me a story of when she was a young girl. She warned me not to follow the example of young Jeanette but even as she continued to paint the picture of a wild girl who had some happy times on her Grandma Lyster’s farm. The details of this particular story are vague, but this I remember: Young Jeanette loved to run away from her parents and grandparents so that she could play with the animals, the dirt, and the trees. At one point in this story, she was being chased, and ran her wiry self into a big wooden fence, where she got caught. Someone eventually came and freed her, and she made it out alive, but not unpunished. As a child, I was fascinated with these stories that my grandma animated, and I remember thinking that one day she should write a book. As I have aged, the stories have grown faint, and I have always felt the urgency to preserve some of her story before it is all forgotten.

The week before she passed, I visited Grandma and she asked me to bring her all of her old photos. I sat next to her bed and showed her each picture. If the back of the photo did not have a date or description, she had me write down what she could remember. This peek into the past reminded me of all that she had been through—death, war, diseases, handicap, love, family, success, and life—and what strength she maintained until the end. What a life. So now, years later, the importance of documenting Jeanette Love’s story is crucial and should be known.

*Telling this story will reflect the lives of women who have faced physical and societal struggles, while honoring their successes. I will structure this story in the form of a monologue- driven play inspired by and taken from my grandmother’s journals, photographs, and personal items. The*

*play's structure and documentary content will give voice to a woman whose physical and social experience exemplifies so many other women of this era. I will examine methods and means to create performances with these non-dramatic texts ( letters, notes, bulletins, sketches, diaries, library logs) and found objects that coexisted with my grandmother. This process will be a learning experience, and I intend to research and become acquainted with my grandmother in ways that I have never considered.*

### Physical struggles

I endeavor to recognize women with multiple illnesses or disabilities by rejecting theatrical tropes of the past, and by portraying strong, intelligent women. In the past, particularly in early nineteenth century literature, ill women, both on and off stage, were discussed and portrayed as weak and vulnerable invalids, a familiar archetype of this era. A well-known example of this trope is Lucille Fletcher's radio drama *Sorry, Wrong Number*. Leona, the protagonist of this drama is referred to as a "neurotic invalid" and although the point of the thriller is to watch Leona discover the truth and manipulation behind her husband's murderous plot, she is portrayed as unstable and hysterical to the very end. Nowhere in the play does there seem to be any moment where a handicapped woman can maintain control of her emotions. Clara Morris, an American actress from the early nineteenth century often wrote about similar frustrations as a female stage performer. She often was cast as a victimized woman, and if she did not portray that character to fit societal assumptions, she would be critiqued as a failure. Grossman's book *A Spectacle of Suffering*, opined that Morris's portrayal of Lady Macbeth was a "highly publicized failure," revealing the "bias of the critics who rejected her interpretation" of a "madwomen"(4). More recently this stereotype has been challenged through second wave

feminists and theatre artists who decided that they had enough of the vulnerable woman stereotype. According to *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, feminist theatre in the 1990s “found ways to participate in these debates about women’s bodies, health, and illness”(129). Authors and performers such as Linda Park-Fuller, Susan Miller, and Lisa Loomer brought awareness to women and illness by openly talking about their battles with breast cancer. Up to that point, breast cancer was something that was not publicly addressed through performance, but a movement began and women began producing “poetry, plays, memoirs, films, comic books, novels essays, and self-help manuals about breast cancer,” which led to a performance style referred to as “autoperformance,” an “intersection of feminist solo performance and autobiographical narrative crystallizing a one woman show that features the explicit body” (Tulsa 129-139). An example of this type of performance is the earliest feminist, autoperformance piece in Park-Fuller’s *Clean Breast of It*, a 1993 one-act narrative where she interprets her own breast cancer experience for audiences. Park-Fuller takes a Brechtian approach to performance by alienation, in efforts to force the audience members to rethink breast cancer as a whole while also commenting on a woman’s reaction to illnesses such as cancer. The author purposefully opposes the “sick role as described by medical sociologists: a set of social expectations imposed on people undergoing health problems...” that align itself with the idea of the submissive, weak patient who can no longer speak for herself. Park-Fuller effectively talks back to “Western medical practices and invites spectators to do the same” (129-39). I too want to effectively respond to Western medical practices and accurately portray a woman who lived through multiple illnesses, with the goal of defying the female sick role, and perception of women as infirm.

My grandma was diagnosed with polio in 1953, five months after giving birth to her firstborn, and the effects included, but were not limited to, a paralyzed left leg for the rest of her life. At the age of thirty-three she began using a cane, which eventually led to a knee brace and walker, which eventually led to a full-time wheelchair, which finally led to an electric scooter. Due to her handicap, she fell easily, and throughout the years she broke a hip and broke her leg twice. Her rotator cuffs eventually gave out, and she had to have two extensive surgeries which inhibited her vertical arm movement for the rest of her life. When she was 80, she was diagnosed with breast cancer which eventually metastasized to pelvic cancer. Despite these physical challenges, Jeanette lived a very active, healthy life and exemplified a strong, capable woman who did not match the “sick role” that so many women are relegated to in theatre. Not only do I want to give strong voices to those who have had sickness, but I aim to accurately portray handicapped women on stage. These stories should be more common, so that audiences understand the human response to illnesses and learn that there can be hope and strength amidst suffering.

I began searching for other portrayals of polio victims, and discovered a research team at the University of Glasgow and a Scottish theatre company, *Birds of Paradise*, working to promote deaf and disabled artists. This team conducted five live interviews with polio survivors in 2018, and then created a verbatim theatre performance of their experiences for historical and societal purposes. This particular research team embarked on this endeavor because of the absence of accurate depictions of disabled people, particularly those who had polio. According to researchers Shah and Greer, “Young people’s understanding of historic disease and disability is, more often than not, likely to be framed by a repertoire of cultural scripts, in relation to literature, film and theatre. ... such constructions may be narrow and based on stereotypical represen-

tations, and thus fail to transmit ‘knowledge about the lived realities and the social conditions experienced by previous generations of disabled people’ (Shah and Priestley 150). Therefore social and oral histories are essential to fill in the missing links in intergenerational and interrelational experience of disabled lives (2). This is another excellent example of ways to share illness with others: through empowerment, not through pity. I agree with Shah and Greer’s opinion that the “interplay of human lives and historical times, the timing of lives, linked or inter-dependent lives, and human agency in choice making” (5) are all themes that should be explored, particularly in feminist theatre.

### Societal Struggles

Although often overlooked, women played a substantial role in society during the mid to late 1900s. The women of this era are now elderly, or no longer with us, and seem to have been left in the shadows. My aim is to shine light on the strength of these women. Taking time to document my grandmother’s story will inspire others to share the stories of the unsung women of that era—and there are many. Writers are constantly adapting incredible historical events and crafting them into stories that people can read, watch, and discuss. Although we are lucky to have access to stories that shaped our country’s culture, there is a knowingly lack of diversity in history books and in literature in general; specifically, there is a gender and cultural gap. There are many stories of men who fought in battles, but few stories of the women left behind. More specifically, why does the recoding and analysis of historical events primarily focus on the roles of men? Why do the majority of plays set during these major events primarily portray the struggles of the era through the male gaze? In 2016, the political magazine *Slate*, examined a set of “614 works of popular history from 80 [publishing] houses,...[and] found that 75.8 percent of the total titles had male authors(“Kahn and Onion 1). Since this study in 2016, percentages have

slightly shifted, but the overall stats remain—most history books are written by men and about men. Of course, there are numerous nonfiction books and plays written about women, but due to the perspective imbalance, there are many more equally important stories out there waiting to be told through a female lens, and on the stage. I began searching for plays focusing on women who lived during major American historical events such as the Great Depression and World War II, and discovered only a handful. Many stories had female characters, but the plays themselves were not focused on the experiences of those women. I will be writing a play about a woman who struggled and lived through this very era.

In focusing on the one life of one woman, I can delve deeply into her ninety-three years, exemplifying the significance of the “ordinary” woman. In Brander Matthews 1916 *A Book About the Theater*, he questions why there are so few women playwrights and why the plays written by women are low in rank and rarely produced. At the time, he concluded that at the time that the answer must be “that women are likely to have only a definitely limited knowledge of life, and that they are likely also to be more or less deficient in the faculty of construction. The first of these disabilities may tend to disappear if ever the feminist movement shall achieve its ultimate victory; and the second may depart also whenever women submit themselves to the severe discipline which has compelled men to be more or less logical.” Ironically, Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles*, a play that is anthologized in American literature as a classic, was written and first performed in 1916, the same year that Matthews poses these questions. Perhaps the amount of plays written by females has never been the issue, but the knowledge and publicity of these female playwrights. Progress has been and continues to be made, but there is still much more to do. The New York State Council on the Arts is currently conducting a three-year study on the status of women in theatre and is already generating reports and informative staged readings to



help fill this gender gap. Similarly, Susan Jonas at New York University has co-founded a series of staged readings for plays written by women, called “On Her Shoulders,” and has invited response plays inspired by our foremothers. Current educational initiatives invite theatre teachers to add “one new classic play by woman to their syllabi”(Jonas 1). Professional theatres, such as the Halcyon in Chicago, are producing more plays written by women in order to advocate against gender disparity in the arts. Unfortunately, in spite of these successes, there are also setbacks. Just a couple years ago in three classic theatres in New York City, out of the 132 plays in the last ten seasons, “four were by women, all 20<sup>th</sup> century(Jonas 2). This exemplifies a lack of exposure to female literature and lack of estimation of the female story. While other theatre professionals are working to rectify this disparity, I aim to help this cause by taking the time to research, understand, and then create opportunity through performance.

As I flipped through a box of pictures my grandma gave me before she passed ranging from the 1890s through the early 200s, I found myself not only drawn to the photos, but also the inscriptions handwritten on the back. The descriptions were short and to the point, but in a tone that communicated so much more. On the back of her wedding photo was the following: “1950, Nov. 17. Lace gloves only thing that were my own.” I turned to another picture, a single shot of a slightly younger Jeanette with a wide grin that seems to jump out of the picture. The back reads, “My days in Seattle visiting friends after the first shift of Riveter at Boeings, 1941-1942.” As I worked through this stack of pictures, stories were being narrated, glimpse by glimpse. I began to ask questions. Who is this person and do I really know her? Could she motivate the women of today? As I began to research beyond the pictures, I discovered numerous stories of women from this same era, and although all have very different experiences, one similarity stands—all of these women lived difficult, inspiring lives, and no one has taken time to document their story.

One of the women I spoke with is currently 96 years old. She has lived through wars, cultural changes, rights being given, and rights being taken away. She was a woman laborer, a mother, and a wife, and experienced much hardship along the way, yet she lives to tell about it. It is crucial to tell stories of women laborers who contributed much and sacrificed much for their families and country.

### Societal Struggles and Labor: A Woman's Work

Because my grandma was a riveter in World War II, it is important to include an account of a woman's opportunities to work, and the opposition that followed after the war. While men were fighting, manufacturers needed more laborers to produce materials. According to documents from The War Manpower Commission, "women were called to take their place on the production line" (1). Men's responses towards women joining the workforce were volatile. Some men would ignore the presence of women in the workplace, while others would refuse to work alongside them. Before long, no one had a choice, and men and women worked alongside each other whether they wanted to or not. In Mobile, AL, an "estimated ninety-thousand workers swarmed into the city to work in the local war factories, especially in one of the two shipyards (Gulf Shipbuilding and Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding) or in the ALCOA factory. The ALCOA plant alone would produce 34% of the nation's aluminum, a metal necessary for the production of airplanes" (Women in the Workforce 1). Men and women both worked at these particular plants, but the plants never would have stayed open without women joining the workforce. I recently interviewed Juanita Doyle, a woman who worked as a ship welder in Long Beach, CA during WW2. She took the job because she noticed that for the first time in history, men and women were being paid the same wages. She jumped at this exciting opportunity and

became a working woman. After the war Doyle lamented that “They didn’t need women welders anymore. So many women, as men came home, were out of jobs. I had been trained in school to be an executive secretary. I was just glad to have training and experience that helped me to get another good job. I moved to Compton, California, and worked as a secretary.” So many women were out of jobs again, and yet wanted to continue working. They had proven that they could work a job and support their family. There are many instances where women saved their working wages and put “down payments for a new home,” helping the financial growth of the US in the 1950s as men returned from battle(Working Women 1). I want this project to give voice to these successful women, and unveil a new perspective.

## Structure

When considering this project, the structure of the play is vital for my overall purpose. If (through the lens of my grandmother’s life) I want to give voice to the unsung female who is ill, disabled, and working, then what structure is most effective? After reading through many plays, I decided to pattern the structure based on four different plays: *Turn Here, Sweet Corn*, *For Colored Girls*, *Say Something Bunny*, and *A Clean Breast of It*.

Atina Diffley’s 2020 memoir *Turn Here, Sweet Corn* was adapted for the stage by Jim Stowell as a solo performance that tells the story of a woman’s life as an organic farmer and her fight against a big corporation’s attempt to run a pipeline through her land. In the stage adaptation, audiences get a glimpse at Diffley’s personal and professional life through a “poetic and spiritual” performance “about the power of the land without ever becoming precious” (Reid 1). I was inspired by this piece to write portions of the script in monologue form, from one woman’s

perspective. Stowell's script begins with four paragraphs of stage notes, one explaining that the performance should "seem like a movie that the actor and audience co-create" (Stowell 1). I too am beginning my script with explanations of what the script is and what it will hopefully create. Stowell mentions that the script should give the structure of the picture, but leave space for the audiences' imagination to fill in the rest of the story and memories. In my project I have monologues and dialogue alluding to certain times in Jeanette's life, but they remain allusions. With the use of photographs as actor and audience prompts, Jeanette's story will begin with words and allow imaginations of actor and audience to fill in the rest. One of the most notable differences between Diffley's story and my own, is that her script reads as a continual chronological story with few time gaps throughout, while my narrative is in sporadic order that will scatter Jeanette's life out on stage just like scattered photographs.

*For Colored Girl Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange influenced the structure of my project. This well-known play, based on a choreopoem tells the stories of seven colored women through monologues. Songs, poems, and dances shape the world of these seven different women. Although I am not necessarily writing a choreopoem, I am borrowing elements of this style to add dimension to the story, in hopes that it will evoke emotional responses to the main character. At two or more points in my script, Jeanette's dialogue transitions to a poem that she reads as an outpouring of her feelings, or as description for what will happen next. The element of dance is used minimally, but the movement in one of the dances will take the place of words in the monologue. I believe that this may reflect honesty and emotion through movement, something that Shange masterfully executed throughout her writing. The poetic nature of *For Colored Girls* will not be the style of my monologues, but there are elements of Shange's phrasing were influential, especially her short, phrased lines and

unfinished sentences. I experimented with these as I rewrote some of Jeanette's journal entries. In Shange's play different women speak in solo while also interacting with each other; this exchange is something that I have also incorporated into my script. The majority of my project is one woman speaking as four different versions of herself. Much of the dialogue between the four Jeanettes is short and quick, similar to *For Colored Girls...* conversations.. I originally wrote more dialogue between Jeanette and other women, but after reading through this play, I decided to focus on having all versions of Jeanette onstage simultaneously.

*Say Something Bunny!* is a documentary, interactive script written and performed by Alison S. M. Kobayashi. This delightful and innovative script was the show that initially inspired me to begin this project with the images, writings, and objects I inherited from my grandmother. Kobayashi began writing *Say Something Bunny!* after she received an amateur audio recording of a family from over sixty years ago. As she worked to transcribe the recording, she began writing about one of the entertaining women on the recording, Bunny. When this piece was originally performed, Kobayashi performed each of the characters herself while her small audience gathered around a conference table and where they were also assigned to read parts of the script. The recording of Bunny and her family plays sporadically as part of the performance, making this docu-script a mix of fiction and non-fiction. Because I cannot yet locate recordings of Jeanette, I will not be using her actual voice in my script, but I am using some of her belongings, pictures of her handwriting, and her actual words. If I had not been exposed to the *Say Something Bunny!* Project, I would not have been inspired to use the antique pictures as a centerpiece for my project.

As mentioned earlier, *A Clean Breast of It* is a solo performance written and performed by Linda Park-Fuller. This play's structure is similar to my script in that it features one woman

talking directly to an audience about her life and problems. I adopted the conversational structure of Park-Fuller's monologues but did not use the Brechtian elements in *A Clean Breast of It*. The political nature of Park-Fuller's story invites a Brechtian script. What better way to tell society what it feels like to have breast cancer while also calling them to change their attitudes towards the subject of breast cancer? Alienation and confrontation was effective for her performances as for many feminist one woman shows. I would not characterize my show as a Brechtian performance, but after reading numerous feminist scripts, I thought that it was important to write in some Brechtian moments at times when I really wanted to point out a specific societal problem that Jeanette faced in her lifetime. For an example, in one monologue she addresses the audience directly and calls an audience member out for staring at her and her limp leg. By breaking the fourth wall and taking the audience out of the emotion of her handicap state, my hope is that they can change common behaviors of society towards those with disabilities. Another *gestus* moment that I have written is during a monologue. Jeanette changes a part of her costume, she takes off and on her wig. During this costume change, the audience will once again be taken out of their voyeur state for just a few moments. I would not have felt the necessity for these moments without reading through Park-Fuller's work and performance.

Of all these plays that aided in the structuring of my project, not one of them is parallel in subject matter or thematic elements. When reading through plays of the era, I found it hard to get a hold of plays written by women about this era, which supports my earlier point of the lack of knowledge and access to women's literature of the early to mid 1900s. Some of Samuel Beckett's plays resonate with some of the hardships that my characters face throughout the play. Most specifically, Beckett's *Happy Days* and *Not I*, have women who are stuck or trapped in their own mind or in a mound of dirt, being forced to live with their current circumstances. Past

traumas, possible injuries, and memories flood both these women's minds, only to leave them wanting for the good old days. Winnie often denies her hopeless circumstances by thinking of all her happy days she once had, and she chooses to live with a hope that there will be more happy days to follow. A little less hopeful is *Not I*, a story of a woman of seventy who has remained mute most of her life besides random spurts of jumbled sentences that tell the story of four different times in her traumatic, loveless life. This woman has only her mouth to tell her traumatic stories, no matter how understandable she is. These two plays are not my grandmother's story, but as I began to work on this play, I could not help but see similarities between my grandmother and these two fictional women whose lives turned out harder than expected, but each woman push/ed through her circumstances, while attempting to communicate her/their story. Although these two plays have parallels to the content of my script, my chosen structural elements are the vehicles that carry her story to a meaningful conclusion.

### Content

I will use the vehicle of documentary theatre to frame the content of my script because of its historical effectiveness, its goals, and its adaptability. Documentary theatre has existed for centuries, dating back to ancient Greece, when this form of theatre is mentioned, people are most often referencing the docu-theatre popularized during the 1920s and 1930s. Documentary theatre of this time was often called Living Newspapers, where people would take controversial, political issues written about in the newspaper, and bring these "facts" to life through song, dance, and poetry. According to Britannica Encyclopedia, "its dramatic antecedents include the episodic structure and didactic nature of the pre-Expressionist drama of the German playwright Frank Wedekind and the Expressionist theatre of the German directors Erwin

Piscator with whom Brecht collaborated in 1927” (1). Because the Russian Revolution inspired artists to produce these kinds of performances, the motive was highly political, and sought societal change. Today, documentary theatre (sometimes called docudrama, verbatim theatre, theatre of fact/the real, or tribunal theatre) remains social and political, and is predominantly known as theatre “built by an individual or collective of artists from historical and/or archival materials such as trial transcripts, written or recorded interviews, newspaper reporting, personal or iconic visual images or video footage, government documents, biographies and autobiographies, even academic papers and scientific research” (James 1). Plainly put, source materials are at the center of this genre of theatre and can be utilized to craft the truth in a way that is both artful and factual. According to scholar and teacher Jordi Cox, documentary theatre is characterized through the use of source materials that connect events onstage with real events, people or issues, ...[and] the connection to the real is important and will shape the way the audience experiences the play” (3-4). But how do the real and the representational co-exist? And how will this paradox aid storytelling from the female perspective?

