

## **From Dorothy - Act 1, Scene 1 of *Tomorrow's Fresh New***

Hi I was 14, when we went to the World's Fair. I remember the trip so well. It must've made a good impression on me because I found what was the beginning of a play I started to write the next year in 1975. Then I remembered that I had written more, but I don't know what I did with the rest of the play, or if I even finished. When I was a boy, I started a lot of journals (mostly binder paper stapled together). I would write a day or two and then forget about it. Every time I restarted, I made a new book out of paper and staples. There was something about seeing those big gaps in time that bothered me. Better to start fresh. This story, so far, really does, reflect the trip my dad, my grandma and I took from Iowa to Seattle and back. We went to Expo74 twice on the trip. If you think this is any good, I will look for more entries. I've got boxes of this stuff to sort through. Best wishes on your project, Dorothy

<title> **Tomorrow's Fresh New**

Four chairs. Minimal Props. Chairs are transformed into different configurations throughout the play. Tom remains the same character throughout. Grandma and Dad play multiple characters

Tom - the boy  
Grandma (Lenore)  
Dad (Ralph)

TOM <to himself>  
So much corn. acres and acres of corn. I mean I'm from Iowa, we've got corn. But somehow this corn in Montana is ridiculous. Maybe it's the mountains in the distance. Maybe it's one of those perspective things.

DAD  
Watcha thinking about Tom?

TOM  
Nothing.

DAD

Sure is a lot of corn.

TOM

Yeah.

DAD

You know this trip is going a lot smoother than I thought it would. We haven't really spoken in so many years. And then I call you up and you are like, sure no problem. "Lets go."

GRANDMA

It is a lousy way for us to reconnect but I think we got along pretty good when you were married. I was a good mother-in-law, a good grandma.

DAD

The best. Right Tom?

TOM

Sure. Hey have we decided whether we are going to pick up mom before or after we go to Expo 74.

DAD

I've been thinking about it. I think we should stop in Spokane on the way over to plan things and then on the way back to, you know, do it.

TOM

So twice?

DAD

Yes.

TOM

Yes!

<PAUSE>

GRANDMA

When you called me, you didn't seem that sad, I mean, about her dying.

DAD

I wrote her off as dead a long time ago. She ruined our family, then she ruined herself. At least this will be the last time we're left holding the bag. I mean until we are literally holding the bag of her.

GRANDMA

That's pretty heartless. I mean I'm her mother, and her son, your son is sitting right there.

TOM

I don't mind.

DAD

Well, Lenore, can you say you feel that much different?

GRANDMA

No. Let's pop in an 8 track. Waylon Jennings again?

TOM

No! I need to rehearse! Up with People... please.

DAD

I f&\*king hate them. I would say I hate their music but I don't want to call it "music." Because it's not music it's some kind of hypnotic death cult chanting. I just picture bombers over Vietnam and their "Songs' <air quotes> being blasted from speakers mounted on their wings.

GRANDMA

Hands on the wheel Ralph! You're going 90 miles an hour.

DAD

We're nothing but fresh meat to the Up With People cult.

TOM

I would tell you that what you said hurts my feelings. But, I am glad you don't like them. You don't understand. John Wayne understands. Pat Boone understands. Walt Disney understands. And you don't. I wish Pat

Boone was my dad. Not you.

DAD

Ouch. Look, I'm sorry. I know you want to be in the cult, I mean "band." <starts to do air quotes again but a look from Grandma stops him> I know that you want to belong to something. Your voice is great and I know you could meet their high, uhm, standard, but I mean couldn't you just join the army next year when you are out of school? Vietnam is over and we'll never get in another war because of it. Now's the time.

GRANDMA

Make war not music?

DAD

Sure. Well, the army has a choir too and they sing a lot of patriotic songs like Up With People does, just not with the idiotic smiles on their faces. Can you imagine an army choir singing together right before they go into battle. Kind of chokes me up.

TOM

Maybe they would kill people while they were singing.

DAD

No, only Up With People would do that.

TOM

It's OK you don't need to play their music, I have it all memorized already. I will be ready.

DAD

OK

<Tom appears to be humming to himself>

GRANDMA

Did you ever hear from her after Seattle?

DAD

No. Once the phone rang when I was sleeping. I picked it up and it

sounded like someone was crying. When I said her name, when I said "Hazel" they hung up. I had to get to work in a couple of hours and I couldn't get back to sleep. All I could think of was it must be fantastic.

GRANDMA

What?

DAD

Heroin. Instead of feeling sad or hurt or angry, all I could think about was "How good is this heroin stuff, anyway?" To leave your family. To leave everything for it. And then I started thinking about the word "heroin" and how Hazel was a heroine until heroin. I got stuck on that word for a while. Before drugs, she did a lot for a lot of people. Right after I realized what was going on with her, found her stuff, it dawned on me how she was the same but different. I wondered if I would have even noticed if I didn't find the needles and crap. When I found all that I could see that Hazel was the same but like stretched out, flattened. Kind of like Gumby gets in one of those claymation things.

GRANDMA

I always liked Pokey better.

DAD

I would have guessed that.

GRANDMA

It really is a big sky out here. You look at the mudflaps on the pickups, and the license plates and they say "BIG SKY COUNTRY," and then you look up and you realize it's true.

DAD

Was there any kind of history of drug use in your family?

GRANDMA

No. Why because I didn't notice it was a big sky until mudflaps told me?

DAD

No, no, I mean that's a good observation but... I just wonder what made her start. Maybe you didn't notice that she was using drugs as a kid.

Maybe if there was a sign that said "Big Drug User..."

TOM <interrupting and coming out of his silent singing continues singing out loud >

If more people were for people! All people everywhere! There'd be a lot less people to worry about! And a lot more people who care! <stops singing> Have you ever seen so much corn?