The “theatre of the real” can often be misrepresented, and lead to an assumption that if the story is factual then the performance itself reflects 100% reality. It is important to realize that the goal of documentary theatre is to allow audiences to connect to the real, but through representational means that will eventually evoke emotion, change, or thought. As Canadian theatre professional and researcher states, “Often these plays deliberately expose mechanisms of truth-making and knowing....[and] on the surface, theatres of the real offer authenticity and certainty in their attachment to reality but watching one of these plays does not produce a secure experience of truth. The closest we can get to an objective reality is the feeling of real, replacing fact with feeling” (. ). This form of theatre is not lying to the audience, but offers facts in ways



that pose questions; the authors attempt to evoke these responses is through representation. A common criticism of documentary theatre is that it can lack the potential to be avant-garde or aesthetically brilliant, but I would disagree and believe there is a way to represent facts in an artistically pleasing way while simultaneously making political and social points. “This tension between ethnographic content and modern or postmodern artistic form remains a hallmark of documentary performance, whether defined by features or practices”(James 2). Documentary theatre uses both documentation and artistry to innovate new stories. As Peter Burger famously coined, avant-garde is “a fundamental re-thinking of the artist’s social practice, together with a full-scale interrogation of the social and institutional conditions of art” (Youker 21). Not only does documentary theatre’s origins root from some of the same people who started the avant-garde movement, but this form of theatre clearly parallels the purpose and tactics of avant-garde art. Youker explains that documentary theatre employ[s] “avant- gardist tactics of estrangement, juxtaposition, genre-splicing, and audience confrontation. Through these tactics, documentary theatre presents criticisms of and/or alternatives to the ways in which dominant culture constructs, circulates, and hierarchizes the materials of memory. In some cases, this takes the form of an overtly critical art—art centered on the enactment of a critique that it makes explicit to its audiences” (25). Documentary theatre’s multiplicity is significant, making it an ideal form of storytelling for the overlooked female perspective.

If documentary theatre takes socially relevant nonfiction stories and “presents criticisms” through innovative artforms, then this theatre genre is an ideal vehicle to tell the missing female stories of the past and present. In recent years, we have been working to share history from all perspectives, and this is one place to begin. The theatre world , as a whole does, not seem to have these stories, and the ones that have been written have not been widely successful. There is a

need! These stories should be written in new ways and perspectives, and creating a documentary theatre production highlighting the power struggles of working women during this era could be a refreshing blend of the real and the representational.

As mentioned before, stories about the women who lived from the 1920s-2000s have been documented, , but many details have not transferred from the page to the stage; there were struggles and triumphs for these women that relate to triumphs and struggles of today. For an example, statistics show that in 1943, “46% of all women aged between 14 and 59, and 90% of all able-bodied single women between the ages of 18 and 40 were engaged in some form of work or National Service (Anitha and Pearson). These new opportunities were empowering to women, giving them the option to work for the first time. Despite the unstable, horrific atmosphere of WW2, this is one of the triumphs that some women gained after the war—the ability to work and potentially be seen as capable, as someone who possesses intelligence. Unfortunately, many women lost their jobs after the war, and the ones who continued to work had to (and continue to) fight for equal pay. This power struggle remains and can be effectively critiqued in this form of documentary theatre.

To create an effective documentary play about one woman who lived through the Great Depression, World War II, and beyond, there must be accurate and substantial source material from which to work. Docu-theatre scholars agree that there is a wide range of the acceptable source materials including scientific data and statistics, newspaper articles, quotes from political and other public speeches, courtroom transcripts, testimonials, diaries, letters, interviews, ethnography, video, photography, audio clips, and social media posts, etc. these documents must not only inspire the creators of the show, but they must also inform and connect to the real world. This is where Brecht’s influence may be seen in a documentary play. The audience is not blinded

to the fact that documents are directly in front of them; in fact, audiences should be aware of these documents so much that they are taken out of the storyline of the production to think on the truth and accuracy of the documentation. (This is what Brecht calls his “gestus” moment, or audience alienation.) Because actual documents are being used throughout the play, it is important that the right amount of dramaturgical work be done to ensure the accuracy and validity of the chosen documents. With these ideas in mind, it can be stated that there are archival materials about my subject, Jeanette, are waiting to be taken and transformed into a performance.

Some critics say that there are potential issues by choosing Documentary theatre as a form of spreading facts. Researcher and theatre scholar Stephenson says that because documentary theatre “is documentary in the sense that it is composed, to a significant degree, from materials that it presents as documents of something external to the performance event, and in that it implicitly or explicitly uses its own compositional and performance strategies to invoke and/or question the value of documents as a discursive category”(1-2). Although this seems like it could invite misrepresentation of text, I believe it does the opposite. When using an original document on stage, it will most likely be read aloud in some form, and then performed in a representational manner. Yes, this inevitably changes the way people receive the information, yet it does not change what has actually been recorded. Similarly, Dr. Youker suggests that “theatre creates the illusion that the representation inscribed on the document has been restored to its embodied origin, that it is once again “the thing itself” rather than an account or depiction. Often, this re-embodiment is vital to a theatre artist’s agenda in using documents; the artist wants to use performance to render visible again the bodies that were rendered invisible by the cultural production processes that created those documents” (27). What better way to make something

visible again than in a new, beautiful way that innovates, targets, and promotes a sense of community.

By using actual documents from my grandmother in my script, I will bring awareness and a sense of community among young and old. In the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, Claycomb discusses the documentary theatre community and defines “community” in four different ways: “1) as the larger represented community of all voices in the play; 2) as smaller represented communities that can be grouped together by perspective or by ideology; 3) as the community of actors who represent these first two communities; and 4) as the community of audience members and actors who together experience an individual theatrical event” (6). I would like to borrow his interpretation of community when reflecting on my own theatre production from a completely female perspective. The feminist community can link the voice of the play to the actual audience themselves, sharing known and unknown information with numerous people, ultimately opening the dialogue between a variety of perspectives. Craycomb points out that *communitas* seems to be the goal of so many oral history performances; something that creates “in the audience a sense of community that encourages dialogue, that allows for the peaceful confrontation of individual identities and that incorporates them all into the Utopian space of the theatre” (10).

Through the vehicle of documentary theatre, an unexplored female story will be researched and performed in hopes of opening up conversations of the past and present struggles from the female perspective. After discussing the benefits of documentary theatre as a form of theatre, and the lack of female stories during the WW2 era, it can be concluded that documentary theatre continues to be an effective way to make art while remaining poignant. Historically,

feminist leaders often utilize some form of docu-theatre to empower, inform, or lament their current burdens. Artists cannot dictate certain responses from prospected spectators, but in the process, one can only hope that the audience “will then be motivated to seek and verify the available information on a given subject, and that she will not restrict herself to paths that lead her to validate her existing prejudices” (Youker 225). There are valuable perspectives to be heard in this world, and it is time to create opportunity to listen and learn from each of these stories.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

Because my project is centered around one person’s long life, it is important to understand the many social issues, politics, and societal pressure that occurred during her lifetime. When reading about her poor childhood, I should be able to reflect on the Great Depression and understand what it means to live during and after an economic decline. If she traveled across the country to work as a riveter, then I should understand the campaign push for young girls to gather a group of their friends and join the workforce. In turn, I can better understand the undulating times for women for most of Jeanette’s ninety-three years of life. Whether she ever mentioned the word feminist in a conversation is not important; after highlighting the aspects of each wave, one can easily see life choices and attitudes that reflect a little of each wave. The polio background in this project is paramount, for who knew that she was 1 out of 200 people to be paralyzed by the disease? Background information adds another dimension to Jeanette, a dimension with so much potential.

This project is a play and, as with any written work of theatre, eventually performers, designers, and directors will read it and add their artistic perspectives, which is why this historical section is essential to the project. Because the play is structured nonchronologically, the events can seem sporadic, giving only a snapshot into a moment, never really seeing more. Absent potential is present, awaiting a creative team to fill in the gaps with what they know about the era, the diseases, and the politics of the day. Without the cultural context, the subtlety of this story is lost and lost with it are the potential stories of many of other women who lived similar lives to Jeanette Love.

Significant advances have been made in the medical field since the polio vaccine was discovered and administered. Once controversial views among feminists are constantly evolving and continuing to affect politics and flood the media. Women are still striving to choose the best lives for themselves and receiving resistance in one way or another. And women continue to be some of the hardest workers you will ever know. Has life actually changed that much? Ask Jeanette. She will tell you.

## POLIOMYELITIS

In 1789 the first description of a disease called Poliomyelitis was recorded; this disease is now referred to as polio. Although this disease was most likely around years before the 1700s, this was the first recorded clinical description, recorded by British physician, Michael Underwood. According to the Museum of Natural History, in the 1840s, Jacob Heine conducted further clinical studies on polio, and discovered its impact on the spinal cord(1), but it was not until 1908 that researchers Landsteiner and Popper linked the cause of polio to a virus(Eggers 1). Simultaneously, while these researchers were sharing this breakthrough, Ivar Wickman

noticed seasonal breakouts of the disease and wondered if this was due to the way polio was spreading. Wickman believed that one could contract the disease through direct contact, but this idea was controversial. He decided to investigate this spread by tracking the outbreak in Trastena, Sweden, a small town with about 500 inhabitants that mostly lived in isolated, dispersed homes. Within a short period, Wickman reported that out of “forty-nine persons (who) became ill, 26 of them had significant paralysis” (Eggers 2-4). Through this study he proved that polio was being spread through family visits. “Wickman also reported that 21.4% of the victims were older than 14 years, an age distribution uncommon before epidemic poliomyelitis had emerged around 1880” (4). Although this was a significant discovery, his involvement in polio research is often underplayed.

Defined by Yale Medicine, “Polio is an intestinal infection spread by contact with fecal waste...[that]enters the body through the mouth, travels down the digestive tract and is excreted in the stool” (1). Although the number is minimal, in about one in 100—“the virus invades the central nervous system, destroying the motor neurons that stimulate the muscle fibers to contract” (1). Polio can cause paralysis (most often to the legs) and can also cause death. This condition occurs when “the breathing muscles are immobilized, a condition known as bulbar polio, in which the brain stem is badly damaged” (1). The symptoms for Poliomyelitis may include fever, fatigue, vomiting, headache, neck stiffness, pain in the arms and legs, weakness, paralysis, difficulty breathing, swallowing, and speaking (Hopkins 1). In some cases, the infected patient may feel most of these symptoms, and others may experience one or two symptoms only. Often those who contract the disease are not permanently affected, remaining sick for only a few days or weeks, but those who do suffer from a serious case may never fully be cured. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine statistics, “1 in 200 cases (of polio) result in paralysis” (1). Once

paralysis is involved, a patient can never fully recover. Polio paralyzed President Franklin Roosevelt for the rest of his life, making the nation more aware of the need to create a vaccine to combat this devastating disease. Physicians have concluded that there are three types of polio that people can contract: inapparent polio, cases with mild symptoms, and paralytic polio. John Hopkins, the CDC, and Yale Medicine describes inapparent polio as the most common type of polio out there. When one contracts this form, they do not have any symptoms, but are still contagious and can pass along the disease to others. Another form is polio with mild symptoms; this type looks similar to the flu and the “mild symptoms” include a fever, stiffness, and weakness. Doctors believe that this form of polio does not harm the brain and, usually symptoms dissipate within a week or two. Paralytic polio is the most dangerous form, the type that many fear (JohnsHopkins 1). When one contracts this type of polio, they will begin feeling weakness in their muscles, and this weakness eventually turns into paralysis. Historically, this form was very uncommon to contract, but the chances still threatened any who were exposed.

Polio began to spread in the United States in 1916, which was the largest outbreak in the US up to that time. The epidemic started in Pigtown, Brooklyn, NY, when parents began complaining that their child could not hold a bottle or that the leg seemed limp” (Yale Medicine 1). The disease “claimed 6,000 lives and left 27,000 people paralyzed. New York City alone reported 8,900 cases and 2,400 deaths, 80 percent of the fatalities being children under 5. There had been minor polio outbreaks in previous years, but nothing like this” (1-3). For good reason, this illness became one of the most feared diseases in America; polio numbers were growing and still there was no preventive medicine or vaccine to combat this growing epidemic. By the 1940s the outbreaks had increased, and the age of fatalities seemed to be growing. From 1940 to 1944, “reported polio cases doubled to eight per 100,000, doubled again to 16 per 100,000 between



1945 and 1949, and climbed to 25 per 100,000 from 1950 to 1954, before peaking at 37 per 100,000 in 1952” (4). With the cases growing swiftly, it was all the more exciting and crucial when in 1953, a successful vaccine was created, and could be administered to the general public.

What a long road to discovery. The polio vaccine process took years and many different perspectives. Researchers first had to figure out how many different strains of polio there were before they could decide how to develop a safe vaccine for each of these virus types. Medical professionals also had to determine what the “true pathogenesis of polio” was. They had to discover how polio traveled into the central nervous system. Once this was certain, then they could produce the vaccine that would effectively fight against this disease. Fortunately, after hundreds of researchers began this investigation, they eventually (including Jonas Salk) agreed that out of “196 tested strains of poliovirus [each virus] fit neatly into three distinct types” (Yale Medicine 1). This was relatively good news; containing three different types of a disease seemed possible.

In 1952-1954 John Enders, Ph.D, Frederick Robbins, M.D, and Thomas Weller, M.D made a breakthrough in the polio vaccine process. These scientists developed an “in vitro cultivation” that allowed the polio virus to grow in a test tube. Before, attempts to observe the virus were always attached to nerve tissue, but this discovery allowed for researchers to get a better look at the changes in the infected polio cells without injecting the virus into the spinal column or brain of a monkey. This was important; now studies could continue and advance without damaging animal nerve cells. In vitro cultivation also made it possible to mass produce the vaccine. Because of this breakthrough, Enders, Robbins, and Weller received the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1954 (Yale Medicine1). While this discovery was helpful, medical professionals were still struggling to figure out how polio was getting to the central nervous system. Test upon

test was made and there seemed to be no traces of the virus in the bloodstream. It was not until a doctor—a female doctor—at Yale was allowed into the picture that there were answers to this anomaly.

Dr. Dorothy Horstmann had to fight for every position she received in the medical field. Because of her gender, she was denied residency at well-known medical institutions, and when applying for a fellowship at Yale, she was almost denied entry because she was a woman. Horstmann had longed to work with the doctors at the Yale Poliomyelitis Study Unit due to their dedication to finding a workable vaccine. She applied and the dean told her that he did not have good experiences hiring women on his staff. Offended, she fought for the position, and the dean eventually gave in, accepting her into the fellowship in 1942( “Breaking the Back” 1-3). She began her research through clinical studies and laboratory research. In a clinical study in 1943, she tested patients and realized that the poliovirus was “only present in the bloodstream during the brief period before a victim took sick and the physical symptoms became apparent” (“Breaking the Back”1-3). No one had noticed this before, and after experimenting with the idea, Horstmann concluded that when a victim is first infected with the disease, it often is contracted through the mouth, which then goes directly to the bloodstream, but the virus is visible in the bloodstream only within the first few days of contact. Researches and doctors had waited too long to locate the virus in the bloodstream. This was groundbreaking; an immunizing vaccine, could kill the virus before it entered the central nervous system. In a letter to Horstmann in 1953, John Fulton, M.D., D. Phil., Yale’s medicine historian ,wrote:“This disclosure is as exciting as anything that has happened in the Yale Medical School since I first came here in 1930 and is a tremendous credit to your industry and scientific imagination. ... It is also medical history.”(“Breaking the Back” 1-3). Horstmann published her findings in 1952, which paved the

way for Sabin and Salk's effective polio vaccines. In 1954 the inactivate vaccine was tested and a year later, was approved and administered to the citizens of United States. The number of polio cases quickly declined, beginning eradication of the disease in America and eventually around the world.

Ironically, studies show that men are at a higher risk of paralysis when contracting polio. According to the National Library of Medicine, lower limb muscle decline is greater in men than in women. In the results of a four-year study at , muscle weakness from polio can occur after fifteen years of contracting the virus, and these late effects of polio are more common among men. Young children under the age of five are also more likely to experience paralysis from polio, or even death. Despite the statistics, it is equally important for all to receive the vaccine, and in recent years there have been some discrepancies in the vaccine's global distribution. In 2021 Rotary Magazine shared the importance of the polio vaccine reaching everyone. In some communities more boys than girls are being given the vaccine, and in some cases they are being equally distributed. Unfortunately, in some countries mothers are not permitted to make the decision for her family's vaccinations, so her kids are left at home without this vaccine. Currently, there are strategies being formulated to eradicate this issue. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is engaging women as frontline health workers "because in some cultures mothers are more likely to open the door to a female vaccinator" (Monnet 1). This organization is attempting to include women in the decision-making process while helping the fathers to also be engaged. There are limitations beyond the gender-disparity within these communities, and health professionals are doing what they can to fulfill GBEI's mission by bridging this gap and completing "the eradication and containment of all wild, vaccine-related and Sabin polioviruses, such that no child ever again suffers paralytic poliomyelitis" (GBEI).

## Grandma's Journey Through Polio

In August of 1952 my grandmother Jeanette Love contracted polio. She had just given birth to her first-born child five months prior to her diagnosis. While on vacation in Fargo, North Dakota with her husband, Harry Love, and her daughter Joy, Jeanette became very ill, and although her family wanted her to stay and recover in North Dakota, she had a feeling that they needed to get home to Grand Rapids, MI. They traveled home by car, and with each day her sickness seemed to worsen. She could not keep any food down, seemed to have a fever, and grew weaker by the day. On the second day of the long trip home, Jeanette's legs began to stiffen and she started to walk in an unnatural way—she and my grandpa joked that she was walking like a farmer. After three days she arrived home and was even worse. She still could not keep anything down and at this point her left leg was dragging and her husband had to carry her into the house. The doctors told her to take some aspirin, but because her symptoms worsened, they eventually had her come in to be tested for polio. The test was positive and she was in incubation for ten days and still, the pain in her back and legs were horrendous. By the end of the incubation period, her symptoms lessened, the pills started to ease the pain, and she was able to keep some food down. By that time, her right leg was feeling better, but “the left leg and foot were done for.”

Her recovery process took three months. Jeanette remained in the hospital during this time, switching rooms occasionally in an attempt to cheer up other patients. Apparently, Jeanette was a positive light in the hospital and doctors tried to put her with the “grumpy patients” to try and help them. Throughout these three months Jeanette could see her family, but only on certain occasion and usually outside. After her first reunion with her daughter, Jeanette caught a cold

and was sick for a while before she could see Joy again. Even though it was just a cold, it made her extremely weak, and it seemed to digress the recovery process. The nurses did not do anything for her until doctors saw her deteriorating state and gave her a shot to help; it gave her strength almost immediately. By the time Jeanette was released from the hospital in October 1952, her right leg had completely recovered, but the muscles in her left leg were gone forever. She had learned to walk with a cane and would do this for years to come.

Now that she had a handicap, there were many adjustments that had to be made for Jeanette. She came home to her husband and baby, and was determined not to let the polio get the upper hand. When her daughter Joy was small, she fed her in her cradle that had wheels on it so that she could slide it along. When Joy was old enough to be in a highchair, she and Harry put coasters on the bottom so that she could push it around as needed. It worked, but soon a salesman came by offering a table with wheels and a chair in the middle—this was just what she needed. She could not hold her daughter anymore unless she was sitting, and as Joy grew older and more active, she had to find ways to put wheels on anything to help her keep up with her growing daughter. Because of polio, the doctors advised Jeanette not to have any more children, but she and Harry both wanted one more child, so they defied the doctors' orders and she gave birth to a healthy baby boy in 1955. Her pregnancy was more limited than many, but she still managed to take care of Joy and safely carry her baby for the full nine months.

“My polio did not hold me back in doing what I needed to do.” Once she was released from the hospital in 1952, I think this was Jeanette's life motto. While raising two children, she worked as a secretary for a church, and in 1960 my grandpa started a youth camp in northern Michigan; grandma did what she could to keep the place running. In the beginning days, she took on as much physical labor as she could. In one instance, she was found sitting on a towel on the

dining hall floor, scrubbing it clean. She would just push herself along until it looked clean and ready. She was even a counselor for a few weeks at the start of the camp, which meant a lot of walking and physical activity. There were limits to her involvement, but she did what she could do.

Having polio affected many things physically throughout Jeanette's life. She was an active, working soul, which meant she had the tendency to push hard and not ask for help. It was easy for her to slip and fall because of her useless left leg, and throughout her life she broke both legs twice and her hip once, all due to falls. As she aged, her body became weaker, whether this was due to the polio or just age, I am not sure. It was probably both, but she eventually used a brace on her left leg and switched out the cane for a walker. Jeanette used the walker for a couple decades, and only resorted to a wheelchair when she had to cover long distances. She refused to let her handicap keep her from traveling, so she took two trips to London, one trip to Jerusalem, the Caribbean, Hawaii, and numerous road trips to see family around the US. On trips like these, she would use the wheelchair and allow someone to push her around from place to place. One consequence of relying so heavily on her arms was that her rotator cuffs began to tear, and she had to have an extensive surgery to repair those tears. After those surgeries she said that her arms were never the same; she could lift her arms only so high and could not bend them in certain directions without pain. This made things difficult because later in life, her husband became handicap due to his diabetes, and she was his primary caregiver. She would attempt to help him up out of his chair, help him in the bathroom, make him food, and did it all with a walker, wheelchair, and very weak arms. She took care of him in this state for almost twenty years before he passed. Although she said she was happy to do this for her husband, it took so much of her strength, but she lived for almost twenty more years preceding his death.

## Feminist Trajectories

Women's movements have been around for centuries, some believe that forms of feminism date back to 570 BCE in Greece with Sappho, or with Hildegard of Bingen. In 1792 Mary

Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, one of the earliest publications advocating for equality for women. The term feminism was coined in 1837 by the utopian philosopher Charles Fournier as he attempted to support women's suffrage (Rampton 1).

Feminism has many forms, and when I refer to this term, I am referring to alleviating "women's subjugated positions, private and social alike, by exerting impact on the economic, political, and cultural fabrics of modern societies" (Malinowska 1). Feminism seeks to abolish gender-based inequalities while maintaining the respect of a women's social standing. Within this context, feminism has four waves, the first beginning at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 where women rallied for equal rights.

An important relationship between feminism and the press. Women activists began writing pamphlets and journals promoting women's thoughts in a more balanced light. These journals portrayed a balanced "vision of femininity, providing a more thorough picture of the lives of women, especially with regard to their professional potential, and included women of color in the idea of womanhood thus defying the image promulgated in the burgeoning women's popular magazines (e.g., *The Lady's Magazine*, *Ladies' Magazine*, and later *Ladies' Home Journal*)"

(Malinowska 3). Women also used these journals to discuss the professional gender as well as racial discrimination. In the early stages of this wave, the media began to portray women activists in a biased manner. Unflattering pictures were published of the extreme women who hated men. Later on in the movement, positive strides were made and the right for women to vote was acknowledged and seen as acceptable. One of the greatest breakthroughs in the first

wave of feminism was the success and inclusion of women in telegraphy. Numerous historians agree that many females in America and Europe “entered a challenging ... technological field in which they competed with men” to start a “subculture of technically educated workers” (Jepsen, 2000, p. 2). “Telegraphy enacted the “deeds not words” suffrage slogan and carried women toward the century of a communication hype to which they proved to be skillful contributors” (Malinowska 3).

The second wave of feminism started in the 1960s and continued until the early 90s. Because of the political unrest of the 60s and 70s, the issues women were fighting for were often put to the side and considered less important than war protests and racial unrest. Amid all these social injustices, women continued to fight for their place at the table. As their voice rose to the public, they focused on gender roles and women’s sexuality. “Simone de Beauvoir’s phrase “one is not born a woman but becomes one” (Beauvoir, 1949/1956, p. 273) served as a byword for the wave’s effort toward relaxing the social idiom of femininity” (Beauvoir). During this second wave of feminism, poststructuralism and deconstruction was changing the way society thought, and the second wavers were greatly influenced by these thoughts, particularly regarding the way that womanhood and a women’s lived experience was structured. According to Rampart, “the second wave was increasingly theoretical, based on a fusion of neo-Marxism and psycho-analytical theory, and began to associate the subjugation of women with broader critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality, and the woman's role as wife and mother”(1). Gender and sex was also being theorized and discussed in a differential way. Feminists fought against the idea that women’s bodies were objects, and key concepts at that time were Betty Freidan’s *feminine mystique* (1963) and Laura Mulvey’s *male gaze* (1975), and later Alice Walker’s *womanism* (1983/2007) which introduced the ideas of the third wave. Throughout this



wave, women fought to express the need for agency “as well as [a] self-aware, bottom-up representation of femininity”(1).

The third wave of feminism began in the mid 1990s continued until 2010-2012. The third wave feminists took a radically different approach than second wavers. As many numerous Gender Studies scholars would say, third wave feminists stepped onto the stage defining issues for themselves, more specifically, they eschewed “victimization and defined feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy” (Rampart 1). While developing their own form of feminism, they openly responded to the previous wave of feminism in three important ways. While second wave feminists attempted to destroy the current category of “women,” third wave feminists defined that category through their own personal experiences that they believed defined feminism. Third wavers also used different forms of vocality and action instead of so much “theoretical justification” (Snyder 3). Taking action meant subverting the current “sexist culture” of the day by developing their own rhetoric to combat derogatory terms like “slut” and “bitch”(Rampart 1). This rhetoric was a form of mimicry that received much attention at the time, prompting many women to write on the topic. The sex wars of the second wave did not come without controversy among feminists, and most third wavers sought to put more emphasis on inclusiveness within the realm of feminism (or antifeminism) than the second wave feminists did.

Third wave feminists claimed that they were a new generation, who grew up with their mothers involved in some sort of feminism, so it is only natural for this generation to be feminists, as well. But according to Snyder, this generation differs from their mothers’ perception of feminism. “third wavers feel entitled to interact with men as equals, claim sexual pleasure as they desire it, and actively play with femininity...[and] argues that desires aren’t

simply booby traps set by the patriarchy” (4). Another contrast between these two waves is the attitudes towards the opposite sex. Many third wave feminists claim that their mothers were sexually judgmental and promoted the idea that the only way women can “give up heterosexual privilege” is by not marrying(4). This is where the idea of “girl power” came in to play. This generation of feminists wanted to be authentic and playful, while promoting sex-positivity among all types of women. A negative result of this contrast between second and third waver women was the stereotyped misconception that all second wave feminists were frumpy, violent, and rigid. Despite this unfortunate misconception, according to prominent third wave feminists, “third-wave feminism potentially offers a diverse antifoundationalist, multiperspectival, sex-radical version of feminism that could move American feminism beyond the impasses of the 1980s and 1990s” (Snyder 19).

Fourth wave feminism began in the early 2010s. Many societal changes had occurred globally, most notably, in the way the internet and technology dominated the world including social and political issues. With the rise of the internet, women activists had and have a more accessible way of voicing injustices and promoting change around the globe. Unlike the third wave feminist’s denial of ever wanting to be a collective “movement,” women activists who consider themselves fourth wave feminists are currently on the move, attempting to fight for intersectionality, internationalism, solidarity and decentralization(Master Class 1). Gender studies professor at Pacific State University was recently interviewed about each wave of feminism and started her discussion of the fourth wave by explaining that some of the earliest issues in the women’s movement globally are now “receiving national and international attention by mainstream press. ...problems like sexual abuse, rape, violence against women, unequal pay, slut-shaming, the pressure on women to conform to a single body-type, and... female

representation in politics and business” (Rampart 1), which is where intersectionality plays a role. Intersectionality was an issue that third wave feminists believed important, and fourth wavers are continuing this effort. Because of the technological advances of the day, fourth wave feminists are working to advance social justice and gender equality around the world through conversations with those who have experienced these particular forms of oppression. Women of color and sexually abused victims have stood up and shared their stories in attempt for justice and to promote societal change. These efforts also involve the push for solidarity across the globe by celebrating the diversity among the nations while also shedding light on the oppression of the capitalistic way of thinking in the West (Master 1). Fourth wave feminists are striving to decentralize the way women have been treated in the past by empowering them. Numerous women who have been sexually assaulted are now having opportunities to give light to their past own experiences. With the push for internationalism, more women from around the world can finally have a way to receive help and tell their stories that have been hidden by authorities for years. There seems to be a place for every person in this wave of feminism, and these issues can be fought together and be fought at home, work, or on the streets, and these causes can be promoted through public platforms, media posts, hashtags, and protests.

#### Is there a Feminism/Womanist Dichotomy?

In 1983 Alice Walker defined womanism as “a black feminist or feminist of color ... a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually ... committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female.” During the second wave of feminism feminists fought for crucial issues, but racial equality did not seem to be ton their radar. Walker highlighted the impossibility of separating race from gender; after all, there were still privileges

that white women had and have that women of color did not and still do not. Womanist Mabinty Quarshie compares womanism to intersectional feminism in that they “both acknowledge the ways that women navigate several identities simultaneously, with womanism focusing specifically on the experiences of black women and women of color” (1). For years black women have been confronted with the struggles of “classism, sexism, and racism” on a daily basis—at home or in their working environment. Statistics show that these women “earn less than everyone else does; they are often marginalized and discriminated against, and crimes (abuses, violence, killings, etc.) against black women are underreported and forgotten” (Squadrin 1). In recent years it has been difficult for women of color to take part in live or social media protests, because of the ignored facts that continue to be swept under the rug by the general public. During the women’s rallies of 2017, there was a dilemma amongst womanist: do they march for a cause that in the end does not really help them? According to scholars at Catholic University of America in DC, womanists like Breahna Blakely state that “There’s a lack of relatability to non-privileged people. I would like to see feminism take on racism. If we only focus on gender issues while ignoring the fact that women of different backgrounds face different issues, then we’re leaving out a whole group of people (1).” Her concerns reflect those of many women who have declined to participate in the current feminist movement. The question is: Will the people of today’s feminist movement focus on racial and gender oppression, giving women of color an opportunity to thrive in ways that all women desire equally?

As already stated, there seems to be a current dichotomy between womanism and feminism, but should there be? I believe that there must be a way for women to come together as women, working to be unified for a common goal—that common goal being equality for women. I do agree that it is crucial for white women to be open-minded and understand the different

experiences that women of color face in comparison. All these issues are important, but if women cannot come together with shared experiences first, then how will the feminist or womanist cause be effective? For if there is no underlying unity amongst all women, then there is no foundation to carry some of the important racial issues that women of color bear. Unification will sustain hardships, and it can start only when women can relate and support each other in their shared battles.

### A Women's Independence

Women's fight for independence has always been a battle. Although not the first to stand up for a women's independence, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* notably reflects the attitudes that some women had in the 1700s; she questions society by simply asking, "How can a being be generous who has nothing of its own? Or virtuous, who is not free? How many women...waste life away...who might have practiced as physicians, regulated a farm, managed a shop, and stood erect supported by their own industry instead of hanging their heads surcharged with the dew of sensibility. ...How much more respectable is the woman who earns her own bread" (Wollstonecraft 76). Although many disregarded these questions, Wollstonecraft's ideals would carry on as the European economy grew. The industrial revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century thrust women into the workplace, forcing women to work outside the home just to make enough to provide food for the family (Johnson 612). The jobs were strenuous for women, given the fact that they would work in factories all day, and then go home and work in the home all night; unfortunately, their wages were most often less than men's. Nonetheless, women continued to work both inside and outside the home for a time. A few years later an invention was developed that proved helpful in the emancipation of women. Surprising as it may

sound, it was a bicycle that aided in a women's freedom. In 1890, after the tricycle and tandem bicycles became a socially acceptable mode of transportation for women, the safety bicycle was created. With this advancement, women could ride alone, wearing a long skirt in a modest fashion. Before this particular bicycle, women were scorned for riding due to the high bar placement on the bike, causing a women's skirt to rise up in a scandalous fashion. Soon, you could see women biking the countryside, enjoying one of their only ways to travel from place to place on their own (13 Things 1). Although seemingly trivial, this advancement led to a movement in freedom of dress and choice of expression for women. When reflecting on women's independence, Susan B. Anthony voiced that she thought "the bicycle has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world." Extreme or not, Anthony knew that this small freedom was a step closer to bigger liberties that women would one day enjoy. The war followed soon after, opening even more positions that women would need to fulfill in order for their countries to survive.

### Rosie the Riveter

As already discussed in this project's artistic aim, the working women during World War II were crucial and their jobs were catalysts to societal changes for years to come. Women did have more opportunities during this time in history, but did these opportunities last? Or did women's employment become only "temporary empowerment?" And as gender studies professionals often discuss, "what long-term changes in women's lives were brought about by the war campaign of Rosie the Riveter" (Santana 1)? The campaign to recruit women was so successful that, by the end of the war, there were about 6 million women who joined the workforce between 1942 and 1945" (1). A diverse group of women began working, including

women with children, which caused controversy both during and after the war. William M. Tuttle Jr. commented on this public outcry in his study on the “latchkey children” of World War II, noting that working mothers were dealing with the stress of supporting a family and the public’s open hostility towards their choices(1). Many pronounced that the “hand that holds the pneumatic riveter cannot rock the cradle” (Tuttle1). Stories of neglected, starving children were spread by the mainstream media, most of which were proven to be false, political propaganda. Anne Gould of the War Production Board responded that the “charge that because a mother goes to work [she then] loses interest in her children is too absurd to comment”(1). What is often overlooked is the sheer number of women that had to provide for their families during the war. While mothers were at work at aircraft plants and shipyards, their extended families were taking care of the children.. To expand this needed care, the U.S. government approved fThe Lanham Act, which provided unding towards day care centers. A dispute followed the funding, but it ultimately continued as the number of children in these centers grew(Tuttle 2). Towards the end of the war, most mothers were satisfied with the child care options presented to them, and this, according to gender studies activists, “represented a major shift of national policy on preschool programs. The federal government had essentially declared that...if the national interest is served, public funds should help wage-earning mothers carry the burden of the cost of daycare.”

Immediately after the war many women were quickly forced back into the home. Some women were relieved to return home, while others wanted to remain in the public workforce; after all, they finally appreciated how it felt to work a job and to get paid for that work. Some women stayed, particularly the poor, unmarried ones, but their pay was lowered once the men came home from war and took back their original jobs. Women were reassigned lower positions, while men were offered promotions to high-paying positions. Domesticity was once again placed

on a pedestal, particularly because it seemed that the traditional definition of the family was in jeopardy. Newspaper ads and magazines began giving advice on domestic chores, while highlighting the importance of a clean house and happy home. “American women also were under immense pressure from their country to protect and defend steadfastly the very idea of traditional home and family, and their central place in it, that was transforming so quickly” (Yellin 36). Women’s trousers, and their use of men’s tools disappeared quickly, being replaced with a skirt and apron for the home. Women were encouraged to embrace this role as it was their patriotic duty to fill it.

Some long-term effects from the Rosie the Riveter campaign can be seen today. Scholar Joanne Meyerowitz states that the perception of women was forever changed because as they worked those five years, “women appropriated, transformed and challenged the stereotype and the competing voices” (1994). More women worked outside the home from this point on and were more willing to put their children in some kind of childcare, while also agreeing to lower-paying jobs as secretaries so that they could continue to work. Pre-World War II women experienced a change in society that could not have happened as quickly had it not been for their work. A new kind of women existed now, and although the perception of women continues to evolve, these women worked hard for others and for their families, all the while maintaining their own individual pursuit of excellence.

### **Chapter Three: The Play**

When working on character development of each Jeanette Love represented in this script, I began with a character interview with the Jeanette that I knew growing up, and then I went back and interviewed the different ages of Jeanette represented in my play. By focusing on the



youngest Jeanette, referred to as “She,” and the oldest, “80s/90s Jeanette” I discovered specific changes from her childhood to her womanhood.

I based my questions off Dunne’s character interview questions in his book *The Dramatic Writer’s Companion*. I asked each Jeanette about their inner life, via the following questions, “When was the last time you cried, and why? How do you sum up your spiritual beliefs? Who, if anyone, would be willing to give his or her life for you? What is the greatest loss you have experienced, and how has this affected you? If you could ask God one question, what would it be?” Through this interview I discovered that Jeanette as a child was carefree, but also sensitive. Not much seemed to bother her because she was too busy running around and enjoying the outdoors. But when it came to her relationships with family and friends, she valued them because in her young mind, they were all she had. She felt like she was not as good as most other people, but that feeling did not matter when she was with her family, which made the passing of her mother even harder. I believe this loss shifted her trajectory for the next ten years of her life. The security of love had departed, and although she still had her father, her stepmother entered the picture too soon. In She’s mind, this woman was cruel. Young Jeanette had already had a shallow view of God at that point in her life, and after her life turned upside down, she wanted little to do with God. All that remained were unanswered questions, ( although 80s/90s Jeanette seemed to have overcome this, and lived a secure, hopeful life despite these unresolved questions).

While retaining her childlike spirit for most of her life, 80s/90s Jeanette was transformed by both tragic and victorious events. She remained sensitive with a slight inferiority complex, but Jeanette’s journey led to an abundance of security and love that kept her life a symbol of joy and gratitude. Her views on God transformed into a devotion that guided her through many

hardships. Although she often longed for a run in the park without her wheelchair, she did not let the question “why?” guide her thinking. As I wrote this play, I attempted to reveal how Jeanette’s attitude and motives shifted as she aged. Young Jeanette seemed lost and although she lived a hard life, it was also one that was grounded in love. This foundation gave her identity and fulfillment as she faced her last days.

The other set of questions that shaped the Jeanettes’ characterization were ones that focused on the changes in her physical life. “In one word, how would you describe yourself as a child? Have you ever had a serious illness or injury? What is the scariest experience you have ever had? What is your greatest fear, and what has it stopped you from doing? For whom or what would you be willing to give your life?” These questions revealed a great contrast between the young and old Jeanette. Both Jeanettes describe themselves in the same way, but after middle aged Jeanette experienced a life altering injury, her scariest experience and greatest fears completely changed. She went from climbing the highest tree in the park, to being a nervous wreck as she was carried up or down a flight of stairs. Her greatest injury began with cuts and bruises to being bed-ridden on more than one occasion. These physical altercations changed Jeanette’s way of life, which in turn made the people in her life that much more important. 80s/90s Jeanette would give her life for any one of her loved ones, while young Jeanette would have to think twice before giving her life for her sister or brother. Her physical limitations changed her, but did not keep her from growing as a person.

These interviews with each Jeanette shaped the dialogue of this play and helped me structure and divide the monologues between the different sides of her character. Without this process, the different versions of Jeanette would not have been developed.

*She*

By Ashley Love

Production Notes:

**CHARACTERS**

Each character should be played by a different actor.

**She:** A carefree spirit that represents Jeanette's youth. She lives "free as a bird." There is also a correlation between young Jeanette and Jeanette's granddaughters. This character is fluid switching between author and subject. It is up for the actor and audience to decide when those moments occur. The age for this character varies.

**20s/30s Jeanette:** This Jeanette is free but conflicted. You see the biggest changes in this character throughout the scenes, but she never loses her spark for life.

**40s/50s Jeanette:** Although she had a bad leg, this Jeanette would walk with a cane, and with every step manually, with her left hand, would lock her knee before continuing. She is the only Jeanette that wears a wig.

**80s/90s Jeanette:** This represents the most recent version of Jeanette and also her wheelchair days before the age of 80. She is the most free she has been in years, and also in the most physical pain.

**The stage is shaped like a large, deconstructed hat box with old family pictures dispersed in piles around the perimeter of the entire stage. Each picture is of a woman who lived during the 1920s-2000s. Images are projected, on screen center.**

## Scene 1

*80s Jeanette sits in her wheelchair at the center of the circle cutting and gluing pictures into a notebook. She skips onstage and begins looking at the pictures.*

She

Whatchya doin'?

80s/90s Jeanette

Gluing these in my journal. Oop. Fell out. Can you get that one?

*Pictures fall out of the journal and onto the floor. She begins to pick them up while 20s/30s Jeanette walks on stage directly towards She.*

80s/90s

*Looks at 20s/30s Jeanette*

Ah...This is my mature and thoughtful look.  
(IMAGE 1)

20s/30s

*Begins helping She pick up the pictures*

What are you doing?

She

She's cutting up pictures and gluing them to a book.

80s/90s

I'm trying to look over 60 years and remember the good ole days

She

When she was as free as a bird.

*20s and 30s Jeanette walks over and picks up a pictures and begins to speak*

20s/30s Jeanette

Marie Lyster.

She  
Mama!

20s/30s Jeanette  
(IMAGE 32  
This was her wedding picture—She was beautiful, wasn't she? And so serious. Look at her face.

She  
I can see a smile. And her dress... I want a dress like that.

80s/90s Jeanette  
Yes, mama was beautiful.

**Scene 2—**  
**JEANETTE RIGHT BEFORE HER WEDDING.**

20s/30s Jeanette  
*Show( image3) of the lace gloves worn at Jeanette's wedding. Holding her pair of lace gloves that she wore on November 17, 1950. "These sleeves were worn on my wedding day."*

*80s/90s Jeanette and She help 20s/30s Jeanette put the finishing touches on her make up and hair as she talks.*

"These lace gloves are the only thing that is mine; everything else is borrowed." Jeanine lent me this dress—no, she gave me the veil. Margaret borrowed the dress from a girlfriend of hers. It's real pretty, don't ya think? Taffeta isn't my favorite—

80s/90s  
...But beggars can't be choosers. I the dress was just fine. And the gloves—they were only \$12...

20s/30s  
I've always wanted to wear gloves on my wedding day. I wasn't one to sit around and dream of love and marriage; I was too busy chasing the boys around on Grandma's farm.

She

Like me! I do that—

20s/30s

And you chase chickens—

Do you remember Mama showing us her dress?—who knows what I thought of her dress then,

She

Yes I do—I love it. and I told mama that “I think I want to get married one day too. If I do, I think I’ll wear lace and my husband will probably look like Daddy.”

80s/90s Jeanette

Ha! Harry looked nothing like Dad!

20s/30s

But he is handsome and always looking so sharp...like a hundred bucks. Out of all of the girls in Chicago, Harry Love chose me.

She

Harry Love? That’s a funny name—

80s/90s

Nobody understood why he dated the gangly girl from Fargo...well, I still don’t understand why! And to think of the first time I laid eyes on him. I thought he was pompous—so sure of himself—

20s/30s

SO stuck up. He was first in his class—...and me—the old Lyster girl, at the bottom of the class.

80s/90s

I wasn’t the smartest can in the pile...is that the saying? Smartest stick in the bunch?

20s/30s

I failed college English. I had to repeat my English grammar course; it had been so many years...I had forgotten much of grammar. My college English teacher was Wilma Benker and she was an excellent teacher. Our class was small so she was able to spend as much time as needed to help me understand nouns, adverbs, and adjectives.

She

No...not nouns and verbs!

20s/30s

It gets easier—

She

Well it doesn't sound like it. didn't you say you failed?

20s/30s

Anyways...Harry was in a higher level English course...like I said, first in his class, so I couldn't believe my ears when he approached me on the sidewalk outside the dining area and asked me out for the first time.

80s/90s

(I found out later his brother Bruce talked him into it.)

20s/30s

*Show (IMAGE 4)*

We went to a park downtown for our first date; it had a fountain right at the center. That's when I realized Harry wasn't so full of himself. I had never met anyone that knew so much and who was just so secure in himself. You're not gonna believe me, but I knew on the second date that he was the one for me.

80s/90s

I believe you—

She

Me too!

20s/30s

We met at Ken's apartment, and Harry walked in, looked at me and his eyes just flickered. I was so embarrassed, I turned away. But Harry slowly walked over to the couch where I was sitting, sat down at my left side and our arms ever so slightly grazed each others. Like this.

I immediately felt electricity bolt through my entire body! You might not believe me, but that's fine with me. I'm stinking to it and I'll always remember that moment—

Ugh...I need Margaret to help me pin this.

*Putting on the gloves and outlining the lace design on the right arm.*

80s/90s

I wish Mama could have seen these gloves.

*Jeanettes pin the wedding veil, as 20s/30s Jeanette reads her poem.*

*When I left home, many tears  
were shed,  
For always alone, I'd be they said,  
So off to school I went  
With a sigh,  
And resolved to be an old maid,  
Til I die  
But in each cloud is a silver  
Lining  
My heart at last has ceased  
Of pining.  
For on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of November  
Of the Love family, I'll  
Become a member.  
I finally made it my friend,  
Tis true,*



*So I'll bid you a final  
Adieu.*

**Scene 3—they told me not to have another kid.**

*She pics up another photo and runs it over to 40s/50s Jeanette as she walks on stage for the first time. With each step she locks her left knee with one of her arms and then continues walking a step at a time, locking her knee at every step. She holds a cane in the other hand. While Jeanette speaks, She pops in and out of the curtain, adding her opinion to the routine.*

40s/50s

Why are you all looking at me? Oh, you're wondering why it takes so long for me to get center stage?

She

I wasn't wondering!

40s/50s

Shhhh!

You think you can hide it? You know—we handicaps see it A-L-L. We know you stare at every click.

She

Not me!

40s/50s

Last week Harry and I went to Mark's basketball game. We walked in...excuse me...I caned in, Harry walked and we went to sit down in the lowest section of the bleachers. As we approached the bench, everyone in the stands just stopped. I looked behind me and realized—they have never seen a woman with a dead leg before. The poor souls! Well I didn't want them to miss out on a very important education, so I told Harry, "I'm goin' to the middle!". He usually stands on

the sidelines anyways, so I hobbled from bench to bench to bench—made people uncomfortable,  
“Excuse me ma’am, I’m going to use your head for a boost.”

*She slowly creeps out from behind the curtain giggling to herself.*

“Thanks sir—just gonna lean on your shoulder while my cane pivots into your big toe.” And there. I planted my caboose center stage for my lesson in *Lady Has a Cane 101*. The game began and every time Mark’s team scored or didn’t, it was cane time for me. I wacked the man in front. Whack! “Don’t you let him get by you—you play defense, boy!” Whack wop whack—

She

Wop wop wop! “Go go Go!”

40s/50s

Sorry sir! And that’s how ya do it folks.

*She begins clapping for Jeanette.*

Instead of staring, they’ll run away and leave so you can cane cheer in peace.

But you know what I can’t do anymore?

Dance.

She

But you can!

40s/50s

I can’t—I have polio--

*Awkward pause.*

You know what else I can’t do? I can’t have any more kids. I got polio 15 years ago and the doctor said, “I’m sorry, ma’am, but you shouldn’t have any more children.” I didn’t make a sound.

*Pause*

I looked at the doctor. Then I looked at Harry. I looked at the doctor. And then I said with tears flooding to the surface of my bloodshot eyes, “Harry. Come over here . Lets have a son right here and right now!” And pop. 9 months later we had little Mark William.

She

See—

You can!

*40s/50s Jeanette walks over to the pile of spilled pictures and picks it up, showing all Jeanettes as they arrives on stage. and (IMAGE 7)*

#### **Scene 4: Her Graduation Picture**

She

*Each Jeanette gets involved in this reenactment.*

A new dress and look at this stain. Grandma isn’t going to understand. I’ll tell her: “It was an accident. I fell” and she’ll say, “Huh?” And I’ll bump up my volume five notches and say, “I fell down the hill over on the northside!” and she’ll say, “Jeanette! Your new dress! What happened?” and I’ll pick up her ear horn and begin yelling in the most respectful voice, “FALL! I FALL DOWN”

20s/30s

and I’ll re-enact the scene that just happened nearly three hours ago...only I’ll leave out the most important details in order to keep Grandma from plunging into her *I expect more from you* routine that plays out very clearly in a glance.

*Begins to laugh and sigh*

She

Oh---so worth it though. Tonight on the dance floor...

I was so caught up in the swingin' and the dancin'.

80s/90s Jeanette

We were kickin, twirling, and having a good ole' time in the center of the dance floor; the crowd encircled us, they were cheering!

She

Time stops for me when I'm dancing,

20s/30s

Me too

40s/50s

It did for me too.

She

so I didn't notice our cheering section until I practically collapsed onto one of the poor girls. I think I knocked her drink right out of her hand.

20/30s

Oh you did! And the look on her face—

She

And I still felt like the queen of the floor—had way too many drinks afterwards to prove it.

20s/30s

You did that too.

She

Jerry, Velma, and I were having such a ball, we left the club on foot and decided to race to northside hill. Seemed like a good idea! I was completely drunk

80s/90s

and was just as happy as a lark;

She

we ran and ran. I couldn't make it up the hill. I found a valley, sort of thing just right off the highway, screamed, and then just threw myself down the hill—new dress and all!

20s/30s

I screamed! And rolled, laughed and rolled...like this

*Takes 80s/90s J and her Wheelchair and begins wheeling her around the circle while she laughs and screams*

She

Velma and Jerry followed soon after—oh we were laughing our heads off, well, until Velma threw up. Ah. What a crazy group we are...I think I might miss them.

*20s/30s stops the wheeling and comes back to She.*

20s/30s

*Out of breath*

Margaret thinks it will be good for me to get out of Fargo for a while to experience the real world. I don't know. Is anything real right now? With so many men off to war...all the women working...I don't know.

She

I think I'm excited—I've never traveled out of state by myself before. I hope Grandma and Grandpa can do without me;

20s/30s

Dad will be fine...he has *her*.

40s/50s

He was always fine, even after mom died.

80s/90s

Maybe he wasn't—

20s/30s

But he was

She

I hope I will be too.

I'll have a real job—finally be doing something that really matters for the first time in my life.

20s/30s

Off to Seattle on Friday!

She

But for now. I think I'll try to wash out this grass stain before Grandma sees. I'm gonna have a headache in the morning...

40s/50s

You will.

*Jeanettes move to another part of the circle, and 20s/30s Jeanette picks up more pictures and just throws them to the ground. She stomps on one of them, while 40s/50s Jeanette picks one of them up and cleans it while the girls begin to talk.*

## Scene 5

20s/30s

She is just awful. When I was thirteen, I was in the kitchen with Harold, he was a baby at the time. (It was before Marcella) Stepmother told me to make dinner, so I turned on the stove to boil some water. Harold was crawling around the kitchen and she told me to watch him.

She

I don't know how to cook dinner. I didn't know what to do. While I was cooking the potatoes, some hot water splashed on my hand and burned me, right here. It really hurts.

40s/50s

Come here. Let me see.

*Comforts She as 20s/30s Jeanette continues.*

20s/30s

It hurt so, but Harold started crying so I tried to pick him up with my burnt hand. I tried consoling him all the while I was holding back tears...my hand was in pain.

She

I wasn't crying...I promise I wasn't crying.

20s/30s

Stepmother came in the room and saw the water boiling over and Harold screaming, so she started screaming at me—

She

and she blamed me for ruining dinner and upsetting my brother. I screamed back at her, shoved Harold into her chest, and ran to my room.

20s/30s

The next week, Daddy told me I should go live with Grandma Olson. I can't tell you how much that burn hurt me. She scares me.

*Lights fade as 40s/50s Jeanette hands the picture to 80s/90s Jeanette and the picture is projected while the spot light shines on 80/90s Jeanette.*

**IMAGE 9:** Daddy.

80s/90s Jeanette

I have Marcella on my mind and feel badly that I said those things about my life with her mother. I doubt she believed me. ...the mother that she knew may have not been the woman I lived with. I bet Marcy went home and told Harold and Eileen all about it. I'll write her a letter and apologize. Maybe they have fond memories of their mother. Dad had to live with her for quite some time. I don't think he could stand it after a while...but my thoughts should not be on the early years.

She

That lady touched my shoulder again in church this morning.

*As She begins speaking lights come grow and 80s/90s Jeanette wheels up to her and listens.*

It's not my fault that the pastor talks so long. And I don't really even know what he is saying. Daddy is up in the choir and mom is home sick, so it's just Earl and me. Margaret stayed home with momma this morning. It's just too hard to sit still and in silence—lady behind me never understands that. Tap tap. That's what she always does and it's getting old. I don't really listen to the sermons. This morning I started daydreaming about the tree outside at the back of the church—

80s/90s



Look at it--it's the perfect climbing tree!

She

—the best I've ever seen. All of a sudden my thoughts were interrupted. I heard the pastor say “Mrs. Lyster.” I stopped moving and thinking; my head went up to listen to what he was saying about Mama. He said, “Yesterday I made a visit to Mrs. Lyster to be a blessing to her as she has been confined to bed for years. Instead, I came away the one that was blessed.”

80s/90s Jeanette

That statement has never left me. Love. My mama was always about love...oh that people could say that about my life. ...I do try to show love to everyone...

**Show IMAGE 10**

She

Mama. I guess I should sit still for a few minutes.

*Lights fade.*

**Scene 6: A picture of a pamphlet and then a picture dated 1951.**

20s/30s Jeanette

*Running in with a broom with She close behind.*

“You hold still, no you don't! Harry! Harry! He's in here! Just stand still, ya little guy. Oh, nuts!

*(Yells to the other room)* NEVERMIND!

I don't know where he went!”

*80s/90s Jeanette wheels out searching for the mouse with a fly swatter in hand*

She

Maybe he's under the bed? Let's crawl under and see!

80s/90s

Good luck with that!

*Puts down the broom and sits down at her typewriter. While Jeanettes talk, She walks around the stage searching for the mouse.*

20s/30s

The amusement we get from chasing mice! They have really made themselves at home. The first time we spotted our little friends was after an evening service. We got home, turned on the light to our closet and there was a mouse, sitting on the trunk staring at us.

*Begins to laugh*

There was a night last week when Harry went to bed and he found a mouse under the covers.

80s/90s

OH, let me tell this part. He started yelling and said, "I'm going to get that mouse!" the uh..mice...mouse rather... ran to the kitchen and under the refrigerator. He took...did he take a?

20s/30s

A broom.

80s/90s

Yes! And I was to bang on the refrigerator,

20s/30s

Which I did, and the mouse came out and Harry smashed it with the broom. What a mess—

80s/90s

It was flatter than a pancake. We had a good laugh over that.

20s/30s

And then ...One day I was in here typing the bulletin. The keys always stick because this is the spare room and it's unheated. Anyways, I reached my hand behind the typewriter and out jumped a mouse. I screamed.

80s/90s

And Mar—Harry thought I had hurt myself. After that I was very careful not to have a mouse help me type. We'll see how that goes.

She

Did the mouse really help you?

80s/90s

It's a joke..

She

But it's not that funny—

80s/90s

Well, I was being fathecius—fececes...I can never say that—

20/30s

Facetious.

She

Fashetious. I can say it.

*She starts hunting for the mouse again*

20s/30s

But what a great time we have had here in our little farm house. It isn't anything fancy, but it has met our needs, and it was a step up from living with Harry's mother. We lived with her after

our wedding until a church opened up for us. We both worked at the department store until this little church in Brookstone, IN, called Harry to come be the pastor.

80s/90s

The church had a steeple and a little church bell ...it's just what you imagine.

20s/30s

We've only been here since this past March! Arrangements were made for us to live in this five room farmhouse. It has a pot-belly stove to keep us warm and an out house for our restroom needs. The church is paying us \$40 a week if they get that much in the offering. Since we had to buy a car with not much down payment we had to pay \$80 a month. Each week I set aside \$20 to be sure to have enough when the statement comes. The farmhouse is furnished, which was such a blessing because all we have is a little box radio. It's in the living room.

80s/90s

Oh all the time we spent listening to news and sports. But there is a piano in the living room...

20s/30s

And we sure do make use of it! I can only play with my right hand, but that doesn't stop me.

80s/90s

That's never stopped me. I can't play like Brenda, but I played what I could.

20s/30s

Almost every evening we go in the cold room and sing every song in the hymnal, well, almost every song...I can only play songs with one sharp or one flat. You know, a few weeks ago a man in the church told me he would love to have a church choir and he asked me to be the choir director! I am not so sure that I am qualified; I mean I can hold a tune and read some notes...so I

said yes. You should have seen me on stage last Sunday waving my arms and keeping time with my foot. Ha!

80s/90s

How my family would laugh at me now...they wouldn't believe it. me up there...

20s/30s

I don't know how we sound, but I do find enjoyment in doing it. I'm finding that I am a better choir director than I am a cook. Ask Harry! Wait...don't ask Harry. I've only been married for a few months, so I am not a very good cook. But I'll get better?

80s/90s

Nope. You never do.

20s/30s

Never? Not even a little better? One day I thought I would try something daring and new. I decided to fix some nice porridge. It turned out a little lumpy. I think I left the flavor out, oops!

80s/90s

(Give me a break, after all, I was a working girl and didn't fix meals! )

20s/30s

I still am a working girl! I can remember Harry's smirk as he tasted the lumpy porridge. He ate the entire bowl, looked at me from across the table and very gently said, "Honey, will you fix me some eggs and bacon?" and that did it—no more trying something new. I'll stick to the basics from now on!

... to the bulletin for Sunday. I hope it goes better this week. I can't help but feel our time here will be short...but I think I will profit from my time here no matter how good or difficult these next few months may be...

*Begins typing and then She waves at her to stop typing, pointing to the mouse.*

Don't. move. I am going to get you little guy.

*In a loud whisper moving slowly to the broom.*

Harry! Come quick! He's back.

### **Scene 7: First Day on the Job—1940**

*20s/30s Jeanette walks to center stage picture in hand and begins speaking*

Six of us girls traveled out to Seattle last week and today we are riveters at Boeing Aircraft. Today I was invincible. I stood in that space just in awe of all those aircraft parts. Feeling the support of the girls on either side of me. Crazy Jeanette Lyster is serving her country, and she is good at it! No one told me that, but let me have my moment. (I actually didn't have any idea what I was doing today. )The supervisor gave me a gun and said "there. Rivet it there—in the bulkhead." What's a bulkhead? I didn't ask him because I knew he was just trying to intimidate me. Ha! I took that gun and got to work. I learned how to put rivets in a bulkhead one rivet at a time. The sound of the rivet leaving the gun, snapping into place. Rivet and snap! I'll be singing that for days. Ah. Can I say it felt pretty good? I am now on equal footing with my male counterparts who are working over there. When I walked into the plant this morning and saw all the women. Never in my life have I seen so many women doing manual labor—we almost outnumber the men! What a year this will be. And now—where to party in this city is the question. Suggestions? Know any fun boys?

*My dancing days have just begun...begins to dance to her own beat*

A rivet and a snap...rivet and a snap. Don't be shy. Come on!

*She runs on stage and joins, skipping around the stage to the beat.*

A rivet and a snap—rivet and a snap.

*As they dance off stage 80/90s Jeanette rolls on with She pushing her.*

### **Show IMAGE 13—Tree Canvas/Painting**

80s/90s Jeanette

For the last week or so as I was drinking my coffee and looking out the windows as I finished my breakfast, I watched the beautiful trees (three in fact) beyond the deck. I couldn't help but notice that two branches from two of the trees were turning color. I thought it was odd because the rest of the leaves were still green. As I watched these two branches change from rust color to red, it seemed strange. They were the only two. They transformed to a beautiful bright red and stood out from the rest. Now today, I look out at other branches and I begin to see others beginning to show forth the same beauty. I am probably mixing up my words, but this beauty stands out to me and I think it makes a good illustration for some people's lives. Maybe a good sermon illustration? (I told Mark and he was not impressed.) Oh well. I do love the trees though...always have.

She

I climb trees. All of them. It's easy!

80s/90s

Back then everything was simple. Needless to say, I had a very happy childhood. It was the years of the depression, the years 1920-30 and my family was very poor but I was ok.

She

My family might be poor. But we wear what every other average person wears...just "hand-me-downs"...I think that's what they are called. But I just got my first store bought dress for my

11<sup>th</sup> birthday! It's so beautiful; I will be sure to wear it on Sundays. I don't want to mess it up. Maybe they'll take a picture of me wearing it...I really look beautiful in it.

80s/90s

On a normal day I would just wear bloomers and black stockings. In fact, I think it was my lot in life to wear bloomers made from cheap material,

She

But that's ok. That way I don't have to worry about ruining it when I'm outside. The kids at school think I'm weird because of how I look. I don't have any friends at school. They all made fun of me this week because I was punished. If someone speaks out loud or does something the teacher doesn't like, they get marched to the room for punishment. Well, I didn't do anything and still got in trouble. The boy who sits behind me was pulling on my hair so hard. He kept doing it and it started to hurt so bad that I yelled out and then got in trouble for yelling, and he didn't get punished at all.

80s90s

It's all right...I guess teachers were just mean in those days.

She

She doesn't like me because of my appearance; I look like I am from the poor neighborhood...I don't care. She can think what she thinks. My clothes don't bother me. As long as I can be outdoors, I'm happy. And besides. I got even with that boy a few days later. One day I was up in a tree near my house and he was walking along the sidewalk and laughed at my bloomers. I jumped down from the tree and ran to him and boxed his ears! It made me so happy...even if I did run away afterwards. Now, my life is better. Who am I? I'm as good as anyone else.

80s/90s



You are. And now. I'm 91. I wish I could take a walk and touch those beautiful branches. I can't. My arms don't have the strength to make my own coffee anymore—Mark and Brenda have to do that for me. I can't even scoop my own ice cream. I can put my own teeth in, but—I no longer have my own teeth. Going to the bathroom isn't so simple anymore. I wear a pull up. And I get nervous every time I have to go to the bathroom because I don't know if I can hold myself up to pull my pants down. It hurts so. I can't sleep. Didn't that used to be simple? I lay in bed most nights with my hip throbbing or my arm tingling; it reminds me of the polio days. I just started getting this pain in my stomach—how long will I lie awake trying to distract myself from the pain? I can't pick up books anymore. Last night I was laying in bed reading and I dropped my book on the ground. You know it took me fifteen minutes to finally pick it up without falling out of bed. My shoulder has been sore since. It used to be easy to get out of a chair. It's not. Adam had to pick me up out of my chair last night and lay me in bed. I never thought that I would get to this stage—I guess it's old age?

Remembering isn't simple anymore—oh my forgetfulness...and now, I can't seem to spell anything; I just write out what it sounds like, weird, huh! Sometimes at night when I can't sleep, I compose letters I want to write to people—they are beautiful letters, but in the morning when I try to put it on paper, I can't remember what I planned to say. I even have a hard time keeping my words on a line. I remember when I was learning to write—you had to hold your pencil properly(your pointer finger should be bent like this—not like this.) I never managed that.

I shouldn't be saying any of this. I'm blessed to live another day...You can tell I should go back to bed with all this rambling. NITE NITE. Maybe I'll dream of the trees...I never tire of looking at those trees...such beauty...even the old ones.

She

You're as good as anyone else.

*She comes over and gives 80s/90s and hug and lights fade.*

**Scene 8: Hair problems , IMAGE 14: High school pic**

*Lights on as She paces the floor while 80s/90s Jeanette wheels downstage in distress.*

80s/90s Jeanette

Today I finally got a permanent. I am a mess.

She

I'm vain! I've never been vain...But I'm vain. I don't care about this stuff! Ugh...now look at me! Uff da, is right! ...I guess I'll wear a scarf the rest of my life!

40s/50s

Or a wig...ha.

She

Stop. I'm being serious. I was brave today and look where it got me.

40s/50s

Two years ago you wouldn't have been so brave, would you.

She

7<sup>th</sup> Grade changed me.

20s/30

Well, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade probably changes all girls.

She

Why are you here?

20s/30s

Same reason you're here.

80s/90s

Uh—You were saying? 7<sup>th</sup> Grade...

She

Oh. Yah. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade changed me, I didn't have any friends at school back in those days.

20s/30s

Back in those days? It was two years ago...

80s/90s

Let her be—

She

*Getting frustrated*

I managed ok with no friends. I was shy. And besides... I wasn't as good as other people, so I didn't deserve friends.

20s/30s

Well, maybe you didn't—

40s/50s

That was her *thought*.

She

That was my thought. Until one day after study hall a girl

40s/50s

(who was considerably older than her age...I might add)

She

She came up to me. She stopped at my desk and told me not to worry what other people thought because I was just as good as any of them. I had a much better feeling about myself after that.

80s/90s

That girl will never know what she did for me. Two years later, I may be a straight slip of a girl, but I was more confident. .

She

I am more confident! I'm not fussy. And I usually don't care about my hair—

20s/30s and 40s/50s both begin to laugh

Ha!

She

but I gave into vanity today and I'll regret it for the rest of my life!

I don't know if I can take the scarf off. It's too awful. I'm blaming Greta's mother for this one.

*Almost starts to cry*

40s/50s

It'll be ok. It's just your thin, fine, ugly brown hair anyways—

20s/30s

She has a point!

80s/90s

Well...she might.

She

But it had so much potential in my mind. Well now look at it—

*Takes off the scarf and all Jeanettes react dramatically.*

She

Ugh. Why did I let this happen?

20s/30s

Yes, why did you? Why did I?

She

Greta's mother runs a beauty parlor, so she offered to give me a permanent, you know—those electric curlers that stay in your hair for an hour.

80s/90s

Oh my, yes. Those always hurt my skull.

She

I don't know what she put in it to curl, but I sure feel the burns on my neck—

80s/90s

I can still feel them—right here.

40s/50s

Me too!

She

Well, Greta's mom finished curling it, I looked in the mirror and almost screamed! I mean look at it! anyone would have screamed!

20s/30s

I did.

She

I looked around to see if anyone noticed me, thanked her and out the door I went! Her store is at the end of the shopping center and I didn't want anyone to see me, so I walked down the street in a hurry.

40s/50s

Didn't I walk over to Sears?

She

I walked as fast as I could until I got to Sears. I ran into the store, found the restrooms and took my comb and straightened it all out. And it's still a horrific mess. I will never forget this.

80s/90s

No, you never will forget it.

She

And Margaret just looked at me when I got home tonight, smiled and said, "bad day, huh?" it was her idea in the first place! Grandma just shook her head at me, "Uff da" she said. (*Jeanettes begin mimicking their grandma*)

She always says that to me.

*Scene continues to 40s/50s Jeanette going up to She as if in a mirror. (IMAGE 15—Wig)*

40s/50s Jeanette

"Do you like my hair?" it looks full?

20s/30s

No, the back needs picking. I can't reach it.

40s/50s

*Reaching for her pick and mirror and then attempting to pick the back of her hair.*

My arms aren't what they used to be.

80s/90s

Mine are worse. Look how far up I can hold them!

*Begins moving them side to side like an arm dance.* And I used to be a dancer! It's not my leg... Years of usin' my arms... Huh, I used to be so strong....

40s/50s

I'm still strong—

She

I'll always be strong—and so will you.

80s/90s

Until you break your leg one too many times...

40s/50s

Even though I was a light, string bean of a gal,

She

Like me—

40s/50s

...I could hold my own.

*Looking in the mirror.*

The back really is flat. Maybe I should just take this thing-a-ma-jig off.; it will look better. Girls, Just close your eyes; hopefully Harry won't come in.

20s/30s

Why?

40s/50s

After the polio. It changed my hair. Not that it was ever anything but a mousy mess, but I could do it up real nice.

20s/30s

Hey!

She

Hey!

80s/90s

It was never as beautiful as Margaret's. I always wanted hair like Margaret. Oh her hair was so beautiful, long and white, but not mine. And polio made the texture worse, so Harry suggested I try a wig.

40s/50s

I kind of liked the idea. I could choose any look I wanted, money was no option! He was with me when I went to the wig shop. I'll never forget his face when I put this one on—his eyes flickered. They flickered *at me*.

20s/30s

Like when we met?

40s/50s

*Nods*

I've worn this ever since. I feel naked without it. And yes, it isn't always comfortable, but Harry loves it.

I just can't reach the back.

*Finally takes off her wig and begins fluffing the back with her pick.*

There.

*She looks at the wig and then at her face in the mirror. 20s/30s Jeanette walks over to the wig and takes it away.*



20s/30s

Much better.

*Lights fade as she sets the wig down again, picks up a few pictures and sits downstage center with all the Jeanettes on stage listening.*

### **Scene 9: Riveter Part Two**

20s/30s

I finally broke up with Mitch. I broke up with him a couple months ago...he was fun...so much fun...way too fun. Oh the trouble he got me into. We were together for five months and I thought my heart was broken. I've been drinking way too much since then. Makes me feel pretty miserable...I don't want anything to do with men from this time on.

80s/90s

You were miserable.

40s/50s

And alone...

*She scoots closer to offer comfort*

20s/30s (**Show IMAGE 16, 17 Monkey and brother**)

Earl and Margaret left this week. How wonderful it was to see Earl, my brother and best friend. He really has become so handsome. He loves the navy... he had to fly back to Kuwait this week... He has a pet monkey and a fiance. Her parents don't approve of the engagement, so we'll see who lasts longer, the fiancé or the monkey? (I'm rooting for the monkey...shhhhh) Margaret doesn't approve of the girl either...

I didn't realize how homesick I've been until I spent time with my siblings. But I certainly didn't let Margaret know that. She tried to convince me to come back to Fargo—

80s/90s

I acted like I was as happy as a lark here in Seattle. I smoked and drank in Margaret's face; I used crude language—she didn't approve.

20s/30s

She doesn't approve of all my drinking and smoking either. (she thinks it is going to kill me) I told Margaret that I am perfectly happy here, so forget it. I'm not coming home.

40/50s

But you've been miserable?

She

She already said that—

20s/30s

Around 10:30 this morning, while I was riveting bolts in the bulkhead at the plant, I kept thinking. With each rivet that I put in the block, I felt the misery of so many of my recent life choices. I said to myself, "I need all these things in my life; it's the only way that I'm going to make it." Then, with the twinkling of an eye, my thoughts changed right there and I was saying, "I don't need this...or this..."

She

You didn't need what? the gun?

20s/30s

Not exactly, but I I put down my rivet gun, excused myself from my partner, and went down to the restroom. Not a soul was in the restroom. I went to the very back, went in the stall, closed the door and got down on my knees.

40s/50s

It was there that my life would change forever. I gave my heart to Jesus on June 15, 1942 at 10:30am.

She

By the toilet?

80s/90s

*Laughing*

Yes, right by the toilet.

20s/30s

My friends aren't going to understand this, but I think I may go to my boss and give my two weeks notice. I think I need to go home and start new.

*Lights shift as 80s/90s Jeanette rolls over to her table and begins drawing in her journal.(*

**IMAGE18—map, IMAGE 19 college pictures are displayed through the scene)**

80s/90s

Let me draw a map of the dorms so you can picture it. (*show picture after drawing*) one girl single bed....this girl went through my room and Mary and Wanda's to get to their room. I went through their room too. 2 girls...Barb...oh. I got this all wrong. Hallway...over here was the street...I may have got this all wrong.

I made a mess of that. College life. Those were the good ole days. I

20s/30s

*(IMAGE 19) On the floor surrounded by pictures and sucking on a sucker that is in her mouth  
Many pictures shown during this scene*

The last dorm party! Snacks, lots of snacks and these—suckers.

She

I want one!

20s/30s

They don't cost much. I'm gonna miss these days with the girls. Barb is engaged too and we promised each other that we wouldn't let things change. They already have. But she's still my best friend. Haven't had a best friend before...but Barb and I...we've shared our most private moments, we're always together.

She

Do you tell secrets?

20s/30s

Maybe. But if you think I'm gonna tell you—

She

Just one—

20/30s

Nope.

She

Come on—

20s/30s

I said no.

Where is Barb anyways?

40s/50s

She's probably eating another piece of pizza.

20s/30s

She does love her snacks!

80s/90s

Jessica, Dorothy and Red begged me to stay around another year, live in town or something after I marry.

20s/30s

And "just promise me you won't get too serious" Red says. Talk about being too serious. I don't think she likes Harry. I tell the girls I didn't come to college to find a husband.

80s/90s

(between you and me...most of them did). But for me...It just sort of happened.

20/30s

When I came here I couldn't even pass the exam to get accepted into any college...I worked hard to get here.

40s/50s

I saved enough money to buy a train ticket to Chicago. I had \$50 to my name. I thought I was rich!

She

\$50! You are rich!

20s/30s

We've never been rich. Maybe one day—

80s/90s

Don't count on it!

20s/30s

...I wrote a dozen places to live and they all said "Sorry—

...we're all filled." All of the letters said that except for the last one.

40s/50s

The last letter said something about wiring money a week in advance. So I quit my job in North Dakota, and bought a train ticket without hearing back for sure that I had a place to stay. Aunt Myrtle thought I was crazy.

20s/30s

Everyone thought I was crazy.

40s/50s

"He will silently plan for thee." I kept that phrase in my pocket when I would get worried or depressed about what's next.

20s/30s

I still have that piece of paper. Took it with me on the train, to school...and now. Here I am . educated. I tried to educate myself these past few years. Look...here is Barb and I trying to educate ourselves. **(IMAGE 20)**

She

You don't look very smart...

20s/30s

So I'm not the brightest cookie in the box—

40s/50s

You still aren't—

She

Ha. I knew it!

20s/30s

**(IMAGE 21)**

Barb and I—We don't do well studying together. oh well. But what adventures we've had. When I came as a freshman, we hit it off right away. We would find free concerts in the park, grab some snacks (mainly cheese and crackers)...we loved our crackers. A group of boys would bring a block of cheese and a blanket, and we would find a spot on the grass and enjoy the music and freedom. I was always good friends with the boys...me being older than everyone...I think they felt safe with me, so we were always pals. Story of my life until Harry. So now, here I am...about to graduate. I have passed my classes, I've held a job, and found a husband—not bad!

And the girls. I'm going to go eat some cheese and crackers before Barb eats it all.

*Lights out*

**Scene 10: Mama**

*She pushes 80s/90s Jeanette on stage. She starts slowly and then picks up the speed. Soon, they are flying on stage, screaming as they roll in a winding pattern. While 80s/90s Jeanette takes a breath and picks up a picture she finds on the ground, Young Jeanette stops to catch her breath and begins speaking. 80s/90s Jeanette stays in the background and watches.*

She

Told ya I'd beat you!

*Sticks out her tongue and laughs and she turns around, picks up a rock from the ground and draws her own hopscotch board on the sidewalk.*

*Singing*

She'll be comin' around the mountain when she comes, yee—haw! She'll be comin' around the mountain when she comes, yee-haw!

*40s/50s Jeanette calls She from a distance.*

JEANETTE! Jeannette!

*She continues to play hopscotch*

I'm playing hopscotch!

She

Jeanette, you need to go home—

40s/50s

*She  
Begins to laugh like it's a game and runs around and around 40s/50s Jeanette*

40s/50s Jeanette

It's mama.

Jeanette

*Her giggling continues until she hears what was said. . She stops and stares, looking at what might be her home.*

40s/50s Jeanette

*Walking over to She to offer comfort*

I'm so sorry.

*Jeanette pulls away and then sinks to the floor. 80s/90s Jeanette rolls down and speaks*

80s/90s

“If I had been home sooner.”

Hopscotch could have waited.

I gripped the wooden railing,  
searching for just one of mother's fingerprints.

I saw

flashing lights of the worst of my fears, and Dad  
was Michelangelo's muse sculpted to the living room floor.

I ran to see this statue of the house, but  
he crumbled through the cracks as I  
reached out for his strength.



Alone on this porch, I kissed the fingerprints I know were there.  
After feeling close again, I reverted to  
My infant pose. The Dakota air doesn't comfort  
the way motherhood can.  
It's started to rain, erasing her prints from the surface.

*All four Jeanettes enter stage loudly, laughing and talking amongst themselves, carrying books, library cards, library logs and pictures.*

**Scene 11: Library Days (IMAGE 22—library log book, IMAGE 23—picture of library)**

80s/90s

Lynn was very pissed. She didn't agree with anything Harry was doing—

40s/50s

Jeanette! I can't believe you said that!

80s/90s

What? She was a pain.

20s/30s

And now she insists on helping me reorganize the library. I have a day to get this place in tip-top shape.

All

1853—Type LF—Title: *The House of Seven Gables*---Author: Nathaniel Hawthorne.

20s/30s

Hmmm...could never get into this one much. So gloomy. I might even say I don't like it, but  
Lynn picked it up earlier and let Hawthorne have it. ...

40s/50s

There must be too much decay and arrogance for her to handle.

20s/30s

(Too much decay and arrogance in these walls if you ask me.) Can I get an Amen? S

She and 80s/90s

AMEN!

20s/30s

I'm going to give this one another try...

All

1881—24L—*Why You Act the Way You Do*—

80s/90s

Ha! Well, I don't know. That's a good question! Why do I act the way I do? Why do YOU?

She

Me?

20s/30s

These titles—Oh...shhhhh. *A Thread of Suspicion*.. that Jane Pearl. ...she knows how to write a good mystery. Type: Fiction—*Soon* and *Leave a Candle Burning*. Leave a candle... I sure hope not! Can't be giving Lynn any ideas....

40s/50s

Let's put this one in the back.

All

1869—260—*None Dare Call it Treason*, J.A Stormes. ...*The Essentials of Prayer*---wait.

20s/30s

Oop. We don't have that—maybe someone already checked it out? 262.0...don't see it.

80s/90s

This library was my vision the moment we arrived here in Rockford. There were a pile of books in the church's attic and I have more than enough books to share—seemed like a sign—

All

261—265—Fiction, Fiction, Fiction type.

80s/90s

I told Harry the ladies needed a place of their own to work...to come exchange books, to share in them.

All

Young Fiction—YF—YF—YF—

C7, C7—244, C7.

40s/50s

I told them come, let's build a library. And what a blessing it was

20s/30s

I mean...Lynn has been a pain, but there's a needle in every haystack.

80s/90s

A needle in a bunch? Which one is it. ...she's the needle.

20s/30s

Or maybe I am? She'll be back from lunch soon.

All

1765, 1766, 1768...*Choosing My Religion...*, 242. ...

80s/90s

You know, I really shouldn't have said "pissed." Forgive me?

## Scene 12: Polio and Joybells

*(IMAGE 24) Picture of Jeanette and daughter Joy with the description: "This is my favorite picture as it shows the love and bond we have."*

*80s/90s Jeanette makes her way over to her desk again, shows her picture off and begins to write a letter to her daughter.*

80s/90s Jeanette

This letter is a gift to you, my daughter Joybells,

I write in my own hand, terrible as it may be

20s/30s

It is pretty terrible...

80s/90s

*Glances at her and continues*

so that you will know the bond of love I have for you:

Joy Marie Love. Born on March 2nd, 1952, in Plainwell, Michigan, at 8:30pm. After nine months of getting big as a barn and being two weeks overdue I went to the Plainwell hospital on Saturday evening, but you didn't want to leave my warm belly. You really gave me a hard time! But when you finally came, I took a good look at you, and instead of crying, your eyes were wide open, looking me and the place over. You were such a delight.

She

Was she so cute?

80s/90s

She was beautiful. Joy, you were beautiful and we had a peaceful five months with you.

40s/50s

And we know what comes next...

She

Do I know?

80s/90s

On August 23rd, when you were almost five months old, I contracted polio. We were finishing up our vacation visiting Margaret in Fargo, when you became quite ill. You had a very high temperature for two days and nights, and then I became very ill. I remember how we stopped at a lodge on our way home. It was the most beautiful spot overlooking the Mississippi River. As we were walking up a beautiful staircase, I looked through the window at a lovely garden. If I had not been so sick, it would have been enjoyable. I was just so sick to my stomach; I couldn't keep anything down, but as long as I gave you milk, you were alright. The next day we arrived at Beulah and George's house in Chicago. I remember walking ahead of your dad and George and they remarked that I was walking like a farmer. We just laughed!

20/30s Jeanette

THEY laughed.

80s Jeanette

You laughed too and you know it.

20/30s

So maybe I laughed a little...

She

How does a farmer walk?

20s/30s

Why don't you show her?

40s/50s

Very funny—

80s90s

The next day we traveled on and I continued to get little to no rest and I ached all over. We were in Michigan City at this point on our travels, staying with our friends the Mingards.

20s/30s

Sweet Mrs. Mingard. She wouldn't go near me, and I overheard her saying that I might have polio. It's a funny feeling having people shun you for fear that I would give them a disease. We arrived home around midnight, and you were finally doing better. .

80s/90s Jeanette

I thanked God for that!

20/30s

But remember, I was getting worse, so we called the doctor.

80s/90s

Oh my. Yes. Dr. Smithfield.

20/30s

A lot of help he did—

40s/50s

He said “take an aspirin and I'll see you Monday.”

20/30s

A surprise for him on Monday when he came and I was worse than before. Dr. smithfield...

80s/90s

He said he didn't know what I had and then left.

20/30s

Thank you, Doc.

80s/90s

By Tuesday afternoon your dad had to half-carry me to the bathroom because my left foot was dragging. Again, people wouldn't come near me. I heard them talking in the other room. When the doctor came back, he decided I'd better go into the hospital to be tested for polio.

80s/90s Jeanette

I think that was harder on your dad than me.

40s/50s

It was.

80s/90s

I remember looking at him through the screen door after they had given me a spinal tap.

20s/30s Jeanette

The test was positive and I watched your dad crying on the other side of the door....

80s Jeanette

I wanted to reach out and comfort him—

20/30s

But I couldn't—

80s/90s

During those ten days of incubation, I didn't really realize what was happening to me. All I knew was that I was very sick and I still couldn't keep anything down. They gave me pills to stop the ache in my back and legs, and pills to help me urinate as it seemed everything was out of cycle.

By the time I had finally calmed down, what do you think they put under my nose—(30s

*Jeanette joins in*) but a fish dinner! I just about got sick all over again.

When my fever broke after ten days, the paralysis had stopped. My right leg was not too bad, but the left leg and foot was done for. Oh well! I could at least use the bedpan on my own!

20s/30s

The bad part was that the nurses-in-training had been using me as a guinea pig—they learned how to put a tube in me and as I look back over the years, my bottom has been on display many times!

80s/90s

(little did I know then that I would have to endure the same experience twenty years later!)

30s Jeanette

Well this is reassuring!

80s/90s

What a future you have coming for you, Jeanette.

20s/30s

I was in the hospital for three months.

80s Jeanette

It wasn't that bad.

20s/30s

It wasn't great, lets be honest.

80s/90s

But it really wasn't that bad. In fact, one doctor asked me if it would be ok to move my bed next to a lady that complained constantly—he thought my attitude would cheer her up. (I don't know if it did any good).

She



It did.

80s/90s

When I was able to sit up, I was taken on a stretcher to a waiting room so I could see visitors and on September 21st, my birthday, I was able to sit outside and see family—mainly I wanted to see you, Joybells! You had been with your Aunt Helen those months while I was in the hospital. I am so sorry I could not be with you those months as you became more active. I was afraid that when I finally saw you at the hospital that you wouldn't recognize me. When your dad brought you to the screen door, your beautiful face looked at me first, then you stared at the ladies on each side of me, and then back at me. You knew me, Joy-bells! You knew I was your mommy.

40s/50s

A moment I'll always remember...seeing your beautiful face for the first time.

20s/30s

I was finally able to come home late October. I was on crutches and you really were a challenge to keep up with. We had wheels put on your bed and high chair so that I could push you around.

80s/90s

I could not carry you—

20s/30s

I cannot carry you.

She

And I probably can't carry you either...

80/90s

Those were hard months, Joy, but God gave me songs in the night when I couldn't sleep, and my favorite stays with me to this day: *(at some point Jeanettes join while She listens)*

*No one ever cared for me like Jesus;*

*There's no other friend so kind as he.*

*No one else could take the pain and darkness from me;*

*O how much He cared for me.*

In conclusion, I want to say that through all the bad health, I can only be thankful for the way I've been taken care of all of these years. I count it a privilege to be your mother. My love for you is so great, my heart actually aches. You may be bored reading this, but know that I am very proud of you—you are everything a mother could ask for.

Your loving Mom  
2010

*80s/90s Jeanette is helped out of her wheelchair by She and 20/30s.. Slowly, Jeanette stands up straight and tall and puts both hands against the wall. All Jeanettes stand there to help keep her stable and she begins to talk to the audience.*

### **Scene 13: (IMAGE 26, 2006) NYC monologue against the wall**

80s/90s

You didn't know I was this tall, did you? No one does. I'm 5'9"—my grandchildren don't believe me, well until today. Dreams can still come true at eighty-six, can't they? With all the traveling I've done, I have never spent any time in New York City. I have begged Mark and Brenda to take me with them and the family, and they finally gave in and let me wheel along. Who said it was easy for a wheelchair in Time Square?

20s/30s

Absolutely no one.

80s/90s

And yet...here I am. My grandson was pushing me around the corner of that street with all the lights—you know...and he wasn't being gentle. He ran right over a divet in the sidewalk and POP.

She

POP! The rubber from my left wheel flew in the air and began to roll down the street!

*They all laugh*

80s/90

Oh, what a riot. I better stop laughing or I might wet myself. Ah...

I said ope, and I there I see Mark running for it!

20s/30s

He could have been a little quicker...

80s/90s

Before he could get it, two New Yorkers from the scaffolding above jumped down, "We got it! We got it!" You know...in that accent. I can't do accents—my children always make fun of me when I try.

20s/30s

Go ahead. Lets hear it—

80s/90s

You're just teasing with me. Oh well. Those men beat Mark to the tire and brought it back. What kind men they are. They helped Mark and Aaron fix the wheelchair tire—(don't tell them, but it's a good thing; Mark was never really a fix-it kind-a-guy.) "No problem—we got this. We can

fix it.” So here I am, up against the wall of some place...maybe a Starbuck? In between Brenda and Ashley. I have to keep hopping on my good leg. Like this.

She

Hey, you’re dancing! I told ya you could do it—

80s/90s

The girls are holding me up strong and Andrea comes behind my caboose and holds that up. My rump is good size,

20s/30s

It is. Lets have her hold it in place (pointing to 40s/50s)

40s/50s

I’ll do my best

80s/90s

Of course she thinks it’s funny to smack me on the rear while she helps. Oh those girls.

40/50s

I’ll pass on that though—

20/30s

Oh come on...

*She smacks her on the butt*

80s/90s

We can’t stop the laughter...

What a memorable trip to New York. I loved every minute.

It will be the last time I come to the city.

**Lights fade as actors quickly transition to next scene.**

**Scene 14: Grandma Olson (IMAGE 27)**

20s/30s

Grandma Olson doesn't hear half of what I say anymore. She literally can't hear half of what I say. That ear horn...coming in handy years later. She says her mom was deaf and that one day I will probably be deaf.

She

No I will not!

20s/30s

You took the words out of my mouth

80s/90s

What words?

20s/30s

I said you took the words out of my mouth—

80s/90s

Speak up, girl

She(looking at 20s/30s)

Funny.

80s/90s

You talkin' about Grandma Olson?

20s/30s

Yes, about her hearing.

80s/90s

She was deaf by the end of her life

She

I thought she was deaf now!

20s/30s

She's worse now

She

But I have to talk to her through—

All

An earhorn.

*They laugh.*

80s/90s

Oh Grandma. How I loved her.

20s/30s

She made me cry last week. Since I just got back from Seattle, I'm living with Grandma and Grandpa right now. The last couple months have been hard. I started going to church again. It was great for a while until I noticed that people were not who they said they were.

She

Just because some guys says he believes in God doesn't mean he is a good person—

80/90s

I remember thinking "If this is the way Christians act, I want nothing to do with it."

20/30s

. I stopped trying to make good decisions and just had a rotten attitude...I was mean.

She

You're always mean to me—

20/30s

Well, you don't count.

80/90s

You were pretty rotten those few weeks, but love came to my rescue.

She

What?

40/50s

Listen—

20s/30s

Every night before Grandma and Grandpa went to bed, they sat around the pot-bellied stove to read the Bible and pray. One night last week I came home and Grandpa wasn't there, just Grandma. She said to me, "Yenette, would you read for me? Grandpa has gone to bed."

She

*Giggling*

And you said no and ran to your room!

20s/30s

I said Ok. She had me read Psalms 46, 27, and 34. By the time I had read Psalm 34 I was in tears.

80s/90s

...the Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit...

20s/30s

Grandma began to pray, and I began to let my troubles go.

80s/90s

...he is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit...

As time went on I realized that my Grandma's love for me was the healing point in my life.

20s/30s

That night will stay with me forever.

80s/90s

...As strong as the day it happened.

She

Grandma loves me, huh?

*Lights fade and rise again with 40s/50s Jeanette and 80s/90s Jeanette.*

### **Scene 15: CoBeAc Monologue**

40s/50s

She sits on the floor as she speaks

I still can't find my cane—Douglas! Full of mischief, that boy. Not a bad boy, just a rascal.

Every time we are in the dining hall for meals, my cane ends up on the rafters. I yell at Mark and he just smiles and points....wouldn't you guess – that camper Doug Jackson! It's been five years since the camp opened, and that boy is still playing tricks.

I don't always get to know the campers because I am full-time secretary in the office, but I do enjoy being around all the excitement when I can, even if it means me being terrorized by cane



thieves. I have a good relationship with the counselors though. Many call me “Mom Love”. I feel like I am their mother away from home. I am glad that this place feels like home to so many, my own children included, and I hope this place will continue to be for many for years to come.

*80/90s Jeanette begins to read a letter while 40s/50s Jeanette listens*

*To CoBeAc Friends,*

*On a chilly November day, back in 1959, Harry, Joy, Mark, and I drove down Headquarters Road to a county fire road that led us to the camp property. We stopped where the road led to the lake. The children and I waited in the car while Harry walked through the trees, and up the hill to where the men were working on the construction of the camp. As I looked around at the trees surrounding us, I could not help but thank God for the privilege He had given my husband to develop this camp.*

*My husband was thirty-three years old when he was called to be youth and camp director. What a privilege it is for me to work along side my husband in these years.*

*When I look back at the memories of the camp’s first year, the one memory that stays with me is that of the first three weeks of “Work Camp” in 1960. The work weeks were for junior high and senior high young people. We had a small staff of six people to clean the cabins and dining hall. My job was to scrub the kitchen floor. Another woman and I shared the job. I did my half sitting on a rug, and yet I managed to get through my half of the floor. We had a lot of fun. Just imagine me, no cane in hand, just sliding from one part of the floor to the other—like a magic carpet. We were just so excited about having campers, I would have cleaned the whole camp on a rug if needed! During those weeks I was counselor as well as office worker, but I could not participate with all the activities because of my handicap; I did what I could.*

*I remember our glorious sound system: The first year we did not have a loud-speaker system, so an old church bell was erected on a telephone pole. It took care of the wake-up call, and lights-out, and the schedule for each day. It did the trick! I rang that bell any chance I could get, although it wasn’t technically my job. We would ring the bell and then would meet at the tree stump that was in front of the chapel. This tree stump became the meeting place for all, until it started to fall apart. I couldn’t help feeling a bit sad when we removed it last year.*

*Oh we saw changed lives during those three weeks. God put His approval on His camp, and it remains as beautiful as ever today. Many of Harry’s visions for the camp are still coming to pass. It is by grace that I can live to see the plan for this camp still being carried on.*

*In his Grace,*

*Jeanette Love*

40s/50s

Is there a way you can help me up? Where is my—I need my cane. Douglas! Where’s my cane?!

*She and 20s/30s run out onstage to help her up while 80s/90s Jeanette wheels across stage while speaking.*

### **Scene 16**

Everyday I get up for the day and wonder what is in store for a grandma stuck in a wheelchair...

Right now I am tired and have ached all day with my back..and arm. I jerked my arm without thinking last night and I couldn’t get out of bed this morning. It was a challenge. I am afraid I have been trying to get up by myself—up and down...Tylenol isn’t helping much. I am now using ibuprofen and then Tylenol extra. It keeps me going....

I really would like to go lay in my bed, but I don’t want to go through that right now.

She

Let’s write something. Maybe like the one you wrote the other day? “I am in a good mood today...

Come on!

80s/90s

But I’m not!

She

And I want to keep it that way!

See, I can make words rhyme,...hmmm

80s/90s Jeanette

If only I had more time!

She

See! Let's write another one!

80s/90s Jeanette

Ok... You got me.

Well...what shall we write about? The trees?

She

We always talk about the trees—

80s/90s

I love the trees. I used to paint trees, you know.

She

I can paint—

80s/90s Jeanette

Yes you can and will. Now let's see...

As I see the weather change day by day, sometimes

She

The wind blows!

80s/90s

That's right, but it doesn't rhyme.

Sometimes the wind blows fierce with no delay.

Sometimes it's so hot—

She

But you already started with the word sometimes.

80s/90s Jeanette

Oh dear, I do that all the time. You can do that in poetry. Remember that!

She

I can?

80s/90s Jeanette

What do we have? AS I see the weather change day by day, sometimes the wind blows fierce  
with no delay.

Sometimes it's so hot that my body has no desire to move,

She

But you're moving now?

80s/90s Jeanette

Just barely—

But I know as the weather changes that he is in control.

So that is the end of the matter.

Did you get that?

She

What?

80s/90s Jeanette

So that is the end of the matter.

She

I like that.

So that is the end of the matter.

The end.

80s/90s Jeanette

I still can rejoice; I will sing! A good way to go through the day even if I am out of time.

*Transitioning right into funeral arrangements.*

**Funeral Arrangements include IMAGE**

80s/90s

*Beginning to write some notes down on a scratch piece of paper.*

Follow me. Can I tell you a few requests?

My funeral—Jeanette Love.

20/30s

We are going there right now. Well ok then.

80s/90s

I would like a lot of music as my testimony.

Congregational songs:

40s/50s

I know—I know—

She

So do I!

40s/50s

I don't think you do.

80s/90s

“Great is Thy Faithfulness,” “I Will Sing of the Mercies of the Lord”

She

I was going to say those—

40s/50s

Really? Then sing one of them right now—how does “I Will Sing” go?

Let’s hear it—

She

I know it.

20s/30s

You don’t know it—

She

I do—

20s/30s

But you never listen in church—

She

You don’t either—you hate church—

20s/30s

Used to—

She

Well I know it. I just don’t want to sing that one.

40s/50s

Moving on...

80s/90s

And I love...what’s that one. You know—it’s an old one. How he is...uh—

40/50s

OH How He loves—

80s/90s

No. the one she sang on TV the other day....

How...oh Jeanette...

40/50s

How Great Thou Art.

20s/30s

I know you can sing that one—

She

Of course I can. That one's easy.

How Great thou art....how great thou art...

20s/30s

Always did have a low voice.

80s/90s

Well I would like that one. And then I would like Mark and family to sing as a group whatever praise they want...

If some would like to speak as friend and family: Bruce, Sharon? Joy my darling daughter, Mark give message. And Doug at Saginaw if possible?

40s/50s

You sure you trust him to do that?

80s/90s

I'll be dead...what harm can he do?

She

Who's Doug?

20s/30s

I don't know. Who's Doug?

40s/50s

An old camper. Now he's my pastor—

80s/90s

And a friend of Harry and mine for years. Now listen... There are things I would like to pass on. Ugh. Jeanette. If I live much longer, I won't be able to spell at all! I have the funeral already paid for in full so that Mark and Brenda don't have to worry about that. They don't have the money—

20s/30s

You're talking like you are going tomorrow—

She

Is she going tomorrow?

80s/90s

No. but I would like to pass on my keepsakes to the family. You can sit down and decide who the losers will be. By the time you read this, I will be dancing in heaven.

20s/30s

Oh dancing.

40s/50s

Dancing days are over for me—

20s/30s

No!

80s/90s



Please give all my Colleen Hawes photographs back to them. They lost most of what they had in their first house. Pictures that you don't know...maybe Bruce would like some? I really do sound like I'm leaving tomorrow!

*Begins laughing to herself.*

Oh what a riot. My grandkids would laugh at me if they saw this.

I understand if changes must be made...

I love you all. And remember what accidents that happened to me were all to God's Glory. So that is the end of the matter.

She

Wait. So you are leaving tomorrow?

### **Scene 17: Sense of Humor Story (IMAGE Journal entry)**

April 29, 2014

*Spotlight is on She alone as she reads an excerpt from Jeanette's journal*

She

One night as I lay in bed meditating, I heard someone talking. I listened then heard my right leg (whose name is "Rightie" say to "Polie", my left leg,

"Polie, get off me—" Polie did not move. Rightie asked her again, but still no response, so

Rightie took her foot and shoved her friend off.

Polie said, "Thank you. I needed that!"

So ended the matter.

It was not long before I heard my right arm speaking to my left arm saying, “Just because you can write with your hand and have the tear in your rotator cuff fixed does not mean you are better. Why, I can raise my arm higher than your arm!”

Left arm responds to my right arm, “that’s okay with me.”

The right arm darted back, “The least you can do is take some of my prickling!”

Left arm respond, “I’m doing just fine.”

So ends the matter.

I thought I was almost to sleep when I heard yelling again. I listened and I heard my right hip saying to my left hip, “You are flat, lazy, no good, hip! Why, you have to ask your left arm to roll you over with a bar handle.”

Left hip said, “At least it helps ease your pain. All I get is dancing under my skin.”

That is the end of the matter!

There is more to come. This is the life of Body and Soul.

*Lights off.*

*Lights on suddenly. Sound begins abruptly.*

### **Scene 18: Christmas at Our House**

*All the Jeanette’s simultaneously speak as they spot another Christmas present to open.*

What?! What?! another one? 40s/50s

Forevermore! 80s/90s

Not for me?! 20s/30s

80/90s

W-O-W wow. W-OW...Wow!

She

What's going on?

40s/50s

It's for me! Oh wow...

80s/90s

W-O-W

40/50s

What could it be?

80s/90s

I have no idea—

20s/30s

Of course I have no idea

She

What is going on?! What is it?

40s/50s

It's a...it's a...

20s/30s

It can't be—

80s/90s

Oh it is!

*They finally get the present unwrapped and it's a box filled with fun jewelry.*

40s/50s

Oh my—what beautiful—

80s/90s

Jeanette, you shouldn't have—

20s/30s

I've always wanted boxes of jewels—

40s/50s

Dream come true!

She

But who's it from?

*The Jeanettes look at each other and start laughing. She is confused and then just starts to laugh with the other three. She picks up the present and begins speaking:*

She

Wrappings of Christmastime strategically scattered  
For a picture perfect eve.

A family's wants were met in excess—  
Love filled space and time with gratitude of present—  
Past reminders of former eves like this.

All is done.

Is anything ever completely done?

40s/50s Jeanette

Up  
From under scattered givings is

One more.

Who could this be from? What could this be?

She

Words archived in their memories.

Always one more—  
Onemore  
To unwrap, file away, to pull out when

The heart wants to laugh.

40s/50s

I love to laugh.

***80s/90s Jeanette wheels out just as 40s/50s Jeanette walked out for an earlier "routine."***

### **Scene 19: Cancer /Stand Up**

Why do they call it stand up? I'm not standing. You're not standing. What's standing? But you're here and I'm here, so I might as well tell you—I have cancer,,breast cancer to be

specific. if you want me to be completely truthful, I will. My bosoms are large and I'm not afraid to lose them. I think I may be relieved to get rid of them. I used to be so small, barely an A, and then Joy, and then polio. Can I just blame everything on polio? I have cancer? Well that's obviously polio's fault. Thanks Mr. Jonas Salk. If you would have come out with your little vaccine a year or two earlier we wouldn't be here NOT standing, would we? Oh well! That's what I like to say anyways. I go in for surgery on Friday. If it hasn't reached the lymph nodes then I won't do chemo, just radiation. "Just radiation..." What does that actually mean? Reduction of white blood cells, possible burns, vomiting, little resistance to infection... I'm excited! Maybe Mark, Brenda and the kids will want to go shopping afterwards. The hospital is close to the mall, let's just make a day of it. oh...you wondering why I'm holding a stuffed animal? Have you ever felt these things—it's so soft. The kids gave it to me this morning. They said that it would be with me as protection while I'm in the hospital this weekend. It will be my comfort. But I shouldn't be scared, right? Cancer is nothing. But it isn't nothing. And I've been through so much worse, so what's the big deal? Besides, it's polio's fault.

**Scene 20: Holy land and Harry's Death (IMAGE: two photos)**

A dream come true. –The Holy Land.

80s/90s

And the Red Sea ate up your nylons? They were a mess!

40s/50s

But I touched it! my foot did anyways.

80s/90s

Mark and Steve carried you down the mound of sand—

40s/50s

And very carefully placed my feet in that water.

80s/90s

And the nylons were gone—

40s/50s

It was worth a 50 cent pair of nylons...

And then we went to the garden.

80s/90s

I'll never forget that either.

40s/50s

You had better not!

We were touring the Garden of Gethsemane where the tomb was. There was a long long wait to see the open grave. I was watching from a distance, sitting in my wheelchair, when Mark and Harry walked up to me and said , “we’ll carry you.”

80s/90s

I can't believe Harry offered to carry me—

40s50s

He did though.

80s/90s

I couldn't believe it.

40s/50s

They went on either side of me, picked me up and as they carried me. The people in line stepped back so I could see the tomb. As they took me inside and I saw the place, I cried. Harry whispered in my ear, “Don’t cry!” Oh what joy.

To think that Harry and Mark loved me so much that they carried me to this wonderful experience. Their love was again.

*All Jeanettes come onto stage*

80s/90s

You know Harry is gone now.

40s/50s

He wasn’t well, was he.

20s/30s

Is this why you don’t wear your wig anymore?

40s/50s

Hey, what’s wrong with the wig?

80s/90s

Nothing—it’s full.

She

But it does make your face look bigger—

40s/50s

I think I look better —

20s/30s

I think you should get another one. Maybe one with more...

80s/90s

I won't get another wig.

She

Yay!

80s/90s

And that's not why I don't wear the wig anymore. It was just too hard. my arms don't work anymore...

40s/50s

He does love the wig though.

80s/90s

Yes. He did.

40s/50s

I'll miss him.

80s/90s

Me too. Through all the bad health of my husband—

20s/30s

You had to do everything for him these last years, didn't you. And you might not say it, but I will.

40s/50s

Say what?

20s/30s

Just let me get this out. It was hard, wasn't it? It was hard making him meals day in and day out when you struggled to walk. It was hard for you to see him get so bad that he had to sit in a chair



all day unless you helped him to the bathroom. You bathed him when you can barely bathe yourself.

40/50s

That's not true. I can certainly bathe myself!

She

Me too!

20s/30s

Not you, her!

You did all that for years and years and now you are worn out. You're weaker than ever, so just admit it. It was hard. Yes, you loved him, but it was hard.

80s/90s

Yes, Jeanette. If this is what you want to hear, then yes it was hard to take care of Harry all those years. It was painful to see him lose his dignity and take it out on me. It was difficult. But I must say that I counted it a privilege to be his wife and raise children with him. He was a gifted man that loved his family very much. And at the end of 48 years I can be thankful for his declining health, my polio, and all the testings before and after because in the end...life is a gift and I have found joy and hope in it.

She

But is she still going to wear that wig?

*Lights slowly fade*

**Last scene**

*Singing/humming is heard in the distance. She tiptoes onstage.*

She

Someone's out here, right?

Shhh. ...

*Very loud off key whisper singing is heard*

80s/90s Jeanette

*There's no other friend so kind as he...*

She

It's late—

*Singing ceases and runs on into low whispering*

80s/90s

Be with Joybells tonight...give her confidence—...I love her so...

And harr—Mar—Adam. Oh, You know who I mean.

Thank you for giving me sweet Adam. The way he helps me...and for Mark and Brenda... I give them a hard time...

She

She does.

80s/90s

I make life difficult for them—always stubborn—

She

Who's she talking to?

80/90s

*Begins singing again. Singing sounds in between a hum and lyrics*

*No one else can take the pain and darkness from me...*

Oh God. Some days I'm in such pain I think maybe I'm in my last days. You know. The prickling of my nerves...up and down my leg...up and down my leg. Up and down my arm...up and down my arm...

*Begins humming again*

*Da da da da da dada dada da da da...*

Help my blonde. She has such a hard semester ahead...with the play. Give her care—

She

Who's she talking to?

80s90s

And keep my great grandbaby healthy; what a doll she is. Thank you for this family—  
thank you.

She

The girl was startled by a noise—whisper—a chant.

Listening closely, she discovered the source. With ear pressed against door, the

Girl was touched.

No noise—no whisper—no chant.

A plea—a breath—a song.

She's praying...

For me.

Thanks, Grams.

*She and 20s/30s Jeanette run into the room with the other Jeanette limping behind with her cane. They help 80s/90s J out of bed and put her in the wheelchair. She gets directly behind the wheelchair.*

She

Ok—ready—set—

80s/90s

Whoa—where are going?

20s/30s

Lets go dancin'!

She

Here

*She starts throwing all the pictures on 80s/90s Jeanette's lap.*

Lets go!!!

*80s/90s while laughing, 20s/30s J skips ahead leading the way with her hands spread free.*

*40s/50s Jeanette limps behind trying to hit them with her cane.*

40s/50s

You guys hold on! I'll bop you!

*She giggles and pushes the wheelchair in circles while all the pictures on Jeanette's lap fly off her lap into the air. 20s/30s Jeanette still leading the way.*

80s/90s

Whoa!!

*Laughing and beginning to snort she is laughing so hard*

20s/30s

I'm as free as a bird!

*They stop at the center of the stage with picture strewn all about the stage. 40s/50s Jeanette finally catches up and tries to pick up a few pics on her way. She gets to Jeanette in the wheelchair and hands her the picture.*

40s/50s

Here—ya lost this.

*Hands her a picture of herself that's projected on the stage.*

80s/90s

Now—

She

Lets dance!

*They all dance together as the lights fade*

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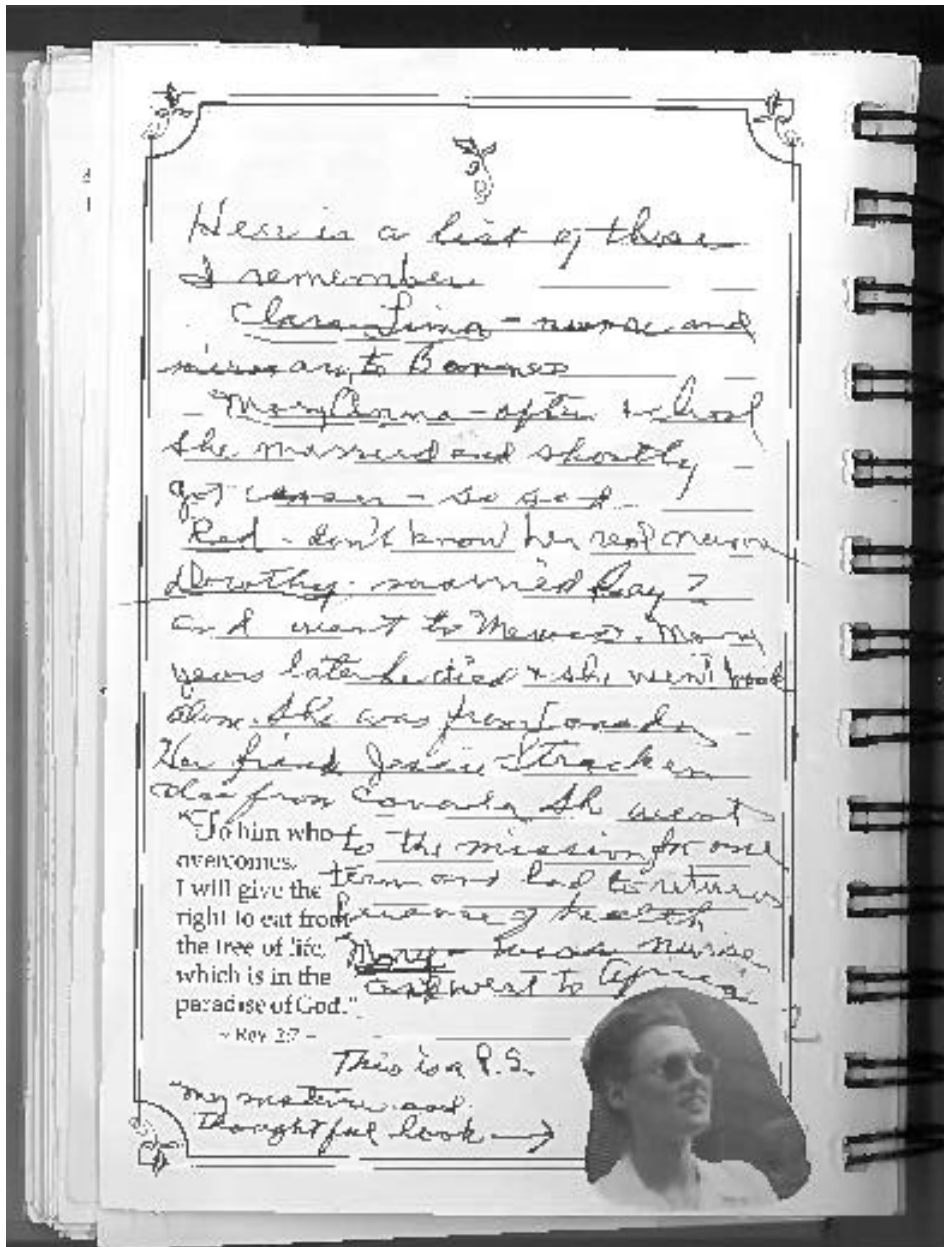
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Images



Here is a list of those  
I remember  
Clara Lina - nurse and  
sister-in-law to Barnes  
Mary Emma - after school  
she married and shortly  
got cancer - so got  
Red - don't know her real name  
Dorothy - married Ray?  
and went to Mexico. Many  
years later he died & she went back  
alone. She was from Canada -  
Her friend Jessie Strachen  
came from Canada. She went  
to him who to the mission for one  
overcomes. team and had to return  
I will give the ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~right~~ <sup>right</sup> to eat from  
right to eat from ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~tree~~ <sup>tree</sup> of life. ~~None~~ <sup>None</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~nurse~~ <sup>nurse</sup>  
the tree of life. ~~None~~ <sup>None</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~nurse~~ <sup>nurse</sup>  
which is in the ~~east~~ <sup>east</sup> ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup> to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~paradise~~ <sup>paradise</sup> of God."  
- Rev 2:7 -

This is a P.S.  
my mother and  
Thoughtful look →



Journal Image 1. "My Mature Look." Woman with Sunglasses.



Image 2: "The Lyster's Wedding Photo."

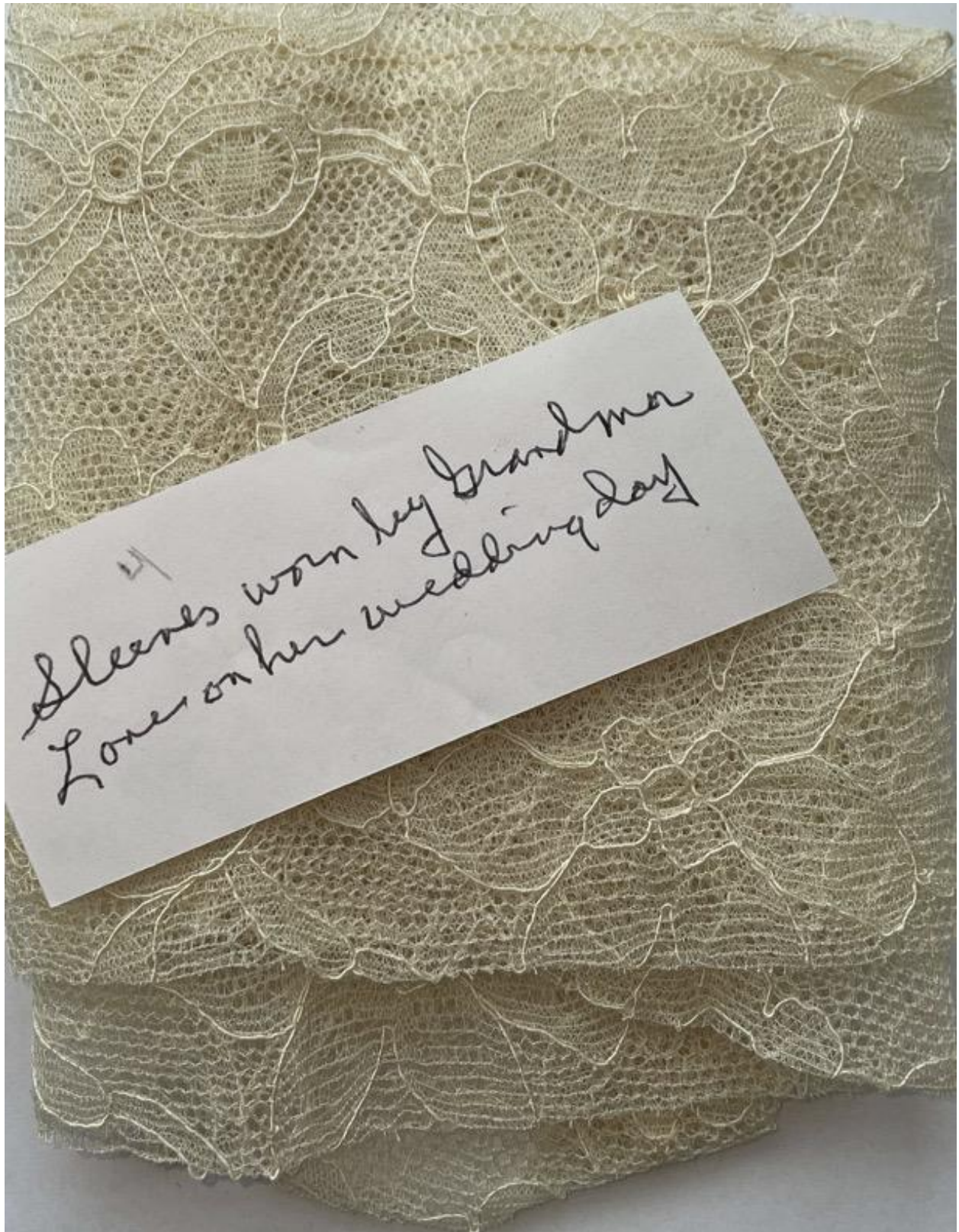


Image 3: "Sleeves worn at my Wedding." Gloves and Description.

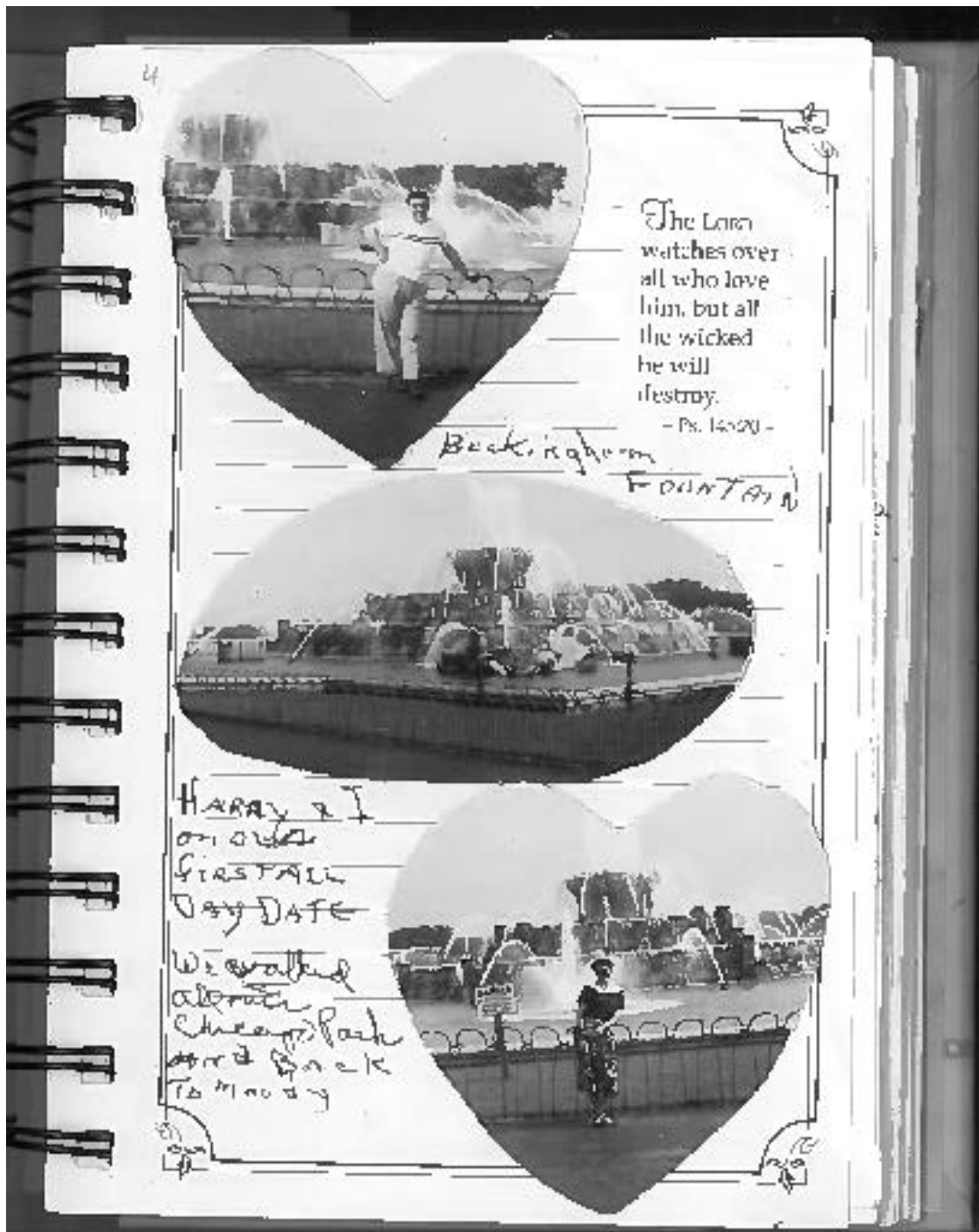


Image 4: Journal Entry. "My First Date." Buckingham Fountain.



Image 5: "My Graduation Photo." Jeanette Lyster.



Image 6: "Mama." Marie Lyster.

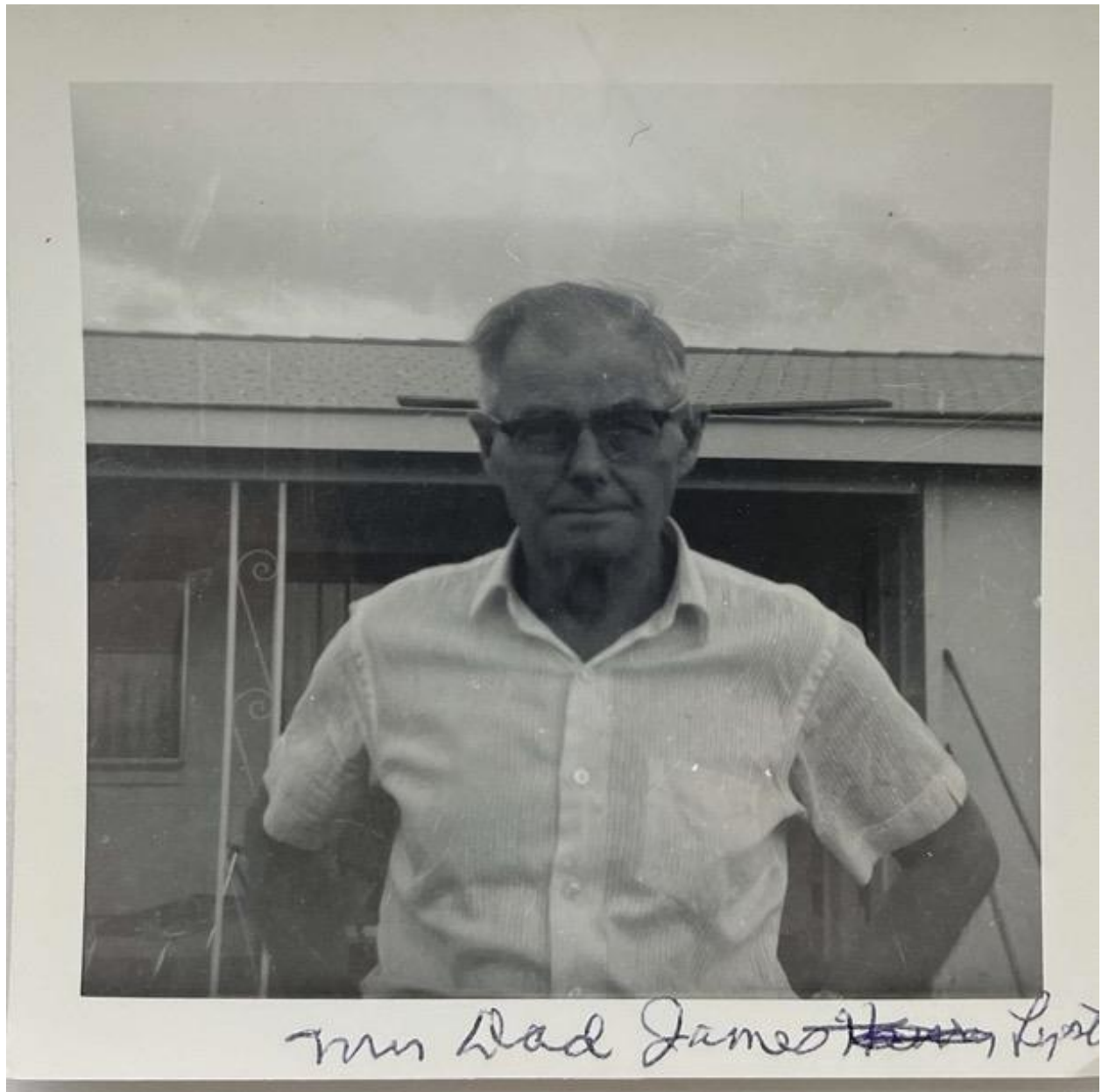


Image 7: "Dad." James Lyster.





my days in Seattle  
visiting friends after  
the first shift <sup>W8</sup>  
Reveries at Boeing  
1941-1942.

Image 8: "My First Day at Boeing." Seattle, WA.



Image 9: "The Tress of Winter. Oil Painting by Jeanette Love.



Image 10: "Young Jeanette Home in Fargo."



Image 11: "The Wig." Travels in London, England.



Image 12: "Visiting Home during WW2." Fargo, ND



Image 13: "Margaret and Earl." 1941.

Image 14: "My College Dorm: I Made a Mess of This." Journal Entry.

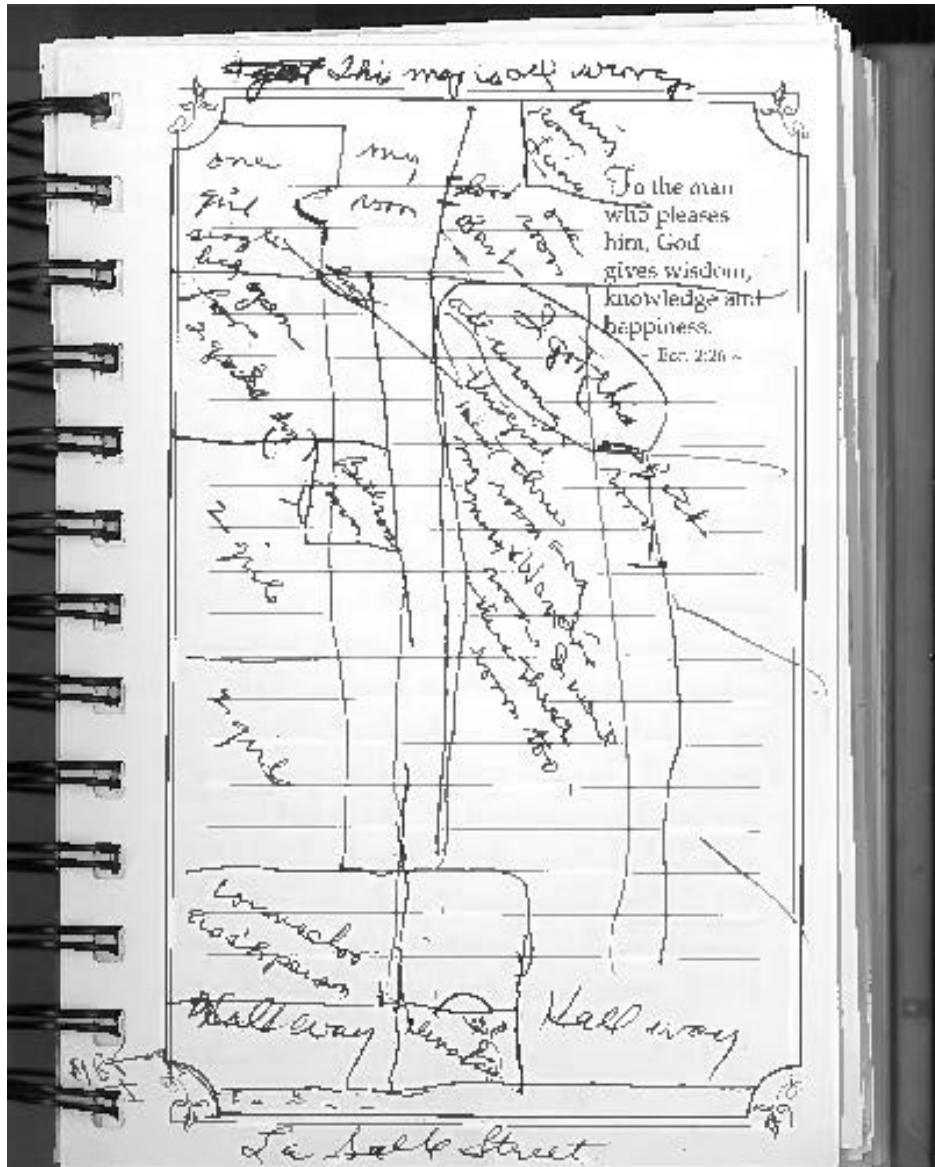




Image 15: "College Days." Journal Entry

Image 16: "Barb and Me." Journal Entry.

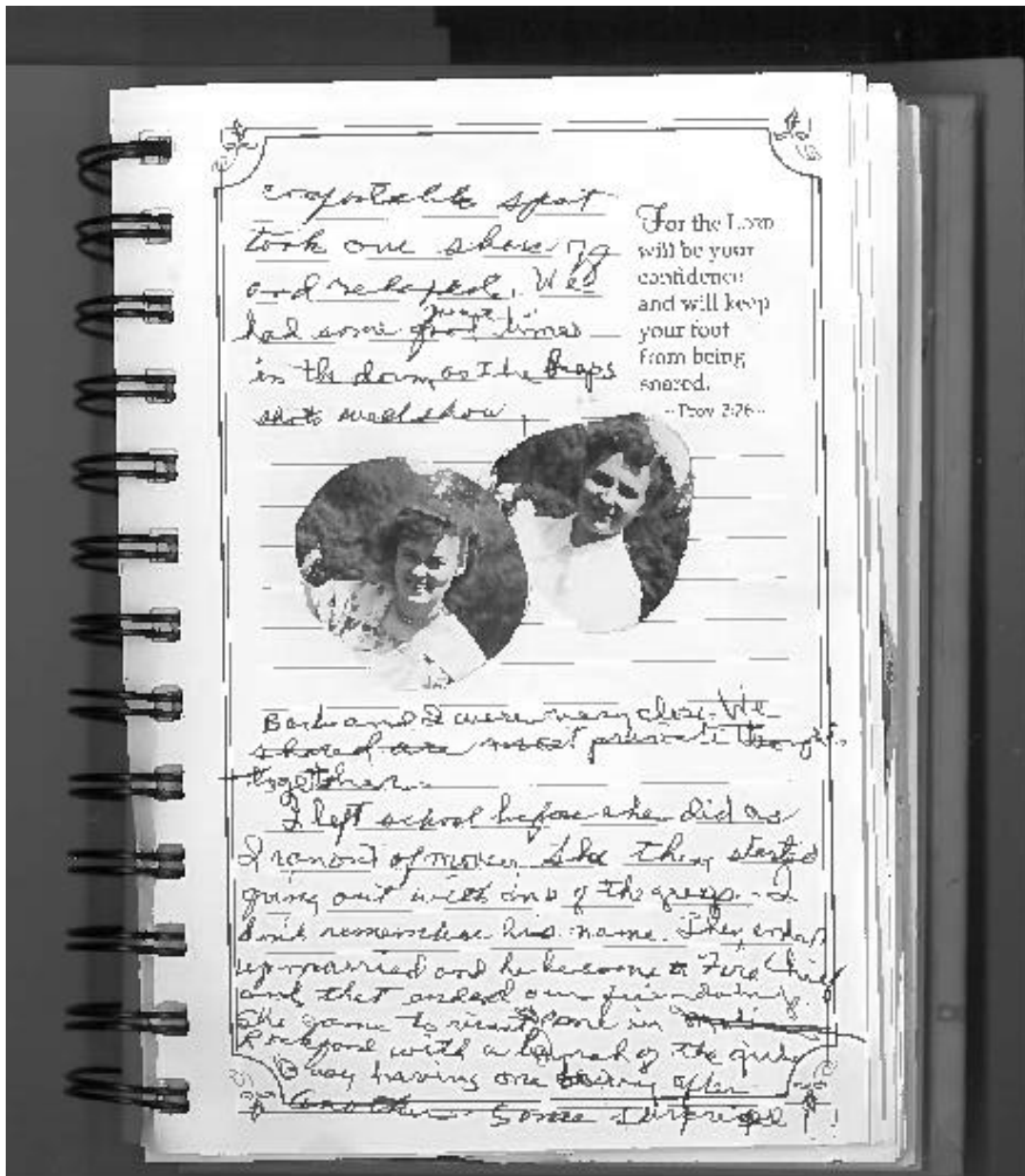






Image 17: "Last Dorm Party." Journal Entry.

Image 18: "Lynn and Library." Rockford, IL.



Acc. #	Cat.	Title	Series	Author
1346	202.4	Rebirth of Our Nation	-	Howard, D.E.
1347	200.	Relevance	-	Holmes, L.C.
<del>1349-1362</del>	<del>1349</del>	<del>Praying To The God You Can Trust</del>	<del>-</del>	<del>Anderson, Laila</del>
1363	222.	Manners + Customs of Bible Lands	-	Wight, F.H.
1366-67	207.	Science For You	-	Singer
1368	207.	Science For You	-	Singer
1369	207.	Science For You	-	Singer
1375	266.	The Gospel According To Home	-	McCord, J.D.
1376	240.	Now That I Believe	-	Cook, Robert
1377	F	The Man From Shadow Ledge	-	Thorne, S.B.
1379	230.7	Love Is A Decision	-	Smalley, Gary
1380	246.1	Ann of Ava	-	Hubbard, D.
1381-82	200.	When Finance Fails	-	Tiner, J.H.
1382	200.	When Finance Fails	-	Tiner, J.H.
1384	236.	When The World Wild Balls Come	-	Brooks, Ted
1385	236.	When The World Wild Balls Come	-	Brooks, Ted
1386-87	244.	7 Logedacton Horse Book	-	Day, R.E.
1388	205.	Our Glorious God - His Attributes	-	Daughton, M.J.
1399	207	Horses and Ponies	CKF	-
1400-1404	246.	How Can you Be Sure of Eternity with God	CKF	Lalor, E.W.
1405	246.	How Can you Be Sure of Eternity with God	CKF	Lalor, E.W.
1406-07	236.	Heaven - Your Real Home	-	Evick, T.P. for
1408	236.	Heaven - Your Real Home	-	Evick, T.P. for
1409	242.	Approaching God	-	Evick, Paul
1410-1411	F	When Breaks The Dawn	-	CKF, JANETTE
1412	F	When Breaks The Dawn	-	CKF, JANETTE
1413-1414	2 F	These My People	-	Howard, M.J.
1415	2 F	These My People	-	Howard, M.J.
1416-1418	2 F	More Children's Books	-	Howard, M.J.

Image 19: "Library Log." Created by Jeanette Love in 2010.

This is my favorite  
picture as it shows  
the love & bond we have



Joy Marie Love - March 2, 1952  
Plainwell, Michigan

I planned your time  
to be born by knowing what  
days I could conceive.

After nine months of  
getting big as a bear and  
being 2 weeks overdue. After  
taking medicine to induce  
labor, we drove to Plainwell  
Saturday evening around  
8:30 pm.

You didn't want to leave  
my warm belly and really  
gave me a hard time.

Image 20: "Joybells." Wedding Photo.

Images 21,22: "NYC: The Wheelchair Incident."





Image 23: "Grandma Olson." Fargo, ND.

Images 24-26: "Camp CoBeAc: The Lake, The Building, The Family."









My funeral - Jeanette Love  
One ceremony at Caldeata Bible  
Baptist Church, second memorial  
service at Saginaw, Mi, either  
at funeral chapel or First Bpt.  
The reason for a service at Saginaw  
is so my family in N.D. and friends  
in mid-west could come if desired.

I would like a lot of music as  
my testimony of my love for the  
Almighty God.

Congregational songs:

"That is Thy Faithfulness"

"How Great Thou Art"

"I will sing of the mercies of thy love"

The above especially are to be sung.

"High Ground" - Brenda & Ashley?

"The Love of God" Brenda Keen

"Make me a blessing" - Adam & Ashley

I would like Mark & family sing as a  
group whatever praise can be to God.

If some would like to speak as  
friend or family: Bruce Lee, Sharon Wilson,  
Cedric Hanson, Jay, my daughter, daughter

Mark to give message. Doug  
Jackson at Saginaw if possible. I would

## Jeanette Marion Love



*A Life Spent Serving God & Others*



Born: September 21, 1922

Promoted to Glory: October 20, 2015

Image 27: "Funeral Arrangements."

April 27, 2014

STORY

## A Sense of Humor.

One night as I lay in bed meditating I heard someone talking; I listened; then heard: "My right leg (which is "Rightie" says to "Pali" my left leg. "Pali get off me" - "Pali did not move. "Rightie" hiked her again but still not a ~~move~~ <sup>move</sup>. Si "Rightie" took her foot and shoved her off. "Pali leg moved up. "Rightie" was straight. Pali said "Thank you, I needed that!" ~~So ended~~ <sup>ended</sup> the matter.

It was not long before I heard my right arm speaking to my left arm saying "Just because you can write with your hand and have the tea in your roller cuff, fixed hole, not say you are better. Why? I can raise my arm higher than yours, same. My left arm said "That's okay with me." The right arm ~~said~~ <sup>said</sup> that I can't you can't take some of my prickling. Left arm said "I'm doing just, fine." ~~So ended~~ <sup>ended</sup> the matter.

I thought I was about asleep when I heard yelling. I listened and I heard my right hip "saying to my left hip" "You are a flat, say, no one hip, why you have to set your left arm to roll over with the barbed. Left hip said "at least it helps ease your pain. I'd get it ~~off~~ <sup>off</sup> dancing under my skin." ~~That is the end of the matter.~~ <sup>There is more to come.</sup> This is the life of Baby and Soul.

Image 28: "Sense of Humor." 2014.



Images 29, 30: "Israel: The Garden."





May 15, 2013  
"My Dear Sweet Ashley" Ash  
also - my blonde  
You may think this  
is so typical of your Grandma  
Love to carry on a conver-  
sation when I am in glory  
I may not be able to see  
godly physical is not really  
necessary because I  
will see you in glory  
I think of our  
lines together through  
the years; all I can say  
is thank you to God for  
having the privilege of  
having such a wonderful  
granddaughter  
Being what my memory  
is I thought I should write  
words that will bless your  
heart. Not that I am anything

Image 31: "My Dear Ashley." Journal Entry. 2013.



Image 32,33: "Carefree."

